



PhD-FHSE-2021-021
The Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences

DISSERTATION

Defence held on 02/07/2021 in Esch-sur-Alzette

to obtain the degree of

DOCTEUR DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DU LUXEMBOURG EN SCIENCES DU LANGAGE

by

Marie-Anne HANSEN-PAULY

Born on 14 May 1948 in Luxembourg-City

NOMADS' POETIC TRANSLINGUALISM MULTIPLE VOICES, DIALOGICAL WRITING AND SPACE CONSTRUCTIONS IN THE WORK OF LILIANE WELCH AND PIERRE JORIS

Dissertation defence committee

Dr Jeanne E. Glesener, Chair
Professor, Université du Luxembourg

Dr Wolfgang Hallet, Vice Chair
Professor, Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen

Dr Adelheid Hu, Dissertation Supervisor
Professor, Université du Luxembourg

Dr Manfred Schmeling, Member
Professor Emeritus, Universität des Saarlandes

Dr Claude D. Conter, Member
Directeur, Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg

Contents

Abstract.....	8
Preface	10
PART ONE: Outline of research context and conceptual cornerstones.....	12
1. Interconnected experiences of languages and mobility.....	13
1.1 Introducing the poets.....	13
1.1.1 Liliane Welch: a Luxembourg-Canadian poet	15
1.1.2 Pierre Joris: a European Yankee	18
1.2 Situating the poets' writing practices	21
1.2.1 Similarities in linguistic and cultural backgrounds.....	22
1.2.2 Diverging views and practices.....	23
1.3 Promising research perspectives: From <i>multi-</i> to <i>translingualism</i>	26
1.3.1 Language multiplicity.....	28
1.3.2 The many facets of travelling, migration and nomadism	31
1.4 Research questions.....	34
1.5 Summing up and looking ahead	39
2. Methodology	41
2.1 Interdisciplinary approach.....	41
2.2 Research strategies.....	42
2.2.1 Starting from conceptual metaphors	42
2.2.2 The palimpsest as metaphor for nomadic translingual voices and texts.....	48
2.2.3 Mapping as research method: a cartographer's work	54
2.2.4 Focus on writers' positioning: <i>posture d'auteur</i> and heterolingual ethos.....	56
2.3 The selection of source texts	60
2.4 Researching multilingually: a decentralized position	68
2.5 Summing up and moving on	69
3. Multilingualism and Nomadism:.....	71
Reviewing the research context and setting up a framework of reference.....	71
3.1 Research on language multiplicity linked to literary writing: Overview of a multifaceted field	71
3.1.1 The interest of early studies for an approach of Welch and Joris.....	72
3.1.2 Critical thoughts on language and language multiplicity.....	77
3.1.3 Review of studies with literary perspectives on multilingualism:.....	80
3.1.4 Applied Linguists' perspectives on literary records of multilingualism.....	95
3.1.5 Critical re-conceptualizations of multiplicity and interconnections.....	109

3.1.6	Articulations between literary studies and applied linguistics.....	113
3.1.7	Summing up and moving on to nomadism	122
3.2	Nomadism and nomadic multiplicities: a wide range of perspectives on a concept-in-use....	125
3.2.1	Nomadism, a cluster of concepts and words.....	126
3.2.2	Historical studies of nomadism.....	131
3.2.3	A wide array of critical views on nomadism today.....	134
3.2.4	Nomadic theory: From Deleuze/ Guattari to Kenneth White and Rosi Braidotti.....	138
3.2.5	Nomadism: a way of writing and conceiving multiplicity in literature	174
3.2.6	Nomads and the concept of hospitality.....	186
3.2.7	Anti-nomadic thinking versus a concept of hospitality.....	187
3.2.8	Summing up and moving on to a framework of analysis for translingual writing	189
3.3	First findings and cornerstones for a study of translingual nomadic work.....	192
3.3.1	Translingualism: a practice and a concept	192
3.3.2	Selecting conceptual cornerstones for a study of translingual writing	197
3.3.3	Specifying the research questions: understandings of translingualism	204
3.3.4	Note on text analysis	206
3.3.5	A roadmap for the study of Welch and Joris	207
	PART TWO: The poets' nomadic lives and thinking across languages.....	210
4.	Mapping nomadic and translingual lives and work	211
4.1	Lives and works of nomads: Mapping relations with otherness.....	211
4.1.1	A focus on peripheries.....	212
4.1.2	Routes or roots	212
4.1.3	The poets as living maps of nomadic figures	213
4.2	Liliane Welch: Nomadic itineraries and positioning between the Old and the New World	213
4.2.1	<i>Moving</i> centres and peripheries in a nomad's life.....	213
4.2.2	Books as thresholds to nomadic and translingual writing	226
4.2.3	Welch an unacknowledged multilingual writer?	228
4.2.4	Mapping the reception and the positioning of a nomadic poet.....	237
4.2.5	The poet's presentation of herself	243
4.3	Pierre Joris: Mapping routes and rhizomes	248
4.3.1	Visualizing mapping processes.....	248
4.3.2	A nomadic life: routes, stops (<i>mawâqif</i>) and encounters.....	252
4.3.3	Mapping the nomad's work: Looking for routes across nomadic translingual writing	264
4.3.4	The routes of reception.....	277

4.4	Summing up. The multilingual poet: nomad or migrant?	279
5.	Memories of multiple languages in movement.....	283
5.1	Introduction: Connecting linguistic and nomadic perspectives.....	283
5.1.1	Contextualizing a critical reading of nomads' memories of early language experiences.	283
5.1.2	Methodological issues for studies of remembered languages in movement.....	286
5.2	Liliane Welch: Reconstructing early language experiences.....	288
5.2.1	<i>Seismographs</i> : Starting from a metaphor.....	289
5.2.2	Language in the family: Remembering heterogeneous, embodied voices.....	290
5.2.3	Becoming nomadic: The transformative power of written language	298
5.2.4	Concluding thoughts on awakening to language multiplicity.....	317
5.3	Pierre Joris: A confusion of languages: early memories of multiple voices	323
5.3.1	Fragments of a language biography in progress.....	324
5.3.2	Reflections on a (Luxembourger's) sense of between-ness in languages	335
5.4	Welch and Joris: Similarities and differences in their views on language multiplicity	342
6.	In search of a poetics for language/s in movement.....	345
6.1	Preliminary thoughts.....	345
6.1.1	Focus on the language features in nomadic writing	345
6.1.2	The relations between everyday languages and poetic language in nomads' writing.....	346
6.1.3	Contextualizing a nomad poetics in relation to literary multilingualism.....	348
6.2	Liliane Welch: The nomad's translingual writing as creative response	351
6.2.1	On the way to poetic writing: Investigating encounters on the nomad's path.....	351
6.2.2	The search for her own voice: a poetics of response to nature	372
6.2.3	A poetics of dialogue as response to voices.....	384
6.2.4	Wrapping up on Welch's poetics: Response as praise and "translanguaging"	391
6.3	Pierre Joris: A nomadic poetics of transformative processes.....	393
6.3.1	A nomadic poetics: From Deleuze and Guattari to an open space of multiple relations.	393
6.3.2	The purpose of a poetics: Positioning the nomad poet as thinker	398
6.3.3	<i>Thinking through</i> a nomad's languages.....	408
6.3.4	<i>Thinking through</i> dimensions of space	420
6.3.5	<i>Thinking through</i> translation as a fundamental feature of a nomadic poetics	427
6.3.6	Reception of a nomadic poetics, critical exchanges and clarifications.....	440
6.3.7	Wrapping up with a few notes on how to <i>read</i> nomadic writing.....	450
6.4	Comparing translingual poetics.....	452
	PART THREE: Examples of a translingual poetics in practice:.....	454

7.	Encounters with multiple voices and practices of heterolingualism.....	455
7.1	The wide spectrum of heterolingual features.....	455
7.1.1	Visible forms of heterolingualism	457
7.1.2	“Invisible” forms of heterolingualism	459
7.1.3	Heterolingual elements as moments and places of articulation between languages	460
7.1.4	Examples of heterolingualism in poetry	462
7.2	Liliane Welch: In search of a voice and place.....	467
7.2.1	Positioning in a new world	467
7.2.2	Language and Otherness.....	473
7.2.3	Cheirography: Writing and body's response to nature.....	484
7.2.4	Summing up: Response through the body and search for a poetic voice	489
7.3	Pierre Joris: Tracing relations to languages and poetic interconnections.....	491
7.3.1	Scrutinizing his relation to de-centred and multiple languages	491
7.3.2	Exploring a middle in movement: the poet's positioning and becoming	506
7.3.3	Poetic translingualism: the creation of imaginary communities with other poets.....	511
7.3.4	A poem to sum up the writing of exiles and nomads.....	521
8.	Translational processes and writing as dialogue	523
8.1	<i>Word-House of a Grandchild</i> : Welch's pseudo-translation of imaginary voices.....	523
8.1.1	Context and a short note on pseudo translation	523
8.1.2	The missing dimension of language diversity in <i>Word-House</i>	525
8.1.3	<i>Word-House of a Grandchild</i> : pseudo-translation as a mode of self-writing.....	529
8.1.4	Pseudo-translation, mobility and the creation of new spaces for the nomad narrator...	532
8.1.5	Authorial positioning and heterolingual ethos	535
8.1.6	The text and its heterolingual reality: reading <i>Word-House</i> as the poet's assemblage of voices .	536
8.1.7	Reception – or “triple refraction”	537
8.2	Pierre Joris: Dialogic and translingual writing.....	539
8.2.1	Multilingual and nomadic aspects to look out for	539
8.2.2	“Writing in all my languages”: What it means in the poet's practice.....	540
8.2.3	Writing/ Reading	541
8.2.4	More examples of dialogic multilingualism.....	548
8.2.5	Winnetou poems: a decentralized, multiple voice in “a material flux of language matter”	558
8.2.6	Citational framing and citation as text.....	563
8.2.7	Provisional conclusion on translingual writing and multilingual poetry.....	566
9.	Palimpsestic writing and the creation of translingual spaces	568

9.1 Liliane Welch: Palimpsestic voices and the creation of imaginary nomadic spaces	569
9.1.1 Staging other poets on the scene of her poetry	569
9.1.2 Rewriting Rimbaud: Analysis of a palimpsestuous relation	569
9.1.3 Thought and imagination in translingual processes.....	577
9.1.4 The creation of imaginary transpoetic spaces.....	579
9.1.5 A nomad's memories and dreams.....	581
9.2 Joris: Staging multivoiced responses to disaster.....	584
9.2.1 <i>The Agony of I.B.</i> : Whose text is it? A wealth of translingual strategies	585
9.2.2 <i>The Gulf</i> : Language and disaster	601
10. Concluding remarks and outlook	617
10.1 Foundations for the research.....	617
10.1.1 The benefits of nomadic approaches for a study of languages on the move	617
10.1.2 Benefits deriving from a combination of research in literary studies and applied linguistics	618
10.2 Key aspects of translingualism in nomadic poets' work	619
10.2.1 Centralized or de-centred conception of multilingualism	619
10.2.2 The absence of <i>one</i> native language	619
10.2.3 Posture and positioning towards languages	621
10.2.4 Nomads' poetic creation and different forms of re-writing.....	625
10.3 Specific insights gained through the study of Welch and Joris.....	627
10.3.1 The poet as noet: a core feature of translingualism in Joris's work.....	627
10.3.2 Poetic creation as life writing	628
10.3.3 The palimpsest as flexible and productive tool for an analysis of translingual writing....	630
10.4 Comments on the research process	632
10.5 Outlook on further research topics	632
11. Appendix	634
11.1 Glossary	634
11.2 The spectrum of otherness in translingual writing.....	642
12. Bibliography.....	643
Primary Sources.....	643
Liliane Welch	643
Pierre Joris.....	646
Secondary Literature.....	651
Dictionaries.....	679

Selected on-line resources.....	679

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Liliane Welch, <i>Untethered in Paradise</i> (2002). Cover painting by Alex Colville	214
Figure 2. Liliane Welch in New Brunswick. Cover of <i>Seismographs</i> (1988)	217
Figure 3. Liliane Welch, cover of <i>Manstoma</i> (1985)	219
Figure 4. Liliane Welch, collage by Ginette Knaff on cover <i>Stealing the Flowers of Evil</i> (2008)	226
Figure 5. Pierre Joris, <i>Routes not roots</i> (2007). CD cover by Nicole Peyrafitte.....	249
Figure 6. Pierre Joris, <i>Winnetou Old</i> (1994).....	249
Figure 7. Pierre Joris, <i>An American Suite</i> (2016). Cover design by Nicole Peyrafitte.....	250
Figure 8. Carte des Trois Arabies (1654), in Pierre Joris, <i>Arabia (Not So) Deserta</i> (2019)	251
Figure 9. Pierre Joris: Opening page of "Notes Toward a Nomadic Poetics"	422
Figure 10. Cover of <i>Dream Museum</i> (1995) with collage by Ginette Knaff	482
Figure 11. Pierre Joris, « L'ancre d'eux » http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/joris/	506
Figure 12. Pierre Joris, cover of <i>Barzakh</i> , painting by Nicole Peyrafitte.....	507
Figure 13. Paul Celan, from final draft of <i>Der Meridian</i> , used as cover for the English translation	515
Figure 14. Liliane Welch, <i>Word-House of a Grandchild</i> (1987). Photograph of Rinaldo Bravi	529
Figure 15. Opening page of "Canto Diurno #1" (<i>Poasis</i> 2001:1)	564
Figure 16. Extract from a piece entitled "Nomadism" ("Three Ontological Goggles," <i>Barzakh</i> 2014)	565
Figure 17. Liliane Welch, cover of <i>Fidelities</i> (1997): <i>Terres Rouges</i> , painting by Harry Rabinger.....	581
Figure 18. Irving Petlin, The Red Door.	600
Figure 19. Pierre Joris, <i>The Gulf</i> , "Disaster – Oildreck." (<i>Barzakh</i> : 290-291).....	614

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I am extremely grateful to my supervisor Professor Adelheid Hu for her genuine interest in the project, her clear-sighted guidance and her unwavering support.

I am equally grateful to the other members of my thesis committee, Professor Wolfgang Hallet and Professor Jeanne Glesener for their invaluable advice and pertinent comments that disclosed crucial paths and perspectives for the enquiry.

My deep gratitude goes to Professor Manfred Schmeling whose dedication to multilingualism and comparative literature triggered an early interest in the subject.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Dr Claude Conter, who enlarged my view of the work through his rigorous commitment to writers in and from Luxembourg. My thanks also go to the staff of the Centre National de Littérature whose kind assistance greatly facilitated the research.

Furthermore, I would like to express heart-felt thanks to the innumerable colleagues, friends and students whose stimulating talks inspired my reflections over many years.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to Jeannot Hansen, my husband, and the rest of the family without whose unflinching encouragement and comforting words, whenever needed, the completion of my dissertation would not have been possible.

Abstract

NOMADS' POETIC TRANSLINGUALISM

Multiple voices, dialogical writing and space constructions in the work of

Liliane Welch and Pierre Joris

In the past decades, multilingualism has developed into a highly researched topic in literary studies as well as in applied linguistics. Surprisingly, two Anglophone poets, Liliane Welch and Pierre Joris, originally from Luxembourg, have not been included in research despite the rich and manifold perspectives on languages that their work displays. They grew up and were educated in the multilingual environment of Luxembourg before they immigrated to North America while continuing to travel widely. For their writing, they rejected their earlier languages, Luxembourgish, French and German and opted for English as the language of their writing.

These observations have motivated the overall research question: What multiple facets of translingualism does a nomadic approach of writing offer? Through close references to the work of Welch and Joris the study aims to investigate the impact of multiple languages on poetic writing, with a particular attention to poets' linguistic meta-reflections and their positioning in relation to languages.

The dissertation is divided into three parts with separate yet related research aims and objectives. Part I sets out the context of the research while it also enquires into the pertinence of associating literary and linguistic dimensions with important features of nomadic theory. The definition of research aims and objectives motivates the description of a concept-based inquiry. An extensive review of relevant studies highlights the international and interdisciplinary character of recent research on multilingualism while nomadism appears as a rich resource for thinking about what moving means for writers. Both areas thus significantly contribute to the description of conceptual and textual cornerstones, which ensure the coherence of the study as a whole. Concepts need not come as abstract ideas only; the palimpsest as conceptual metaphor proves a fitting tool to investigate layers of texts, thoughts and locations. It is a golden thread that all along the dissertation functions as reminder of transformative processes.

A distinction between fact-oriented and poetic writing accounts for differences in focus in Parts II and III. Primary text resources in Part II comprise documentary and autobiographical writing as well as academic pieces. These texts help draw the poets' itineraries, inquire into how they reconstruct former language experiences and develop key elements of a poetics for their creative writing. Gradually, the specificities of each poet's conception of the role of language multiplicity emerges. Poetry as creative and imaginative work is at the centre of Part III, which scrutinizes texts for their various uses of translingualism in dialogical

writing, in trans-lational practices and in the creation of poetic spaces marked by superimposed voices, languages and texts.

Among the outcomes of the study, a few points stand out. The elaboration of an interdisciplinary framework stresses the benefits of crossing disciplinary perspectives and negotiating between terminologies in different languages. Part II shows that contrary to widespread beliefs both poets reject the mother tongue as language for writing; moreover, they demonstrate the rich cognitive, self-constructive and creative potential that a new self-selected language holds. The fundamental role that nomads' ongoing reading in several languages holds for translingual writing is another crucial point that both poets constantly demonstrate. Differences, however, appear in their understanding of language multiplicity in texts. While Welch aims at a unified language, Jorisi is in search of new forms of writing that transgress borders of languages and genres. The analysis of poems in Part III confirms these diverse orientations and underlines the relevance of a distinction between implicit and explicit forms of heterolingualism, which account for a highly diversified range of writing across languages. For a study of all forms, the palimpsest remains a powerful conceptual metaphor to investigate the articulation of languages. The examples show that only an in-depth analysis can bring to light the nature of interactions and indicate their relevance for studies of multilingualism outside the literary context.

Preface

The two poets who triggered my research interest in literary forms of multilingualism are Liliane Welch (1937-2010) and Pierre Joris (1946 -). For someone who is not familiar with their work, their writings will come across as English literature – or rather literature in English (or as Canadian respectively US -American literature). Their work with its links to different cultures and languages however falls outside the conventional ‘territory’ of national literature studies and seems to require ‘new’ or alternative approaches with references to concepts of transnational literature, of world literature or another ‘networking’ model. Studying these two poets turned into a “nomadic” experience of research, which often required me to roam across languages or to switch geographical and cultural perspectives while following the multiple hints in the poets’ texts. Focussing on work that is constantly on the move across linguistic as well as disciplinary borders involves an ongoing questioning of research positions: only with the “exploration” of nomadism could I find a meaningful route through the maze of questions.

When for a few years I could benefit from the then customary “nomadic” life of Luxembourg students abroad, I became interested in experiences of migration and their impact on cultural practices. Especially in Canada, I noticed parallels and differences with Luxembourg: the tensions between the remnants of a “colonial” deference towards uncontested great cultures and a budding awakening of sensitivity to a national cultural identity. I could also observe quite different forms of multilingualism and though always a privileged outsider, I gained new perspectives on migrant experiences.

In my earlier work in Luxembourg schools and teacher education, an important challenge consisted in reconciling the focus on (English) language instruction with the specificities of the multilingual context. Intense contact with interdisciplinary work provided insights into the particular challenges that mixing epistemologies and learning methods represent for all who are involved. It also showed me the benefits of crossing disciplinary borders when dealing with complex issues, which reach beyond the contents of particular subjects. Furthermore, my research interests continued to be influenced by my graduate studies in comparative literature, several decades earlier. Inquiring about themes, like exile and life writing, writing in one’s other languages and intercultural issues, in which I have always been particularly interested, I found it natural to confront various perspectives.

A growing curiosity about language matters – in social, cultural and educational contexts – explains why the observation of interaction practices in life and in literature has become almost second nature to me. Increasingly diverse linguistic surroundings as well as contact with researchers who share a similar fascination have further broadened my sensitivity for the crucial role that personal expression and intersubjective communication play in life and in literary representations. However, attention to a

multiplicity of languages (in society, in cultural products) only seems to arise when it challenges views and practices or causes problems that require action on the part of institutions. Less visible aspects, such as language activities (reading, writing) involved in the creation of texts, mostly concern individual authors and tend to go unnoticed.

Some parallels between research in sociocultural studies and literary, mostly comparative, studies, especially in relation to so-called migrant literature and multilingualism, seem quite conspicuous. Yet cooperation around what appear to be common issues of investigation has remained quite timid and differences in outlooks are hardly ever thematised. An invisible line of division between a focus on people and the situations they have to cope with, and a focus on texts seems to separate approaches in sociocultural fields of study from more literary oriented research. The starting point for the present study has been this apparent dichotomy as well as the wish to see whether reading the poets' texts through the lens of sociocultural studies on multilingualism can add a further dimension to an understanding of texts and – conversely – whether poets' insights and literary perspectives allow insights that an observation of linguistic activities and interaction does not offer.

With the ever-increasing mobility of people and languages as well as a growing awareness of intercultural contact, it is not surprising that the lives and works of writers with two or more cultural attachments have inspired a great diversity of research into multilingualism (and migration). Nonetheless, I believe that further cases, like those of Liliane Welch and Pierre Joris, on the one hand are worth exploring for their own specificities, yet on the other hand also contribute further insights into issues of language interaction in and through texts. Their poetic work belongs to the huge bulk of English language while beneath the surface strong cultural and linguistic currents influence the multiple directions of their poetic creation. Both poets grew up in Luxembourg where languages and cultures have mixed for many centuries.

Research on multilingualism based on literary texts usually focusses on narratives, often autobiographic texts. Yet, as this study hopes to show, poets' work also offers many insights into complex translanguaging processes. In particular, theories of nomadity have provided tools to move beyond debates on mono- and multilingualism.

PART ONE: Outline of research context and conceptual cornerstones

1. Interconnected experiences of languages and mobility

1.1 Introducing the poets

The two poets, Liliane Welch (1937-2010) and Pierre Joris (1946 -) share a common place of birth, Luxembourg, which is the starting point for the present study on language relations in writing. Both spent their childhood and adolescence in Luxembourg. They left their homes in their late teens to study abroad and from that age they lived most of their lives in North America. They became English language poets as well as academics, Welch in Canada and Joris in the United States, while remaining keen travellers regularly visiting Europe. Despite significant differences between their works, their situation as poets shows some parallels and their writing appears as fascinating material for research into poetic creation and responses to languages on several grounds.

They grew up among several languages: Luxembourgish, the national idiom was used at home and in everyday communication, whereas German and French – the “other”, the written languages of Luxembourg – were their school languages. What makes their cases particularly interesting is the fact that later they chose an additional language, English, as their language of writing. The work of poets who constantly move across and between continents, whose writing reflects their ease in several languages as well as an inclination to combine cultures and ideas, is not easy to approach. It reveals well visible as well as many not so obvious traces of travelling and the present investigation focusses on how these compound aspects become part of their creative writing processes.

A few of the core themes of the study appear in the key words of the title, “Nomadic poets’ multiple voices, translational writing and space constructions.”¹ *Nomadic* is a governing notion that underlies the various areas of enquiry. The poets’ nomadity refers to physical movement yet it also implies mental travelling across languages and cultures. *Nomadic* is linked to notions of impermanence, to stopping and moving on. Closely associated with ideas of migration, it stands in opposition to a settled, sedentary and stable life within clearly defined boundaries.

Multiple voices is not just a synonym for multilingualism. On the one hand, the word *voices*, rather than *languages*, is to mark a difference from linguistic codes. A voice evokes the material nature of the poets’ words as well as their attachment to a body. A voice is unique, a language is not. Voices belong to the realm of sense perceptions; they imply a speaker and a listener and in the present context, the word should come with quotation marks, as it refers to the poets’ written “voices”, recorded in texts. On the

¹ In the the course of the dissertation, all these key notions, here only broadly introduced, will be elucidated with the necessary theoretical underpinnings.

other hand, voices change, mostly in interaction, and become multiple. Multiplicity is engendered by surroundings; it may stand for what we call national languages as encountered and used by the travelling poets. Multiplicity can also be a feature of their own voice, which takes on different modulations; in literary texts the poet speaks through different masks and the voices belong to projected personae. Moreover, *multiple voices* refer to the polysemy of poetic language, in particular to its metaphorical nature, as enhanced by writing across several languages.

Translational writing follows from multiplicity. It is not meant to express a focus on the nature of an exact transposition from one recognized and separate language into another. The use of the term *writing* – and not texts or work in translation – refers to processes that engage a speaker and interlocutor whose languages – or rather voices – differ. Translational writing thus is dialogic in nature; in poetry then dialogue is imaginary and writing as a careful choice of words may reveal reflections on sameness and difference, on self and alterity, as grounded in language. Similarly, writing points to acts of language, not to objects; the focus will be on relations between languages and that which generates them, on works as they develop, not on finished products.

Space constructions should emphasize the notion that poets, though relying on direct experience and sense perceptions, make sense of the world in which they live through constantly reimagining their place and their relationships to others. What they construct, or create, cannot be dissociated from their travelling and nomadic routes. Their work no longer fits traditional, fixed concepts of place and belonging. Its poetic language, reflecting contact with multiple voices requires a re-conception of the space in which texts are produced and received.

The present study, conceived as a case study of multilingual poets, thus sets out to enquire into how the work of nomad writers can create guidelines for novel representations of work that does not fit in with traditional models of literature defined by authors' positioning in one place and language. The interconnectedness of the briefly commented core concepts (multiple voices, translational writing, space construction, travelling) points to the need of an approach that moves beyond disciplinary practices. Notions or metaphors not particularly attached to one specific academic discipline may prove to be fertile cognitive tools to develop a general, conceptual framework: Nomadism appears to be such a productive notion. Associated with conceptual approaches of language multiplicity, it can take into account mobile writers' positioning and poetic concerns.

Despite their extensive writing, Welch and Joris still seem to be little known beyond their circle of friends and readers on both sides of the Atlantic. The entries in the on-line Dictionary of Luxembourg authors² and Canadian, respectively American websites³ provide a good survey of their lives and work, while the following survey of some biographical cornerstones aims at situating their work with a particular focus on the language aspects of their migrating and nomadizing lives. An elaboration of key points with textual references follow in chapter 4.

1.1.1 Liliane Welch: a Luxembourg-Canadian poet⁴

Liliane Welch, née Meyer, was born in Esch-sur-Alzette in 1937 and grew up in this small mining town in the south of Luxembourg, situated on the border with France. The language diversity she knew from childhood reflected the usual trilingual practices of the country. Luxembourgish was spoken at home and in everyday life, while the languages of schooling were German and French. In her first year of secondary school she began to learn English, a language that fascinated her from the start.⁵

At the age of 16, she participated in a one-year exchange programme of the American Field Service and attended a high school in California. Though at the end of the programme she had to return to Luxembourg, this first stay, we could say, was the beginning of her nomadic life. It marked a deep break in her views, attitudes and relations, drawing her away from the earlier, in her eyes, stifling and confining centre of a settled life determined by immovable social conventions.

At the age of 19, she definitively turned her back to Europe, left home and emigrated to the U.S. The next years were a time of intense study. She received her BA and MA at the University of Montana and her PhD in French literature at Pennsylvania State University (1964). During these student years, she also strove to find her position in her new, self-chosen country, notably through an intense reading of American classics while keeping literary links with the Old World through her studies of French literature.⁶

² See entry by Frank Wilhelm for Welch, and by Sandra Schmit/ Nathalie Jacoby for Joris (www.dictionnaire-auteurs.lu; www.autorenlexikon.lu).

³ See entry by Andrea Bell for Welch in *The New Brunswick Literary Encyclopedia* (<https://nble.lib.unb.ca/browse/w/liliane-welch>); for Joris, see for instance the site of the *Academy of American Poets* with an unsigned entry about Joris (<https://poets.org/poet/pierre-joris>).

⁴ For many of the biographical details, I am indebted to documents kept in the National literary archives of Luxembourg, Fonds Liliane Welch at the Centre National de littérature (L-190); another source is a chapter entitled “Liliane”, in *Acknowledgments* by Cyril Welch (2009).

⁵ For information about the curriculum in Luxembourg secondary schools (*lycées*), with details about differences between schools for boys and girls, see Michel Schmit, *L'enseignement secondaire et supérieur au Grand-Duché de Luxembourg : recueil de législation scolaire*, 1962; for more specific discussions of the place of English, see Hansen-Pauly, “English for Boys and Girls from 1939-1969” (1989); “Mapping English in Luxembourg schools until 1968 : The emergence of new linguistic and cultural spaces” (2018).

⁶ More details in Part II and III:

In 1967, after teaching a few years in the United States, she emigrated once more, this time to eastern Canada, which from then on she was to consider her home. She obtained Canadian citizenship and worked as a professor of French Studies at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, until her retirement in 2004. It was in these geographical and cultural surroundings of the Maritimes that she started writing poetry in the early 1970s. In order to foreground her constant involvement with multiple languages, I would propose approaching Welch's life during this long period from different angles by looking at the various forms of her academic, literary and social communication. One could roughly distinguish between her life as a citizen and private person, as a teacher (and scholar), as a poet and as a traveller and mountain climber in Europe.

New Brunswick is an officially bilingual province, in which Welch's private and professional environment was mostly Anglophone. Her husband, Cyril Welch, professor of philosophy, was originally American and the university where they both taught is an officially Anglophone institution. French literature was the object of her teaching and French was the language she used in the classroom; in contrast to this "classical" European French language of culture stood the Acadian variety spoken by the Francophone part of the population of New Brunswick. For writing, she used English, initially for critical work while later it became above all the language, in which she wrote her poetry. English, as she said, was her "belated mother tongue".

Despite their attachment to Canada, the Welches remained keen travellers, who as regularly as migratory birds moved to Europe each spring. From their second home in Luxembourg, they roamed in all directions, with a great preference for the Alps and the Dolomites. One could call the summer months Liliane Welch's "multilingual season", the time when she would quite naturally communicate in Luxembourgish, French, German or Italian adapting her language to interlocutors. Italian was a language she started learning during those summer trips and it came to play an important role in her life and literary work. Moreover, during those journeys in Europe, she came to discover other "languages" or forms of artistic expression, especially painting and music, which in their own way can also be counted among her multiple languages.⁷ Welch's publications comprise poetry, essays as well as literary criticism. Liliane Welch began her writing career as an academic, leaving an impressive number of reviews and critical articles. Most of them were written during the first decade of her professional life and are evidence of the vast range of her readings

⁷ I have drawn most of this information from the rich documents deposited at the Fonds Liliane Welch at the CNL (L-190), essays and letters, as well as from personal exchanges with the poet whom I regularly met from the late 1980s until her death. In 2000, she arranged for all literary records of her work, including letters, and unpublished work to go to the national literary archives in Luxembourg. See her correspondence with Germaine Goetzinger, head of the Centre national de littérature (L-190; II.1.G1).

in English, French and German.⁸ Together with Cyril Welch she co-authored two books of critical work on French 19th and 20th century writers, (mostly symbolist poets): *Emergence: Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Rimbaud* (1973); *Address: Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Butor* (1979).

From 1975 until her death in 2010, Liliane Welch published more than 20 volumes of poetry, all in English. Some of the titles evoke the influence of symbolism (for example, *Assailing Beats* 1979; *Dream Museum* 1995); they often evoke natural surroundings or hint at metaphorical views of poetic language (*Syntax of Ferment* 1979; *From the Songs of the Artisans* 1983; *Word-House of a Grandchild* 1987; *Life in Another Language* 1992). The poems often reflect various locations (Europe, Luxembourg versus New Brunswick/Canada), or are devoted to art and literature, the other realms or spaces of her poetic imagination. The recurring names of poets like Rimbaud, Rilke, Dante and others hint at the integration of “foreign” voices in her writings. Many of her poems have also separately appeared in magazines in Luxembourg and in Canada. Some have been translated into various languages⁹; *Von Menschen und Orten* (1992) is a German translation by Luxembourg poet Nic Weber of pieces included in *Life in Another Language*, Welch’s only collection of poems in prose.

In her essays¹⁰, Welch covers a wide range of subjects, from literary criticism and book reviews to reflective, autobiographical texts in *Seismographs* (1988). Travel pieces dominate in *Frescoes* (1998), a collection about impressions of Europe. *Untethered in Paradise* (2002) is a mixture of personal pieces on selected artists; the essays are followed by poems that continue her response in prose and through their direct reference to visual works of art they become a poetic form of intermediality.

A presentation of Welch’s writing would be incomplete if one did not mention her extensive correspondence with friends and poets. She carefully filed the letters, many of which she deposited at the national literary archives in Luxembourg. They are valuable documents of her peregrinations, with evidence of the role that her multiple languages played in her literary and in her social life. The question arises whether one might also approach Welch’s work as a nomad’s *poetic narrative* of her life, her languages and imaginary space constructions. One could argue that Welch’s letters add a narrative thread that poems alone cannot provide.¹¹

Liliane Welch died in Luxembourg in 2010.

⁸ See her own publication lists and curricula vitae in the Fonds Liliane Welch. Add reference

⁹ See several hints but few precise references in the documents of the Fonds Liliane Welch. REF

¹⁰ In the chapter on Methodoogy, I will briefly discuss the various uses of the essay as genre, which Welch and Joris (or their publishers) have applied to a broad range of critical, imaginative, autobiographical and reflective writings.

¹¹ Cf. the narrative thread is considered as part of the research questions. Joris’s blog and multiple interviews provide comparable information. The juxtaposition of both forms also points to the difference between handwritten and electronic interaction. See 2.3 Selection of source texts.

This short presentation should have highlighted her life as restless traveller, marked by experiences of language diversity and creative energies: Movement and Locations played an important role in her poetic creation: travelling, wandering, mountaineering and visiting museums or attending concerts were as important as reading to her. One might also say that in Europe – during her multilingual season – she collected ideas, while she did all her writing in the predominantly Anglophone surroundings of her Canadian home.

1.1.2 Pierre Joris: a European Yankee ¹²

The epithet is inspired by Jerome Rothenberg, who has called *Pierre Joris is “a genuine Luxembourgian Yankee”*. Any summary of Pierre Joris’s life of travelling and of his extensive work entails making selections and leaving out numerous aspects. The following short overview focusses on what is relevant for the present research: his travelling as well as his experiences of multiple languages, which later leave their imprint on his literary practice.

His childhood and adolescence in Luxembourg immersed him in the traditional trilingualism of the country. Luxembourgish was used for daily, social and informal communication; he spoke it in the family and with friends. For Joris, German and French, and from the age of fourteen also English, were the languages of school, indispensable for reading and contact with people met while travelling abroad. In the seven years of his secondary education, Latin was also part of the syllabus.

After a first year of medical studies in Luxembourg, Joris went to Paris to continue his studies. Soon however, through various contacts, he discovered that poetry and the English language were his true vocation. At the same time, he became familiar with postcolonial questionings of political and cultural hegemony as experienced by Maghrebian friends he met in Paris.

The next two decades were the most truly nomadic in his life. In 1969, he went to the United States for undergraduate studies at Bard College. Among the constantly changing locations during the years that followed, until his definitive return to the United States and the completion of his PhD, several deserve

¹² In addition to the above mentioned on-line sources, I have consulted documents kept in the National literary archives of Luxembourg, Fonds Pierre Joris at the Centre National de littérature (L-342); most of Joris’ archives (1960-2010) are however located in the archives of Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, which I have not consulted <https://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/findingaids/view?docId=InU-Li-VAD7271.xml&brand=general&text1=pierre%20joris&startDoc=1>

Two publications have proved good sources for biographical details. Peter Cockelbergh, *Cartographies of the In-Between*, 2011, where between sections with critical articles, talks of the editor with Joris are inserted. They are called *Géographèmes* and each of them is centered on a specific area that has marked the poet’s life: US 125-135; Maghreb, Algeria 187-196; Luxembourg 245-251; UK, France (, Germany) 315-320. Corina Ciocârlie, *Prendre le large*, 2014, published in connection with an exhibition on travelling poets, has a richly illustrated section called: “Routes, not Roots. Voyager avec Pierre Joris,” (60-91).

particular attention. He lived in England for four years, where he took an M.A. in Theory and Practice of Translation studies at the University of Essex (1975) and worked in London for some time. Another experience that has marked his work deeply was a three-year stay in Algeria where he taught at the University of Constantine. Paris also remained a hub of his life, notably through his work for France Culture, a well-known radio station. Furthermore, the 1970s and 1980s were the time when he published his first collections of poetry and translations, while he also edited the work of others and in general set up a vast network of contacts with poets in many places across Europe, America and North Africa. Quite naturally, these connections moved across linguistic borders.

Eventually, in the late 1980s, Joris returned to the United States. In 1990 he obtained his PhD in Comparative Literature from SUNY (State University New York) at Binghamton for his translation of Paul Celan's poetry. He was Professor of English literature at SUNY in Albany, in upper state New York from 1992 until his retirement in 2013¹³ – which in no way meant the end of his writing and nomadic work; he now lives in Brooklyn, New York. Although in the past 30 years he has changed his postal address only once, Joris has remained an extremely active traveller (Ciocârlie 2014). Interviews and blogs show that Joris refuses to see himself as settled within one community of writers.¹⁴

His contacts include poets from all over the world (mostly American, European and North Africa), but in all cases, those from the margin – from cultural or linguistic peripheries or in-between spaces – predominate (for instance Francophone poets from North Africa or Luxembourg or a writer like Jerome Rothenberg, the American poet, translator and anthologist known for his work on ethnopoetics). Joris is a polyglot who enjoys moving across languages. As a translator, he remains conscious of linguistic and cultural differences as much as of interaction and Local embeddedness.¹⁵ The following short survey of his languages merely aims at suggesting the range of his linguistic nomadic roaming.

His passion for English had motivated the change in his career plans. In life and writing, it became the dominant language though always 'moving' in relation with his other languages. Moreover, for Joris as a poet, English was at least two languages. For a while he dithered between British and American English; yet after a time of hesitation he clearly opted for the American variation as the language of his poetic writing.

¹³ See <https://www.albany.edu/~joris/resume.html>

¹⁴ See his blogs Pierre Joris <https://pierrejoris.com/> and Nomadics blog, Nomadics: Meanderings & mawqifs of poetry, poetics, translations y mas. Travelogue too: <http://pierrejoris.com/blog/>; among the many interviews, see Transitzone. An Interview with Peter Cockelbergh, 2010.

¹⁵ For a recent view on the relation between mobility, poetry and translation see his talk "A Nomad Poetics Revisited: Poetry and Translation in a Global Age," 2017.

French has continued occupying a key position in all forms of communication. His focus has not only been on metropolitan, Parisian French. His wife, Nicole Peyrafitte, is a Pyrenean-born multi-disciplinary artist. Since his first stay in Paris, he has kept up his contact with representatives of Francophone writers from North Africa and carried on translating their work into English. His fascination for Arab literature and writing as well as for their scriptural form accounts for numerous references and occasional insertions of Arabic signs in his poetry. Some of his work also reveals an interest in medieval French literature and in Provençal. German, the language which is closest to Luxembourgish and the first he acquired at school, has taken a special place in his poetic writing: His translations of Paul Celan's poetry into English represent numerous deterritorializations that fit into the discussion of the nomadic writer. And then there are the traces in his work of his other languages, Luxembourgish, Italian and Spanish. All considered together, his languages appear to work like a huge repertoire from which the writer draws, in some way or other, to create his poems.

The list and range of Joris's publications is impressive and still in progress.¹⁶ Unlike Welch, Joris has always produced poetic, imaginative and critical work in parallel. From the wealth of available material, I suggest a first distinction based on conventional notions of genre.¹⁷

Among his work on literary theory and criticism, two collections stand out: *A Nomad Poetics* (2003) and *Justifying the Margins* (2009). The titles highlight the focus of the enquiries – nomadism and the margins. These texts show great commitment to issues that concern poets who do not conform to expectations of established central positions. The focus is on those that are often considered outsiders (despite apparently sharing a common language with the "centre") either through their reliance on innovative forms or through their position at, or origins from, cultural peripheries.

Some of Joris's poetry collections contain work written over a period of several years (*Breccia* 1987/ 2014; *Poasis* 2001; *Barzakh* 2014); others are smaller volumes e.g. *Janus* (1988), or books focusing on one theme (*Meditations on the Stations of Mansur Al-Hallaj* 2013); a few are bilingual editions, published in Luxembourg with the English text accompanied by a French translation (for instance, *Aljibar* 2007; *Aljibar II* 2008). Though varying greatly, they all follow open forms of poetry. They cover a wide range of subjects, among which the most relevant for the present study include references to space and movement; reflections on language(s); echoes of other poets' work and voices; encounters with cultural diversity.

¹⁶ See entry in Luxembourg Dictionary of authors <https://www.autorenlexikon.lu/page/author/322/3227/DEU/index.html>, accessed 28.01.2021)

¹⁷ In ch. 4, the notion and purpose of traditional genres in relation to nomadic translingual writers are questioned.

His translation work includes texts from French or German into English (as well as from English into French). Among them, the most prominent publications are his numerous translations of the poetry of Paul Celan, of works by Habib Tengour, Pablo Picasso and other avant-garde, experimental writers. Joris's work as an anthologist is evidence of a commitment to the circulation of little known poetry (i.e. little known in America), most of it from outside the United States – which required enormous translation work, usually in cooperation with others.¹⁸ It is certainly a significant facet of the nomad's work (as mediator of world literature). The introductory texts point to the importance Joris (and co-editors) allocate to contextualization and networking.

So far, Joris has written one play: *The Agony of I.B.* (2016), which is interesting for the insertions of short passages in other languages than English (German and Italian). It raises several questions as to the authenticity and effect the effect of foreign voices in literary texts.

Joris is also a very active blog writer (<http://pierrejoris.com/blog/>) who regularly reports on his travelling, conferences, encounters, reading. Other forms of writing, lying beyond the conventions of literary genres, yet deserving attention in a study of nomadic writing, are his interviews as they associate the poet's critical, theoretical views with reflections on his own work; most are available online; some with video recordings. They confirm a dialogical approach of (self-) positioning.¹⁹

1.2 Situating the poets' writing practices

The work of Liliane Welch and Pierre Joris raised my research interest in forms of literary multilingualism, which reaches beyond a classification of multilingual texts, a purely linguistic analysis or sociological observations based on biographical details. Therefore, their writing practices with often implicit ideas on languages underpinning their texts are at the heart of the enquiry. To someone who is not familiar with their work, it will appear as English literature – or rather literature in English (or as Canadian respectively US -American literature). However, with its links to different cultures and languages the work falls outside the conventional field of national literature studies and seems to require alternative approaches with references to concepts of transnational literature, of world literature or other 'networking' models.²⁰

¹⁸ More on his translation work in ch. 4 and 6.

¹⁹ One could also mention video-recorded lectures; as they are hybrid forms situated between written essays and literary interviews, they are not specifically taken into account in this study.

²⁰ See Damrosch 2003; 2009; Bessière and Gillespie 2015.

1.2.1 Similarities in linguistic and cultural backgrounds

Associating Welch and Joris in a project is an implicit reference to several coincidental particularities of their lives: their country of origin, Luxembourg, and its 'official' tri-lingualism; their emigration to North America and their choice of English, their 'fourth' language according to the order in which they acquired languages, as means of poetic expression. In most studies – though not all – the multilingualism of writers is discussed in relation to one so-called mother tongue, the language in which they are educated and which forms an important part of their cultural background. Coming from Luxembourg, Welch and Joris made early linguistic experiences that were somewhat different from the situations that are usually encountered in large, monolingual countries or regions where one language dominates in cultural and public domains. According to the common practice of the country, they were brought up in one language (Luxembourgish, the spoken idiom they used at home and in everyday life) and educated in German and French (the languages of schooling and written communication). English was an additional language they learnt at secondary school.

Both have produced a considerable amount of work, poetry and essays, all in English. Therefore, not only do they write in their so-called fourth language (in the order of acquisition), one may also say that they moved from the multilingual background of their adolescence to a more or less monolingual surroundings. Their work thus promises insights into the effect early multiple language experiences can have on later writing. Their decision to write in English, at first sight, is similar to that of many migrant writers who adopt the language of their new surroundings. However, Welch and Joris would have had good reasons to choose, if not their mother tongue Luxembourgish, then one of the two other languages to which they remained close, French or German, as language for their writing. Indeed, Welch took her PhD in French literature, taught French poetry in an officially bilingual Canadian province. Joris, for his part, has always kept close ties with France where he lived for some time while his highly praised translations of Celan's poetry (into English) are evidence of strong affinities with German as a poetic language. This situation of living and working between languages raises questions as to their choice of English, but perhaps more interestingly it raises questions as to the role of their other languages in writing processes and the production of mainly monolingual works. Moreover, their authentic, ongoing interest in language diversity is confirmed by the later acquisition of further languages, Italian in Welch's case, while the work of Joris, who is also an active translator, gives evidence of some familiarity with Arabic and knowledge of other (European) languages.

Another point they have in common is that unlike many writers who write in the language of their host country, they have never been under pressure to leave their original home. They are voluntary exiles,

have travelled widely and kept in touch (or gradually taken up contact again) with cultural life in Luxembourg and elsewhere, to the extent that their position as writers eventually remains one of in-between-ness. Both have referred to themselves as nomads – a notion they have understood and explored in different ways, yet which indicates a refusal to be identified with one location and culture. In all their writings one can find no trace of communication between the two poets. A couple of times they seem to have participated in the same event, once on the occasion of a “Semaine de la littérature luxembourgeoise” at Carleton University in Ottawa, in 1988 ²¹ and another time at the “Journées de Mondorf” in 1995. ²²

1.2.2 Diverging views and practices

So far, mostly similarities between the work of Welch and Joris have been underlined. They are the starting points for the study. The diversity of perspectives on language that their work presents as well as the differences between the two poets’ views and positions, *as nomads* – and they are considerable on many points – are best introduced through a few extracts from essays and poems. Short comments in the form of readers’ imagined responses to aspects of multilingualism should give a glimpse of the issues at stake in the present study. They are not meant to be an exhaustive analysis but should rather point to explicit or implicit views on language(s), to languages as thematic aspects of content (or themes) or as specificities of literary form.

The first extracts are taken from essays. They prefigure the texts and issues elaborated in Part II of the dissertation.

1.2.2.1 Liliane Welch: “[I]ncessantly comparing English to French”

In an essay published in a collection primarily addressed at a Canadian readership, Welch reflects on early experiences of language learning and describes her early fascination with English.

As a twelve-year-old lycéenne I was already incessantly comparing English to French, the other language with which I was later to earn my daily bread. I sensed then, as I do today, in the polysyllabic beat of French something scholastic, romanesque, civilized, straining toward essence, truth and abstraction – a stroll through a manicured garden. Whereas in the monosyllabic English sounds there lurked darker energies, more visceral passions, something pagan, mythic, primal; they prefigured wanderings over the wide, lonesome and untamed Rocky Mountains. The movement and stillness of the English words were similar to the trance-like breath of hiking up a steep slope. (“On the Way to English”, *Seismographs* 1988: 40)

²¹ See Roger Manderscheid, *Der Aufstand der Alliteraten* (2003: 89.).

²² See Koltz and Portante, eds. *Anthologie* 1995.

Welch's reflections on languages (French- English) read like an autobiographical piece, like memories of an early insight into differences between two languages learnt at school and which both came to play a crucial role in her life as a poet and as a teacher. The text is the work of an expert writer who interprets and communicates early intuitions. The words used here are not those of a twelve-year old school-girl. The technical language she later acquired ("polysyllabic", "monosyllabic") and the highly academic terminology used to compare French and English appears as part of an attempt at self-construction and meaning making, which encompasses later periods of her life (for instance, as a student in the US living in the Rocky Mountains). The connotations of French with classical rigour and of English with nature poetry echo views and interpretations found in histories of literature. However, the metaphor of two different walking styles (French as a stroll through a manicured garden and English as hike up a steep slope) introduces a personal note and a view of language as a physical experience of breath and rhythm, which seems promising for the investigation into the poets' approach of language. The reflections contain no precise examples or quotations but they leave no doubt as to the contrast that the speaker feels between the evocative sounds of English words and the rigid syntax of French. Through the metaphors of walking, language is seen as an experience and an activity, not a finished text. Whatever the meaning of all the implied images is, the text insists on the physical experience of language, on the affective dimension of response, on what languages and words do to those who listen and use them.

1.2.2.2 Pierre Joris: "[O]ne always writes in a foreign language"

Joris reflects on the poet's relation to languages in the following terms:

At any rate, one always writes in a foreign language. Be it mother tongue or foreign language, language is always foreign, other, second – and only therefore can one find a home therein. All writing, all poetry is a trek toward language, our other, the station, the staying on the passage through time, I am a space traveller trying to write myself into an oasis corner, an amen corner as I circumambulate the polis of my lifespan, stopping here and there. ("A Glottal Choice", *A Nomad Poetics* 2003, 60)

These few lines are a poet's reflections on the language of writing and his rejection of the conventional distinctions between mother tongue, foreign and second language. All writing is movement, an arduous journey in search of language as such ("a trek toward language"). Only in this way can he accept the widespread notion of language as *a* home, the indefinite article denying the exclusive association of language, nation, and identity. The core idea is that the writer's language is always foreign: it can never be reached definitively and its foreignness is what makes it attractive.

The second key word is *other*, repeated three times; with its many connotations, it adds further possible perspectives on the "foreignness" of language. The language of writing is always other, which may be

interpreted in several ways: it is never the same as speech, it is not a direct expression of “self” and it constantly changes. Language does not belong to the writer; it is always the other’s language, the language of another. Yet, paradoxically, “all poetry is a trek toward language, *our other*”. [My emphasis] Does the language of poetry stand for the foreign, the unknown or other part of “us”, that which the poet goes on searching for without ever reaching it? The close connection between time and space towards the end of the quote [“the passage through time”, “I am a space traveller”] suggests further considerations about a writer and his language, which are worth exploring in other texts.

The next examples are taken from poetry. They prefigure Part III which focusses on how Welch and Joris thematise and display various forms of language multiplicity in texts. Words in another language may emerge as a kind of parallel text and echo of literary voices (Welch), or they openly disrupt the English language surface as in the extract from Joris’s poem.

Liliane Welch : from “Commedia Mia”

Therein Ulysses endures his torment
 là dentro si martira Ulisse
 A firefly on the throat
 of the abyss, no unknown
 too dark, this
 is the foolhardy
 bold break with home
 and love:
 (Gathered in Memory’s Hands 2006: 67)

The bilingual heading of this poem immediately introduces another language, Italian. (For those familiar with Dante’s *Divina Commedia*, the title of Welch’s sequence from which the extract is taken, makes the literary connection quite obvious.) The English heading thus is a translated quote from Dante’s work (and we may assume it is Welch’s own translation). Ulysses is the traveller who rejects ideals of home and has to suffer. The poem however does not seem to be a translation but rather a personal response. It shows that for the poet reading the work of others, Dante and Virgil, is an important source of inspiration and part of the writing process.

Pierre Joris: “Letter to Steichen’s Ed”

*In fact, every photograph is a fake from start to finish, a purely
 impersonal, unmanipulated photograph being practically impossible.*

– Edward Steichen

Leiwen Ed,
 Ech wees net ops du ons Sprooch nach gekannt hues,
 that’s why I’ll address you in American English.

You were born zu Béiwen, bei Roeser, in Luxembourg,
 I was not
 You were an American citizen,
 I am still not,
 I am just a plain citizen of Luxembourg.
 (Barzakh 2014: 224)

Formal and informal features characterize the beginning of this poem and both are related to language aspects. On the one hand, in its form, it reflects the tradition of epistolary poems known since classical antiquity; a quotation from a text by Edward Steichen introduces the perennial issue of the impossibility of objectivity in art. On the other hand, the use of a spoken, non-literary idiom, Lëtzebuergesch, underlines the colloquial tone. Indeed, the opening words of the letter, in Luxembourgish, after the epigraph in English, mark a striking linguistic break with readers' expectations. Soon the context is clarified. Joris's poem is an imaginary address at a famous compatriot, Edward Steichen.²³ The epistle is thus created from an everyday, fictitious occasion, which for the poetic persona implies he should first address Steichen as you would speak to your countrymen, that is in their shared language of origin, Luxembourgish.

Unlike the extract from Welch's poetic response to Dante, this poem has no translated quotation from a literary model. The two languages, English and Luxembourgish are not juxtaposed but present a natural mixing as one may easily find it in the speech of people changing languages and trying to negotiate their form of communication. What the examples show is the diversity of practices; the present research attempts to find tools of description and analysis which acknowledge their specificities.

1.3 Promising research perspectives: From *multi-* to *translingualism*

The succinct biographies and the extracts allow a broad outline of the projected approach and point to connections with two research areas: language multiplicity and travelling or mobility.

What one can retain from these extracts is that they present language as an experience of otherness, for the poetic speaker and for the reader. This is a feature that concerns language in general, yet multiple languages enhance the experience and trigger reflections on the nature and meanings of words. The extracts contain meta-reflections on language, a feature for which applied linguists as well as literary studies provide relevant frames of investigation (see e.g. Kramsch 2009; Gauvin 2009).

²³ Edward Steichen (1879-1973) was an American photographer with Luxembourgish roots. "The Family of Man" is a well-known collection of photos, to which Joris alludes in this poem. For more details about Joris's poem, see ch. 8.2.4.

The core interest in language for the poets lies in writing as a process. Language is not primarily a system of communication ready for them to use. It is an activity, through which they attempt to make sense of the world, of their position and their travelling. Writing establishes relationships with others, often through imaginary dialogues with figures encountered in other texts. This fictitious but meaning making interaction usually implies crossing language boundaries, which may take various forms of foreign -words insertions, a mixing of languages or a reflection on what foreign language or the language of others stands for.

The references to a diversity of cultural and linguistic contexts, alluded to in the extracts, make it difficult to situate the work of Welch and Joris within one national literature. Voices in the texts evoke a fundamental form of in-between-ness that invites an in-depth investigation. They also raise questions as to critics' and readers' conceivable approaches. The emphasis on language aspects along with echoes of other writers and travellers hints at possible cultural and socio-linguistic as well as literary perspectives on the poets' work. On the one hand, the above extracts, are poets' words marked by imaginative and aesthetic concerns. On the other hand, they are also the words of writers, who have a rich experience with various languages and are ready to communicate their reflections on aspects that rise beyond pragmatic issues.

The documents seen so far already reveal a certain divergence between the poets' positioning in relation to languages which needs to be explored much further. While Welch insists on expressing a difference between "her" languages and on justifying her preference for the sounds of English (extr. 1), Joris would not see languages in terms of "possession" and rather blur the terminology of difference (extr. 2). On the level of text appearance, forms of multilingualism vary too and the ways the dominant English language meets with words from other languages hint at different conceptions of language interaction in writing. English and Italian remain clearly separated in the poem by Welch where Dante's words are inserted next to their translation. In the Luxembourgish-English piece by Joris, we have a genuine mixing of languages, reminiscent of code-switching.

From all these early observations, I derive a simple thesis that motivates the present approach: The writings of Welch and Joris should be approached through the angle of language multiplicity, although by all appearance they are literature in English (apart from a few rare insertions of words in other languages). This stance requires a review of what multilingual stands for in literature. A second thesis consists in calling the poets' work *nomadic*. Nomadic not only refers to travelling as a frequent theme in their work. It is also understood as denoting movement between thoughts and languages, thus pointing to an inherent though not immediately visible feature of texts. These premises should entitle us to consider nomadism as a

useful concept and tool to explore the apparent paradox arising between a monolingual surface and attending features of multilingualism. The focus of the present project thus is on the processes of writers' relations to *otherness* as encountered through ongoing movements, *otherness* remaining an open notion including other languages and voices, other environments, other thinking, as well as other ways of writing.

1.3.1 Language multiplicity

Research perspectives wavering between writers, texts, themes and formal aspects

Multilingualism is a research area that has attracted the attention of numerous scholars in the past decades with the focus of studies moving from aesthetic features of texts to the socio-cultural content of such work, and from issues concerning the position of poets and their work in literary studies to questions of language mobility. A particular difficulty arises from the overlapping of perspectives, which vary with the changing focus on the languages of poets, on the language(s) of texts, on thematic issues or on linguistic aspects of the literary production of a region or country.

One way of approaching the specificities of such in-between work consists in looking at available models of research. For a study of multilingual dimensions, two fields have seemed promising: sociocultural studies (and their investigation into the writings by migrants) and studies focusing on literary dimensions of multilingual writing. Both provide pertinent case studies as well as more general considerations on issues of multilingualism. They often borrow concepts from outside their field. Sometimes they work with the same concepts (identity, heteroglossia, hybridity) or use the same examples of texts; yet, explicit cross-references or cooperation between scholars (from applied linguistics/ sociocultural studies and literary studies) seem to be scarce.²⁴ The goals remain different. Sociocultural studies tend to aim at new insights to propose actions of change or educational measures; literary studies rather focus on critical and aesthetic considerations and propose revised approaches of their fields of interest.

A review of studies (ch. 3) will bring details about features that are relevant for the approach of Welch and Joris. Especially, in recent publications on multilingualism an awareness of diversity dominates. I have selected a couple of positions that give an idea of the range of ideas taken up in research. In the Foreword to a collection of essays entitled *From Translingualism to Language Mixing* (2021)²⁵, Doris Sommer insists on the variety that studies offer. She speaks of a proliferation of specific cases and of terms used to describe linguistic variety and writers' experimentation. Language is also understood as metaphor for difference (sexual and other) and allows scholars to address issues of ethical positioning as well as

²⁴ See various studies of *Lost in Translation* by Eva Hoffman (in 3.1.6).

²⁵ Katie Jones, Julian Preece and Aled Rees are the editors of *International Perspectives on Multilingual Literatures: From Translingualism to Language Mixing* (2021).

possibilities of playful polysemy. Research on writers between languages becomes a way to acknowledge the languages and work that are forgotten “by linguistic hierarchies, globalisation, and the marketisation of languages.” (Jones, Preece and Rees 2021:17) A textual aspect of variety consists in the multitude of devices that writers use to evoke otherness, an area that because of its sheer variety still remains under-researched (see Dembeck and Parr 2017: 217).

Jessner and Kramsch (2015), for their part, looking at cross-disciplinary perspectives see diversity as challenge, a view that they situate against a general background of change:

[T]he transition, on the one hand, from a monolingual world of identifiable knowledge, predictable monolingual grammars, clearly recognizable authorities and gate-keeping mechanisms, disciplinary boundaries, attested forms of knowledge and certified channels of knowledge transmission, to, on the other hand, a multilingual world of multiple truths, multiple access to knowledge, and decentered sources of authority (academy, internet, webpages, Wikipedia, blogs, etc.), where people are no longer content to receive knowledge passively and respectfully, but want to participate, collaborate, manipulate, control and invent.²⁶ (*The Multilingual Challenge* 2015: 7)

In studies on multilingualism in literature the emphasis often moves between different perspectives (writers, institutional aspects and language policies, texts, themes, and formal elements). Frequently, the focus is on themes, usually related to migration and exile. Sociocultural and psycholinguistic studies tend to use descriptions of these situations and reflections on displacement to gain insights into experiences of language loss, alienation, hybridity, otherness and outsider positions. The range of authors writing across cultural and linguistic borders shows that the phenomenon encompasses writers with varying combinations of languages and different motivations for their choice of language. Examples abound all over the world, with varying combinations of languages: Nancy Huston²⁷ writing in French and English;

²⁶ The text includes a reference to Michel Serres (2012).

²⁷ In an exchange of letters, *Lettres parisiennes. Histoires d'exil* (1999) Nancy Huston and Leila Sebbar analyse their position between languages. Another work of reflections on what exile has meant for the Anglophone Canadian who moved to France is *Nord perdu suivi de Douze France* (2004), while *Cantique des Plaines* and *Plainsong* (both published in 1993) are an example of self-translation.

Yoko Tawada²⁸ in Japanese and German; Joseph Brodsky²⁹ in Russian and English; Abdelfattah Kilito³⁰ in French and Arabic. The decision to write in more than one language, or not in one's primary language, is usually linked to personal circumstances, like a bilingual or multilingual upbringing (e.g. Elias Canetti, Jorge Semprun; Ilan Stavans; J.M. Coetzee).³¹ Often writing and reflecting about languages are connected to professional interests, such as translating (e.g. Ilma Rakusa)³², to voluntary expatriation (e.g. Ying Chen)³³ or to political events leading to displacement (e.g. Ariel Dorfman³⁴) and sometimes to a new literacy imposed by exile (e.g. Agota Kristof)³⁵. Often, several of these circumstantial causes coincide. What all these writers have in common is an attachment to two or more languages. Some continue writing in their mother tongue but are aware of multiple voices ghosting their writing (e.g. Norman Manea).³⁶

As *thematic studies* of multiple languages often refer to (auto-) biographical texts to which one accords a high degree of authenticity, they focus on the documentary dimension of texts. They look at circumstantial facts such as indications of place and time, analyse the rendering of speech interaction in dialogues as well as reflections on languages that reveal personal dimensions of experiences often neglected in broader social and political studies. But multilingualism, in one form or another, can be found in all genres of writing. *Imaginative, poetic dimensions of texts* reveal further facets of multiplicity, notably reflections

²⁸ *Verwandlungen*, is an evocative title of Yoko Tawada's Tübinger Poetik-Vorlesungen ((2001). All her poetic and prose work is based on discoveries of linguistic and cultural otherness, on polysemy and powerful metaphors; see for instance (2013).

²⁹ In 1972, Joseph Brodsky arrived in the United States at the age of 32, as an exile from the Soviet Union. He is the author of six books of poems in Russian, of three books of poems and three books of essays in English. See his *Selected Poems* (2020) and the speech he delivered on obtaining the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1987, in which he expounds his views on poetic language, as different from the language of the people and does not address the bilingual dimension of his work

³⁰ The title of a collection of texts, *Je parle toutes les langues mais en arabe* (2013) sums up the view Abdelfattah Kilito's experience and practice of his multiple languages, which reflects significant aspects of *translingualism* as it is explored later in the dissertation.

³¹ The titles of their memoirs and autobiographical pieces evoke personal positions and experiences. Elias Canetti uses a striking image, *Die gerettete Zunge* (1979); for his reflections multilingual Jorge Semprun chooses "langage" rather than "language": *Le langage est ma patrie* (2013); *On Borrowed Words* (2001) the title of Ilan Stavans's *Memoir of Language* is a reminder that language does not belong to the writer. *Boyhood, a Memoir* (1998) by J.M. Coetzee's does not foreground the young boy's position between Afrikaans and English that the texts evoke.

³² Rakusa's work combines language memoirs with experiences of translation and writing as process of self discovery: *Zur Sprache gehen* (2006); *Autobiographisches Schreiben als Bildungsroman* (2014); *Mehr Meer. Erinnerungspassagen* (2009).

³³ For reflections on the language experiences of the Chinese writer, who chose the French language for her life and her writing, see in particular Ying Chen, *Quatre mille marches. Un rêve chinois* (2004).

³⁴ See Ariel Dorfman, *Heading South, Looking North* (1998).

³⁵ Agota Kristof fled her native Hungary in 1956 to the French-speaking part of Switzerland where she had to learn French from scratch before she became a celebrated writer in the new language. See *L'analphabète* (2004).

³⁶ See The Hooligan's Return: A Memoir. Translated by Angela Janu (2003); *The Fifth Impossibility: Essays on Exile and Language* (2012).

on interrelations between languages (Jean Portante,³⁷ Nico Helminger,³⁸ Uljana Wolf.³⁹) They provide a plethora of aesthetic interpretations of multilingualism, like innovative uses of images, language mixing and polysemy.

Chapter 3.1 attempts to give an overview of studies that uncover the creative, transformative, as well as critical potential of texts which juxtapose languages and their cultural references. The state of the art will highlight these aspects of a poetics for multiple voices in texts and point to the less explored features, which a study of Welch and Joris can complement.

Furthermore, the dimension of travelling and moving, physically and mentally, is a promising conceptual perspective on multilingualism. To theorize it I will turn to studies of nomadism as a fundamental pillar of the research.

1.3.2 The many facets of travelling, migration and nomadism

Travelling is used as the general term for people's movements, for whatever purpose. One may ask why the study of Welch and Joris does not foreground *migration*. Migration and nomadism are often seen as near synonyms, yet for the present study a distinction helps analyse features of one or the other in poets' self-presentations and explain differences in relation to language multiplicity.

Views of migration and nomadism involve different forms of travelling and positioning in space. So, one way of differentiating between them consists in looking at the type of movement that they represent.⁴⁰

The migrant leaves one place to reach another one. He then has two *points d'attache* and will continue to feel close to his origins. In its simplest form, migration is similar to the regular routes followed by migratory birds. Migrants may move on to a next place but connections to the starting point remain strong. The hope is either to return or to find a new home. The nomad, on the other hand, can be seen as always moving from the middle: origin is not relevant; nor does he aim at finding a permanent destination. His travelling is dictated by current needs and the next stop is temporary. The routes that he follows resemble an open network.

Nomadism appears as the more productive concept for a study of the poets' writing processes. Travelling and moving to new locations is a recurring theme in both poets' work and it is undoubtedly linked to features of multilingualism in their writing. Yet, while studies of multilingual writers often highlight the

³⁷ See Jean Portante, "L'étrange langue," (2006); *Le travail du poumon* (2007).

³⁸ Nico Helminger, *Grenzgang. Sequenzen* (2003).

³⁹ Uljana Wolf, *Falsche Freunde* (2009).

⁴⁰ For this succinct and much too schematic presentation, I am indebted to various authors, notably Vilém Flusser (2003), Rolf Kailuweit (2009), Iain Chambers (1994) and Rosi Braidotti (2011). For a more differentiated view of nomadism see ch.3.2.

role of forced migration, the situation of Welch and Joris is different. When they opt to move to a new place, they have a choice, either to stay where they are or to look for another destination. This oversimplified view on their movements in life accounts for my decision to investigate nomadism, rather than migration as background for their translingual writing. Moreover, nomadism as way of life has given rise to a rich complex of thoughts, on which Joris has based his poetics. Towards the end of the present section, I briefly return to a comparison with migration (more in ch. 3 and 4).

In the Humanities, as well as in common usage, nomads and nomadic practices or experiences of nomadism are viewed from various angles, which awaken many associations reaching from historical and geopolitical references of wandering herdsmen and travelling peoples to metaphorical and conceptual representations. At this point, I attempt to provide only a rough idea of how the figure of the nomad and theories of nomadism may elucidate the poets' lives and work between languages. I will just hint at a few of the aspects and basic distinctions that are further elaborated in chapter 3.2.⁴¹ Representations of nomads vary greatly, just like the work of Welch and Joris seems to reflect diverse understandings of nomadic living, writing and thinking.

In the popular imagination frequently fed by media and publicity⁴², the nomad may come under various guises. In common usage today, the terms *nomad* / *nomadic* have become fashion words and are often synonymous with adventurous travellers, with wanderers or tourists ready for off-the-beaten-track trips and looking for experiences that break with the routines of lives within well-organized structures. For some of these nomads, the purpose is not merely the exploration of unknown and exotic surroundings, but rather the spiritual insights they hope to gain; they could be described as spiritual nomads. (Maffesoli 2006) In the domain of the arts, the figure of the nomad is closely associated with poetry and various events celebrating community and creativity. Around the Mediterranean, the souvenir of troubadours or travelling medieval poets inspires "nomadic festivals" or encounters of artists sharing their songs and crafts. In literary studies, a proximity of nomads to their natural environment is stressed.

In academic, literary and philosophical contexts, the focus is often on intellectual nomads and virtual travellers who explore their study fields in books and through other vicarious means. The nomad becomes a conceptual metaphor in critical theory, which mostly draws on the extensive writings of Gilles Deleuze/ Félix Guattari, two French thinkers, who radically question mainstream philosophy. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), they devote an extended chapter to nomadology.

⁴¹ For this reason, only summary references to representative work are given here.

⁴² It has been confirmed by a quick search in the internet, where the search word *nomad* generates innumerable websites of travel agencies, festivals, social issues related to the migration of contemporary or past itinerant peoples, as well as historical and ethnographic documents from all over the world.

An interest in key features of nomadism has also given rise to a trans-national project of *geopoetics*, a term coined by the Scottish-French nomad poet and thinker Kenneth White (2008).⁴³

In socio-politically oriented contexts, the connotations of leisure and festivity are entirely missing. Implicit references to the original meaning of nomads as wandering herdsmen may subsist and include historical figures of nomadic populations and their threatened descendants roaming the steppes of Central Asia or the Sahara desert or Polar Regions. The focus is on their lack of a permanent abode and nomads bring about associations with itinerant people and homeless migrants. Discussions stress issues linked to their outsider status and ensuing conflicts with authorities or permanent residents, settled people and citizens in opposition to travelling people.

Nomads are sometimes seen as standing for all minoritarian people. Thus, feminist and gender theory has used the figure of the nomad to underline a philosophy of *becoming* for all (cf. Braidotti 2011). Another key thinker of nomadism is Édouard Glissant whose work links nomadism to Francophone and Caribbean postcolonial writing with archipelagic representations of space and movement (Glissant/ Noudelmann 2018).

For a description of changes brought about by globalization, especially in urban contexts, sociologists have introduced the notion of digital nomads, whose way of life is changing views on space and territories. Alternative forms of virtual networking have arisen with the growth of this new type of mobile professionals. They bring about the need for shared means of communication; in relation to languages, the fact that this type of nomadism privileges the use of English in all parts of life is a significant phenomenon.⁴⁴

One notices that even in this certainly incomplete survey not all images of nomads are quite consistent with each other.⁴⁵ Thus, for instance, on the one hand, nomads, as travellers, may stand for a return to nature and authentic forms of life. This is a form of nomadism connected to life outdoors and being on the road. On the other hand, nomadism becomes associated with new forms of technology and globalization, pointing the way to a future ruled by virtual space and communication.⁴⁶

⁴³ Cf. Kenneth White and Geopoetics (<http://www.geopoetics.org.uk/what-is-geopoetics/kenneth-white/>); more in ch. 3.2. See also Bertrand Westphal, *Pour une approche géocritique des textes* (2005).

⁴⁴ On digital nomadism or the role of electronic communication, see for instance, Vilém Flusser (Kailuwait 2009).

⁴⁵ A fact that Zygmunt Baumann has foregrounded in his last book, *Strangers at the Door* (2016): While nomadism and migration have in his eyes marked the history of humankind, "as quasi-anthropological constants" the migration crisis has led to a wide-spread rejection of homeless nomads.

⁴⁶ Nomadism thus proves a fitting notion to accommodate the significant differences between Welch, the outdoor wanderer, and Joris, for whom new technologies have become part of his search for connections and open spaces.

Yet, however diverse the connotations of the term nomad are, one can note a few recurring and common characteristics, often linked to conflicts or situations of tension. Moreover, all types of nomads are associated with great mobility, with “being on the road”, literally or metaphorically speaking. From a life of travelling one may deduce frequent encounters with others or strangers, with different cultures and languages. The figure of the nomad leads to an awareness of self as different, usually as a minoritarian, and a need to mediate and (or) “translate”, possibly also to defend one’s position. (Braidotti 2011)

Constant movement entails multiple experiences and temporary dwellings, a core mark of nomadism, epitomized by images of tents and caravans. More important is the ensuing sense of open space, which stands in contrast to sedentary people’s views of enclosed and bounded territories. Accounts of nomads’ lives underline multiple experiences of otherness and stress their outsider position. Nomads may also reveal forms of communities that radically differ from those of sedentary, organized societies and challenge commonly accepted beliefs and practices.

A few preliminary observations may be drawn for a study of nomadic poets. This study assumes that features of nomadism could have an impact on language practices. Hence the choice of “a nomadic lens” for the subsequent analysis of texts and poems by nomadic, multilingual writers. The diversity of views underlines the “fuzziness” or vagueness and uncertainty of the notion of nomads and nomadism. According to contexts, the term nomad is understood in its literal sense and designates real people, or it is used, especially in theoretical discourse, as metaphor or concept to refer to various ways of life and of thinking. The boundaries are not always clear between *nomad* as a word referring to travelling people, as a figure or metaphor standing for something else (e.g. a particular type of travelling) or as a concept used to organize thoughts about a complex phenomenon of mobility (as in digital nomad).

We may assume that words and languages travel along with nomadic poets who use them to create their texts. Yet, the link to multilingualism in literature or the connection between nomadism and language features in texts is not foregrounded in presentations of nomads.⁴⁷

1.4 Research questions

*What happens when words and languages
move between voices and travel into other texts?*

Note on terminology

⁴⁷ At best, one could say that nomads’ languages are evoked through the figure of the troubadour and through the reference to (global) English as lingua franca imposed by modern-day nomads.

A rich terminology linked to language multiplicity points to efforts at specifying enquiries.⁴⁸ The general term for language multiplicity is multilingual. Other terms are discussed in the course of the dissertation. To start, the following distinctions are useful as they reflect the changing perspectives of enquiries:

- *plurilingual*, like *interlingual*, highlights interaction; mostly found in French texts (plurilingue)
- *polyglot* is mostly used for people
- *translingual* refers to processes, such as writing
- *heterolingual* emphasizes differences and is used for texts with foreign elements or elements of otherness

Obviously, perspectives can overlap and more terms are possible to suggest particular aspects. In other words, the object of the dissertation is a study of multilingual poets, an enquiry into translingual writing processes and into the nature and functions of heterolingual features of texts. It involves investigating what multiple textual and extratextual dimensions the passage between languages implies. For all scenarios, notions of movement, difference and transformation as highlighted by nomadic theory are considered to be significant.

The notion of **translingual writing** appears to be the most productive for research that combines the nomadic and multilingual dimensions of poets' work. Steven G. Kellman has defined translingual *authors* as "those who write in more than one language or in a language other than their primary one. By expressing themselves in multiple verbal systems, they flaunt their freedom from the constraints of the culture into which they happen to have been born" (2003: ix). Beyond its reference to a particular category of authors, translingual emphasizes *writing processes*, in particular the passage between languages.⁴⁹ In the course of the present study further elaborations on the nature of passage and transfer are investigated, notably in relation to travelling languages in the work of Joris and Welch.

As stated in the introduction (1.1), the emphasis is on language as poets' voices, on writing and reading as processes, not on linguistic elements. Such processes involve reference to otherness or difference. The study investigates the pertinence of the notion of translingualism for an appraisal of language multiplicity in the work of Joris and Welch. The aim is (1) to see how nomadic notions of multiplicity, movement, otherness, translation and transformation can be productively combined for an appreciation of what poets like Welch and Joris *do* with languages and achieve through their writing and (2) to propose a way of reading work that reflects imaginary processes that cross language spaces.

⁴⁸ The distinctions are further elaborated in a Glossary (see appendix).

⁴⁹ To avoid confusions or constant references to the debates surrounding the terminology, I will use *multilingual* to indicate the general phenomenon and *translingual* to speak of the poets' writing practices.

Throughout, the study concentrates on aspects of *articulation*, a term which in English – and in other languages, too – may be understood as

- a. an act of speaking
- b. an act of or a mode of jointing (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*)

Both meanings refer to *acts*, to doing something, and not primarily to a state of affairs.⁵⁰ The relevance of the first meaning seems obvious in the context of languages and may be easily associated with poetic speech. The second meaning leads to the core of the inquiry: the articulation between the poets' multilingualism and the production of monolingual texts (or texts in a dominant language) with heterolingual elements, a process which is seen as similar to a joint in the human body. An articulation is movable, it combines and involves interrelating actions.⁵¹

Articulation understood as joint, junction, connection, or hinge is the "place" (physical or mental), the moment, thought or event,⁵² which decides on how language experiences take a certain direction and form in written, literary productions. Articulation also refers to the process of writing as the act that links the writer and the text.⁵³

Articulation is also to be seen in the sense of connecting poets' ideas *about* translingual writing (critical and meta-reflections) and the actual emergence of multiple languages *in* texts. The dissertation aims to combine theory and practice not in a hierarchical sense but, as articulation suggests, the investigation concerns movements in both directions, the actual writing and the meta-level of reflection on what happens. Such a study involves (1) a close reading of the poets' texts, also in connection with the work of other thinkers or poets and the contexts in which they produce their poetry. The aim is to see how all levels – of writing, critical reflection and reading – elucidate each other. (2) It also involves testing and proposing adequate conceptual tools, like nomadism and the palimpsest, for the study of processes and outcomes.

An overview of research questions

The study is driven by questions regarding the multiple facets of translingualism, the forms it can take, the writers' motivations, specific features of poetic texts and the challenges they represent for readers.

⁵⁰ The emphasis on acts of language is elaborated later. See 3.1: Austin; Krämer; Cassin for a translingual approach: see entry for "acte de langage" (2004: 11-21).

⁵¹ See dictionary: 1a: joint or juncture between bones or cartilages in the skeleton of a vertebrate; b: a movable joint between rigid parts of an animal; 2a: the action or manner of jointing or interrelating the articulation of the limbs; b: the state of being jointed or interrelated (Merriam Webster).

⁵² An event, Jacques Derrida says, implies surprise, exposure, the unanticipatable (2007: 441). Also see 9.2.2.

⁵³ Another word for articulation could be "nexus", but articulation may be better suited to express a mobile joint, which transmits changing fluxes of language.

The questions can be asked from different perspectives which slightly change the focus from conceptual work to a case study of poets, to features of nomadism in translingual processes and to multiple articulations generated by translingual writing:

- What multiple facets of *translingualism* does current research offer? – Focus on concept
- What are the multiple articulations in nomad *poets' translingual writing*? – Focus on texts
- What multiple facets of *the poets' work* does translingualism reveal? – Focus on Welch and Joris
- Can the multiple facets of translingualism expand understandings of *nomads' writing* across languages? – Focus on specificities of a category or community of writers who cross language borders
- What additional dimensions or new insights does a study of Welch and Joris contribute?

The closely interrelated perspectives constantly overlap, in different combinations.

Three research *aims* derive from the general question on translingualism and underlie the structure of the dissertation. Hence each part pursues specific *objectives*, which contribute to the findings briefly discussed at the end of each part and more generally in chapter 10 (Conclusion).

Research Aim 1: Developing a framework of analysis that combines concepts derived from studies of multilingualism and nomadic theory. (*Mostly corresponds to Part I, entitled "Outline of research context and conceptual cornerstones."*)

Objectives linked to aim 1:

- to contextualize the work of Welch and Joris as well as the research fields that are being considered
- to compare terminology, research foci and research approaches used in studies about multilingualism in literary studies and in applied linguistics
- to identify parallels between key concepts of nomadic theory and views on multilingualism in literature
- to revisit understandings of translingualism and set up the conceptual cornerstones for the analysis

Key words: methodology: conceptual metaphors, mapping, positioning, mother tongue, multilingual literature, nomadic figurations

Research Aim 2: Exploring lives on the move between languages and highlighting conceptions of translingual poetics. How do Welch and Joris, as nomads and travellers, convey their itineraries, reconstruct former language experiences and develop a (*translingual*) poetics for their writing? (*Mostly corresponds to Part II: "The poets' nomadic lives and thinking across languages."*)

Objectives linked to aim 2.

- the role of cross-language personal and academic itineraries for translingual poetics
- to recognize their positioning as translingual writers and the value they attribute to language

- to expose parallels and specificities in the poets' itineraries
- to interpret their reconstructions of language experiences and analyse their attitude to their former languages (Luxembourgish, French and German)
- to scrutinise meta-reflections on language inserted in texts and talks for elements of deep language awareness (*"surconscience linguistique"*)
- to examine understandings of multiplicity in writing

Key words: nomadic spaces and itineraries; voices; memories as reconstructions and positioning; a poetics of response and a translingual poetics for thinking

Research Aim 3: Analysing the creation of translingual poetic spaces. (Mostly guides the reading of *poems in Part III: A Translingual Poetics in Practice.*)

Objectives linked to aim 3:

- to highlight poetic devices of translingualism
- to distinguish between explicit and implicit forms of translingual writing and outline the spectrum of the poets' heterolingual devices
- to identify the role of dialogue in translingual writing
- to detect and analyse various trans-lating/ trans-languaging procedures
- to make out the creation of poetic spaces that connect languages and knowledge
- to investigate the appropriateness of the palimpsest as conceptual metaphor for translingual processes

Key concepts: heterolingualism, dialogue, translational writing, transformation and creation of new spaces, images and metaphors

A double lens on possible articulations of multilingualism with nomadism

The parallel focus on Welch and Joris offers an individualized perspective on the issues addressed in each chapter. The twofold structure is not meant to "measure" the value of each poet but to give a sense of the scope of possible responses to selected points of analysis. So far critical studies of Welch and Joris have not placed the poets' work in the broader context of research on multilingualism in literature. Therefore, the present study aims to explore tools for an approach of this specific dimension of their writing.

Rough overview of research procedure

The research process involves several steps: (1) building up a framework of reference combining features of nomadism and language multiplicity, (2) contextualizing the poets' lives and professed beliefs about languages and literature, (3) reading their creative work with attention to meaning-making processes in relation to nomadic and linguistic features and (4) assessing what the study of Welch and Joris can contribute to readers' understanding of translingual processes.

1.5 Summing up and looking ahead

How I see the value of the planned research

Chapter one has outlined several motivations for a study of Welch and Joris, starting with the particular multilingual background of Luxembourg. Another significant feature is the intimate link between their lives on the move and their creative writing; as academics they bring perspectives on mobility that reach beyond forced migration. Moreover, their work as poets indicates a great sensitivity to language interaction, which can bring new insights into writing processes.

The research must take into account the significant differences in their work, which the short extracts have already indicated. The analysis will refer to concepts that are broad enough to account for diversity while it aims at pointing out general elements of translingual processes that reach beyond the work of Welch and Joris.

For the study, promising connections arise from nomadic theory and point to the necessity of an interdisciplinary methodology, while the palimpsest quite naturally offers itself as metaphor and tool for an approach of texts with complex interlingual connections. The following outline indicates how gradually the different dimensions of language, literature and movement are explored and become inter-related.

Structure of the dissertation

It corresponds to the research aims and consists of three major parts.

Part One sets the context and elaborates a theoretical frame for the study. The first chapter has aimed at setting the broad context of the enquiry. It should have shown that interest in the poets derives from their nomadic lives as well as their multiple languages. Welch and Joris choose English as their medium of writing, though in terms of acquisition it figures as their fourth language.

Responses to their texts entail mixing up literary and linguistic as well as sociocultural and philosophical, institutional and textual levels of investigation. This *croisement des regards* is the core, and the challenge, of the present enquiry, which consequently does not quite fit into a purely literary research area nor into linguistic or cultural studies.

Chapter 2 investigates key conceptual metaphors which govern the general approach while it also points to the role of interdisciplinarity and multilingualism as tools for the research.

In chapter 3, the pillars of the research, nomadic theory and multilingualism in literature, are investigated in a comprehensive survey of relevant studies. The insights drawn from the relation between mobility and multiple languages (translingual writing processes) allow the description of cornerstones that frame the subsequent analysis of poets' work.

Part Two aims to bring to light the multi-layered nature of the poets' lives, their movement between languages and literary theories with the aim of highlighting parallels as well as differences. While chapter 4, based on notions of mapping, locates the poets' travelling and publications, chapter 5 inquires into their memories of language experiences. Chapter 6 is devoted to their poetics; it includes details about their positioning and ethos as multilingual writers.

Part Three focusses on poetic writing and on palimpsestic translingual features. Chapter 7 examines the description of encounters with otherness in poems, while in chapter 8 translingual dimensions are explored through dialogical and translational writing. Chapter 9 deals with the most complex examples of translingual writing, which illustrate the creation of imaginative spaces confirming the pertinence of a palimpsestic perspective on nomads' writing.

The **conclusion** sums up the main insights and sketches out a roadmap for readers of nomadic and multilingual texts.

2. Methodology

This chapter first provides some clarification as to the use of interdisciplinarity. (2.1) It brings information on the conceptual research framework and the incremental approach which impacts on the methods used in the three parts of the dissertation. (2.2) Details are added about the selection of source texts as well as guidelines for the analysis of texts. (2.3) Lastly, comments follow on the researcher's stance and reflections on what researching multilingually involves for this study. (2.4)

2.1 Interdisciplinary approach

The research questions call for an interdisciplinary methodology, which allows the coordination of literary and sociocultural or sociolinguistic views on multilingualism. The idea of common ground is central in theories of interdisciplinarity. It implies recognizing shared views or assumptions, for instance broad understandings of language diversity and difference, while it also anticipates the creation of new perspectives (Repko 2008; Darbellay 2016).

Interdisciplinary approaches of languages and multilingualism focus on communicational dimensions and tend to disregard literary forms (see for instance *The Routledge Handbook of Multilingualism* 2012 and *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Superdiversity* 2018) or include them under the umbrella notion of cultural studies, which does not leave space for a focus on specific aspects of literary language and diversity (Bachmann-Medick 2012; 2014). For this reason, a *tertium comparationis* is beneficial as it opens new perspectives: this is what the additional investigation of nomadism as concept and way of life should bring. Theorists agree that metaphors, or metaphors used as concepts are powerful epistemological tools for the establishment of such common ground. (Repko 2008: 18, 284; Fourez and Laroche 2003) Especially Mieke Bal (2006) has explored the methodological routes of concepts and furnished clarifications that underlie the approach in the present study.

An interdisciplinary approach also means relying on research practices that foster crossing conceptual and methodological perspectives on the object of study. To juxtapose different disciplinary perspectives, mapping proves an appropriate strategy. Through its association with notions of space it particularly fits a study of travelling languages and texts. For interdisciplinary studies, different maps, seen as mental representations, permit to explore a mental territory from different angles. The aim is not to find the one true map but to provide various perspectives (described as cornerstones in chapter 3.3) to be used as tools for complex study fields.

2.2 Research strategies

2.2.1 Starting from conceptual metaphors

What is a conceptual metaphor? What are its characteristics? How does it work as a tool of research? The fact that for a study of Welch and Joris *nomadism* is research tool as well *as object and context* of the study is at first confusing, yet an emphasis on the unstable, fuzzy aspect of the conceptual metaphor allows accommodating the quite diverse understandings of nomadism that the works of Welch and Joris offer.

Another challenge seems to follow: in metaphors two elements illuminate each other. There is a mutual, reciprocal effect of clarification. This would mean that in our case multilingualism (or the translingual writing process) is elucidated through the metaphor or concept of nomadism while vice versa, notions of multiple languages cast a new perspective on nomadism. I would however like to stress that the emphasis of the present research is on issues of languages and literary writing in the work of Welch and Joris, not on a *general* study of nomadism, which remains first and foremost a thinking tool.

The introductory chapter has provided a rough idea of how the figure of the nomad or nomadism can become *a* governing principle to investigate the poets' experiences of mobility and difference and the multiple dimensions of language in their work. The centre of the enquiry will be on what words, languages can do while wandering along with the poets who use them to create their texts (cf. Research questions), though the figure of the roaming nomad does not at once suggest parallels with issues of language and poetic writing.

Taking at random some of the common perceptions of the nomad/ nomadism, standing for instance for travelling or a certain life style, as the framework for a study of work by Welch and Joris would situate the study on 'moving sand': it needs a firmer theoretical foundation. The boundaries are not always clear between *nomad* as an ordinary word used to refer to people on the move, *nomad(ism)* as a metaphor standing for something else (cf. a particular type of tourist) or as a concept used to organize thoughts about a complex phenomenon (a way of life, as in *digital nomad*).

From word, to metaphor and concept

Why speak of poets as nomads when they obviously do not live in tents, look after animals and have indeed permanent postal addresses? In this apparent misnomer, we easily recognize a metaphor or figurative meaning that should help uncover connections between nomadism and multilingual writing processes. It is important to recall a few of the characteristics of conceptual metaphors, to see what they can do for the investigation but also to indicate possible limits of their use. The aim is to move beyond linguists' approach (rhetorical aspects) to cognitive aspects (on the semantic level) and the general

meaning making function of metaphors. Numerous thinkers have investigated the role of metaphors in mental processes. I will first follow the clarifications provided by George Lakoff, then consider the distinctions that Paul Ricoeur proposes before turning to Mieke Bal, who explores the power of metaphors as methodological tool and their proximity to concepts in this explanatory function.

It is worth considering several interpretations that a statement like “Multilingual writing is nomadic” could produce. If we read it as a metaphor, according to the etymology of metaphor, we mean, that writing is moved to another domain, nomadism, which should help explain the domain of multilingual writing. Studies of metaphors, such as those by Lakoff and Turner, point out that we use a metaphor because what we wish to express seems quite complex and cannot be rendered by one available word:

Far from being merely a matter of words, metaphor is a matter of thought – all kinds of thought: thought about emotion, about society, about human character, about language, and about the nature of life and death. It is indispensable not only to our imagination but also to our reason.
(Lakoff and Turner 1989, xi)

One should remember that there are several types of metaphor. Seen as a key feature of poetic language their visual appeal is often emphasized. However, in most cases, in everyday language (as well as in literary contexts), they have above all great cognitive power. For Lakoff and Turner, metaphors involve correspondences between two conceptual domains; they speak of source domains, which belong to something we believe we understand well, (like a journey, a house, a desert, a mountain) and target domains (that which we intend to explore). They give the example of the poetic metaphor “Life is a journey”, in which *journey* is the source domain, that which one seems to know as having some characteristics such as departure, roads, obstacles, guides, destination.⁵⁴ Relying on this implicit knowledge of an audience, a speaker or poet can then explore that which is much harder to describe in words, namely *life*.

In cognitive metaphors, we have ordinary, conventional language, which becomes dislocated but is not obscure. If we wish to explore multilingualism through the concept of nomadism and say: “*Multilingual writing is nomadic*” we use an intelligible statement, but one may still wonder about the combination of the two elements of the metaphor. It appears that the complex concept of *multilingual* (referring to texts in more than one language, as well as to poets’ languages or their linguistic environment) can only be explored through the domain of nomadism, *on condition* we know how nomadism is to be understood, so that our associations with nomadism can function as a framework for an investigation into multilingual

⁵⁴ Lakoff and Turner refer to schema theory which says that all knowledge is organized into units and information is stored within these units of knowledge, or schemata.

poets' writing. The distinction between source and target domain no longer makes much sense as we first need to establish those categories of nomadism that appear to be relevant.

In *La métaphore vive* (1975), Paul Ricoeur extensively deals with the creation of meaning in language through metaphor. His distinction between three levels of metaphorical meaning is enlightening for our example: the level of the word (*niveau lexical*), the level of the utterance or sentence (*niveau sémantique*) and the level of discourse or the text as a whole (*le discours*), which may be narration (*récit*), poetry or philosophy (*niveau herméneutique*). The last level underlines the particular power metaphors can have to re-describe reality: « le pouvoir de redécrire la réalité, mais selon une pluralité de modes de discours qui vont de la poésie à la philosophie; [ce niveau] exprime une « vérité métaphorique ». » We see how important it is to move beyond the lexical meaning of a metaphor. *Multilingual writing is nomadic*, for instance, when seen as part of an utterance, or of discourse, acquires further dimensions, which link the meaning of the metaphor to broader contexts or visions of nomadism and language multiplicity than a purely lexical level would afford.⁵⁵

In fact, many studies stress the importance of context and situatedness for an understanding of metaphors.⁵⁶ Metaphors are open forms, which allow taking into account a diversity of associations. This openness is also part of their meaning making power, in which the reader participates. Another point to remember about metaphors as “matters of thought” is that they also involve “thought about emotion” (see Lakoff quotation above) and often trigger an affective response. Bal, for her part, speaks of a *mise en scène* to stress the situational character of metaphors: they are always to be seen in context. The term *nomad*, accordingly, produces all kinds of associations, which will be carried over to understandings or perceptions of multilingualism. Multilingual poets do not speak of *the* nomad (as abstract or general type), they use figurations of the nomad, engaged in various activities and located in different geographical, historical and linguistic contexts. All contribute to a complex, multi-layered view of writing practices and of interacting languages.⁵⁷

From this quick survey of metaphors as cognitive tools, the close relation between metaphor and concepts becomes evident.⁵⁸ Mieke Bal's extensive work on concepts and metaphors provides a thinking

⁵⁵ For an in-depth study of metaphors in literary texts, see Derek Attridge, "Performing Metaphors: The Singularity of Literary Figuration." (2005). It is enlightening for the analysis of poetic texts in Part III.

⁵⁶ Emotions, as well as the role of context (or situatedness) are stressed in many studies (Bal, Lakoff, Ricoeur).

⁵⁷ See for example Welch's poems about her nomadic grandfather, her references to nomadic literary figures like Rimbaud, Whitman, Thoreau, and "Ulysses" in Dante's *Commedia* – (and herself as wanderer and poet): meaning making for these nomadic figures always occurs through poetic language. Similarly, Joris speaks of Bedouins, of Dante in exile and many more.

⁵⁸ Also see the debate between Ricoeur and Derrida on the place of metaphor and concept in philosophical discourse. <https://www.cairn.info/ricoeur-derrida-l-enjeu-de-la-metaphore--9782130556527-page-1.html>

framework, which takes into account the above-mentioned, inevitable contextual differences. She sees studies based on conceptual metaphors as process, as always provisional (2002: 55). The metaphor as concept has important methodological implications. Bal writes: “Metaphors are not vague, poetic oddities or decorations but fundamental forms of language used with an indispensable cognitive function, in addition to the more generally recognized affective and aesthetic functions” (2006: 157). She explains why it makes sense to “consider theoretical concepts as metaphors,” thus pointing to the fluid passage from metaphor to concept, confirmed by the ambivalent formulation she uses in the title of her essay: “The concept of metaphor and the metaphor concept”.

Following Bal’s description of the process, one can see how the metaphor of nomadism can become a powerful tool to investigate complex processes of writing. She distinguishes three aspects of metaphors, which I attempt to apply, very cursorily, to an approach of Welch and Joris. “Firstly, they substitute something for something else” (158). They establish a similarity, in the case of Welch and Joris, between multilingual poetry and nomadism. The second term aims at clarifying the first, but the terms are not synonyms. The metaphor always refers to a situation and makes sense in a particular context. “Secondly, metaphors displace meanings” (158). Multilingual poetry becomes associated with movement and spaces. By displacing the focus on aspects of language to a focus on what nomads may stand for and on what they do, the second term, *nomadic*, with its connections to certain forms of travelling, provides a wide range of possible meanings. The metaphor – already used as a concept – becomes a heuristic tool that invites us to discover aspects of languages and poetry which otherwise may not be noticed. “Thirdly, metaphors offer a second discourse within which the first term can be placed” (158). In the present case, the multilingualism of literary texts is placed within the discourse of nomadism, which needs to be explored to reveal the full array of meanings.⁵⁹ Calling multilingual poetry *nomadic* thus points to a reciprocal relation while also disclosing a further range of related ideas. Bal describes it as an aspect of the research process and stresses the role of such interactive relations:

The shift in methodology I am arguing for here is founded on a particular relationship between subject and object, one that is not predicated on a vertical and binary opposition between the two. Instead, the model for this relationship is interaction, as in ‘interactivity.’ (2002: 24)

A survey of critical approaches of nomadism (in chapter 3.2) will show that through its multiple associations it has remained a fuzzy concept. To be used as a tool it needs clarifying.⁶⁰ As Bal claims, the

⁵⁹ Vice versa, one may argue that the notion of nomadism is likely to be illuminated through the association with multiple languages and writing processes – this however is not the primary aim of the study.

⁶⁰ It might profit from being approached through views on multilingualism, but as said above, the aim here however is to see it as a tool, which needs honing before being used.

aim of an approach based on an exploration of metaphors as concepts is not only to work with similarities but also to “get an eye for differences” (158) and for the various ways in which words can be understood. Differences between Welch and Joris should thus not be cancelled by a general concept but rather seen as part of the search for multiple insights into multilingual poetry. Nomadism, like any concept in Bal’s eyes, should be approached as multiple and flexible, prone to change with situations that are being analysed.⁶¹

“Travelling concepts” or *concepts nomades*⁶²

For her research on concepts in cultural studies, Bal has coined the term *travelling concepts*, which is also the title of her book (2002). It fittingly corresponds to what in French is called *concepts nomades*. Concepts are not fixed and travel in all directions:

They travel – between disciplines, between individual scholars, between historical periods, and between geographically dispersed academic communities. Between disciplines, their meaning, reach, operational value differ. These processes of differing need to be assessed before, during and after each ‘trip’. (2002:24)

Interdisciplinary research consequently draws on these nomadic concepts; recent research has focussed on how they travel across humanities, also taking into account the roads they travel across languages.⁶³ Concepts travel in time, too; the fact that they have a history cannot be neglected in the understanding of what they represent. This means they are “constantly changing, not given but created” (2006: 51) and point to an on-going process.

Rethinking the use of concepts as methodological principle, Bal stresses their capacity to prompt new ways of thinking and looks upon “concepts not so much as firmly established univocal terms but as dynamic in themselves. While groping to define, provisionally, and partly, what a particular concept may *mean*, we gain insight into what it can *do*.” (2002: 10). Concepts are not given, they are created. The power of concepts in processes of thinking appears especially through the juxtaposition of understandings of complex and difficult states of affairs, for instance in the interaction between scholars of different disciplines:

Concepts [...] are the sites of debate, awareness of difference, and tentative exchange. Agreeing doesn’t mean agreeing on content, but agreeing on the basic rules of the game: if you use a

⁶¹ For her approach of work with concepts in the classroom, Bal is indebted to views she shares with Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy* (2002: 50 -51).

⁶² Also see Neumann and Nünning, *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture* (2012); Doris Bachmann-Medick, “From Hybridity to Translation: Reflections on Travelling Concepts” (2014).

⁶³ See Olivier Christin, *Dictionnaire des concepts nomades en sciences humaines* (2010).

concept at all you use it in a particular way so that you can meaningfully disagree on content.
(2002:13)

Multilingual writing means quite diverging views and practices, as shows a first superficial look at the writings of Welch and Joris as well as other authors. But using a common concept – nomadism – to investigate their work should lead to a better understanding of what the multilingual dimension represents. If nomadism proves to be a multifaceted notion, like multilingualism, it is precisely this controversial nature that will deepen the meaning making process.

A concept-in-use is like first-/second-person exchange. At the same time, concepts are connected to problems; otherwise they are meaningless. Using concepts just to characterize or label an object means falling back into a practice of typology whose point is limited as well as limiting. (2002:51)

Concepts are never simple: this explains the multiplicity of their aspects and possible uses. They are always in a process of becoming, which involves developing relations with other concepts; hence the importance of considering clusters of concepts. Through various forms of travelling, concepts become flexible instruments of rigorous thinking, which is never mechanical repetition and application (2002: 25). Bal approaches concepts as linked to a problem,⁶⁴ arising out of a particular situation, which they attempt to solve.

Working with images

Images are not quite the same as conceptual metaphors. Without considering the debates attached to the difference between the two, one may say that some images in poetry appear as powerful tools for introducing new perspectives on familiar situations and for thinking through the meaning of unexpected connections.

Among the innumerable approaches of imagery those that refer to a connection between sense perceptions and thought suit the present study. At least since the Renaissance and the metaphysical poets, images have been seen as a base for novel perspectives on objects and abstract notions; through unexpected comparisons they can foster new forms of seeing and reasoning. For poets, images are a technique, while for an analysis of poetic texts they are a privileged site to analyse complex connections, like those of interacting languages and speakers' mobility. There are different types of images and here are just two views on imagery, to which Joris often refers: Ezra Pound, for instance, defines image as "an

⁶⁴ *Problem* is understood in the widest sense, such as a difficult situation, or a lack of understanding (of what multilingual poetry is).

intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.”⁶⁵ Joris also refers to “deep image” as concrete renderings which are close to experience and generate meaning.⁶⁶

In the present study, images are seen as tools to think through a difficult idea. The poets’ use of images thus appears as a valuable source to evoke aspects of language, writing and travelling. The challenge is to see how in the writings of Welch and Joris images achieve a balance between abstract thought and imagination. Some images are metaphors. Joris however, like Deleuze and Guattari, considers metaphors as devices that ask for conformity with literary conventions and thus do not permit innovative thinking; consequently, he rejects them as appropriate strategies for nomadic writing. One could disagree in the cases, when metaphors are approached as concepts with multiple connections.

2.2.2 The palimpsest as metaphor for nomadic translingual voices and texts

In the analysis of poems and voices, the palimpsest gradually emerges as a golden thread that helps knitting together many strands of thought in the exploration of nomads’ reading, thinking and writing across spaces and languages. Though appropriate for a study of relations between languages in Part II, the palimpsest proves above all an excellent tool to conceive interacting voices in the poems studied in Part III.

From object to writing practices, metaphor and concept ⁶⁷

The highly complex nature of a *heterolingual* text as outcome of a *polyglot* poet’s *translingual* writing shaped by dynamic relations to *multiple* languages, personal experiences and cultural connections is hard to grasp and describe in purely theoretical terms. For such difficult notions, a reference to objects and situations often helps clarify thought processes (Bal 2009; Dillon 2007). The palimpsest, to me, appears as such a tool that can elucidate the intricate relations of languages in texts and underlying writing processes. It is both a powerful conceptual metaphor and a complex image that helps explore nomads’ writing. It allows me to uncover for both poets a narrative of between-ness, however fragmentary or discontinued, which on the hand marks their relations to otherness and on the other hand it becomes a characteristic of their writing.

Literally, the Greek word *palimpsest* refers to paper or parchment prepared for writing on and wiping out again, like a slate. In its most common use today, it means a piece of parchment or paper that has been

⁶⁵ From Ezra Pound, *A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste*, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/articles/58900/a-few-donts-by-an-imagiste>

⁶⁶ Robert Kelly and Jerome Rothenberg have developed the concept of “deep image.” See in Robert Kelly, *A Voice Full of Cities*, a collection of essays edited by Joris (2014:9-10).

⁶⁷ For my approach of the palimpsest, I am greatly indebted to the study by Sara Dillon: *The Palimpsest. Literature, Criticism, Theory* (2007).

written on twice, the original writing having been rubbed off.⁶⁸ Studies of ancient documents aim at developing techniques to uncover the hidden text. In these cases, the original inscription is at the heart of enquiries; a famous example is the Archimedes palimpsest (Dillon: 2007:11-13). Those who study such documents with writing on top of a previous inscription focus on decoding what is legible but do not assume a textual relation between the earlier and the later writing.

A palimpsest is not only an object, it also refers to a practice. Rubbing, in particular stone rubbing,⁶⁹ seems to me an interesting example of insights into work with palimpsests as objects: it involves erasing but sometimes also allows covered inscriptions or details of bas-reliefs to emerge. A comparison of the word *rubbing* with translations in other languages indicates a similar double meaning. The French *effacer*, *gommer*, *gratter* is in German rendered by either *radieren* or *gravieren*. My point is that from the start, I wish to point to both the destructive and the creative associations that palimpsests have.⁷⁰ The word is also used to describe a widespread 19th century practice of poor writers who wished to save on paper. After having filled the page, they would turn it sideways and continue by cross writing the first text. Moving away from a focus on the material object, an interest in palimpsests as metaphors for various writing practices also developed. Since the 19th century, the word has been used in a figurative sense to refer to similar practices and to multilayered texts. This view of some texts as layered artifacts has led to figurative uses of the palimpsest in many disciplines. (Dillon 2007)

The palimpsest in theories of text and literature

Since Genette's study entitled *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré* (1982), the palimpsest has become a metaphor of rewriting.⁷¹ If a well visible text covers another text, in addition to a horizontal view, a vertical view of what underlies the words on the page becomes indispensable. Unlike real

⁶⁸ For a survey of its etymology and history, see Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1983) Origin: mid 17th century: via Latin from Greek *palimpsēstos*, from *palin* 'again' + *psēstos* 'rubbed smooth'. "parchment from which earlier writing has been removed to clear it for new writing," 1660s, from Latin *palimpsestus*, from Greek *palimpsēstos* "scraped again," from *palin* "again, back" (from PIE **kwle-i-*, suffixed form of root **kwel-* (1) "revolve, move round" PIE **kw-* becomes Greek *p-* before some vowels) + verbal adjective of *psen* "to rub smooth," which is of uncertain origin. [PIE = Proto-Indo-European]

For an extensive entry in a French dictionary, see <https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/papyrus>

⁶⁹ In German: „Durchpausen eines Steinreliefs auf ein Blatt Papier mit einem weichen Stift.“ <https://www.dict.cc/german-english>

⁷⁰ The magic pad is a playful version of the palimpsest and works on the same principle; so does the ink eraser.

⁷¹ Genette's study focusses on many forms of hypertextuality: despite its title it does not elaborate on the notion of palimpsest as concept. For the role of citations in rewriting, the work of Antoine Compagnon, *La Seconde main ou le travail de la citation* (1979) is relevant for an aspect that marks much of the work of Joris and Welch.

palimpsests, where texts are only connected through the material support on which they are written, the surface and the underground of literary works become related through the second writer's awareness of other voices. Thus, poems approached as palimpsests are believed to contain hints as to how the writing of the surface text is indebted to other works and voices.

Avant-garde writers' insertions of words or chunks from other authors have been compared to palimpsests. The focus is then on the new text and ways of meaning making through the association with other works or voices. This is not the place to give an exhaustive account of various interpretations. I will just briefly mention those aspects of studies, which may support an investigation of cross language relations in multilingual texts.

A survey of relevant critical literature shows that palimpsests have been extensively used to describe and analyse links between texts or artifacts often in relation to studies of textuality and intertextuality. (Kristeva 1969⁷²; Broich and Pfister 1985; Orr 2003, Allen 2011) Most studies of palimpsest and intertextuality, despite references to texts originally written in different languages and cultural contexts *do not investigate connections across languages*. Genette, for instance, sees multilingualism as an issue of translation and excludes it from his extensive study of palimpsestic writing. (1982)

In postcolonial studies the palimpsest is used as tool of analysis and shows its promising potential for an approach of translingual writing. Lise Gauvin refers to the palimpsest to evoke links between the mostly young Francophone literatures that grow outside the metropole: "Le palimpseste reprend la trace, l'écho, l'empreinte, le projet d'un autre texte pour le déconstruire, le reconstruire, le critiquer" (2013: 8). The overview of critical work on multiple languages in literature has several references to studies on the palimpsest with mostly postcolonial perspectives on texts. (See 3.1.4) However, I will not use the palimpsest for an investigation of linguistic phenomena seen in terms of stylistic conventions and deviant varieties of standard languages, as some of these studies do.⁷³ I rather attempt to explore what writing strategies the palimpsest stands for and how it can contribute to meaning making of nomads' positions between languages.

⁷² Kristeva has based her sémanalyse on such a view of texts consisting of what she calls *phénotexte* and *généotexte* (Séméiotikè 1969). Also see the sections on intertextuality: "Le mot dans l'espace de textes" (1969: 84-85) and its sequence which dwells on dialogue and textual relations "Le mot et le dialogue" (86-92), which accounts for the link between dialogue and translation in ch. 8. Her work also allows the link between Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia or language multiplicity and intertextuality.

⁷³ Cf. Arndt, « Postkoloniales Palimpsest. Igbo Relexifizierung und Lexemisierung in der englischsprachigen nigerianischen Literatur » (2007); Zabus, *Le Palimpseste africain. Indigénisation de la langue dans le roman* (2018): see ch. 3.1.3.

Palimpsest as space and landscape as palimpsest: The spatial dimensions of the palimpsest are significant for links with nomadic theory (see ch.3.3). They have led to metaphorical uses, for instance in geology where the palimpsest is understood as a feature of landscape revealing layers that developed at different times.⁷⁴ This point permits a link with geopoetics and Kenneth White (see ch. 3.2) and raises readers' sensitivity for links between language and nature in the poetry of Welch and Joris. Literally and figuratively, the palimpsest entails other spatial dimensions, such as the space on the page, but also studies of the landscape of the mind or of thought, called tropography (Dillon 2007: 42-43).⁷⁵ As the next point shows, the palimpsest as space in movement underlies further studies of mind.

The brain as palimpsest:⁷⁶ With the recognition of the metaphoric and conceptual meaning that palimpsests may hold, the understanding has evolved from the palimpsest as a layered structure consisting of separate parts to an interest in a dynamic interacting, or involute relationship. Palimpsests can also stand for diverse productions of speech by the same writer. In the case of multilingual poets, the visible text then covers words or thinking in other languages; the emerging fragments are likely to have undergone remarkable transformations. Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859) was one of the first to become fascinated by the palimpsest as a tool to explore knowledge of complicated processes. For him, the brain is a complex palimpsest, where successively an increasing number of layers are stored. Nothing is lost. Several reflections that De Quincey makes in *"Suspiria de Profundis"* (1845; 2003) may inspire a reading of multilingual poetics. He observes that though images, feelings and ideas may be forgotten over long stretches of time, they often come back especially at moments of great commotion. Fragments of memories may emerge at any time, often unexpectedly. In opposition to the accidentally colliding texts on a vellum palimpsest, the interpenetrating images and ideas which surface in the brain demonstrate human unity, with all elements contributing to a coherent whole. Calling the brain a palimpsest he wishes to describe it as an organizing principle for complex, intricate and dynamic processes. (2003: 145-152). De Quincey proposes the term "involute" to describe the intricate movements that constantly occur and represent the changes of the palimpsest that is our brain. He writes:

I have been struck with the important truth – that far more of our deepest thoughts and feelings pass to us through perplexed combinations of concrete objects, pass to us as involutes (if I may

⁷⁴ See for example, Hamilton, Harrison and Bender, "Conflicting imaginations: Archaeology, anthropology and geomorphology on Leskernick Hill, Bodmin Moor, southwest Britain" (2008).

⁷⁵ For this aspect, Dillon refers to Derrida and his text *"Fors"* (1977).

⁷⁶ For this section see the chapter in Dillon entitled "The Palimpsest of the Mind" (2007: 23-43); for the analysis of De Quincey's texts I am also indebted to Michel Gieres, *Translating Pain. De Quincey, Wordsworth and Conrad* (Travail de Candidature 2012). However, the stress on suffering and pain is not relevant for my reading the palimpsest and multilingual interaction in writing processes.

coin that word) in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us directly, and in their own abstract shapes. (2003: 107)

Involute, deriving from the Latin *volvere*, suggests a winding move, a swirling or spiralling. However well organized, an involute has many variables, which make its progress rather unpredictable.

If I insist on this description, it is because it may well suit a palimpsestic view of literary production. De Quincey's view of the brain as palimpsest is relevant for an understanding of the interrelated voices that emerge in texts. For the writer in particular, memories of texts and voices become entangled with vivid experiences and stimulate the creation of poems.⁷⁷

The palimpsest of multilingual interaction for a study of Welch and Joris

Reading poems by Welch and Joris in English, one often cannot help hearing or remembering voices/ words in other languages *ghosting*⁷⁸ the words on the surface of the text. Sometimes, there is an obvious clue, a name or a phrase in another language, which irrupt into the poems. In other cases it is up to the reader to make out possible echoes of utterances that may sound familiar. The nature and role of these emerging different, seemingly foreign voices (and their relation to the text on the page) could contribute to our understanding of bi- or multilingualism in poetry and of working processes of poets who while writing in one (non-native) language continue communicating and reading in their other languages. The suggested but usually blurred juxtaposition or interaction of texts and voices invite readers to question their spontaneous, *literal* approach and their immediate response to the language of the texts and words on the page.

Welch does not mention palimpsests. Yet, the recurrent reference to surfaces, which hide underlying strata of ground or thoughts, points to an association of writing with multilayered and connected spaces, for which the palimpsest should bring additional points of entry. Joris mentions the poem as palimpsest in association with collage when he speaks of his early enthusiasm for palimpsests as inspired by Ezra

⁷⁷ Note on the distinction between -ic and -uous. For the present study both terms and their attending nuances are useful. "According to The Oxford English Dictionary, the official adjective from 'palimpsest' is 'palimpsestic', meaning: 'that is, or makes a palimpsest'. In contrast, 'palimpsestuous' does not name something as, or as making, a palimpsest, but describes the type of relationality reified the palimpsest. Where 'palimpsestic' refers to the process of layering that produces a palimpsest, 'palimpsestuous' describes the structure one presented with as a result of that process and the subsequent reappearance of the underlying script." (Dillon 2007: 4) To mark the difference between the actual design of palimpsests and the study of relations in texts, Dillon proposes palimpsestic for anything to do with the design of palimpsests and palimpsestuous to speak about relationships that two distinct yet intimately interwoven texts or voices may have. For the present analysis of relations between texts in different languages, one may remember Dillon's comment on 'palimpsestuousness' as "simultaneous relation of intimacy and separation." (2007: 3), a reading she draws from Genette (1982: 556-557). Gerald Gillespie uses a still different form of the adjective: palimpsestial (2002: 54). See in ch. 3.1.3.

⁷⁸ See a text by Pierre Joris in conversation with Jean Portante: "Whales, ghosts and nomads" (2013).

Pound's writing and evokes the importance of visible lines of fracture or seams. In an interview entitled 'Lignes de fugues / Lettres de fuites' (2008), he explains:

Everything from everywhere could enter the field of writing, to be energized into that multifaceted, multilayered construct called a poem. Amazing! [...] It is the poem as *palimpsest* that immediately interested me. That, to come to your original question, was more essential even than the question of collage. Collage, I have said so often enough, is the essential new technique of 20th-century art (not just poetry), and, unavoidably so given the explosive nature of the century, one that lets reality rain down on us as a wide range of fragments – of cultural, political, social, etc. areas.

Joris explicitly associates the palimpsest with translation and speaks of this essential dimension of his poetics as literary pastry or *mille-feuille*:

The opening Canto of Pound's magnum opus hit me full blast: here was a superb poem in its own right (write?), that was (& remains) great because it is also & at the same time a palimpsest of translations, both in terms of content & form: thus a moment from Homer's Greek *Odyssey* via a medieval Latin version is Englished with structural constructs that call on revising/adapting old Anglo-Saxon formal elements updated via modernist moves, in the process creating a vertiginous literary *mille-feuille*. (2012)

Foreign words in texts are much more than "aesthetic 'enjlivures,' ornaments, prettyfications, like postmodern architectural curlicues additions before their time." (Maintenant # 94, 2012) His words converge with what Barbara Cassin refers to as *interlingual* palimpsest: "Je vous parlais d'un texte grec comme d'un texte palimpsestique, mais c'est l'ensemble de la culture européenne - et bien au-delà sans doute - qui est un palimpseste interlingual, si j'ose dire." (Interview 2006) As Cassin points out, the palimpsest offers promising perspectives for the reading of texts with obvious as well as hidden forms of multilingual writing, an aspect only marginally dealt with in studies of palimpsests, just as it is missing from studies of intertextuality.

As this passage has been a decisive inspiration for my study, I quote it in full:

Passer d'une langue à l'autre, c'est bien passer d'une pensée à l'autre, et d'une culture à une autre. La dimension comparatiste est essentielle. On ne parle et on ne pense bien dans une langue et dans un mode de pensée que si l'on s'aperçoit qu'il y en a d'autres. Encore faut-il ne pas en rester à des identités figées, côté à côté. C'est cela l'intérêt de ce dictionnaire - au moins ce fut une grande préoccupation pour nous - montrer quels sont les transports et les transferts, comment les langues et les idiomes philosophiques, les textes, agissent les uns sur les autres, entrent en interaction.

Je vous parlais d'un texte grec comme d'un texte palimpsestique, mais c'est l'ensemble de la culture européenne – et bien au-delà sans doute - qui est un *palimpseste interlingual*, si j'ose dire. Bien évidemment, le français de Descartes n'est tel que par le passage au latin qui lui-même a transporté du grec, l'a refait autrement, mais c'est aussi la négation d'un certain type de latin, d'un

certain type de grec. C'est cela qui est important et qui est intéressant : qu'une identité ne soit telle que comparative et que, par ailleurs, ces comparaisons ne soient jamais figées, qu'il y ait des interférences, des vols, des contresens et que tout cela fasse fonctionner à nouveau des langues et des pensées. Humboldt compare chaque langue à un filet qu'on lance sur le monde et au moyen duquel on rapporte un autre bout de monde. Il faut donc comparer ce que l'on a dans le filet. » (Cassin 2006; emphasis added)

Key ideas of this passage can be summed up (translingually): Cassin stresses the importance of several languages for thinking; for her, definitions are not fixed: words do not have an immovable identity; an interlingual palimpsest involves the interaction between languages, interferences, borrowings and contradictions: all contribute to a richer process of thinking.

Cassin associates two levels of interrelations, the macro-level of literature with a vast interacting historical dimension and the micro-level of poets and texts, in which voices emerge from underlying texts in other languages. This latter translingual aspect is crucial for an approach of multilingual poets' writing processes. Reflections on the pertinence of the interlingual palimpsest for nomadic poets will be more elaborate once I have given an overview of nomadic theory. They come in ch.3.3.

2.2.3 Mapping as research method: a cartographer's work

A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back "to the same." The map has to do with performance. (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 2013: 12)

Mapping relies on a certain conception of space as developed in the past decades. For ideas that are relevant for the mapping of poets and languages on the move, key features of space as developed by Doreen Massey (*For Space* 2007) prove helpful: *First*, space is inter-relational (10). *Second*, space is the sphere of multiple possibles which resonate with 'difference' and 'heterogeneity' (11). *Third*, space is open, always under construction (11). It must be imagined as always in process, as never closed system and it cannot be conceived without movement. Her dynamic view has repercussions on how to see "other sets of connections, to science, to writing and representation, to issues of subjectivity and its conception, in all of which implicit imaginations of space have played an important role" (18-19). What has come to be called the spatial turn in the Humanities is not only a new way of (re)presenting space, it stands above all for an **epistemological turn**, involving a new way of thinking, of looking at the world, at 'life', at human activities, and so, I would argue, at language too.

From this view on space, derives mapping as methodological tool. With a focus on the poets' travelling and mobility, mapping appears as an important tool for a study of their translingualism. Such a study is

indeed frequently confronted with the question of Locating poets, their languages and their work but also the research process itself.

In view of the interest in the movement and spaces of poets and languages, maps as objects used by cartographers remain an underlying reference for mental mapping. The distinction between the activity, *mapping*, and the resulting material object, *a map* as image of reality, is useful. Maps are tools that help situate locations and follow movements while they can also create new spaces. As theorists remind us, maps can take various forms but they are never the real thing. They are always abstract or mental models used to construct – and *re-construct* – representations of territories, of processes or of fields of knowledge. (Fourez 2003; Repko 2008) Consequently, mapping is a methodological approach that suits research when available maps or representations prove unsatisfactory, as is often the case with interdisciplinary work.

In the present study, it is both a cognitive principle and a tool of organization to speak about languages, literature and travelling. The territory which the work of Welch and Joris presents is not easy to situate and its terrain – with its intersecting languages and voices – appears if not impenetrable then nonetheless unfamiliar if approached with more conventional tools of national literatures.

Mapping as a method of research can be used in many ways to construct, represent or to organize knowledge about a subject. The following observations should show how mapping can be advantageously used for the overall analysis of translingual writing processes

Mapping is a way to visualize nomads' spaces. It either consists in placing territories on existing larger maps or it is a tool to describe features of still little known territories, of blanks on a map. Literature is such a territory; in many cases works and authors are represented within the boundaries of national literature, whose territory is defined by geographical as well as historical spaces. Literary dictionaries or encyclopaedias fulfil a role similar to that of maps. So do histories of literature or various literary atlases. Mapping is part of explorers' orientation work when they investigate unmapped territories or propose a new perspective. Thus, fascinating new models of mapping literature have been proposed, for example by Franco Moretti (2005). Flusser distinguishes between *macro-mapping* and *micro-mapping* for a closer focus on small features, both of which are pertinent methods for a study of translingual poets and their work.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ See Vilém Flusser, « My Atlas » <http://www.flusserstudies.net/node/338> : on the difference between atlases as books and electronic atlases, which open always new perspectives but reduce the world and people to shadows; speaks of a regrettable *Handlosigkeit* of electronic tool. This view shows parallels with Welch's emphasis on hands in the apprehension of the world. See "Poetry as Cheirography" (1988), discussed in ch. 6.2.1 and 7.2.3.

Mapping as method is a dynamic process that accommodates movements and can always be renewed. It is based on an understanding of space that is not governed by a view of closed territories and borders.⁸⁰ An important point of mapping is the multiplicity of maps that arise for the positioning of poets, languages and their works: new mapping involves moving the old centres and their peripheries. Borders lose their significance. Perspectives and relations change; for instance, Paris as centre of French culture is seen differently from Luxembourg than it is from North America; new peripheries emerge. Distances between places change and lose their significance; mapping may also erase distance in time.

Mapping helps organize knowledge for a particular purpose. It allows tracing routes, following travellers and conceiving relations in progress (see the manifold maps that Ette imagines for different literary relations and interactions 2005).⁸¹ New contexts arise and connections between hitherto separately studied areas. Constructing a map involves a discursive process as it arises from different, perhaps competing disciplinary discourses. It allows negotiating meanings, explaining the omissions and highlighting innovative views on routes and relations. Mapping allows working with alternative perspectives, with alternative organizing principles, particularly relevant for in-between spaces like translingual poets' work.

Poems have been approached as space that we can read like a map. (Davidson 2007; 2014) For the text on the page, mapping relations, or micro-mapping, becomes a meaningful way of to mark links, - or in the case of translingual writing – to identify heterolingual elements and their connections. A conceptual link with palimpsests as consisting of different layers or spaces appears.

Maps help locate poets and convey information about their environment and relations: Part II provides examples of how mapping can be implemented in the study of the lives and work of Welch and Joris. Mapping as constructing new representations goes hand in hand with insights gained while reading the poets' work against the grain of monolingualism or monocentric approaches. How to study the poets' own perspectives and positioning is the subject of the next section.

2.2.4 Focus on writers' positioning: *posture d'auteur* and heterolingual ethos

Looking for indicators of poets' attitudes and relations to other languages is a research strategy, which can draw on several approaches. Especially the notions of *posture d'auteur* and (heterolingual) ethos should facilitate an analysis of their beliefs and practices.

Posture d'auteur

⁸⁰ For space theories see Doreen Massey (2005); Wolfgang Hallet (2009); Doris Bachmann-Medick (2009).

⁸¹ See also the archipelagic view of ubiquitous relations between all people and languages proposed by Édouard Glissant (1990/2010).

The French expression *posture d'auteur* is a concept used in the sociology of literature which refers to a *public literary* identity that authors construct themselves (cf. Alain Viala and Jérôme Meizoz, in cooperation with Pierre Bourdieu).⁸² The term and its translations reflect several perspectives, which we can use to examine poets' self-representations.⁸³ The term *posture*, derived from position, initially has to do with the way you hold your body and is also to describe a particular position in which someone stands or sits. In this sense it is a synonym of "carriage" and refers to an expected visual response. But *posture* can also provide indications about somebody's opinions, beliefs or points of view on a certain subject, like languages and otherness: It is then understood as a synonym of "stance"; in French, this sense would also be rendered by the word *attitude*. The German word *Postur* is mostly used in Swiss German, while the two terms corresponding to the English *posture* are *Positur* and *Haltung* (*Attitüde*). Moreover, German comments on the studies by Meizoz speak of *Selbstinszenierung* and *Selbstdarstellung*.

Posture is not only a matter of "self"; it also implies relations to others. As Meizoz explains, posture and position are closely linked (2010: 81-94). Critical response and publication details (for instance the location of publishing houses and their status) ensure the author's position in a national, regional and professional context. Relevant information also comes from paratextual documents; testimonials by critics and readers provided on book covers, often contribute to the author's self-presentation. Through the posture that the author adopts, he or she then confirms (or denies) the position that is attributed to him/her.⁸⁴ Posture appears as an important stage in an author's public recognition.

Authorial posture is a phenomenon which is neither new nor exceptional; in the study of Welch and Joris the focus is on the public self-image which poets convey about their language(s). Meizoz sees a good equivalent of authorial posture in the Latin notion of *persona*, which is associated with actors on stage and which literally refers to sounding through the words spoken behind a mask; for translingual poets, *persona* as mask is a doubly relevant notion as it may also evoke a threshold between languages. The mask can lead to perceptive self-reflections of translingual writers in their new environments.⁸⁵

⁸² See in particular, Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires II. La fabrique des singularités* (2011) and Viala, « Posture » <http://ressources-socius.info/index.php/lexique/21-lexique/69-posture>

⁸³ The reflections on the translation of *posture d'auteur* are an example of what *researching multilingually* stands for in the present study. Sources used include dictionaries in French (Larousse), German (Duden) and English (Oxford and Merriam Webster) as well as the internet for presentations of the work of Meizoz in German and English.

⁸⁴ Cf. Meizoz: "An author's posture marks out his position in the literary field in a singular way. Once this position is reconstructed, we can observe how it is supported or undermined by a certain posture. Posture therefore only makes sense in relation to position in the literary field" (2010: 84).

⁸⁵ See Norman Manea, *The Hooligan's Return* 2003: 290-293; 324-326. It offers a very discerning self-reflection on his position in languages, associating notions of persona and disguise, masque(rade) and acting, together with an etymological study of the Greek verb *hypocrino* "which had a set of meanings sliding from simple speech, to orating, to acting on stage, to feigning or speaking falsely" (290).

Posture aims at creating linguistic identity, including features of multilingualism that observers can recognize. It is a notion of self-construction, which has an impact on the reception of a writer. Though often associated with deliberate strategies aiming at the public's response, it works in interaction with the image created by others, such as publishers, critics and the media.⁸⁶ Posture or self-presentation develop in all texts that foster interaction with the public or readers and can be analysed in a wide range of documents:

La posture se construit également par et dans tous les types de textes qui permettent l'interlocution avec le public : préface manifeste, discours à caractère autobiographique, interviews, correspondances, mémoires, etc. Le phénomène de mise en scène de soi de l'écrivain est connu de longue date, mais il s'observe plus intensément encore depuis l'essor des médias, notamment audio-visuels – en incluant dans ceux-ci les supports numériques. (Viala, *Le lexique socius* No 69)

The wide range of sources accounts for the variety of texts selected for the present study of Welch and Joris (see next section). As authorial positioning largely depends on interaction, interviews appear as an auspicious place to look for signs of positioning.⁸⁷ They are occasions for writers to express what they would like to emphasize, or to correct what they deem inaccurate in the public image that others have produced of them. Public lectures and poetry readings are other sources for a study of posture where one may observe how authors address the public: for instance the use of personal pronouns (“we”-“you” – “they”) can reveal attempts at building rapport or uncover a possible distance.

These stylistic details necessitate attention to the rhetorical details (see below); Pavlenko⁸⁸ speaks of micro-analysis, which may focus on “reflexive positioning (how narrators situate themselves) and interactive positioning (how narrators describe others)” (2007: 179). The wide range of tools from which analysts can choose (linguistic resources, including lexical and morphosyntactic choices, images and metaphors) also belong to the arsenal of devices used in literary criticism (see ch.3.3).

Posture can also be seen as a form of *act-ing*: The subtitle of Meizoz' study *Postures littéraires* is *Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*. The sociological concept of posture thus shows connections with views of literature as performance and as act – because indeed *act*, as Derrida points out has two possible

⁸⁶ Chapter 4 attempts to give a hint of the poets' posture in line with Meizoz's distinction between “non-verbal behaviour” and “textual self-image”. Non-verbal behaviour is mostly the appearance an author chooses for public presentation, including photo and video material: for example, deliberately and repeatedly selected details, choice of background for book covers or blogs.

⁸⁷ See below the notes on The Literary Interview.

⁸⁸ For her view of positioning in social sciences Pavlenko refers to Davis and Harré (1990).

meanings: to do and to act on stage or simulate.⁸⁹ In all attempts at *posture*, there is a certain dose of strategy and of uncertainty, in rare cases even of imposture, as Claire Kramsch argues through an examination of the difficulties some users of multiple languages have to find authentic or legitimate subject positions.⁹⁰

A view on authorial positioning involves notions of subject and writer identity, with an emphasis on becoming.⁹¹ It also covers multilingual writers' changing relations to their languages (Glesener 2009).

Positioning as *ethos*: the rhetorical dimension and the heterolingual ethos

Posture has been compared to *ethos*:

[S]i la posture est liée au discours et, si elle passe par les mots, elle entre par là même en relation avec l'éthos. L'éthos, qui est l'image de soi que l'orateur (originellement) et (par extension) tout Locuteur – et donc notamment tout écrivain – donne de lui dans ses énoncés. (Viala, *Socius* n.d.)

As Meizoz puts it: "[P]osture's discursive dimensions are similar to 'ethos' in rhetoric, that is, the textual self-image offered by the enunciator. The speaker establishes credibility by projecting and imposing a self-image in his discourse." (2010: 85) Posture for Meizoz also implies the recollection of well-known authorial figures of the past who provide a kind of repertory or models of literary practices. Posture may mean conforming to such models and established conventions, or breaking with expectations and the transmitted image by adopting a different posture, which transforms representations and singles out the author as different and innovative.

The notion of "**heterolingual ethos**" as developed by Myriam Suchet (2014)⁹² is particularly enlightening for the study of authors' positioning in texts with foreign elements. Suchet reminds us that heterolingual texts, like all texts, are linguistic constructions (referring to Gauvin 2004). She argues that consequently a text with different linguistic and cultural elements tells us as much about the subject of the utterance as it does about heterolingualism.

L'hétérolinguisme n'est pas un simple phénomène linguistique repérable sur le plan des énoncés: au niveau de l'énonciation, il participe à dessiner la figure d'un sujet que l'on s'imagine responsable du texte. Les dispositifs de construction d'une langue comme étrangère fonctionnent aussi comme des dispositifs de production d'une image de soi dans le discours. La manière dont chaque texte

⁸⁹ See dictionary definitions of "act" presented as epigraphs and general motto in Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, edited by Derek Attridge (1992: vii).

⁹⁰ Claire Kramsch, "Imposture: A Late Modern Notion in Poststructuralist SLA Research" (2012).

⁹¹ See Clarke and Ivanič, *The Politics of Writing*, ch. 6 "Writer identity" (1997: 134-160).

⁹² See *L'Imaginaire hétérolingue: Ce que nous apprennent les textes à la croisée des langues*, « Quatrième partie, L'hypothèse de l'*ethos* » (2014: 181-213). The next chapters bring clarifications and reflections on the use of the concept of heterolingual ethos for the analysis of texts.

hétérolingue construit la différence des langues renseigne donc sur le sujet de son énonciation.
(Suchet 2014: 182)

The outline of conceptual and pragmatic cornerstones for the analysis of translingual writing (ch. 3.3) will highlight some characteristics of the enunciating subject and show that also for the study of texts where no first person subject, no « I » is given, *ethos* proves a productive notion. It encourages us not only to look at deictic terminology but above all to listen *how* languages are spoken about in a text. A focus on *ethos* underlines the discursive and interactive dimension, including the way in which the enunciating subject speaks to others: a positioning towards readers.

Concluding on the analysis of authorial positioning

It is important to note that *posture d'auteur* is related to, but different from the concept of identity and subject, as elaborated in philosophy and sociocultural studies.⁹³ However, the difference between public identity, or *posture d'auteur*, and signs of self or subjects-in-process (Kristeva)⁹⁴ which appear in writer's imaginative, poetic texts is not always as clear as the notion of *posture d'auteur* could suggest. Here is Viala's cautionary comment :

Les frontières entre ces textes directement adressés au public et tout ce qui, dans une oeuvre, vaut comme des signes d'intervention de l'auteur sont floues. Le lien entre posture d'auteur et voix de l'oeuvre paraît étroitement lié dans les oeuvres lyriques. (Viala, *Socius* n.d.)

Especially for the study of nomadic poets, posture appears to be a fertile concept to study their self-positioning in relation to multiple languages and cultures, their professed linguistic preferences and allegiance to national or regional literatures, their choice of literary models, i.e. the “company” in which they wish to be perceived. Posture seen in the context of a search for legitimacy (Kramsch 2012) also allows analysing self-evaluations of cultural affiliation and conformity with traditions, as well as deliberate breaks with writing practices. It may reflect a conscious quest for innovation, for instance through a mixing of literary traditions or the choice of multilingual practices.

2.3 The selection of source texts

An initial reading of work by Welch and Joris has led to two broad criteria for the selection of texts: their references to language (mainly aspects of multiplicity, difference, and subjective experience) and evocations of movement and space. Texts, or passages from texts, which give evidence of language awareness or refer to multiple languages can take different forms. The most conspicuous sign of

⁹³ Romy Clark and Roz Ivanič, *The Politics of Writing* (1997); Roz Ivanič: *Writing and Identity: The discursive construction of identity in academic writing* (1998).

⁹⁴ Cf. Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language* (1980).

multilingualism is an insertion of words or text passages in another language than English, e.g. quotes from literary texts or examples of direct speech in another language. On other occasions, texts contain quotes which have been translated into English or they contain speech which in the original, real-life situation was in another language while in the poem or text it is rendered in English.⁹⁵ A third category of texts related to languages contains reflections on the nature or use of languages. Texts with references to mobility and space, as evidence of nomadic movements, refer either to real life or to mental experiences and metaphorical uses of travelling. Space as context often overlaps with cultural and linguistic spaces. The selection is representative rather than exhaustive and encompasses all types of text. A clear-cut classification would involve a distinction between style, form and content, which is not always possible. For example, an essay may have poetic features like metaphors whereas a poem can refer to factual details confirmed in documentary texts. The source texts are mainly individual pieces from poetry and essay collections,⁹⁶ but they also comprise prefaces or introductions to publications, and less conventional genres like interviews and blogs (Joris) or items of personal correspondence (Welch). What counts is the reference to language, and more specifically to writing processes, which reflect the poets' implicit or explicit poetics.⁹⁷ In some cases, entire collections of poems or longer texts have been selected.⁹⁸ For the discussion of the poets' reception – as multilingual, nomadic poets – some critical reviews are included, as well as interviews with the authors. The latter have proved particularly relevant sources of information.⁹⁹

The selection of texts for individual chapters

The study presents a shift in focus from the poets' lives (Part II) and their own voices to poetic impersonations and presentations of otherness (Part III). Accordingly, chapters 4, 5 and 6 mostly refer to factual, informative texts which contextualize the writing while from chapter 7 onwards, the analysis focusses on views and experiences in poetic writing.

Nomadic poets' writing, like contemporary writing in general, often involves disregard for conventional writing practices or genres. All kinds of texts that can be related to issues of language and writing, or to spaces and movement are potentially interesting. Thus a distinction not based on differences of genre but on the different relations to reality that texts can express appeared more helpful. On the one hand, Welch

⁹⁵ For a description of this phenomenon, see Rainier Grutman, *Des langues qui résonnent. L'hétérolinguisme au XIX^e siècle québécois* (1997).

⁹⁶ For a short note on the essay as a much diversified genre, see below.

⁹⁷ To explain my understanding of the term for the present context, I have added a brief note, see below.

⁹⁸ For instance, *Word-House of a Grandchild* by Welch and *The Gulf* by Joris.

⁹⁹ For a note on the literary interview as relevant text type, see below.

and Joris have written texts in which they explicitly state their standpoints and interests. They are texts that express critical positions or document observations and personal opinions. One might say that the authenticity of these texts lies in a kind of pact of trust similar to Philippe Lejeune's concept of an autobiographical pact. Our main interest in these documents lies in the viewpoints on languages and writing processes that they convey. On the other hand, both authors have produced writings generated by poetic imagination. They cannot be read as "truthful" documents: they render a poet's reading of the world. They are constructions of an imaginary reality that must not be mistaken for first-hand experience or the straightforward expression of personal positions and beliefs. As Welch said when asked about the biographical dimension of her poetry, "*je est un autre*," thus echoing Rimbaud's words (1998: 144; 149). Joris made a similar statement and added that the "I" in nomadic poetry is "multiple others". Poetic language enables writers to deal with complex situations that ordinary language cannot satisfactorily address.

The two types of writings are used differently. The "documentary" texts underlie the chapters on the poets' itineraries, while the analysis of poetic pieces focusses on nomadic and multilingual features in texts. Yet, sometimes, the distinction between poetic recreations and factual accounts is not easy. This is particularly true in the case of autobiographical essays, which are a posteriori attempts at meaning making.¹⁰⁰ Memories and reconstructions deserve researchers' attention as providing insights into aspects of identity, subjectivity or subjects-in-process. They will be the object of a separate chapter, which precedes the analysis of explicitly imaginative work as examples of self-presentations and personal reflection.

A few notes on (critical and theoretical) terminology

The comments concern terms that frequently occur in the present study, yet may cause some misunderstandings as they can be diversely interpreted.

Poetics, poetry and *poetic*

A very broad aim of the present research is to describe features of a nomadic poetics of multilingualism or translingualism¹⁰¹. The term *poetics* may evoke a theoretical text like Aristotle's famous *Poetics*. The suffix *-ics* suggests a discipline, a science with its own rules and prescriptions, but today the term *poetics* is rarely understood as a science imposing constraints and restrictions. It usually refers to writers' practices. *Poetics* in the present context does not refer to a handbook of poetry with detailed descriptions of prosody and metrical conventions. It rather outlines characteristic features of writing generated by

¹⁰⁰ Claire Kramsch calls them *ex post facto* reconstructions of events (2009: 5).

¹⁰¹ For an outline of specifically translingual features, see chapter 3.3.

certain cultural and linguistic contexts and personal dispositions and preferences. Joris's work makes explicit use of the term in his collection of essays entitled *A Nomad Poetics* (2003) where he exposes his views on literature and writing today. Welch, though she also reflects on aims of writing and her practice, does not explicitly speak of a *poetics* or her *poetics*. As the term is widely and differently interpreted, it requires some further clarification.

In an entry entitled "Poetics, Western" in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (2012: 1059-1064), Brian M. Reed proposes a useful distinction between poetics in a narrower sense, indicating an individual poet's description of his own practice, and poetics in a more expansive sense, standing for a study of features that characterize writing at a particular time or within specific conditions:

On the one hand, poetics can designate the compositional principles to which a particular poet subscribes. These principles may remain implicit, or they may be made overt in a variety of ways.[...] On the other hand, poetics may be used as a label for any formal or informal survey of the structures, devices, and norms that enable a discourse, genre, or cultural system to produce particular effects. (1058-1059)

Both meanings can bear on a reading of work by Welch and Joris. It is the second meaning that interests us when we speak of nomadic and multilingual writing in more general terms. The aim of this kind of poetics is "to explain how something works" (B.M. Reed) by looking at the effect of certain features in texts. Examples of such "poetics" are Gaston Bachelard's *Poétique de l'espace* (1958); Linda Hutcheon's *Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) and Tsvetan Todorov's *Poétique de la prose* (1971). They show that a poetics is not limited to a description of poetry or writing in verse. But as Reed concludes his article, both the broader and the narrower concerns of works of poetics continue existing side by side and complement each other:

In the 21st century, the word poetics will surely continue its curious ambiguity, signifying, on the one hand, something institutional and perduring – and, on the other hand, something altogether more changeable, porous, and unpredictable, namely the compositional principles that poets themselves discover and apply during the writing process. (1064)

Poetics always explore what the Greek origin of the word *poetry* recalls: *the act of making and creating* notably through words and sounds. Similarly, **the adjective poetic** (as used in the title, *Nomads' Poetic Translingualism*) covers not only work written in verse as opposed to prose: it refers to imaginative qualities of writing and to a great sensitivity in language for the expression of thoughts and emotional responses. In the work of Joris and Welch poetic reflects the meaning of the German word *Dichtung*, which when used in its broader sense refers to poetry and thinking. *Poetic* is the example of a word used in many European languages, yet with varying connotations. For this reason, *Vocabulaire européen*

dedicates a special entry to the German term *Dichtung*,¹⁰² translated into English as literature, poetry, fiction; and into French with two additional words “invention, affabulation” which stress the imaginative, creative dimension. For a study of poets who live and write between languages, the following comment is informative:

K. Hamburger souligne que le concept [Dichtung] est « supérieur à ce que propose la terminologie des autres langues, et en premier lieu au concept même de littérature [Literatur] » (p. 35). Par *Dichtung*, la langue allemande tend ainsi à définir une opération spécifique de la pensée et du langage. La proximité de *Dichtung* et de *dicht* (dense, étanche) ne serait donc pas le fait d’une contingence homophonique. » (2004: 312)

The aspect of poetics that this study focusses on is translingualism, or the nomadity of texts with languages in movement. The analysis of the work of two particular poets shows shared as well as specific beliefs and practices.

Though the analysis investigates the poets’ work, the present study also evokes a reader’s dimension; as Elleke Boehmer writes in *Postcolonial Poetics* (2018), what counts is the readers’ response to concepts and beliefs. One of the targeted outcomes of the research is a poetics of translingualism as roadmap for readers.

The Essay

The source texts contain a large number of essays by Welch and Joris. For both writers, even a short glance reveals a great diversity of texts. In English, the word *essay* covers indeed a very broad range of writings. Translations into French and German illustrate its multiple meanings; a comparative juxtaposition, however, goes far beyond the scope of this short note.

Apart from its reference to student work, which obviously does not apply here, an essay can be very generally described as “a short piece of writing on a particular subject, written in order to be published.” (OALD) The difficulty, or sheer impossibility, to define a heterogeneous, proteiform genre appears in Brian Lennon’s attempt at differentiating between personal pieces and academic articles,¹⁰³ all of which can be classified as essays:

The essay is [...] to be nonchalant, inconsistent, digressive, flexible, personal, subjective, humanistic, tolerant, dynamic, voluptuous, whereas its systemic other (the article, the treatise, the system itself) is serious, invariant, rigid, impersonal, objective, scientific, dogmatic, static, ascetic.

¹⁰² The author of this entry for *Dichtung* (2004: 312-316) is Élisabeth Décultot. The quoted passage refers to Käthe Hamburger, « Das Wort “Dichtung” », in H. Rüdiger (éd.), *Literatur und Dichtung. Versuch einer Begriffsbestimmung*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1973, p. 33-46.

¹⁰³ Brian Lennon, “The Essay, in Theory” (2008).

The essay is beneficently amateurish, a thinking in process, speculative and ruminative, a theory “in time”; its other is professional, controlled, conclusive. And on and on. (2008: 73)

This distinction explains why the selection of essays by Welch and Joris, on the one hand, includes professional, academic pieces, usually with a central argument, so-called critical essays on literary issues, while on the other hand, it also comprises short personal pieces, with narrative passages or autobiographical details and general reflections or digressions.

One dictionary of literary terms opens its entry with an appropriate quote (from an unidentified author in the Times Literary Supplement): “[T]he essay is not to be cornered in a definition. For what genius could find a common denominator for essays as contrary in tendency as Locke on the Human Understanding and Lamb on Roast Pig?”¹⁰⁴ The title, *Les essais*, which Michel de Montaigne chose for his reflections on himself and mankind is worth recalling. This first use of the term for a piece of writing foregrounds the origin of the English term in the French word, which stands for an attempt, a try. An essay is then to be seen as a contribution to a topic, approached from a personal or a professional viewpoint. I deduce from this that many essays, to some degree, can be read as examples of an open form, which profits from being seen in a vaster context.

This view of essays is particularly appropriate for Joris, who quite radically rejects the idea of a finished text. Welch’s essays, however, are sometimes reminiscent of short stories and seem to aim at closure. They are not likely to be revised – or maybe they will be, through a rewriting in the form of poetry.¹⁰⁵

Many of the selected essays can be read as pieces about subjects in process, telling us about their positions as language users, as poets, as linguistic border crossers, as readers and critics, all giving us glimpses of their views on language.

The Literary Interview

Interviews with literary authors constitute an important source of documentation. To avoid misunderstandings, a short note about their nature and role aims at pointing out characteristics that apply to the selected interviews with Welch and Joris. In “The Literary Interview: Towards a Poetics of a Hybrid Genre” (2014), Masschelein et al. present a study of the literary interview as a particular form of interview.¹⁰⁶ The oral dialogue and the subsequently published written text are the two key dimensions of the literary interview, yet they are not always respected in the same way. The authors see the variations

¹⁰⁴ A.F. Scott, *Current Literary Terms. A Concise Dictionary* (1965:98-99).

¹⁰⁵ See for instance how several poems in her last collection, *Crossings* (2010), echo the much earlier essays in *Seismographs* (1988).

¹⁰⁶ Also see Gilles Deleuze – Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (1972/2008), in which the authors start by discussing the nature and possible results of a dialogue; Galia Yanoshevsky, *L’entretien littéraire. Anatomie d’un genre* (2018).

and cultural differences in practice reflected in the terminology, which changes across languages (French, English and German):

The term *literary interview* reflects the differences between various cultural traditions and researchers. First of all, quite a number of scholars have distinguished the interview from the conversation or dialogue (e.g., Deleuze and Parnet 1977; Genette 1997 [1987]: 363 – 64; Hansen and Heine 1983; Marin 1997). As will emerge below, the English word *interview*, to indicate the journalistic genre, was imported early on into French, although the alternative *entretien* is also common there (Kött 2004: 53). Second, both terms interview and literary interview have been used to designate encounters involving literary figures. In the English tradition, however, the latter term is common. In the Francophone tradition, the term *entretien d'écrivain*, which can be translated as *writer's interview* [...] In German studies, different terms multiply, such as *das narrative Interview* (Schröder 1991), *das literarische Interview* (Hansen 1998), *das Autoreninterview* (Heubner 2002; Seiler 2009), and *das Schriftstellerinterview* (Hoffmann 2009, 2011). (2014: 3 Footnote 1)

In the framework that Masschelein et al. propose for their study, they highlight “four areas of research that present a special challenge to contemporary literary studies: genre, authorship, discourse, and authenticity” (2014: 5). Literary interviews appear above all as a hybrid genre, combining elements of journalism and literary studies; they display features of an oral exchange as well as of a dialogue in a written and edited text. The relation between interviewer and interviewee (or respondent) is crucial. In literary interviews, the interviewer is often a writer or a well-informed critic. The interview becomes an exchange between experts; Masschelein et al. speak of “shared authorship”, which also concerns the published text (cf. the regulations for bibliographic references, in which both names must appear).

It is a form with its own rules and has been called a “staged dialogue” (23). Despite the frequently apparent informality, both parties have to accept certain constraints. For research based on interviews, the implicit authenticity is essential:

[The interview] as a social practice presupposes a rapport between the interview partners and the author's willingness to provide information. It is typically based on a minimal truth claim that the discourse is empirically correct and morally honest. With no indications to the contrary, the overall effect is one of authenticity. This “pact of authenticity” (by analogy to Philippe Lejeune's autobiographical pact) constitutes one of the text's main attractions for a modern audience, who expects to get a unique inside perspective into the writer's private life and opinions. (37)

This does not prevent issues of control during the dialogue; though usually the interviewer has prepared the questions, the interviewee, the writer, is able to lead the conversation into directions of his choice. The interview follows a certain process, starting with the initial contact and agreement; possibly the interviewee asks to see the questions before the meeting (usually in person, though an entirely written exchange is also possible; or an exchange via new technological means). The actual dialogue is later edited

by the interviewer who, before publication, normally submits it to the interviewee who can add further points.

As the examples of interviews with Welch and Joris show, the context of the publication has an impact on the contents. Often an interview follows a new publication by the poet while it may also be part of a series of interviews related by a certain topic (such as the role of the poet in regional literature). For the use of interviews in literary research, the link with the concept of authorial positioning, such as it has been developed by Alain Viala and Jérôme Meizoz (*see above*) is obvious. In the case of interviews, we may speak of a double act of positioning and of dynamic interaction: Both the interviewee and the interviewer adopt a *posture*, “at once in independence from each other and in interaction” (36). The relation between interviewer and interviewee also affects the dynamics of the exchange and the resulting positioning (e.g. a possible, perceived hierarchy; age, gender, degree of familiarity).

Studies of the literary interview show that they are occasions for an author to “compose the self” in a process that is similar to literary creation. An author may cast him or herself as a character and he or she is likely to evolve in the course of consecutive interviews. Another characteristic is the interviewee’s frequent positioning in relation to other literary figures, a habit which interviews with Welch and Joris confirm. For instance, in the interviews with Welch one finds repeated allusions to Rimbaud, while in the case of Joris the names of Paul Celan and Ezra Pound frequently recur.

Literary interviews with Welch and Joris are part of the documentary material used for the enquiry into poets’ multiple itineraries (chapters 5 and 6). This will not prevent later citations in the chapters devoted to an analysis of their poetry. As readers, one trusts the “authenticity pact” on which published interviews are based. Their dialogical character places these interviews somewhere between personal positioning and response to their work. The interviews with Welch and Joris are conducted either by literary journalists, or by fellow poets, some better known than they are at the moment of the interview (for instance Bernstein in relation to Joris ¹⁰⁷). In other cases, the interviewers feel “honoured” by the opportunity the exchange represents. All are familiar with the poets’ work, particularly with their recent publications. The texts of the interviews have appeared in various media: some in books, others in the written press; in the case of Joris many interviews can be found on-line.

My main interest is in the interchange about travelling and language multiplicity.

¹⁰⁷ See interview “Close Listening” in *Cartographies* 2011.

2.4 Researching multilingually: a decentralized position

The adverbial phrase, researching multilingually, points to the way the research is approached. In the present case, multilingualism and wandering writers are the object of research, but the research process itself is also motivated by cross-cultural and trans-lingual movements. Several methodological aspects are perceptible in various stages of the enquiry:

- The use of theoretical resources in several languages

Whenever possible, information on key ideas is drawn from studies produced in several languages and reflecting different cultural contexts (Anglo-Saxon, French and German), sometimes with quite distinct outlooks on the issues or concepts. Juxtaposing theoretical or critical work created from various viewpoints enlarges the perspective and somewhat corresponds to the poets' own immersion in a multiple world. The process is nomadic as much as multilingual: As researcher I watch from the margins while also standing close to the poets' positioning between languages.

- A focus on the tensions that differences in perspectives and terminology produce

Reading a critical text in German or French and integrating its key ideas into an English text requires looking at texts from different linguistic and sociocultural points of view. This gradual acquisition of an eye for differences and similarities generates awareness of the polysemy of some words, or the coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or a phrase, when used across languages. The investigation is often driven by changes in meaning across languages: the same or very similar words in different languages, like *subject*, *culture* or even *nomad* do not mean quite the same or have been used with different connotations and in different contexts of research. The whole process of thinking has entailed a constant and deliberate crossing of languages and cultures of academic study: Many insights – for the poet and the researcher – lie in the movement between various viewpoints.

English has widely become a lingua franca for academic work. But in many cases, it cannot do full justice to ideas that have developed in well-defined contexts of literature and thought. The *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies* assembled under the direction of Barbara Cassin,¹⁰⁸ has proved a crucial tool of reference during all the time I grappled with key concepts, which appeared to be understood differently, sometimes with only minor nuances, or are contextualized in a different way in various languages.

- A translational reading-writing process

¹⁰⁸ I mainly consulted the French version, only occasionally checking my understanding of explanations by a comparison with the English online version (directed by Emily Apter).

Though I am writing in English about English language poets, texts in French and German have proved very useful material *and* tools for thinking, because they have forced me to figure out what equivalents or circumlocutions to use in my text. Such a process of *translanguaging* involves comparing approaches, translating key terminology, finding acceptable equivalents or inserting a term borrowed from another language.

An inner monologue or dialogue of languages has become a way to check my understanding of ideas; this process of translational writing for meaning has been further *complicated* (in the positive sense of developing further folds of meaning) in oral exchanges, notably informal exchanges in my native Luxembourgish. All the while I have kept in mind Boileau's famous motto: "*Ce que l'on conçoit bien s'énonce clairement.*"¹⁰⁹ This could be reformulated for multilingual situations with an emphasis on the undeniable enrichment that a comparison of languages entails.

The very writing of the dissertation has entailed a constant crossing of languages: comparing words, translating them or inserting the "foreign" term. Looking at texts from different linguistic and sociocultural points of view has meant getting "an eye for differences and similarities" and confirmed the importance of work based on "travelling concepts" (Bal). My experience has been similar to what Lüdi describes as a use of multilingualism in favour of scientific knowledge (2015)¹¹⁰

2.5 Summing up and moving on

Based on an oscillating movement between different levels of analysis, including a close reading of poets' writing (micro level, see extracts in 1.2), their links with communities of writers (real and imagined, meso level) and reflections on multi- or translanguaging, including thoughts about the position of poets and their work in broader contexts (macro-level), the study needs a methodology that allows bridging the different levels. Chapter 2 has outlined the role of concepts which open a range of perspectives on translingual poets, who do not easily fit onto existing models of study. Hence also the choice of research strategies, like mapping and positioning. Next to language and literature, space and movement are central dimensions which need to be further specified.

¹⁰⁹ The call for constant revision is reinforced by the lines that follow: « Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément [...] Hâtez-vous lentement; et, sans perdre courage, Vingt fois sur le métier remettez votre ouvrage : Polissez-le sans cesse et le repolissez; Ajoutez quelquefois, et souvent effacez. »

¹¹⁰ See also Geneviève Zaraté, Aline Gohard-Radenkovic and Fu Rong, « Le précis du plurilinguisme et du pluriculturalisme: une recherche internationale face aux défis d'une conception plurilingue et d'une traduction en anglais et en chinois » (2015 : 238-269).

Chapter 3 offers a contextualization of the present study in nomadic theory and ongoing research on multilingualism in literature. The research aims formulated in ch. 1.4 state that developing a suitable methodology is part of the enquiry. The review of approaches in different study areas leads to the outline of cornerstones for the analysis of translingual writing, with guidelines for the close reading of texts. It also allows elaborating on the palimpsest as a particularly productive metaphor and concept for a study of translingual writing. (See ch.3.3.)

3. Multilingualism and Nomadism:

Reviewing the research context and setting up a framework of reference

By context, I mean the academic context of research today as well as views prevailing at the time when Welch and Joris decided to become poets and opted for a language that they acquired quite late, while remaining actively in touch with their other languages. The choice of these poets on the move points to the need for references that emphasize an intricate link between multiplicity, mobility and transformation in their writings. The present chapter takes a three-tiered approach:

First, it outlines the evolution of research into multilingualism related to literary texts.

Second, in view of the underlying importance of mobility, nomadic theory provides a complementary perspective that helps address specificities in the work of Welch and Joris.

From these two areas arises the need for a reconceptualization of multilingualism as always in movement. Key aspects discussed in various contexts contribute to an outline of nomadic translanguaging and cornerstones for the analysis that follows.

3.1 Research on language multiplicity linked to literary writing: Overview of a multifaceted field

The field of multilingualism and literature is huge, encompassing for instance themes like exile, mother tongue or translation. One may roughly distinguish between those studies whose focus is on the language of the text and those studies that foreground the speaker or writer. For a literature review, the available material requires selection and structuring. My aim is to point out recurring features in a great diversity of approaches. Ultimately, the purpose of the review of studies is to outline those aspects that so far have not received much attention and to which an enquiry into the work of Welch and Joris can contribute new insights. The focus on mobility and an open field of interrelations account for the need to include an investigation of nomadic concepts.

The views on multilingualism that are considered have evolved from two main academic fields, literary studies and applied linguistics. Studies of literature at the end of the 20th century reveal a burgeoning interest in formerly disregarded critical issues linked to language multiplicity. These investigations are often integrated in Comparative Literature and connected to World Literature or Translation Studies (cf. 3.1.3).¹¹¹ A different approach of multilingualism in texts appears in research which initially derived from

¹¹¹ I use the term literary studies in a general sense, as overarching designation for various academic departments encompassing the study of national philologies, Comparative Literature and World Literature. As for the capitalization of academic subjects, see MLA and Chicago style sheet: They recommend capitalizing the official

linguistics. It has an outspoken concern for social, cultural and educational matters; it foregrounds issues of migration, language learning and communication (cf. 3.1.4).

In both academic fields, scholarly work of the past decade often refers to the same source texts (cf. 3.1.5). It tends to integrate the perspectives of applied linguistics and literary studies and takes a wider, interdisciplinary approach. This being the research context in which I situate the study of Welch and Joris, the literature review pays close attention to these recent developments. (cf. 3.1.6) A brief reference to underlying theories of language as developed in critical and philosophical writings (e.g. Bakhtin; Austin; Derrida, Kristeva) aims at highlighting their impact on views about multilingualism. They point to a range of related concepts from which all researchers draw. (3.1.2) The diversity of perspectives accounts for the difficulty of drawing a homogeneous picture of multilingualism or setting up a coherent and workable frame of reference.

Like nomadism, multilingualism in literature is a “fuzzy” concept (cf. Bal, *Travelling Concepts*). I have conceived the review or state of the art as a journey, for which I draw a map of “places” to visit, with shorter and longer stops, where ideas are collected which allow an articulation with insights gained from the work of Welch and Joris.

3.1.1 The interest of early studies for an approach of Welch and Joris

Multilingualism is not a new phenomenon in literature, yet for a long time it remained unnoticed by critics. On the one hand, the inclusion of foreign or non-standard components, such as dialectical or creole elements, were considered evidence of language “impurity”, while on the other hand, insertions of words or passages in Latin or other languages of culture were taken for granted and seen as signals of writers’ erudition. The early studies may no longer be relevant for ongoing research. However, the fact that they were little noticed underlines the general indifference among academics towards multilingual features of literature at the time when Welch and Joris started writing (in the 1970s). Adhering to a monolingual model of literature seemed a condition for any writer who wished connections with a national literature, also in Luxembourg.¹¹²

A critical interest in multilingual elements had brought up the notion of languages in contact in communities (Weinreich 1953), while in studies of multiple languages in literary productions, the focus

names of academic departments (e.g., Department of Comparative Literature), but do not capitalize the adjective forms of such departments (e.g., the comparative literature department). I apply the same distinction to Applied Linguistics (versus applied linguists).

¹¹² See, for instance, views in the 1970s on diglossia or the concept of Luxembourg literature as triglossic (Fernand Hoffmann, *Sprachen in Luxemburg. Sprachwissenschaftliche und literarhistorische Beschreibung einer Triglossie-Situation*, 1979:65-111).

was on foreign elements used as stylistic devices (Elwert 1960). More extensive research with attention to contextual aspects of multilingualism and underlying views on what language is and can do started in the late 1960s. Leonard Forster was the first scholar to produce a full-length study, entitled *The Poet's Tongues: Multilingualism in Literature* (1970).¹¹³ With its broad historical scope and attention to particular examples, the study also anticipates many themes that remain pertinent for a study of Welch and Joris. Forster approaches multilingualism from different, usually overlapping perspectives, looking at texts, at writers and at the societies or communities, in which the literature is produced.¹¹⁴ His fascination for the use of foreign languages in texts accounts for a fundamentally positive attitude: He calls to mind Hugo von Hofmannsthal's "image of languages as invisible musical instruments always at hand for us to play upon and make them sound; and then his idea that a foreign language can be something revivifying, bringing faded thoughts to life." (3)

After clarifying some of the terminology used by linguists, he positions himself as a literary scholar with an interest in sociolinguistic questions. From Forster's presentation, it appears that whether the language that comes in addition to the writer's own language is Latin, or a modern language, it is usually a language that poets acquired in an educational context (29). Bi- or multilingual poets of past centuries used to be erudite, well-educated men (hardly any women are mentioned), who may have travelled but just as often acquired their knowledge of other languages through reading and writing. He describes some of the examples of poetry in a foreign language as "five-finger exercises," in comparison with young piano players' practice of the instrument. (48) Poets learn their trade through writing short pieces in a highly valued language, not their own.¹¹⁵

It is interesting to see that in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the use of another, "cultivated" language is a respected way of introducing variation, as a sign of "elegant accomplishment", which can "add brilliance" to a text and to one's reputation. (37) In other cases, foreign words add a note of playfulness through language games. Some examples also suggest functional considerations, such as the need for readers to understand the foreign language.

¹¹³ The book is based on a series of lectures that he delivered in New Zealand in 1968 at the University of Otago.

¹¹⁴ Forster includes a not quite accurate description of the language situation in Luxembourg: "[T]here are plenty of German-speaking Alsations, Lorrainers and Luxemburgers [...] for whom the higher stylistic levels are accessible not in German but in French" (1970: 4).

¹¹⁵ Forster writes about Renaissance and Baroque poets: "It sometimes happens that the poet can express his feelings more freely in the foreign language than in his own. It is as if the use of the foreign language removes certain inhibitions." (48) This view stands in contrast with the belief that arose in the 19th century that poetry is only possible in the mother tongue.

Often, Forster discusses underlying concepts of language, some of which are quite close to present-day debates. Thus, he reminds us that for a long time “language loyalty” (19)¹¹⁶ was not an issue for poets. Only in the 19th century with the advent of the concept of nation state, based on the idea of one language and one culture did languages come to be seen as symbols of national identity. Using or abandoning a language then becomes for bilingual writers a statement of political allegiance or disownment. In the last chapters of the book, Forster also provides innumerable examples of late 19th and 20th century poets, like Pound, TS Eliot, Joyce, Dada movement (see chapter 5), for whom the use of other languages is above all a form of poetic experimentation.

For the present enquiry on the mobility of languages in literature, two of the concepts of language discussed by Forster are particularly worth pointing out: however different, they both stress a concern about the link between language, thought and context. According to the first view, languages are just vehicles; it means that for poetry, one language is as good as another language.¹¹⁷ This position reflects the belief in a complete transposability of one language into another, which was particularly prevalent in the Middle Ages, but also during the Renaissance. The other view is almost the exact opposite: poetry is untranslatable because it is intricately connected to the language in which it is produced. (55) The notion of (in)translatability, as Forster shows, is also connected to many poets’ fundamental conviction that all language is already translation and that whatever language they choose it is not quite appropriate to express their thoughts and emotions.

Forster’s study was an outsider’s view; it was the work of a British Germanist initially addressed at an audience in New Zealand, with no reference however to the special linguistic and cultural situation of that country nor to (post)colonialism. Despite the fact that non-Western languages and literatures are not considered, Forster’s study includes many reflections on language, which have lost none of their acumen for discussions today, especially in relation to writing in Luxembourg.

With *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* (1975), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari cast what was at the time an iconoclastic view of Kafka. They point to the need to recognize the specificities of works created outside the cultural and linguistic centre to which they seem to belong. The questions they raise are of a striking topicality for many writers today:

¹¹⁶ For this and related concepts, see Uriel Weinreich, *Languages in Contact* (1953). In the context of the 19th century, Forster for instance speaks of language choice as sign of “political allegiance” (55). Also see 63-63 on Rilke’s allegiances to different languages.

¹¹⁷ “[L]anguage is material, with which one operates, with which one forms or formulates something. The choice between one language and another is much less important.” (38)

How many people today live in a language that is not their own? Or no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve? This is the problem of immigrants, and especially of their children, the problem of minorities, the problem of a minor literature, but also a problem for all of us... How to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one's own language.¹¹⁸

The reference to the language of nomads and immigrants in relation to literature is close to the present enquiry into translingual writing processes.

Several more studies, which appeared in the following years, are worth mentioning as they prefigure later differences in approach. They vary from considerations on relations between literary productions and their *sociolinguistic environment* (Sternberg), to a view of language as a fundamentally human practice entailing a focus on *speakers* (Wandruszka), to reflections on the *nature of texts* in which different languages interact (Baetens-Beardsmore). These studies were published independently of each other, in Israel, Germany and Belgium.

In "Polylingualism as Reality and Translation as Mimesis" (1981), Meir Sternberg investigates in detail how linguistically homogeneous texts, or texts with a clearly dominant language, report messages in other languages and enquires into how literary texts deal with the mimetic challenge presented by polylingual discourse as it occurs in reality. Sternberg distinguishes different categories of intratextual translations, which reach from selective forms of reproduction over transpositions and conceptual reflections to homogenizing conventions, with authors often combining different types. (See 225-232)¹¹⁹ Whatever the form of mimesis that a writer adopts, it points to underlying views on translating processes and conceptions of what a literary text is to do.¹²⁰

The title, *Die Mehrsprachigkeit des Menschen* (1979; 1981) sums up Mario Wandruszka's core idea. As a linguist, he believes that multilingualism cannot be studied as a system which exists independently of human beings. He rejects categories such as diglossia, which implies a clear distinction between the

¹¹⁸ Passage quoted by Joris in "Toward a Nomadic Concept of Translation" (1998): it is a translation of the French original text.

¹¹⁹ Sternberg describes four distinct types or procedures of translational mimesis, lying between the polar extremes of vehicular matching and homogenizing convention. 1) Selective reproduction takes the form of intermittent quotation of the original heterolingual discourse as uttered by the speaker(s), or in literature, as supposed to have been uttered by the fictive speaker. 2) A more oblique and varied type of translational mimesis is verbal transposition - the poetic or communicative twist given to what socio-linguists call bilingual interference. 3) Conceptual reflection is even further concrete texture of the original discourse: verbal forms of the foreign code as the mapping of reality, and distinctive hierarchies. 4) Explicit attribution, finally, is a direct statement on the reporter's (or even the reportee's) part concerning the language (or some aspect of the language) in which the reported speech was originally made.

¹²⁰ See also Brian Lennon (2015) for a discussion of this article in the context of the challenges that multilingual literature meets today. Sternberg's distinctions prove helpful for an analysis of dialogues in poetic texts (e.g. Welch, *Word-House of a Grandchild*; Joris, *The Agony of I.B.*).

language of high culture and the language of everyday life. Similarly, for him changing languages in speech cannot be reduced to an on-off switching of codes: it amounts to a continuing “mixing, merging and blending” that characterizes the natural language of all human beings (1981: 25). His theory of language concisely summarized in six statements points to key features for future research areas.¹²¹ Wandruszka’s particular interest in the polysemy of words and their translation is a good starting point for an analysis of multilingual nomadic poets’ work: words that change their meaning when they travel across linguistic borders should not be called “false friends”, as if they belonged to different systems. It is natural for words to wander and to acquire new connotations in new locations or, alternatively, to change the sense in which they are known in other places. Polysemy thus becomes a rich source for poetic investigations (233-234) and is part of what he calls language as creative game (319).¹²² Looking at translations of poetic language, Wandruszka does not speak of correct or false renderings; he prefers to underline the wealth of forms, structures, sounds and images that translations produce, with each new text contributing its own music and reflections that make up human language (295 -312). Language, quite generally, is a multifaceted process of translation that takes many forms (321).

In his article, “Polyglot Literature and Linguistic Fiction” (1978) Hugo Baetens-Beardsmore sets up broad categories of linguistic pluralism.¹²³ He sees polyglot literature as “a *genre* whose overall presence in Western literature make[s] a closer study worthwhile” (92). He is mostly interested in texts (dramatic texts) that reflect language mixing in frontier areas where standardized languages are in contact with a variety of dissimilar dialects, as is the case in Belgium. The analysis of texts involves reflections on the sociocultural context and on the audience likely to understand the shift between languages. With examples of artificial or fictitious languages, he points to personal forms of multilingualism (“linguistic fiction”) that should also be understood as categories of polyglot literature.

Only Wandruszka’s study is a full-length book. Yet all these early studies of multilingualism and literature have a few common points: their opening beyond the usual domain of philology, the attention they draw to cultural contexts and sociolinguistic aspects, as well as attempts at setting up categories of texts. However, as Baetens-Beardsmore writes, polyglot literature remained a marginal phenomenon “rarely of great artistic merit” (1978: 100). Such a view may explain why polyglot writers, like Welch and Joris, on

¹²¹ For a theory of multilingualism, Wandruszka has set up six statements 1. Der Mensch lernt mehrere Sprachen 2. Eine Sprache ist viele Sprachen 3. Jede Sprache ist Mischsprache 4. In jeder Sprache ist Notwendigkeit und Zufall 5. In jeder Sprache ist schöpferisches Spiel 6. Sprache ist Übersetzung (1981: 313-321).

¹²² Exploring translanguage polysemy is a characteristic feature of Joris’s writing, see numerous references in later chapters.

¹²³ He distinguishes between 1. Polyglot Authors 2. Polyglot Texts 3. Mixed Language usage and 4. Linguistic Fiction.

the one hand remained reticent towards little regarded idioms like Luxembourgish and on the other hand were aware of the challenge that polyglossia in the tradition of “high culture” and modernist poetry would mean.¹²⁴ From these isolated studies, multilingualism gradually emerged as a versatile research field.

3.1.2 Critical thoughts on language and language multiplicity

References to theorists and thinkers addressing issues of language and language multiplicity appear in many studies on multilingualism. The following brief notes echo ideas that underpin approaches by literary scholars and applied linguists. Often, the selected thinkers’ own position between languages accounts for their sensitivity to issues of polyglossia. In no way do the short notes below pretend to sum up philosophers’ thoughts: Only those ideas are mentioned that correspond to core questions discussed in relation to multilingual poets’ writing or positioning.

Heteroglossia and dialogic imagination

The work of Michail Bakhtin plays a crucial role for both literary and sociocultural research. His concept of *heteroglossia*, as “diversity of speech types and sometimes even diversity of languages” based on a study of discourse in the novel (2004 [1981]: 262 ff) has had a lasting influence on views of multilingualism. In relation to heteroglossia, Bakhtin speaks of orchestration and aesthetic organization and what he says about the novelist *orchestrating* voices is also relevant for a study of poets who like Welch and Joris give pre-eminence to various voices in their poetry.¹²⁵

Hybridization of language is another important notion in Bakhtin’s thinking. It means that two levels of linguistic consciousness are combined in one text, despite a wide separation in time and social space (see the added “Glossary”: 423-434).

The emphasis that he puts on *voice and dialogue* rather than on national languages as coherent and grammatical and semantic systems shows a view of language as constantly in movement under the pressure of centrifugal forces. The notion of “dialogic imagination”, which Holquist has chosen as a title the publication of *Four Essays* (1981), is crucial for an understanding of language multiplicity as a plurilingual dynamic of interacting voices. From Bakhtin’s notion of intratextual dialogism or double-voiced discourse (324 ff), Kristeva has developed the concept of intertextuality.

¹²⁴ For an overview of the terminology linked to multiple languages, see the Glossary.

¹²⁵ Welch as orchestrating the voices of her grandparents, or mixing Rimbaud’s poetic utterances and her own. See also Joris arranging voices in *Winnetou Old*, “Al-Ishk” and in the play *The Agony of I.B.*

Performative views of language and literature

A belief in the performative nature of language underlies views on multilingualism as soon as language is considered not as a system that exists on its own but as constitutive of human beings (Wandruszka) and as part of interactive processes. Since views on language performativity have an impact on the present inquiry, it is worth recalling some key aspects of speech act theory.

In *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), J.L. Austin introduces the notion of speech act and invents a new vocabulary linked to what he calls performative utterances, which stand in opposition to statements that declare something to be the case. Austin's theory is a pragmatic theory of language analysing language not in terms of structure (Saussure) but in terms of use. The first concern of speech act theorists is no longer the distinction between truth and untruth. They are interested in the power of performative utterances, which is not merely saying that something is, but putting the focus on what language achieves, on the effect it has. For an analysis of the performative power of language, circumstances or context are important and so are participants or the audience of a speech act.¹²⁶

The relevance of speech act theory for literature

Austin showed no interest in literature. He rejected a study of performatives in fiction because literary language lies outside the context of language he addresses. Poets and literary critics recognize the power of words but they have approached speech act theory in ways that are largely different from those of Austin. One argument is that literature itself is a context and not a detachment from context (as Austin sees it), though it *does* interrelate with the real world via the reader. This view underpins the work of the School of Constance where Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss developed an aesthetic of reception, in which the notion of an implied reader's response to literature is central.¹²⁷ Austin's social conventions are replaced by traditions of literary practice and shared thinking. A diachronic, historical dimension accounts for an appreciation of the poets' work. Another argument in favour of the power of words foregrounds the role of literary speech in the formation of social communities.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Ultimately, Austin came to question the performative claim of philosophy and notably of language philosophy and his own speech act theory. His distinction between concepts (illocutionary and constative) has not the force that an illocutionary act should have to carry a lasting effect: it cannot be enforced as truth. Philosophical speech acts may fail, like all other speech acts. For a discussion of Austin's theory, see Barbara Cassin, *Quand dire, c'est vraiment faire* (2018).

¹²⁷ When Liliane and Cyril Welch wrote *Address: Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Butor* (1979), they were in contact with the School of Constance; see ch. 6. 2.

¹²⁸ In *Literature as Conduct: Speech Acts in Henry James* (2005), Hillis Miller has framed literary speech acts as forms of ethical conduct underwriting the formation of social communities.

Jacques Derrida challenges Austin's speech act theory generally and shows that speech act theory must not only include works of literature but that any speech act may be literature. Derrida elaborates new speech act theories that form the basis of new notions of responsible and effective politico-ethical decision and action. Derrida may well be the most often quoted philosopher in the context of multilingualism. From his extensive work I wish to mention a few core ideas about language. In *Le monolinguisme de l'autre, ou La prothèse d'origine* (1996) he deals with the paradoxical position of (post) colonial subjects. The metaphor of language as prosthesis or external, added-on limb remains relevant for all writers for whom writing tongue, mother tongue and position in a community (national or cultural) do not coincide. They have the impression of borrowing their words from a community to which they do not quite belong – an idea that is frequently taken up by writers and critics. Their words do not always coincide with the expectations of a community, a situation for which Derrida however sees no alternative. Derrida's writings often touch on issues of ownership ("Language is never owned" 2005), on relations to the other's language(s) and translation (*Des tours de Babel* 1985).

He has closely investigated the power of writing, notably through the distinction between *différance* as being other and *différance* as deferring or postponing or by exploring what writing in the margins means for texts (see *Marges de la philosophie* 1972). In several texts, he explores the special role of poetic language (end of *Le monolinguisme*), and analyses the work of poets as standing between languages and culture, notably Edmond Jabès (*L'écriture et la différence*) and Celan (*Sovereignities in Question. The Poetics of Paul Celan*, 2005).¹²⁹

A dialogic text on hospitality (2000) raises many questions about the complex relations between outsiders and newcomers, which put issues of languages and cultures in a philosophical context of legitimacy, ethical obligation, circumstantial constraints and personal reticence. Derrida has also explored the act of reading in terms of hospitality or openness towards a text. He speaks of readers' "active passivity in a description of 'unconditional hospitality'" (see Attridge 2000: 284).

A good overview of Derrida's ideas on literature can be gained from the collection of texts, translated by Derek Attridge and fittingly entitled *Acts of Literature* (1992). The book stresses Derrida's emphasis on the performative nature of literature: entries from the Oxford English Dictionary figuring as general epigraph point to the different meanings of "act" as noun and as verb in English, notably "to act: to carry out to do things", but also "to represent in mimic action; to perform on stage."

¹²⁹ Joris frequently refers to Derrida, in poems (see "Writing/Reading", in ch.see 8.2.3) and in essays, e.g. "Derrida/Celan talk" 2016.

3.1.3 Review of studies with literary perspectives on multilingualism:

The aim of the brief inventory is to highlight selected studies which fit the situation of Welch and Joris (choice of language of writing; interacting languages). In literary studies, multilingualism has emerged as a multifaceted, international research field. The overview is structured along general perspectives, concepts and themes. It attempts to avoid an over-emphasis on national distinctions between studies without denying the role of location for differences in language practices. Perspectives on works and writers from Luxembourg are integrated into the general state of the art in an effort to give them visibility and to move beyond the emphasis on the “special” situation of the country. The aim is to point to possible new openings for research within a broad conceptual context.¹³⁰

Focus on sociocultural dimensions and translingual writing processes

The work of two researchers, located one in Europe, Georg Kremnitz, the other in the US, Steven G. Kellman, is well suited as introduction. Situated between a sociological (sociocultural) perspective and the search of a specific poetics for multilingual writers, their studies point to the wealth of research that has marked the first decades of the 21st century. Kremnitz and Kellman are also among the first to assemble a substantial corpus of critical work as well as their own lists of multilingual writers. Moreover, their ideas on writing processes and on writers’ motivations for language choices remain relevant for nomadic poets today.

When he began his research in the 1990s, the Austrian scholar Georg Kremnitz emphasized the importance of international bibliographies. He further clarified the object of his studies in a second, enlarged edition of *Mehrsprachigkeit in der Literatur. Ein kommunikationssoziologischer Überblick* (2015),¹³¹ a monograph which stands out for the wealth of information it provides. Kremnitz focusses on migration and writers’ choice of languages as determined by their sociocultural environment. The tensions resulting from changes in language contexts are at the centre of Kremnitz’s vast survey of writers and languages in movement; for him language choices cannot be dissociated from issues of personal and collective identity while he perceives languages as distinct systems of national or regional speech forms, each with its own cultural specificities. If Forster mostly focused his study on poets and the aesthetic effects of multiple languages in literary creation, Kremnitz takes a broader approach, opening the research field to all genres, in particular to autobiographic or fictionalized biographical literature, in which the

¹³⁰ Juxtaposing the work of three migrant writers with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds – Jean Portante (Italian-Luxembourg poet writing in French); Kazuo Ishiguro, a Japanese British novelist writing in English and Zafer Şenocak, the German-Turkish writer) – Jeanne E. Glesener takes a similar approach in her dissertation (2009).

¹³¹ See the introduction of the 2004 edition (“Einleitung und Stand der Forschung”), included in the second edition (2015: 9-14).

writing bears traces of various forms of migration or exile.¹³² Central Europe and mass migration after World War Two offer innumerable examples of how writers make their language choices, yet his most important research may well be about authors living and writing between Romance and other languages. In Kremnitz's study, a focus on experiences of migration takes prevalence over an analysis of formal aspects of language. Ultimately, through his research Kremnitz aims to overcome the past errors of nationalistic politics by uncovering the huge field of literary productions, which involve multiple languages and cultures. His work is a recognition of writers like Ilma Rakusa, - to cite just one example - who do not seem to belong to any national literature because of her multiple linguistic and cultural backgrounds; writing about her nomadic childhood, she says that in her luggage there were not dolls and toys but languages.¹³³

For his investigations in *The Translingual Imagination* (2000),¹³⁴ the American scholar Steven G. Kellman chooses the notion of literary translingualism, which he defines in the preface as "the phenomenon of authors who write in more than one language or at least in a language other than their primary one". By inquiring into imaginative processes, he attempts to grasp specific aspects of the writing craft, which are at work when two or more languages are involved.¹³⁵ The book is remarkable for the number and diversity of writers, languages and circumstances to which it refers. Kellman admits that the classification of writers which he proposes is an oversimplification though it can serve as a means to identify key issues at stake in a study of translingual literature.¹³⁶ Classifications go against the fundamental view of translingualism as a dynamic phenomenon of thinking and creating, in which relationships between languages change over time as writers encounter voices and move among them. For many writers, as Kellman argues, the distinction between specific languages and the focus on one language is ultimately transcended:

¹³² He considers what the Germans call *Migrationsliteratur* a subdiscipline of literary studies. Despite some overlapping with literary multilingualism (2015: 16), migration literature in his eyes is but one dimension of multilingualism in literature.

¹³³ Quoted in Kremnitz 2015: 29.

¹³⁴ Also see, Steven G. Kellman, editor, *Switching Languages: Translingual Writers on their Craft*, 2003.

¹³⁵ For a more extensive view on translingualism, see 3.3.1.

¹³⁶ Kellman distinguishes several types of writers: "monolingual translinguals"; "ambilingual" writers who produce bi- or multilingual (internally translingual) texts and those who produce truly polyphonic work. I would add another group of authors, whose translingualism may pass unnoticed, as they do not fit the general definition. They are the writers in exile, who despite migration or translocation cling to their mother tongue. For their writing, they keep the voice of their origins amidst the clatter of other languages around them. In his memoir (2003) and in essays (2012), the Romanian writer Norman Manea, who immigrated to the United States, offers a complex and thorough analysis of the effects that the gap between his writing language and the languages surrounding him have on his work.

Translinguals move beyond their native languages, but for many, particularly in the twentieth century, theirs is an aspiration to transcend language in general, to be pandictic,¹³⁷ to utter everything. Impatient with the imperfections of finite verbal systems, they yearn to pass beyond words, to silence and truth. (Kindle edition, end of ch. 1)

On several occasions, Kellman refers to panlingualism, well knowing that a condition which would encompass all languages is an ideal state that remains impossible. Translingualism is not an abstract concept but a specific craft and process, which contradicts the contentious view that meaningful thought can only be expressed in the mother tongue. It is also, as Kellman shows, a tradition which creates new literary spaces with their own dynamic connections:

[T]ranslingualism is more than a categorical contrivance, a classification concocted to serve the purpose of idle pedantry. It is a genuine and rich tradition, one in which authors are acutely aware of shared conditions and aspirations. Chinua Achebe responds, explicitly and implicitly, to Conrad, Eva Hoffman to Mary Antin. Both J.M. Coetzee and Raymond Federman have written extensively about Beckett. (Kindle edition Loc 67 of 3263)

It is an important point to keep in mind for the study of Welch and Joris. Translingualism has its own tradition in the sense that writers position themselves outside national literatures and that their work often has explicit references to other texts created across languages and cultures.¹³⁸

From Kellman's innumerable examples of translingual writers and their motivations, one may deduce not a uniform profile but a range of specificities, which account for their aspirations and allow a tentative description of multilingualism as a literary phenomenon. The circumstances of exile, migration and between-ness in which translingual writers create their texts may be the most noticeable aspects of the phenomenon but features of the writing process, with indications of a specific poetics, provide the insights on which to base a close analysis of texts. Kellman's enquiry into the workings of a translingual, literary imagination concentrates on writers' thoughts about the nature of language, on meta-reflections about creative processes, on a questioning of culture-bound conventions and authors' constant search for their (re-)positioning in relation to languages.

Summing up the relevance of early studies by Kremnitz and Kellman for research today

¹³⁷ On several occasions, Kellman refers to *panlingualism* well knowing that it stands for an ideal but impossible state.

¹³⁸ See for instance the chapter "Coetzee reading Beckett", in which Kellman analyses the South African novelist's ongoing interest in Beckett's way of responding to the challenges of writing by moving inside two different linguistic spaces. For Kellman, "literary translingualism is a legacy rather than taxonomic contrivance" (kindle 1052/ 3263). One could add other examples, such as the relation between Ivan Goll and Juan Goytisolo, both writing about Jean sans Terre. The idea of translingualism as a literary tradition is an important point to remember when considering references to other writers in the work of Joris and Welch (Joris referring for instance to Tencour and Celan, or Welch writing or responding to Rimbaud and Dante are examples of connections between writers on the move and writing across languages, which will be explored in Part III).

The studies that appeared in the years shortly before and after the turn of the millennium have a double aim: give visibility to a still little known area of literature and open up new perspectives on a multifaceted research area. As the work by Kremnitz and Kellman shows, multilingualism raises many issues disregarded by national philologies which have been reticent to consider work produced on the periphery of cultural and linguistic territories. How much this concerns new approaches of literature in Luxembourg transpires from Conter's conclusion in a paper on Luxembourg philology "Die Kategorie der Sprache als nationales, Identität stiftendes Medium ist dekonstruiert und mit ihr die Vorstellung einer homogenen Sprachnation." (2008: 30) With today's growing production of works, which, to different degrees, integrate more than one language and culture, one thus notices seemingly opposed trends. The notion of translingualism, on the one hand, corresponds to a search for formal standards; through an acknowledgment of conventions in another language and the emulation of foreign models, writers seek to establish links with recognized works. On the other hand, translingualism has become an expression of migratory experiences; it is a means for cross-border writers to achieve a greater authenticity by an imitation of multilingual contexts and code-switching in everyday speech. One might tentatively say that the interest in multilingual phenomena in literature reflects both tendencies, but that the emphasis varies according to scholars' disciplinary position and writers' ideals. Moreover, both trends, the search for greater formalism as well as the alignment with informal plurilingual discourse, can result in experimental practices.

Multilingualism: a multifaceted research area of Comparative Literature

Comparative Literature often lends an appropriate frame for studies with multiple border crossing perspectives and aims at overcoming the constraints of linguistic boundaries inherent in many canons of study and research.¹³⁹ As a result, collections of essays have been published, usually focusing on selected aspects of multilingualism while also highlighting an ever-growing diversity in the references to writers, languages and locations. Studies usually focusing on the work of selected authors reach from the analysis of foreign elements in a dominant language and culture, to reflections on language experiences linked to exile or migration. Introductory essays by editors situate the central questions and help conceptualize what is at stake in the research. Looking at a few such collections should give an idea of the direction that research is taking in the first decade of the 21st century¹⁴⁰ thanks to interdisciplinary initiatives and

¹³⁹ For an overview of a theoretical framework, see Burtscher-Bechter and Martin Sexle, eds, *Theory Studies? Konturen komparatistischer Theoriebildung zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts* (2001).

¹⁴⁰ For more recent developments see 3.3.

exchanges between scholars. The presentation also wishes to underline some regional and national specificities which appear in terminology and conceptual references.

An early collection is *Literarische Polyphonie. Übersetzung und Mehrsprachigkeit in der Literatur* (1996), the outcome of a project initiated in Carinthia, as centre of a transborder area. The editors, Strutz and Zima, point to the complementary character of multilingualism and literary translation, the latter not being possible without the translator's knowledge of other languages. The book also foregrounds studies of work created in multilingual border areas and bearing traces of different languages. Translation issues and trans-border multilingualism show the link between languages and territorial aspects, which are variously elaborated in many later studies.

Similar issues are discussed in relation to Luxembourg literature and its multiple languages, in *Über Grenzen. Literaturen in Luxemburg* (Honnef-Becker and Kühn 2004). The key words in all the contributions of the collected essays refer to borders and border crossing, to hybridity, interculturality, foreignness ("das Fremde"), migration, change of perspective and transgressions.¹⁴¹

Setting the frame for the essays in *Multilinguale Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert* (2002), comparatists Schmeling and Schmitz-Emans evoke general questions on the nature of language as described in the myth of Babel and the miracle of Pentecost. They outline several understandings of multilingualism, as referring to the languages of writers, of regions, of national or regional literatures, or to the languages of texts, while they also recall the important notion of *languages in language*, "Die immanente Vielschichtigkeit der Sprache" (2002: 14-15).¹⁴² Though the different levels of author, text, context and language are interrelated, the distinctions are essential for a cogent argumentation.

In *Multilinguale Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*, the juxtaposition of essays evidences different academic standpoints and shows a recognition of distinct areas of research.¹⁴³ The introductory essay points to significant developments in approaches of multilingual elements and shows that the insertion of foreign elements in texts is not an *acte gratuit* but part of a poetics. Schmeling and Schmitz-Emans recall possible

¹⁴¹ For a focus on multilingualism inside Luxembourg as historical development with effects on writers, see Millim, "Muttersprachliche Mehrsprachigkeit" (2017).

¹⁴² Other designations are "Vielsprachigkeit inmitten der Sprache *sprachinterne Mehrsprachigkeit*"; in English: intralingual multilingualism. Jeanne Glesener points to poets' understanding of language multiplicity when she draws a link with what Jean Portante calls his *étrange langue* (2014). Text internal multilingualism refers to multimodal texts (cf. multimediality in written texts, when words alternate with drawings and pictures, or have insertions of other material, such as advertisements).

¹⁴³ A subdivision into different research areas is reflected in the titles chosen for the four parts of the collection: 1. Avantgarde und Neo-Avant-garde: Zur Ästhetik mehrsprachiger Dichtung; 2. Die Kunst des Polyglotten: Mehrsprachigkeit – Migration – Exil 3. Postkoloniale Räume: Sprachmischung als ästhetischer Widerstand 4. Polyphonie der Sprachkonzepte: Diskurse – Künste – Performances.

functions of multilingualism that account for writers' motivation (16-17): In some cases, foreign elements introduce a note of *exoticism* or they ensure the *authenticity* of a character's speech. The break with the dominant language can bring *comic effects* as unintelligible elements, while unfamiliar (or made-up) words may contribute a hint of *secrecy*¹⁴⁴ and magic. In 20th century poetry, however, multilingualism becomes a mark of *innovation* while it also signals a deliberate breach with the conventions of national languages.

In a second volume of essays, *Literatur und Vielsprachigkeit* (2004), Schmitz-Emans enlarges on the classification of work on multilingualism.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, she adds an essay on the integration of foreign scripts: "Geschriebene Fremdkörper – Spielformen und Funktionen der Integration fremder Schriftzeichen in literarische Texte" (2004: 111-173). The visual and cognitive effect of different scripts is fascinating material for research and proves relevant for an inspection of Arabic script in Joris's poetry.¹⁴⁶

The studies that interest me most are those that see multilingualism as an expression of aesthetic renewal (see section below: "Toward a poetics of multilingualism"), as reflection of cultural interaction and as a tool of political resistance (studies based on concepts borrowed from postcolonial theory). The comic dimension of multilingualism in literature, often associated with macaronic poetry, deserves particular attention as it has led to diverse uses: Rabelaisian elements or the equation of multilingualism with popular culture or "low culture", in contrast with the multilingualism in high modernist poetry.¹⁴⁷

Perspectives opened by research based on a multilingual terminology¹⁴⁸

It is somewhat surprising that most studies on multilingualism ignore the differences in terminology in European languages. Words with a Greek or Latin prefix or suffix seem to wander effortlessly across language borders, requiring minimal adaptations in spelling or endings. Yet connotations and usage may

¹⁴⁴ The dimension of secrecy is present in the classification of Baetens-Beardsmore when he distinguishes "Linguistic Fiction" as a category of multilingualism. See also subsequent derivations in Busch who speaks of pre-Babylonian phantasies. Joris also refers to the importance of fictitious languages, which he made up from his readings, notably of Karl May.

¹⁴⁵ She distinguishes between a) Literaturen vielsprachiger Nationen, Staaten, Regionen und Kulturen (2004: 11); b) Literarische Werke mehrsprachiger Autoren (12); c) Mehrsprachige Texte (14); d) Integrationsformen nonverbaler Sprachen (15); e) Vielsprachigkeit inmitten der Sprachen (15). The translation of the key notions of Viel- and Mehrsprachigkeit into English and French proves tricky, with additional terms, like polyglossia and plurilinguisme bringing more connotations; see Glossary in the appendix.

¹⁴⁶ See also Schmitz-Emans, „Mehrschriftlichkeit. Zur Diversität der Schriftsysteme im Spiegel literarischer Texte,“ in Dembeck/ Mein, *Philologie und Mehrsprachigkeit* (2014: 182-208).

¹⁴⁷ See Schmeling and Schmitz-Emans for the development in views of comic (macaronic) elements (18-20). For a study of comic elements in Luxembourg literature, see Conter 2014; for a view that combines aspects of multilingual literary texts with foreign language acquisition, see Sommer 2003.

¹⁴⁸ For a comparative view of terminology in English, French and German, also see the glossary added in the appendix.

change.¹⁴⁹ Especially German has coined its own words, (*Vielsprachigkeit*, *Mehrsprachigkeit*, *Mischsprachigkeit*), which invite us to re-think underlying concepts. *Mischsprachigkeit*, as different from *Mehrsprachigkeit* is such an example. Possible translations show a change in references.¹⁵⁰ The translation of German terms (into French or English) often requires circumscribing them; hence it invites mediation and negotiation. Explanations in German may help while they also suggest further connotations due to historical developments. The following extract – an explanation of *Mehrsprachigkeit* – is a good example; it adds the notion of *Sprachlichkeit*, which is another instance of an “untranslatable” word and notion:

Mehrsprachigkeit schafft mehr Sprachlichkeit. Dies ist der Grundsatz der mehr- und mischsprachigen Literatur. [...] Es ist jedoch zu unterscheiden zwischen mischsprachigem und sprachentrennendem Multilingualismus. Literarische Mehrsprachigkeit desselben Autors mit einer Verteilung der Sprachen auf unterschiedliche Texte hat eine längere Tradition (vgl. die gleichzeitig lateinische und volkssprachliche Literatur der Humanisten). Mischsprachigkeit dagegen galt einer puristisch geprägten Rhetorik und Poetik als barbarisch und lächerlich und hatte ihren Platz vor allem in den komischen Gattungen (vgl. die Makkaronische Dichtung). [...] [D]er literarische Multilingualismus [entfaltet sich] seit den 50er Jahren im Kontext interkultureller, mischkultureller und globalisierender Konzepte.

Alfons K. Knauth, Multilinguale Literatur: Enzyklopädisches Stichwort als Beitrag zum literaturwissenschaftlichen Basislexikon, in: Schmitz-Emans 2004: 265.

From this description one may draw several important considerations: multilingual literature is presented as surplus (note the pun: “mehr Sprachlichkeit”).¹⁵¹ Yet, the explanations in German also highlight the difference between languages: the key words – “Sprachlichkeit,” “Mischsprachigkeit” as different from “Mehrsprachigkeit als sprachtrennender Multilingualismus”¹⁵² – create notions, for which French and English have no equivalent terms. They ask for paraphrasing and nurture reflections on distinctions that one term alone cannot raise. A literature review on multilingualism can take advantage of such linguistic comparisons to explore the routes of research and ensuing conceptual openings.

Exophony, *Anderssprachigkeit*, *hétérolinguisme*, *hospitalité des langues*

Several terms have been coined or used to highlight specific aspects of writing processes across languages.

¹⁴⁹ For different uses of multi- and plurilingual, see 3.1.4.

¹⁵⁰ In French, “Mischsprachigkeit” may correspond to “métissage linguistique” (cf. Glesener, speaking about Helminger 2013); for a comment on “écritures métisses” see also Gasquet. In English, one finds *Creole*, which stretches the original meaning of the word creole when applied to a mixing of European languages.

¹⁵¹ “Sprachlichkeit”: The suffix implies a meaning that the word “Sprache” (language) cannot convey. The explanation in Duden is: “das Verfügen über Sprache”, hence in translation it might be rendered by something like language availability, or language one has at one’s disposal.

¹⁵² Below, see also *Vielsprachigkeit*, which Schmitz-Emans takes as the overall concept within which one can distinguish several types of *Mehrsprachigkeit*.

Each collection of essays represents a diversity of perspectives while it also reflects, to some extent, the cultural and linguistic standpoint from which, in particular *editors as authors*, approach multilingualism. It is never a centralized perspective: geographical and literary borders are constantly crossed though contributors' cultural and intellectual contexts vary.

Exophony is a term, which appears in studies to refer in the first place to language difference in texts. Thus Perloff includes "Exophonic Writing" in the title of a chapter¹⁵³ that describes a wide range of poems with foreign language insertions, notably work by Caroline Bergvall and Yoko Tawada. An in-depth analysis of the term exophony is given in the introductory text of *Exophonie. Anderssprachigkeit (in) der Literatur* (2007), where Robert Stockhammer, Susan Arndt and Dirk Naguschewski discuss the various contexts in which the term appears. They point to its use for the description of African literature in European languages. Exophony evokes the in-between situation of translingual writers, for whom the previous mother tongue cannot be a writing language. Despite all the differences in their work, writers from Africa have one common characteristic:

[Sie kommen darin überein] die "Zweitsprache" in der sie schreiben, nicht als gänzlich fremde, und umgekehrt, die "Muttersprache", in der sie zu sprechen gelernt haben, nicht als gesicherten Hort zu beschreiben, an dem sich schriftstellerisch festhalten oder in den sich jeder Zeit zurückkehren ließe. (10)

This situation, which applies to many writers opting for a culturally more highly esteemed literary language, is also similar to that of the Luxembourg poets whose mother tongue did not seem fit for literary work.

Exophony also permits a discussion of literature from the double perspective on exile as emigration and immigration. Hence, one may ask how a study of Welch and Joris should combine this double perspective on their positions in relation to languages and literary communities. However, as Stockhammer, Arndt and Naguschewski confirm, a critical reading of the term *exophony* reveals a problematic implication which derives from the prefix *exo-*. It refers on the one hand to well-defined territories with clear-cut borders, requiring a clear position on one or the other side; on the other hand, it also suggests countable languages and seems to leave no room for language mixing, while the critics' interest in exophonic texts often lies in their ability to let languages interact. (2007: 14-16) Finally, they point to the possibility of reading the German word "Anders-Sprachigkeit" with a stress on the first word: *Anders-Sprachigkeit*, for which a literal rendering is not easy in English. It amounts to saying, that there are not only different

¹⁵³ The full title of the essay is "Language in Migration: Multilingualism and Exophonic Writing in the New Poetics", in *Unoriginal Genius* (2010: 123-145).

national languages, but that literature from the start is a foreign language, which leads them to propose a word game which echoes the terminology of language learning: “Zweitsprache, Literatur” (2007: 21). By now the double meaning of the subtitle of the book, *Anderssprachigkeit (in) der Literatur*, where the preposition “in” is put between brackets, is clear.

Hétérolinguisme is a term coined by Francophone researcher, Rainier Grutman (1997; 2017) to analyse linguistic otherness (or *Anderssprachigkeit*) in literary texts. He defines it as « la présence *dans un texte* d’idiomes étrangers, sous quelque forme que ce soit, aussi bien que de variétés (sociales, régionales ou chronologiques) de la langue principale » (1997 : 37). The difficulty to define language borders in texts has also led distinctions between explicit and latent forms of multilingualism (Radaelli 2011; Blum-Barth 2021)¹⁵⁴ and the detailed description of a wide spectrum of heterolingual devices (Suchet 2014). A review of studies on multiple languages approached as heterolingualism/ *hétérolinguisme* is more extensively discussed in 3.1.7.¹⁵⁵

Francophone studies of multilingualism often emphasise notions of *hospitality*.

Écrivains multilingues et écritures métisses. L’hospitalité des langues (2007) is a collection of articles assembled by Gasquet and Suarez, which introduces conceptual links of multilingualism via its dominant language, French, with references to a wide range of writers from mostly Latin countries through the key words, *hospitalité* and *écritures métisses*. The subtitle of Gasquet’s essay, “L’hospitalité des langues ou une invitation à la xénoglossie,” introduces another term, *xenoglossia*, here primarily meant to refer to foreignness and otherness.¹⁵⁶ The emphasis is on the language hospitality sought by writers who do not write in their mother tongue—a growing phenomenon in all parts of the world.¹⁵⁷ *L’hospitalité des langues* or *l’hospitalité langagière* is a phrase he has borrowed from Paul Ricoeur: “Hospitalité langagière donc, où le plaisir d’habiter la langue de l’autre est compensé par le plaisir de recevoir chez soi, dans sa propre

¹⁵⁴ For a specific focus on drama, see Conter 2017 (Glossary in the Appendix).

¹⁵⁵ Olivier Mouginot presents an overview of the French/ Francophone perspective on multilingualism in a document, entitled [Balade conceptuelle entre les langues : deux livres pour penser ensemble plurilinguismes et écritures]. It is a digitally written diary (2014-2018) in which he records his own readings.

¹⁵⁶ *Xénoglossie* according to Larousse means « Phénomène au cours duquel un sujet se montre capable, dans un état modifié de conscience, de parler une langue étrangère véritable qu’il ne connaît pas à l’état conscient ». <https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/x%C3%A9noglossie/82873>. It is thus reminiscent of *glossolalia* and the miracle of Pentecost. Glossolalie -Phénomène extatique, constaté dans de nombreuses religions et sectes religieuses anciennes et modernes, dans lequel le sujet émet une série de sons ou de mots dont les auditeurs ne peuvent saisir le sens sans le concours d’un autre sujet possédant le don de l’interprétation. Larousse

¹⁵⁷ For other references to hospitality, see Derrida *De l’hospitalité* (1997), or *Of Hospitality*. Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond (2000). For comments on the shared etymology of *hostis* and *hospis*, see also Hansen-Pauly 2009.

demeure d'accueil, la parole de l'étranger. » (2018: 11) Hospitality is a view of translation seen as mutual sharing and exchange. However, Gasquet reminds us of another face of hospitality (also developed by Derrida):

L'hospitalité est en rapport direct avec l'épreuve de l'étranger ¹⁵⁸, cette volonté farouche d'élargir l'horizon linguistique et culturel. L'hospitalité est le devoir ultime de l'accueil. Cependant, il n'y a pas d'accueil sans résistance puisque les lois de l'hospitalité se forment en lutte dialectique contre le refus de l'autre, de sa langue et de sa culture. Derrière toute hospitalité point un soupçon : la menace de l'étranger et de l'étrange. (2007: 10)

Referring to Ricoeur, ¹⁵⁹ Gasquet uses notions of in-between-ness and nomadity, which are central for a study of Welch and Joris:

L'écrivain de l'entre-deux langues est voué à construire une identité différenciée, construite sur la base du refus du provincialisme de la langue maternelle. Mais ce refus est double, puisqu'elle implique aussi un recul insurmontable par rapport à la langue d'accueil. Ces écrivains apatrides [...] sont des « des exilés qui auraient renoncé à la quête de l'asile d'une langue d'accueil. Bref des nomades errants ». (Gasquet 2007: 9)

For Gasquet, a writer between languages refuses a place in the mother tongue while also remaining reticent to accept a place in a host language. Choosing to write in another language, these authors are mediators – “des passeurs” – who like translators are located between languages and cultures. ¹⁶⁰

Écritures métisses is another expression that figures preeminently in the introductory essay. For Anglophone readers, it reveals facets of *métis* that are rarely put forward in relation to multilingualism.

¹⁶¹ For Gasquet,

[Métissage et multilinguisme] se situent dans un permanent “entre-deux”, toujours pluriel. Le métissage comme le multilinguisme glissent, par définition, vers un chantier en permanence inachevé. Dans le domaine littéraire, l'un et l'autre travaillent à la déprovincialisat[i]on de l'écriture et au désenclavement des esprits. Mais il ne faut pas comprendre le métissage comme une simple acception du multiculturalisme, ou encore comme l'aboutissement de la fusion entre les identités et les cultures. Ce n'est pas non plus un syncrétisme figé, mélange savant de plusieurs cultures. D'après Laplantine, ce qui caractérise les formes du métissage c'est leur inachèvement, ou plutôt la possibilité d'être différemment. ¹⁶² La force de ce dernier repose sur une promesse inachevée, toujours ouverte sur le pluriel en devenir. [...] [D]ans le domaine de la langue [le métissage] acquiert une importance particulière puisque c'est dans ses tréfonds que pourrait se forger

¹⁵⁸ A reference to a book by the translation theorist Antoine Berman, *L'épreuve de l'étranger* (1984).

¹⁵⁹ See Ricoeur, *Sur la traduction* (2004 : 18-19; 2018:10).

¹⁶⁰ In an essay included in the collection, Christian Lagarde takes a sociolinguist's view of language hospitality (2007: 19-29); Karpinski comments on language hospitality in connection with feminist theories (see 3.3).

¹⁶¹ It is also worth recalling that in French *métis* is associated with sturdiness when it refers to half cotton, half linen material. See the publicity for the sale of quality canvas: « L'association entre le coton et le lin rend le tissu métis très solide et lui permet de garder un aspect soigné et délicat. » (Les toiles de la montagne noire)

¹⁶² Gasquet refers to François Laplantine and Alexis Nouss, *Dictionnaire des métissages* (2001).

(soulignons le conditionnel) une identité ouverte sur le multiple humain. [...] Cette possibilité d'être différent dans le monde et envers le monde se veut une résistance contre l'être figé et clos. Ainsi le lien du métissage avec la résistance linguistique des écrivains multilingues devient plus explicite. (Gasquet 2007: 11)

Métissage thus appears as a term linked to breeding but with fewer negative connotations than in other languages: crossbreeding, mixing – etymologically meaning that something is half this and half that – stands for strength, and potential for novelty and plurality.¹⁶³ *Métissage* bears some resemblance with Bakhtin's description of the hybridization of language. Like multilingualism, *métissage* always implies plurality as well as an in-between state. Both suggest something that by definition is unfinished, work in progress, and involves an affirmation of difference. *Métissage* is an opening on the future, on plurality; it cannot be conceived without movement, a feature, whose relations to multilingualism will be further explored through nomadic theories.

Gasquet's views are close to Glissant's ideas of *Métissage*, often translated as *creolization* in English. Related concepts in Postcolonial Studies are *mestizo*, and hybridity which can be linked to Homi Bhabha's notion of third space. The emphasis is on cultural interaction. Writers like Edward Said, Salman Rushdie or V.S. Naipaul analyse their position between languages but Anglophone postcolonial studies do not pay particular attention to translingual writing as a "key concept". Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2013) refer to language particularities always in relation with another concept, as shown by their see entries on "Nation Languages," on "Appropriation" (of English), "Borderland". Literature is discussed from a primarily Anglophone position.¹⁶⁴

Creativity

In an inventory of research areas, creativity can figure as a cross-language notion associated with multilingualism. *Polyphonie - Mehrsprachigkeit und literarische Kreativität* (2010), a collection of essays edited by Michaela Bürger-Koftis, Hannes Schweiger and Sandra Vlasta reflects an interdisciplinary approach with contributions in the same volume from biography studies, cognitive sciences, various fields of linguistics and literary studies with an important focus on comparative studies. The contributions in *Multilinguisme et créativité littéraire* (2012), edited by Olga Anokhina, follow a different methodology. They look at the genesis of multilingual texts, often by a close analysis of manuscripts. They show the role of cognitive as well as affective components of literary creation while they also examine the relation between reading and writing. This has led Anokhina to speak of *plurilinguisme à géométrie variable*, an interesting notion for an approach of writers as readers. The essays in the collection exploit various tracks

¹⁶³ Suchet however would not agree and sees the same negative connotations in French.

¹⁶⁴ Also see Boehmer "A Postcolonial Poetics of Multilingualism?" (2019)

to explore the genesis of multilingual writers' work; for a study of Welch and Joris, the focus on the role of authors' reading across languages is the most promising.¹⁶⁵

Toward a poetics of multilingualism

Studies on the specificities of a poetics of multilingualism in literature entail references to images, metaphors and paradoxes, such as *the invisible mouth*, the *palimpsest* and *unoriginal genius*. They are devices that highlight multivoicedness and dialogue inside texts, while they also allow connections with notions of cultural diversity (or *Interkulturalität*), space and territory as developed in postcolonial theory.

Visible and invisible poetic processes

In "Poétiques de la bouche invisible. Polyglossie et codes discursifs de la modernité." (2002), Wladimir Krynski starts his enquiry into different incarnations – or avatars - of polyglossia with Homer, whose writings contradict the future ideals of a pure language. His use of swear words, vulgar expressions, metric licenses, idiomatic expressions and a diversity of dialects are signs of polyglossia inside the Greek language, a practice of which classicists may not approve. (2002: 39) Krynski understands polyglossia in 20th century literature "comme méthode dialogique, interlangagière et intercodique, mais aussi comme modalité de construire un message intertextuel de plus en plus complexe." (40) He addresses a key question for any study of literary multilingualism: the problem of understanding texts that polyglossia and its citational practices raise for readers through an ever growing space of referents.

The challenge for him is to find a method of reading that integrates a recognition of multilingual formulations while also ensuring the readability of texts. Despite the great diversity that he notices in polyglot writing processes, he believes that they can all be approached through the same metaphor: "the poetics of the invisible mouth." Thanks to the metaphor, the foreign elements are perceived as utterances of speakers who are not directly named but may be partly identified either as individuals or as voices in a network of exchanges, or as representatives of larger groups.

For Krynski, 20th century writers who resort to multilingual elements in their texts, move beyond 19th century models of literature, and base their poetic discourse ("codes discursifs") on conventions of communication. Writers are aware that in their texts they address readers and that they can do this in different ways. Traces of this exchange give evidence of the role they attribute to the insertion of foreign elements – but also of the degree of communication they actually aim at: "L'auteur moderne inscrit dans

¹⁶⁵ This "plurilinguisme à géométrie variable" is a core feature of the multilingualism of Joris and Welch, reflected in their reading practices. A genetic approach based on the comparison of various versions of poems is not possible as their archives do not hold early drafts.

son texte des indications de lecture(s), des auto-identifications allusives qui attirent l'attention du lecteur sur certains éléments du texte." (41) ¹⁶⁶

In his analysis of multilingual works, Krynski shows how despite its immense complexity a very thoroughly constructed work, like Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, offers readers possibilities to construct a web of meaning making relations between voices and languages. In other cases, the efforts of identifying the invisible mouth behind words may not lead to a satisfying overall vision, yet, as in the case of T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land*, the aim may well be the picture of a world in whose fractures and inconsistencies render the absence of all sense of order. Similarly, foreign elements as part of language games only work for the reader when the text offers some props – as is not the case in Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* where all referential links are demolished:

Krynski's inclusion of reader perspectives in his poetics is a crucial point. In his concluding thoughts about literary multilingualism, he raises core questions which derive from the interactional approach.

Les différents avatars de la polyglossie posent le problème de la communicabilité du langage littéraire devenu hybride et s'exprimant en plus d'une langue. La polyglossie soulève aussi la question de l'ontologie du littéraire. La langue au bout du moderne aboutit-elle à un jeu pur et complexe de ses propres miroirs ? Ou bien est-elle encore capable de reconstruire une éthique du communicatif ? (50)

By stressing the importance of communicability, he points to the potential of multilingualism in literature for a richer exchange, but he also warns against its excesses when multilingualism becomes a mere game without references to reality. ¹⁶⁷

Literature cannot be entirely monological; poetry too needs to respect the Bakhtinian notion of dialogue. The specific in-between situation of multilinguals and nomads reinforces the need of a rupture with the traditional monologue of a lyrical subject. This means that in their poetry readers wish to recognize **an imagined dialogue**, remotely reminiscent of letter writing or other forms of exchange.

I understand Krynski's reference to "avatars of polyglossia" in the sense of incarnation (etymologically of Vishnu). It implies the notion of transformation, which makes avatar an interesting, open notion to approach the diverse versions of multilingual interacting voices that Joris and Welch represent. Krynski speaks of poetics – *les poétiques* – of the invisible mouth in the plural and shows that writers always have their own way of communicating (or not communicating) via multiple languages: "the invisible mouth" in many texts, is plural too, speaking in different foreign tongues.

¹⁶⁶ See the description that Suchet gives of "embrayage hétérolingue" / indicators of "gear changing" in texts (2014: 37-41).

¹⁶⁷ « Il semble que le jeu de Joyce a démolit le référentiel. Il en a compromis toutes les prétentions mimétiques. Le retour au sérieux n'est plus possible. » (Krynski 2002 : 50)

The metaphor of the invisible mouth also appears in other critical studies. Dirk Weissmann entitles an essay on Yoko Tawada's bilingual play *Till* with an evocation of two mouths: "Vom Sprechen mit zwei Mündern" (2016). The image of doubleness is present in other metaphors, like the one used by Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, "Une chaise à deux dossiers/ Ein Stuhl mit zwei Lehnen" (1991). It is also close to the metaphor of the mask used in particular by writers who use a second language or a language they feel is not their own. In *The Hooligan's Return* (2003) and in his essays (2012), the Romanian writer Norman Manea extensively explores the notion of the mask to evoke his impression of a lack of authenticity and legitimacy in English. In a recent study entitled "Les langues sous la langue: pour une poétique des palimpsests exophones dans la littérature allemande" (2017), Weissman speaks of an invisible tongue and links it to two other concepts used to describe a multilingual poetics: the palimpsest and exophonic writing.

The palimpsest, as conceptual metaphor has been extensively presented in chapter 2.2.2. Since further on, its power for translingual writing is explored in relation with the poets' work, a few references to studies should suffice to show its potential for a multilingual poetics. Gerald Gillespie, for instance speaks of *palimpsestial* relations when he evokes the complex relations between texts and languages as characteristic of the High Modernist Novel and Poem, in particular in the work of Ezra Pound:

Within a containing framework of English syntax, Pound moves with studied artlessness in and out of a variety of other older and newer languages, and often within these integrated multilingual allusions, reminiscences or thoughts, there is an internal palimpsestial layering comparable to that in *The Cantos* at large. (2002: 54)

The palimpsest as metaphor or concept has also been used for the description of postcolonial language appropriation processes in Africa. In *African Palimpsest/ Le palimpseste africain* (2007; 2018), Chantal Zabus offers a detailed analysis of methods used by African authors who through diverse strategies insert native languages *en filigrane*. These are truly multilingual processes, involving many languages. Zabus uses the suggestive but not so common term *europphone* to refer to the complex impact of various European languages on African writing. The emphasis is on a linguistic analysis of texts. A similar approach is at the centre of a study by Susan Arndt, "Postkoloniales Palimpsest. Igbo Relexifizierung und Lexemisierung in der englischsprachigen nigerianischen Literatur" (2007), who studies the impact of English on Anglophone Nigerian literature.¹⁶⁸ Julian Osthues, *Literatur als Palimpsest: Postkoloniale Ästhetik im deutschsprachigen Roman der Gegenwart* (2017) changes the perspective and looks at contemporary German novels as palimpsests with an underlying postcolonial aesthetics.

¹⁶⁸ The essay is included in a collective study of exophonic writing. See above.

Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century (2010) is the provocative title of Marjorie Perloff's study which questions the belief that originality, or writing in one's own words, is an essential characteristic of poetry. She moves from an analysis of modernist works¹⁶⁹ to new developments and investigates how recent literature continues an important trend in 20th century poetry, which consists in integrating the words of others in one's own text. This tradition, as she shows through numerous examples, covers a great number of practices, among which the insertion of words or snippets from other languages are particularly interesting: it is in this context that she speaks of exophonic writing and of a translational poetics. (2010: 16) Perloff looks at developments in citational practices in the age of the world wide web and blogs enquiring onto what poets can do with other people's words, "how already existing words and sentences are framed, recycled, appropriated, cited, submitted to rules, visualized or sounded." (Perloff 2010: xi) In the present review of critical work about a poetics of multilingualism, a link between Perloff's conceptual metaphor of the "unoriginal genius" and the palimpsest, especially thanks to her extensive references to Antoine Compagnon and his study *La seconde main ou le travail de la citation* (1979). In the context of intertextuality, the latter's work is often considered together with *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré* by Gérard Genette (1982). As a metaphor, the "second hand" is reminiscent of Krysinski's image of the invisible mouth, both suggesting the link of the writer's second language with the body and a physical performance.¹⁷⁰

Postcolonial poetics: model for a poetics of multilingualism?

Postcolonial theory has substantially contributed to the critical discourse of the past decades. Yet, we must ask *why* it may be relevant for a study of translingual poets from a country with no direct involvement in colonial regimes or postcolonial politics.

The language situation in Luxembourg bears some resemblance to postcolonial conditions in the sense that the native language for a long time was limited to oral communication while French and German were the languages of power, culture, literacy and prestige. The difference with colonial situations is the independence of the country, the presence of two languages whose centres are located outside the national territory, while for both however the territory of Luxembourg constitutes a fringe, a border area, where we may say, in Bakhtinian terminology, that centripetal and centrifugal forces have been at work - next to the local idiom. Opting for English as a language of writing cannot be explained in terms of

¹⁶⁹ Modernist poets like Eliot, Pound and Walter Benjamin's *Passagen Werk – Arcades Project*.

¹⁷⁰ See also an essay by Pierre Joris "On the nomadic Circulation of Contemporary Poetics between Europe, North America, and the Maghreb," in Carrie Noland and Barrie Watten on *Diasporic Avant Gardes* (2009).

(post)colonial relationship. A possible significance of postcolonial theory for a study of Welch and Joris must be argued in different terms.

Postcolonial theory is plural. Especially in Anglophone research, more emphasis is put on social and political questions than on aesthetics. Literature appears as an instrument of social change and a mirror of realities. Consequently, a poetics will rather focus on postcolonial concepts and themes, such as exile, displacement, rather than on language and form. Elleke Boehmer attempts to react against this content-based approach; in *Postcolonial Poetics. 21st Century Critical Readings* (2018), she revisits the common understanding of poetics as principles of *writing*. Arguing that a poetics also emerges in the interaction between text and reader, she advocates a *postcolonial poetics of reading*. She proposes new readings of central texts of postcolonial literature; her interest is in the response of people today, who approach them from their own context; their webs of meaning making bring fresh insights into what postcolonialism really means for present-day readers. Such a view of poetics asks for a methodology of research that relies on conceptual work as well as on a contextualization of readers as much as of the writers and their work. To outline this poetics all types of writing can be considered, literary texts as well as non-fiction: readers and critics should be open for all aspects of postcolonial writing that they can meaningfully connect.

Multilingualism could be approached similarly. Like postcolonialism, its theorization often depends on preconceived ideas that distract us from how texts speak about multiple languages or how they are multilingual. Hence *a poetics of multilingualism could be seen as emerging in the interaction between text and reader*. It means that multilingualism cannot be reduced to aspects that correspond to existing theories: the poets' texts have their own ways of uncovering further dimensions, in particular by responding to aesthetic linguistic elements. A poetics must always be re-created and readers can help draw a new picture of multilingualism in literature.

3.1.4 Applied Linguists' perspectives on literary records of multilingualism

In the past decades, many scholars in Applied Linguistics¹⁷¹ have moved their focus from the specificities of one language, mostly English, to situations and practices characterized by multiple languages. Though often related to issues of learning, teaching and education, Applied Linguistics has always had a broad outlook¹⁷² and the studies reviewed below correspond to what Pennycook has described as *critical applied linguistics*:

¹⁷¹ Under the label Applied Linguistics I include Second Language Acquisition (SLA), which corresponds to what in German academic research is called *Fremdsprachenforschung*.

¹⁷² Christopher Brumfit defined Applied Linguistics as "the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue" (Brumfit, 1995: 27). : Brumfit, C. J. (1995). "Teacher professionalism

Given the significance of the [even broader] domain I am interested in here – and the particular concerns to do with the global role of languages, multilingualism, power, and possibilities for the creation of difference – it would not seem too far-fetched to suggest that critical applied linguistics may at least give us ways of dealing with some of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time. (Pennycook 2009: 19-20)

Yet at first sight, however broad the approach, applied linguistics still seems far removed from research on literary writing. The following succinct overview of studies aims to show some overlapping with developments in literary studies while also pointing to relevant additional findings.

Multilingualism as a specific field of research

A first step requires a clarification of views on *multilingualism versus bilingualism*, an important point in view of poets whose work interests us for its evidence of contact with several languages. Staking out multilingualism as the linguists' field of research means moving from the juxtaposition of two languages to the recognition of multiple languages in interaction as a specific field of research. Until the turn of the millennium, views on multilingualism were subsumed into theories of bilingualism. Thus, the essays included in *The Bilingualism Reader* (2000), edited by Li Wei, do not specifically deal with multilingualism, but mention it as a variant of bilingualism. In general, sociocultural studies foregrounded issues of second language acquisition – SLA (e.g. Lantolf 2000) before conceiving the much vaster field of multilingualism. In the introduction to *Thinking and Speaking in Two Languages* (2011), Aneta Pavlenko foregrounds the relation between two languages, with just one parenthetical reference to “multilingual” (2012: 17); most essays included in the book rely on the distinction between L1 and L2. Yet, publications that explicitly dealt with multilingualism (e.g. Wei 2009; 2012; Pavlenko, e.g. 2006) soon followed with explanations on their use of terms.¹⁷³

François Grosjean takes a somewhat different position when he explains why he uses *bilingual* rather than multilingual or plurilingual (2018: 7-8) : « la définition que je donne du bilinguisme [...] ne limite pas le nombre de langues (ou dialectes). » He focusses on people's usage of two or more languages in everyday life and prefers to speak of various types of bilinguals. Hence, some people's use of different languages

and research,” in Guy Cook & Barbara Seidlhofer (eds.), *Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 27. The essay collection is devoted to Henry Widdowson who insisted on the combination of theory and practice: “language teaching is a theoretical as well as a practical activity” (1978, p. 75) Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching Language as Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. cf. <https://achilleaskostoulas.com/2018/05/10/what-is-applied-linguistics/>

¹⁷³ In *Emotions and Multilingualism* (2012), Pavlenko explains how concerns about the limitations of a bilingual focus led to an expansion of the field to studies of third language acquisition and of multilingual speakers, referring to Cenoz, Hufeisen and Jessner (2001, 2003): “To reflect these new developments, I use *multilingualism* in the title of this book as the more inclusive term.” (kindle Loc 176 of 4574)

may mainly consist in speaking, for others in reading (and writing), while the level of competence can vary.¹⁷⁴

Surveys of the development in research on multilingualism figure in many studies (e.g. Herdina and Jessner 2002; Aronin and Singleton 2012). As Adelheid Hu pertinently points out, differences in terminology and approach vary with the authors' underlying concept of language as social phenomenon or as an individual's practice (2016). She recalls Wandruszka's view that every person is multilingual if language is understood as encompassing dialects and idiolects (2016: 11), a position that led to an interest in multilingual people and their writing. (See 3.1.1.) Often, distinctions between sociocultural and psycholinguistic approaches become blurred when studies merge both perspectives in the analysis of particular situations.

Language policies for education in Europe¹⁷⁵ have also endorsed new approaches that challenge the traditional views by putting language users, and not languages as separate systems, in their centre. Gradually, scholars from many parts of the world have become involved in cooperative projects on languages in education (Zaraté, Lévy and Kramersch 2008).¹⁷⁶ The crucial distinction between plurilingual and multilingual, which basically differentiates between a juxtaposition of languages in society (*multilingualism*) and interactional competences of individuals (*plurilingualism*) is widely accepted in research. Yet, in most national contexts, with the exception of francophone countries, this differentiation in terminology is rarely respected in practice. In English *multilingualism* prevails, in German it is *Mehrsprachigkeit*.¹⁷⁷

Multilingualism is recognized as a phenomenon that requires its own research (Busch 2013/ 2017: 44-51). It has become a separate field of study with its specific study areas and methods of research (Aronin and Jessner 2015). Diversity is stressed together with the need for a new discourse. (Blommaert 2005; Blommaert and Rampton 2011; Weber and Horner 2012). Blackledge and Creese (2014) propose the term

¹⁷⁴ To see how the controversy is approached in German studies, see Gogolin and Neumann, eds, *Streitfall Zweisprachigkeit. The Bilingualism Controversy* (2009).

¹⁷⁵ See in particular the work of the Council of Europe, notably the CEFR for languages and the proposal of tools, like the Language Portfolio. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>.

¹⁷⁶ The *Précis du plurilinguisme et du pluriculturalisme*, originally published in French, is available in English as *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism* (2011).

¹⁷⁷ In *Handbuch Fremdsprachenunterricht* (2016) Hu offers a concise overview of understandings of *Mehrsprachigkeit* as a concept and of the focus in current research (10-15). She explains: "Der Begriff *Mehrsprachigkeit* wird in den verschiedenen Disziplinen und Sprachräumen nicht einheitlich benutzt. Während in der Psycholinguistik und der Zweitspracherwerbsforschung Bilingualismus häufig als Form von *Mehrsprachigkeit* angesehen wird oder die Begriffe Bilingualismus und *Mehrsprachigkeit* sogar synonym gebraucht werden, wird von Vertreterinnen und Vertretern der Tertiärsprachenforschung und auch der Fremdsprachendidaktik eine Person oft erst als mehrsprachig bezeichnet, wenn sie neben der Erstsprache mindestens zwei *weitere* Sprachen erworben bzw. gelernt hat." (2016:11)

heteroglossia, drawing on Bakhtin's concept, which offers a common lens for social, linguistic and technological variations of language *in action*. It allows moving beyond multilingualism as a juxtaposition of separate, named languages, while the reference to Bakhtin also evokes similarities with approaches in literary studies.¹⁷⁸

The conceptualization of language aspects linked to writing¹⁷⁹

Applied linguistics is interesting for the theorization of language related notions. Studies often refer to situations of displacement, which challenge understandings of language – the language of the individual and the language of society. For an analysis of poets' multiple languages, relevant elements can be drawn from elaborations on concepts related to writing processes, such as the mother tongue, language loss, language repertoire, code-switching, translanguaging, meta-reflections on language.

In the data used for studies (interviews, conversations, memoirs), references to speakers' **mother tongue** or first language in juxtaposition with other languages abound and are critically reflected on.¹⁸⁰ In the past decades, conventional views of mother tongue have been analysed first in relation to bilingualism (cf. Wei 2000) and gradually deconstructed. It is memoirs that led Lantolf and Pavlenko "to problematize and to deconstruct the concept of *native speaker*, a cornerstone of modern linguistics." (2000: 169) Their attention goes to those who though not being born in a certain geographical area have "a participant status in a discursive community." Among the "full-fledged participants" to whom they refer are writers and scholars (for instance Codrescu, Hoffman, Todorov and Wierzbicka) who have reached their position through their own agency and choice of language.

Mother tongue issues are most often discussed in relation to education, where awareness of complex situations calls for new understandings of a person's languages (for a social approach, see Weber and Horner 2012; psycholinguistic aspects are elucidated in Mercer et al. 2012). Language theories have increasingly discarded the notion of mother tongue, while also references to "first" languages and a systematic numbering of a person's languages are questioned or have disappeared from studies based on a social approach. Translingual writers offer rich material for research on "mother tongue", which is the subject of innovative interdisciplinary studies associated with novel approaches of mono- and multilingualism.

¹⁷⁸ For Bakhtin's influence, see above, for instance Schmitz-Emans 2004.

¹⁷⁹ Also see Clark, Romy and Roz Ivanic, *The Politics of Writing* (1997), a book that shows great sensitivity to issues linked to translanguaging.

¹⁸⁰ Derrida; also see theorizations of self and other by Kristeva (see Kramsch 2009: 94-100).

As several studies by Brigitta Busch show, language **repertoire** is a pertinent way of referring to an individual's range of linguistic resources (2012; 2015). The concept of the linguistic repertoire marks a change in paradigm from national languages or dialects to *speakers*; repertoire puts the focus on the choice of heterogeneous means of expression and on the social role of this selection in specific situations (Busch 2010: 58). She also revisits the concept of repertoire in connection with *superdiversity* and *translanguaging* (2012); in her recent studies, she puts the focus on *experience*, on language as *Spracherleben*, based on phenomenological approaches, as developed in the 1940s by the philosopher Merleau-Ponty. (Busch: 2017). For writers who are already multilingual when they arrive in new settings, repertoire appears as a suitable notion to approach the challenges which they continue meeting.

Translanguaging is another concept worth considering in some detail. Despite its primary use in educational contexts, it proves fertile for further elaboration in connection with multilingual writers. It evokes a translation process, while it is also reminiscent of *translingual* – the term that Kellman applies to processes of imagination and writing which straddle across two or more languages. How then can translanguaging enlighten our understanding of multilingual practices? Ofelia García (2009: 42-51) coined the term *translanguaging* to describe phenomena that she observed in bilingual children; they use metalinguistic skills and divergent thinking for meaning making as strategies that monolingual children do not seem to need. García uses the term to develop a concept that fits into her additive, dynamic view of bilingualism and accounts for natural ways of translating or moving between minority and majority languages, either for communication or learning purposes.

In fact, for a study of multilingual poets' writing processes, the origin of the term offers a clue for further understandings of the practice.¹⁸¹ García explains that she borrowed the term from Cen Williams, who coined the Welsh term 'trawsieithu' (García, – quoting Baker 2001) to name a practice in bilingual education, in which the language mode is switched as well as the language: for instance, reading is done in one language and writing in another.¹⁸² This is strikingly similar to natural practices used in multilingual contexts, like Luxembourg, and in particular by writers who respond to texts read in one language by their own writing in another language. (See for instance ch. 8.2 Joris, *Writing/Reading*.)

¹⁸¹ The verb form *linguaging* which has no direct equivalent in German or French was first used by Merrill Swain (1985) to describe cognitive process of negotiating and producing meaningful, comprehensible output as part of language learning.

¹⁸² See also Ofelia García and Li Wei: *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education* (2014). Through Wei's notion of "translanguaging space" language practices are viewed via concepts of creativity and criticality, thus pointing to the nomad poets' construction of translingual and transcultural spaces, analysed in chapter 7.

Scholars have further elaborated the concept of *translanguaging* for the analysis of social interaction in contexts of linguistic diversity. Blackledge, Creese and Hu (2010) look at the role which *translanguaging* and translation play in the construction of social difference. Much in the spirit of García's early work, the concept is analysed in relation to named languages (Otheguy, García and Reid 2015): "Translanguaging is the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages." (2015: 281) The aim is to challenge practices at schools which put bilingual (multilingual) children at a disadvantage and to change views on minority communities. Li Wei (2018) offers a further clarification of concepts. He sees translanguaging and code-switching as two different concepts (involving different views on language). Translanguaging is a process of meaning-making; it is based on the idea that all language is multilingual and multimodal, hence challenging notions of boundaries between named languages or dialects, which by contrast code-switching assumes.

More concepts used to describe negotiations of meaning show similarities with translanguaging. Studies confirm that, in the case of bi- or multilinguals, meaning is often created through the juxtaposition of languages in processes of internalized self-directed dialogue, which Vygotsky calls inner speech (Lantolf 2000: 164-166). Pavlenko has further investigated the inner speech of bilinguals and she proposes the notion of mental lexicons (Pavlenko 2011; 2014).¹⁸³

For a study of translanguaging in written, academic texts by international students, Canagarajah has developed the notion of codemeshing (2011).¹⁸⁴ The four strategies that he distinguishes also appear relevant for an approach of translingual poets' work: Strategies of recontextualization, strategies of voice, strategies of interaction and strategies of textualization are likely to feature in their essays, and in a modified way in poetry, too. (*Consider link with study of heterolingual elements in 3.1.6.*)

Working with language biographies and memoirs

In the wake of 20th century migration, reflections on language acquisition and language experiences have become frequent subjects of autobiographical writing. I will briefly discuss researchers' interest in *language biographies* and *language memoirs* as, together with elements of nomadic theory, they

¹⁸³ See also Jean-Marc Dewaele, "From obscure echo to language of the heart: Multilinguals' language choices for (emotional) inner speech," *Journal of Pragmatics*, 2015, Vol.87.

¹⁸⁴ A link can be drawn between Canagarajah's focus on codemeshing features and Hu's emphasis on "the cultural-linguistic complexity of teaching, learning and encounters at international universities."

contribute to the frames of chapters 4 and 5 (Nomadic Itineraries; Memories of multiple languages in movement).¹⁸⁵

Outlining the main features of language biographies as research material. Biographical narratives about languages, oral forms as well as published accounts by writers who write in a late acquired new language, have become recognized as valuable material for a study of immigrants' linguistic, cultural and social identity.¹⁸⁶

Franceschini (2001) proposes **language biographies** as a new research field. She proposes a dynamic model of a speaker's languages, which takes into account interaction and changes as they occur over time. The aim of a language biography is not the production of an accomplished text but a documentation of a person's contact with languages and cultures.¹⁸⁷ Language biographies are tools for investigations into the acquisition and use of multiple languages.

Nonetheless, Franceschini points out similarities with features of autobiography as a literary genre, notably with the notion of *pacte autobiographique* as conceived by Philippe Lejeune (1975). It is the idea of a contract, which guarantees the reader that the discourse is non-fictional. In the case of language biographies the *pacte* stands for the trust that researchers put in the information that they gather about a person's languages. The focus of her studies (2001; 2004) is on *story telling* which she sees as a process of meaning making for people who have lived in and between two or more languages. Narrating involves remembering and reconstructing events with references to cultural contexts and to others' words, voices or discourse. Moreover, for Franceschini life stories become co-constructions through the response of the interlocutor (or researcher, or interviewer). The theoretical references show parallels with research in literary studies, for instance the reference to Bakhtin's work.¹⁸⁸ Her research is mostly based on conversation material: Language biographies are constructed in exchange with the researcher.

¹⁸⁵ Poststructuralist theories rejected such views of author and autobiography – a position that accounts for example for Joris's reluctance to "sign" his poetic texts as autobiographical. Some of his texts rendering language experiences indicate the search for new, usually non-linear accounts, with insertions of other text types, poems, documentary writing. They coincide with views in the human sciences that foreground self-construction through writing, while Joris foregrounds various aesthetic aspects and formal devices. – Welch's autobiographical writing is better defined in terms of auto-fiction. See ch. 4.

¹⁸⁶ See 3.1.5.

¹⁸⁷ "The Language Biography", which is part of the European Language Portfolio, was motivated by similar ideas about a speaker's awareness of his language experiences. However, in practice it has been turned into tool of (self) evaluation, which bears no resemblance with the narratives on which research focusses.

¹⁸⁸ Her methodological considerations and the framework she conceives for the analysis of personal narratives are taken up and enlarged by other scholars (e.g. Katharina König, "Migration und Sprachidentität. Positionierungsverfahren in Sprachbiographien" 2007).

Other applied linguists find their data on multilingualism in published writers' texts, usually by writers who have gone through multifaceted experiences of migration. Kramsch refers to these written forms of linguistic biographies as *fcv*: "These autobiographical, fictitious or authentic narratives that thematise the experience of language learners or of multilingual individuals who live several languages in their daily lives, have been called 'language memoirs.'" (2004, no pagination) It is interesting to note that Kramsch considers both "fictitious and authentic narratives," thus acknowledging the importance of imagined experiences for investigations into multilingual experiences – a crucial point for a study of poets' positioning.

Other sociocultural theorists have similarly underlined the culturally constructed nature of narratives by those who reflect on the acquisition of a new language (Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000).¹⁸⁹

Common features in applied linguists' approaches

Several studies provide relevant conceptual and methodological details about a biographical approach of multilingualism. Though their research is situated in different linguistic and cultural environments, Claire Kramsch (2004; 2009), Adelheid Hu (2006; 2012), Aneta Pavlenko (2003; 2007) and Brigitta Busch (2008; 2010a) work along similar principles. Significant common points are an emphasis on dimensions of context and time in the narratives, on reflections about interacting languages and a focus on meaning making processes and identity construction. This is how Kramsch outlines the main features of texts that interest researchers:

All are written in the first person¹⁹⁰, they are retrospective accounts of or reflections on events lived in childhood, adolescence or young adulthood. Their authors occupy complex authorial/narratorial subject positions (Hoffman) because they narrate in one language what was often experienced in another (see Susan Suleiman 1996). They give coherence to events lived in a fragmented manner, as seen from the perspective of someone who is now in full command of the language, but remembers how it was when they were not. (Kramsch 2004, no pagination)

Awareness of writers' retrospective view is stressed in many studies. The second important point, "narrate in one language what was experienced in another" is a formulation which evokes translation processes and is reminiscent of aspects of translanguaging. "Giving coherence" to what is first experienced as

¹⁸⁹ "Personal narrative, patterned after culturally constructed conventional narratives (Linde 1993; Shore 1996), is an important verbal artefact for bringing past events (i.e. occurrences involving other people) into the present and for projecting the present into the future. In so doing, people are able to make sense, that is, make meaning, of what they do and of what others do with them." Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000: 171 -172)

¹⁹⁰ The examples of memoirs she gives are all written in the first person. Some authors however have selected third (or second) person narratives for autobiographical accounts. J.M. Coetzee's examples of autobiography in the third person (*Boyhood* 1997, *Youth* 2002, *Summertime* 2009) also contain important passages on multiple language experiences. See M. Lenta, "Autrebiography: J. M. Coetzee's 'Boyhood and Youth'" (2003).

“fragmented”, disparate, elements refers to memoir writing as part of a constructive process of identity formation. In *The Multilingual Subject* (2009), Kramersch explains that the particular interest in written accounts lies in aspects which language acquisition theory usually neglects: “They report such subjective aspects as: heightened perceptions and emotions, awareness of one’s body, feelings of loss or enhanced power, together with imagined identities, projected selves, idealizations or stereotypes of the other” (2009: 5).

Authors of autobiographical pieces also seem to agree that meaning making involves several stages: memorization, narrating or storytelling reinforced by dialogical processes with a real or imagined interlocutor as well as moments of metalinguistic reflections. Reminding us that these narratives are often texts by skilful writers, “in full command of the language”, Kramersch adds a warning: Memoirs are constructions, *ex post* accounts. They must not be seen as direct response, the related views are mediated through language, usually the ‘new’ language; as texts they are constructions, but they also reflect the role of language for self-construction:

Because they appear in the form of written accounts, they have to be read as *ex post facto* reconstructions of events that were often lived in a much more confused manner at the time. Moreover, they have been cast into specific narrative genres and their authors are often experienced literary writers. This is not to say that language memoirs should be disregarded as unreliable data, but the subjective truths they reveal can only be accessed through alternative modes of inquiry that take into account their metaphoric and literary nature. (Kramersch 2009: 5)

The last sentence points to the necessity of interdisciplinary studies, which would include a literary perspective.¹⁹¹

The quotation in the title of Adelheid Hu’s essay “«On regarde une langue à travers l’autre,» Mehrsprachigkeit als Wert und Herausforderung” (2012) is a phrase borrowed from G.-A. Goldschmidt, which puts the stress on the interrelation between languages in writers’ accounts of their experiences. Hu’s study shows through numerous examples how writers in memoirs approach their languages from a diversity of perspectives: as an issue of identity (François Cheng and his passion for French) or as historically situated practices with a political dimension (Goldschmidt and Roger Manderscheid). Other texts underline the fact that new languages bring a different way of seeing the world and a fresh outlook on life, which turns into a source for ever new metaphors (Yoko Tawada; Herta Müller). Memoirs also include reflections on the interaction of languages in the writing process, a phenomenon that among others Jean Portante describes in his work. Autobiographical pieces also become opportunities critical

¹⁹¹ Kramersch herself provides a good example in her reading of a Kafka text, in which she foregrounds a multilingual perspective. (“Multilingual, like Franz Kafka” 2008)

reflections on mother tongue and notions of *Heimat* as territory or language.¹⁹² Some studies include a focus on gender issues as highlighted in memoirs. This point is further developed in relation to studies of the autobiographical dimension in Eva Hoffman's work (cf. for instance Karpinski 2012) and nomadic theory (Braidotti 2011; 2014).

In general, researchers of multilingualism seem to agree on the constructive dimension of language memoirs and a recognition of the symbolic power of language, however differently that symbolic power is understood.¹⁹³

A focus on identity or subject construction

Researchers' focus on memoirs and similar writings is often motivated by an interest in identity issues as linked to a subject's multiple languages. Another assumption is that writing and story telling are important tools for reflections on these issues. The texts thus become relevant sources for an investigation of the role of languages in the formation of identity or plural identities. (Hu 2014)

Depending on their disciplinary leaning and conceptual borrowings, authors of studies speak of issues of *identity*, of *self* or *subject construction* and *(inter)subjectivity*. A study of people's multiple languages requires new approaches of identity (concepts, tools, such as metaphors), the meaning of which is no longer reduced to the now controversial essentialist understanding based on 19th century ideals of one nation, one language. The etymology of identity, as the entry in the *Vocabulaire européen* (2004: 581) reminds us, has a double connection with the Latin *idem* (same) and with *ipse* (self, as intensive form of personal pronouns). The first refers to resemblance, to being indiscernible from somebody else (like twins, or a photo and the real person), while the latter includes the notion of essence, of unchangeability and permanence: with its focus on the individual, it underlines difference from others. Yet, as the article in the dictionary shows, both meanings are interwoven, with modern languages showing different further interpretations or connotations.¹⁹⁴

Conceptual references to identity in studies vary according to the disciplinary positioning of scholars. Hu brings in another perspective on divergent views. She speaks of identity as mental representation and

¹⁹² All of the points highlighted by Hu and others are relevant for the analysis of multilingual poets' writings, as they stress relations to the real world (context), reflective stance as well as references to the role of imagination in memoirs' (re-)construction of experiences. The emphasis on duality recalls the description of a multilingual poetics (cf. Krysinski).

¹⁹³ See Kramersch 2009 and Kramersch 2020.

¹⁹⁴ « La distinction entre la mêmété et l'identité est particulièrement rigoureuse et inventive en anglais depuis Locke (*sameness/ identity*) : voir en particulier « STAND, STANDING, » où s'amorce une nouvelle métaphoricité (« se tenir debout ») que partagent l'anglais et l'allemand, mais non le français. » (2004: 582) One may note the link with *positioning* and *posture*, two notions that are used in the dissertation to speak about indications that poets give of their place and attitudes to languages and literature.

stresses its symbolic character as opposed to former essentialist views. (2014) The distinction that Kramersch proposes for terms frequently related in connection with identity appears useful for an understanding of differences.

The individual is usually taken to be distinct from the group or collective community. It is a sociological or political entity [...] The person is a moral, quasi-metaphysical entity whose integrity needs to be safe-guarded and nurtured. In contrast, the self is a psychological entity that is given to each human being at birth and is to be discovered, respected and maintained. The subject is a symbolic entity that is constituted and maintained through symbolic systems such as language. It is not given but has to be consciously constructed against the backdrop of natural and social forces (2009: 17)

In relation to poetry and literature, *subjectivity* is sometimes understood as the opposite of objectivity and thus discarded as something non-reliable. For this reason it is important to recall for the context of language memoirs what Kramersch adds in a note: “As individuals participate in multiple symbolic exchanges, subjectivity is conceptualized dynamically as a site of struggle and potential change” (2009: 259).

The *subject* is a notion that is not uniformly understood in European languages. Differences are extensively discussed in the *Vocabulaire européen*.¹⁹⁵ For the study of multilingual poets’ writing, a few points also highlighted by Hu (2003; 2014) are relevant to understand the struggles and changes which living with or between several languages involves. Especially in French, the etymology of *sujet* as deriving from the Latin *subjicere* points to subjugation and accounts for the double meaning of the word. A subject is not only the actor, the one who appears as the author of an act (the grammatical subject, for instance), the subject is also subjected to an authority, including the authority that defines language use. Therefore, we must ask what happens to those who live in several languages, with, or between, several authorities. How do they accommodate their own position? Does their writing reflect an in-between position and possibly push them to find aesthetic means to render it? Is poetry a way to escape subjugation and to *emerge* as multiple *subject-in-process*, as Kramersch explains with reference to Kristeva (2009: 96 - 98)?¹⁹⁶ Studies on multilingualism which deal with the role of languages in the process of self-construction show parallels with enquiries in other fields which underline the creative power of writing, for instance with the work of psychologist Jerome Bruner on the narrative construction of reality (1991), and of Paul John

¹⁹⁵ The detailed entry on “sujet” brings elucidations, especially on the differences between uses in French, German and English, also relevant in relation to concepts of language. (2004: 1233-1254)

¹⁹⁶ Hu refers to a further point made by Foucault for whom subjugation also means “the subjugation of discourses to the speaking individuals” (Foucault 1994:246, in Hu 2014: X).

Eakin, who has studied how through autobiography lives become stories. (*Fictions in Autobiography* 1985; *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative* 1999).

In applied linguists' studies on multilingualism, the focus is on how the story of one's languages is part of a complex process of identity creation (or self-construction). Kramsch highlights the symbolic power of language¹⁹⁷ to argue that learning other languages is a means of empowerment and personal fulfilment that reaches beyond economic profit. Her description of subjectivity as a symbolic entity that is constituted through languages, involves awareness of feelings, memories and desires. (2009: 17-18) Developing a sense of self is a process of meaning making which occurs through language interaction with others and which is particularly enriching for the multilingual subject. It is based on post-structural views, according to which "we are formed as subjects through the symbols we create, the chain of signification we construct, and the meanings we exchange with others". Her understanding of intersubjectivity opens a broad scope of shared memories, texts and projections (19). It is largely synonymous with intertextuality (20): Social interaction is enlarged by a symbolic and a historical dimension. In *A Multilingual Subject*, Kramsch shows through numerous examples (Hoffman, Rose-Brook, Kaplan and others) how writers have reflected on these processes.

Hu insists on the constructivist dimension that underlies narratives. Writing, especially in a newly acquired language, is part of a meaning making process:

[Wie Menschen] - individuell wie auch kollektiv – Bedeutung und Bedeutungssysteme konstruieren, inszenieren oder erzählen. Es handelt sich um einen Zugriff, der nicht direct menschliches Verhalten beobachtet, kategorisiert oder misst, sondern der den Menschen als sinnstiftendes, reflektierendes und sich erinnerndes Wesen versteht.¹⁹⁸
(Adelheid Hu 2012: 18)

"Inszenieren" (*staging*) as aspect of the constructive process evokes difference between narrator and narrated event.¹⁹⁹ The role of memory also recalls the role of juxtaposed time dimensions: the time of the event and the time of memorization. Underlining the importance of studies that focus *on self-articulation* in bilingual writers' accounts of decisive experiences of language, she refers to the research

¹⁹⁷ Also see Kramsch's very recent publication: *Language as Symbolic Power*, October 2020. In this book sociological references dominate, with in the first place, Pierre Bourdieu, *Sur le pouvoir symbolique* 1977.

¹⁹⁸ With a reference to Hu 2007.

¹⁹⁹ The idea of *mise en scène* or *scénographie* is also elaborated by Suchet in relation to her notion of *embrayage hétérolingue*.

of Hein-Khatib whose analysis of the work of Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt and Peter Weiss is based on Gabriele Rosenthal's method of biographical reconstruction.²⁰⁰

In several studies (2004; 2007), Hu questions the relations of research into foreign language acquisition with more general academic concerns as debated in cultural theories (*Kulturwissenschaften*),²⁰¹ which provide a range of concepts and themes to consider in relation to multilingualism. The autobiographical perspective is also stressed in connection with multilingual speakers' cultural identity: becoming aware of oneself and others is essential for multilingual language learners (2006)

Brigitta Busch has widely written on multilingualism. In *Mehrsprachigkeit* (2013; 2017 2nd ed.), she studies approaches from the three perspectives of the speaking subject (with a focus on language repertoire), of language discourse and ideologies expressed in national language policies and of linguistic spaces (more under nomadism). The centre of her research is language as experience – *Spracherleben* and some of her work also offers insights into how writers' literary transcriptions and records turn into significant material for a linguist to investigate. *Mitten durch meine Zunge. Erfahrungen mit Sprache von Augustinus bis Zaimoglu* (2008) is the title of a collection of texts Brigitta Busch, the linguist, published in cooperation with Thomas Busch, whose special field is editing the work of multilingual and translingual literary texts.²⁰² In a subsequently published article (2010a), the authors analyse in detail extracts from Aharon Appelfeld's autobiography (with an extract in the collection of texts), showing how texts allow writers to develop a motif, such as a maternal language/ mother tongue (*Muttersprache; -zunge*), in skillful and subtle ways. B. and T. Busch associate their deep reading of the text with multiple ideas discussed by critical thinkers (e.g. Derrida, Kristeva) and other translingual writers (e.g. Rakusa, Goldschmidt, Canetti). In another essay, B. Busch further elaborates on prebabylonian phantasies (2010b), a notion of early, spontaneous multilingualism that is reflected in many writers' recollections of language experiences.²⁰³

A note on applied linguists' methodologies

(For a comparison of sociocultural and literary approaches, see under 3.1.6: "The example of various readings of *Lost in Translation*.)

²⁰⁰ "[I]hr geht es in erster Linie um die Frage, wie das Erleben von Sprachen mit dem biographischen Gewordensein eines Menschen verknüpft ist, und welche spezifischen Funktionen und Bedeutungen mehrsprachige Menschen ihren Sprachen in ihren individuellen Biographien beimessen." (Hu 2006: 188)

²⁰¹ For Hu there is a significant difference between cultural studies in the Anglo-Saxon world, usually understood as mouthpiece of social and political critical voices with a political agenda, while the German *Kulturwissenschaften* are mostly academic.

²⁰² See blurb of *Mitten durch meine Zunge*.

²⁰³ See ch. 5 for examples in the work of Welch (*Seismographs*) and Joris (autobiographical essays).

The methodologies of researchers vary according to initial assumptions and the focus of their interest in multilingualism. Some studies work with models and questionnaires that define steps for the analysis of changing experiences (e.g. Franceschini 2001; Pavlenko 2003); others base their approach on themes or on concepts related to language acquisition (Kramsch 2009) or start from descriptions of experiences described in autobiographical writing to analyse them with the help of appropriate theoretical underpinning (Busch 2010a). In all studies there is some overlapping of processes, which confirms the importance of a clear initial focus and of openness to emerging aspects in autobiographical texts.²⁰⁴

Aneta Pavlenko, an applied linguist who has widely written on multilingualism, has on one occasion combined the analysis of “ten published autobiographic narratives” with “tape recorded life story interviews” to investigate adult immigrants’ process of social and linguistic identity reconstruction. (2003) The questionnaire that she proposes for the analysis of texts takes a chronological approach of migrants’ response to the new language. She looks at the passage from a first phase dominated by feelings of loss (of mother tongue and social network) and deficiency in the surroundings to a phase of gain with the emergence of a new voice (often arising in writing first). She speaks of a process **of self-translation**, a notion that has been further developed, notably by Eva Karpinski.²⁰⁵

Aware of the appeal of linguistic autobiographies for readers and researchers, Pavlenko has critically reviewed frameworks used for their analysis and provides advice that is relevant for a study of texts by Welch and Joris. In “Autobiographic narratives as Data in Applied Linguistics” (2007), Pavlenko insists on *the interdependence of content, context and form*, referring to the importance of the time and place in history in which events took place, the time and place when they are told and the time and place of the analysis. (2007: 180-181)²⁰⁶ Pavlenko also refers to the role that works by bilingual writers can play to reconsider language ownership and to imagine communities in new ways (Pavlenko and Norton 2007: 596).

In methodological considerations on biographical studies (2017: 32-39), Busch situates her approach of multilingual in theories of memory (*Erinnern*), of narrating (*Erzählen*) before recommending approaches for metalinguistic reflections (*Über das Sprechen sprechen*). Her research includes a visual model of language portrait, which she has used for inquiries into children and young people’s experiences.

²⁰⁴ To some extent, the scholarly work also reflects researchers’ own experiences of language multiplicity and displacement. All the studies referred to are by scholars who at some time of their lives were confronted with language difference.

²⁰⁵ For more references to Karpinski’s work, see 3.1.5; 3.1.6 and 3.3.

²⁰⁶ This reference to various layers of story telling and different levels in time is reminiscent of Gabriele Rosenthal’s model of *Erlebte und erzählte Lebensgeschichte* (1995) that Hein Khatib uses as framework for her analysis of the biographies of Peter Weiss and Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt (2007).

3.1.5 Critical re-conceptualizations of multiplicity and interconnections

Grandfather I heard you
in the flock of Canada
geese last night
when their honk came peeling [...]
I too am driven by your need
for a hundred migrations to come.
I seek you, Rinaldo. Promise of flight.

Liliane Welch, from "Migrations", *Word-House of a Grandchild* (1987: 62) ²⁰⁷

von Hollands Grachten bis tief ins Russische
Reich a Ganovenweise sung in Luxembourg anno domino 3
post world war 2 all the way to Ancel in the Bukowina
and still we go at it turba scriptorum tralala trying
to wring something from this long night how not to escape [...]

Pierre Joris from "Winnetou Old", *Poasis* (2001: 84) ²⁰⁸

These short extracts are reminders that for a reading of the poets' work most of the studies reviewed so far still leave many open questions as to their underlying writing processes: one needs more entries and new glasses to read work created between languages.

The bifocal literary and sociolinguistic approach has been helpful for an initial distinction between motivations of research. However, for the wealth of dimensions that language as otherness can present in literature the distinction proves inadequate. In the past decades, multilingualism has invaded many areas of life and emerged as ubiquitous topic in the humanities. A desire to clarify underlying views has given rise to new perspectives, among which the following research fields appear particularly relevant for a study of language multiplicity and interconnections in literary contexts:

- language and monolingualism as construction
- relational aspects of poetics and role of imagination
- a focus on translation as language othering and otherness in language
- language, space and movement

All tend to see migration – understood as *people and as languages* on the move and in inter-relations – as fundamental experience and condition of universal interest. ²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ See also in ch. 8 and 9.

²⁰⁸ See in 8.2.5.

²⁰⁹ Some of the approaches mentioned here are further detailed in chapter 3.3 as key elements of the framework Language as construction set up for the analysis of the poets' work.

Language and monolingualism as construction

Language is a construct and literature plays a major role in its representations (cf. Lise Gauvin, *La fabrique de la langue* 2004). This is particularly true for the mother tongue; a concept that needs to be revised in particular in the case of writers whose lives and contacts move between languages (Yasemin Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition* 2012). Consequently, notions of multilingualism and monolingualism reveal novel facets (David Gramling, *The Invention of Monolingualism* 2016) while they also ask for new perspectives on the place of outsider voices in philology (Dembeck/ Mein 2014).

Voices and speakers behind the texts are foregrounded through an association of literary, critical and socio-cultural perspectives on the multilingual subject as writer (Kristeva 1991; 2019; Kramsch 2009). Attention has moved beyond the words on the page, to those who decide to write about their experiences in a new borrowed language; many forms of migration and language combinations are considered (cf. Ausoni and Arribert-Narce 2013; Ausoni 2018), sometimes with a focus on special groups, like immigrant women's voices (see Karpinski 2012). Voices in texts also encompass the voices of others that echo in texts and bring novel forms of intertextuality, as studies of palimpsestic aspects show.

Relational aspects of poetics and role of imagination

Writing across languages creates a net of **relations**. In the Francophone world, in particular Edouard Glissant has developed “une poétique du divers et une poétique de la relation,” in which aesthetic considerations are an integral part of the response to postcolonial conditions. He proposes a conception of the world where rhizomatic movements prevail over roots and stable entities. It is a poetics of multiple voices which rejects divisions and any kind of language hierarchy (Glissant 2010; Lise Gauvin, *L'imaginaire des langues: tracées d'une poétique* (2005) and bears many parallels with poetic nomadic work. Writing that derives from this view gives preeminence to in-between-ness blurring borders between languages, cultures and texts. Studies leaning on Glissant's ideas highlight aesthetic elements and the creative dimension of texts in which languages and cultures cross (Gauvin/ Glissant 1992; 2010; Ette 2005; Suchet 2014; Ausoni 2018). The preeminence given to relations challenges borders between study fields and research practices: concepts and methodologies wander between disciplines and determine re-formulations of study aims (cf. Schmeling, who defines *Komparatistik als Beziehungswissenschaft* 2013).²¹⁰

²¹⁰ This is how Schmeling sees research processes: „Der Beitrag reflektiert über die kultur- bzw. literaturwissenschaftlichen Prozesse von Transfer und Vergleich unter dem Aspekt der ‚Beziehung‘. Welche Bedeutung gewinnen Beziehungen im Denken allgemein und welche Funktion haben sie für komparatistische Verfahren? Der Verfasser möchte – in begrifflicher Anlehnung an Edouard Glissants „Poétique de la Relation“ – zum einen zeigen, dass zentrale analytische Kategorien wie ‚Einfluss‘, *regard croisé*, ‚Hybridisierung‘ etc. auf bestimmten

A focus on translation as language othering and otherness in language

Discussions on how to conceive texts that cross language borders can also be found in new approaches of translation studies. The original understanding of rendering a text in another language is open to numerous revisions, which cast new light on language difference and otherness. **Translation** has become a protean concept and highlights the many routes along which languages can travel. In cultural studies translation becomes the overall concept for movement between cultural spaces (Bachmann-Medick 2012; 2014). Literary approaches may focus on translation as rewriting works in another language for another readership or audience (Gentzler 2017). Translation is also understood as part of the process of meaning making when writers attempt to negotiate between different cultures and languages that are all part of their own lives (Fiona Doloughan 2015).²¹¹ Moreover, a comparison of strategies used for the translation of texts with *heterolingual elements* proves a productive way to examine the range of devices used to express linguistic otherness (Suchet 2014). Pseudo-translation is another notion that helps explore languages hiding behind the surface of texts (Brigitte Rath 2012).²¹²

Territory and borders versus movement and space

Territory used to be closely linked to understandings of language and literature as expression of national identity. With globalization on the one hand and the interest in “smaller” languages and literatures on the other hand, the problematic relations between territory and views on languages or multilingualism face new tensions, as exemplified in distinctions between English literature and literature(s) in English, or *littérature française* and *littérature(s) francophone(s)*. New conceptualizations have arisen: Space, movement and location are key words of the spatial turn with its emphasis on dynamic processes, on natural and social environments, on interrelatedness resulting from multiple movements and the vision of an open space. Spatial theories were initiated by thinkers like Henri Lefebvre (*La production de l'espace* 1986); the notion of third space was developed to analyse postcolonial situations (Homi Bhabha 1994) while thirdspace refers to theories of social geography (as developed by Edward Soja 1996). The spatial turn has also been extensively explored in literary studies (cf. Hallet / Neumann 2009) with repercussions

Relationskonzepten basieren und zu unterschiedlichen methodischen Vorgehensweisen anregen. Zum anderen wird deutlich gemacht, dass die Literatur selber solche Relationen mit Hilfe poetologischer Strategien herstellt: der Gegenstand bestimmt die Methode. Typisches Beispiel hierfür ist die Metaphorisierung interkultureller Prozesse. (2013)

²¹¹ Doloughan links up the main argument she develops in *English as a Literature in Translation* with an article by Pennycook, "English as a Language Always in Translation" (2008).

²¹² The article is entitled „Doppelte Rede und Antwort. Pseudoübersetzungsphänomene in « La fille d'un héros de l'Union soviétique und le testament français von Andreï Makine » ”.

on methodological issues (see ch. 2: Mapping and space). However, references to space and movement as conditions for interaction between languages and multilingualism in literature are often subordinated to all-encompassing cultural approaches.

The focus on individual experiences appears particularly susceptible to the impact of language interactions, as lived by people on the move or as expressed by nomad writers with a great sensitivity to the oscillation between movement and standstill (Ette 2004) and the importance of place and location for language practice (Pennycook 2010).

The notion of extraterritorial and open space proves helpful for understandings of translingual writing.²¹³ Poets' languages of writing are often discussed in connection with movement and space. The material and physical nature of territory is not forgotten when it is used as concept linked to a State: also understood as political and cultural space, it becomes problematic for writers on the move. A term to describe their position is "*extraterritorial*," which as a legal term refers to "a transfer or an abandonment of territorial authority" (Lassalle and Weissmann 2014: 26). It stands for something existing outside the territory or the space that defines a country as State.

When moved to a space of reflection, extraterritoriality can be read literally and metaphorically. For writers, it means they move outside cultural conventions and linguistic rules. They may react by a dismissal of the authority of the territory, to which they do not belong, feeling displaced they may express a sense of loss. Extraterritoriality becomes an issue of identity. Lassalle and Weissmann show that with globalization, the concept of territory becomes coupled with the construction of networks, which better reflect spatial mobility. Consequently, notions of borders become challenged, - including the borders that define the areas of philological disciplines, raising for us the question where the study of extraterritorial writers belongs. There is a danger of extraterritorial works being "lost" or overlooked (as "*non-lieux*") – a real risk for the work of writers with no attachment to the cultural institutions of a territory.

One could link the ideas of academic extraterritoriality to Suchet's proposal for « *indisciplinarité* », rather than *inter-* or *trans-* or *multidisciplinary* studies.²¹⁴ Nomadic theory, too, has developed similar concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, which can productively enlarge an understanding of languages and writings, which do not well fit into given categories.

²¹³ I am indebted for these ideas to Didier Lassalle and Dirk Weissmann, the author-editors of *Ex(tra)territorial. Reassessing Territory in Literature, Culture and Languages* (2014). The best known work on extraterritoriality in relation to multilingual writers is however George Steiner's book, *Extraterritorialité. Essai sur la littérature et la révolution du langage* (1971).

²¹⁴ See her article, « De la recherche comme création permanente, » 2016. <https://doi.org/10.4000/revss>.

In critical work, the macro-analysis of multilingualism in countries with strong monolingual institutions and restrictive policies for publication and research funding (Lennon 2010; Walkowitz 2017) alternates with studies that focus on the close reading of texts with voices in multiple languages (cf. numerous case studies, see in particular Weissmann 2012; 2016; 2017). Compound perspectives on language phenomena and their relations also entail the need for new cross-disciplinary cooperation and methodologies (see references to complexity theory in Jessner/ Kramsch 2015). Translingualism, as conceived by Kellman for authors who do not write in their first language, and studied as thinking process of learners is a comprehensive notion that can address most of the conceptual changes just very succinctly reviewed. A look at nomadic theory will specify aspects of movement and interrelations (ch. 3.2) in order to provide a more comprehensive view of translingualism and conceptual cornerstones for the analysis of work by Welch and Joris (ch.3.3).

3.1.6 Articulations between literary studies and applied linguistics

Regards croisés on shared primary sources

Primary sources constitute an important link as frequently literary studies and sociocultural studies refer to the same texts, usually those with autobiographical and narrative dimensions. On the broad spectrum of texts displaying a reliance on multiple languages, only the two extreme poles of avant-garde poetry on the one hand and texts with a purely social or educational function on the other hand are not considered as suitable material by researchers from both fields.

A review of studies reveals a kaleidoscope of case studies, which demonstrate the sheer endless number of literary texts associated with aspects of multilingualism. For research, scholars usually choose works which deal with experiences of migration or of regional multilingualism. They also concentrate on work that exhibits remarkable practices of mixing languages or includes meta-reflections by writers on their position among languages.

Case studies, attempts at categorization and anthologies of texts

An inventory of multilingual writers still seemed possible and important to those researchers who were pioneers in the field. Kellman, for instance, adds “A Roster of Translingual Authors” at the end of his book, listed in alphabetical order with no other information. Yet, he admits that it remains a very partial list of those thousands of translingual writers that since Antiquity have written in more than one language or in a language that was not their primary language. Similarly, in the study by Kremnitz the long “Index der Personennamen” is a list of cited multilingual authors from many parts of the world. Despite an

appearance of exhaustiveness, the names on both lists vary considerably, a fact which confirms the sheer endless number of authors that could qualify as translingual or multilingual.²¹⁵

Later studies no longer attempt such inventories, yet the number and diversity of selected works and writers show how the list is growing constantly, also with an ever-wider range of cultural and geographical contexts.²¹⁶ For the diversity of trans-/ multilingual authors of the past fifty/ seventy years, studies mostly distinguish the following groups:

- postcolonial writers, who in the wake of decolonization moved from former colonies to the metropole and adopted the language of the former colonial masters for their writing, a language which they had acquired previously at school. Most examples are English or French
- writers in the newly independent countries who reject the language of the former master, which they know, choose another language for writing or the local version of the colonial language
- diaspora writers and the Holocaust survivors of the Nazi regime who have relocated in other parts of the world
- writers who grew up multilingually because of their family's usually enforced movements and relocations (e.g. Canetti, Rakusa)
- writers who because of migration for economic or political reasons have settled in places where they acquired a new language, from Eastern Europe (e.g. Petrowskaja)
- finally writers who for personal, and professional reasons have moved and live in new cultural and linguistic environments (e.g. Nancy Huston, Yoko Tawada)

Welch and Joris would fit the last, quite disparate group though issues discussed in relation with other groups also offer significant perspectives for research.

For a literature review of studies on multilingualism and literature, anthologies are important because they give access to text material. We notice that in most anthologies prose texts prevail over poetry and that so-called life writing or (auto-)biographical texts take an important place in these collections. Such text collections usually centre around one major issue, which the authors as editors elucidate in an introductory essay. Anthologies often complement theoretical work. *Switching Languages: Translingual Writers Reflect on their Craft* (2003), edited by Kellman follows his monograph *The Translingual*

²¹⁵ Only a few of the names listed by both scholars are the same; for instance for names beginning with the letter A, a mere four names on Kellman's list match with those referred to by Kremnitz (Aitmatov; Apollinaire, Arp and Ausländer). They both have more than twenty names (under 'A') that are different.

²¹⁶ See e.g. the collection of essays about multilingualism as a world-wide phenomenon edited by K. Alfons Knauth, and Liao Ping-hui (2016).

Imagination (2000); Mary Besemeres first published *Translating One's Self: Language and Selfhood in Cross-Cultural Autobiography* (2002), then a few years later together with her mother Anna Wierzbicka, she edited *Translating Lives. Living with Two Languages and Cultures* (2007). Brigitta Busch together with Thomas Busch edited a collection of wide historical and geographical scope: *Mitten durch meine Zunge. Erfahrungen mit Sprache von Augustinus bis Zaimoglu* (2008): This time the anthology precedes the critical work. Some of the texts in the anthology become the source material she uses in her later published essays. As *Lives in Translation. Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity* by Isabelle de Courtivron (2002) confirms, anthologies tend to be monolingual and in many cases, the texts appear in translation. One of the aims is the dissemination of texts and writers that would otherwise remain inaccessible for a large public.²¹⁷

Sometimes, when the editors are themselves translingual writers, the selection becomes motivated by intrinsic poetic aspects, as is the case for *Millennium books* that Pierre Joris has co-edited, the first one an anthology of modern and postmodern poetry (1995); the second one an anthology of North African Writings (2012).²¹⁸

Paradoxes

The succinct overview of primary sources (work by translingual writers with marks of heterolingualism) highlights a few apparent paradoxes:

- The number of writers one may qualify as *translingual* is huge. They represent innumerable *first* languages and idioms but **the languages of translingual writing discussed in studies is small** (mostly English, French and German). Similarly, most research (consulted for the study) is produced in one of these major European languages and reflects a Western perspective on language multiplicity. It means that my approach, like most studies, remains not only Eurocentric but limited to a small core of languages.
- The lists of translingual writers vary considerably (see for instance in Kellman and in Kremnitz, but also the innumerable case studies), yet some names of writers come back frequently (for instance,

²¹⁷ See also Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn, *Steep Stairs to Myself - Transitional Autobiography. Reflections - Literatures in English outside Britain and the USA* (2008).

²¹⁸ Jerome Rothenberg and Pierre Joris, *Poems for the Millennium. The University of California Book of Modern & Postmodern Poetry. Volume 1: From Fin-de-Siècle to Negritude* (1995). Habib Tengour and Pierre Joris, *Poems for the Millennium. The University of California Book of Modern & Postmodern Poetry. Volume 4. Diwan Ifrikya. An Anthology of North African Writings from Prehistory to Today* (2012). See also Irène Assiba D'Almeida, *A Rain of Words: A Bilingual Anthology of Women's Poetry in Francophone Africa*. Edited with an introductory essay by Irène Assiba d'Almeida. Translated by Janis A. Mayes. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press (2009).

Eva Hoffmann, Samuel Beckett, Yoko Tawada, Nancy Huston) while others are much less prominent and in some cases at best included in references to specific groups or regions.

- Despite differences in approach, many studies however rely on the same critical work and fundamental views on language (Bakhtin, Derrida, Merleau-Ponty, Glissant).
- Some translingual writers' work appears in research across disciplines: *Lost in Translation* by Eva Hoffman is a good example. Yet scholars who position their research in different disciplines rarely refer to each other. (*See below the comment on studies of Lost in Translation.*)

Reading as experience of translingual articulation or passage between languages

The writings of Welch and Joris contain many references to reading which since their childhood and adolescence in Luxembourg has never been limited to one language. For this reason, enquiries into readers' experiences of language multiplicity promise approaches of interest for a study of their work. For researchers in foreign language acquisition, literature is a cultural and a symbolic *product* in which multiple languages (via the voices of characters and the author) and cultures interact. The *experience* of fictional texts is seen as an act of language which involves the reader's own participation.

Readers' interplay with texts

In *Fremdsprachenunterricht als Spiel der Texte und Kulturen* (2002), Wolfgang Hallet shows how in an *interplay* of texts and cultures readers construct "webs of significance"²¹⁹ which they create from associations with various narratives and encounters, conceptions of self and their positioning towards otherness. Webs of significance is a phrase which stresses spatial and dynamic aspects; it is an image that evokes postcolonial notions of centre, periphery and third space (Homi Bhabha 1992; 1993) as well as Bakhtinian notions of centripetal and centrifugal forces. Weaving the web's threads together in various ways, the reader creates a hybrid imaginary space where borders can be crossed. Hallet shows how the interplay of texts involves the interaction of different dimensions of discourse (*Diskurssphären*, see 42-47): the reader's own sphere, the sphere evoked in the foreign language texts as well as the transcultural space which reaches beyond a located culture and stands for universal aspects.

Hallet's analysis of interacting languages in reading processes is underpinned by concepts used in literary theory, notably reader response (cf. Wolfgang Iser),²²⁰ which he uses to develop a model for teaching and understanding intercultural processes. Literary studies of intertextuality tend to ignore language

²¹⁹ *Webs of significance* is a notion Hallet borrows from Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. See Hallet 2002: 70-73.

²²⁰ One could also refer to Hans-Robert Jauss and reception aesthetics. In her theoretical work, Welch develops positions that draw on reception theories (see in ch. 6); Joris also insists on the importance of reception and circulation of texts as constitutive elements of the notion of World Literature.

differences (see Gérard Genette 1982; 1987; Graham Allen 2011; Mary Orr 2003 ²²¹); they assume monolingual readers who rely on translations.

However, in the context of foreign language learning and teaching, the interrelations between readers' languages are foregrounded. Hallet describes how the reading process involves real and imagined dialogues; the reader can create a polyphonic world, in which multiple voices interact. This is where the connection with multilingualism becomes most obvious. Reader response becomes "*multilingual reader response*."

In such an approach of texts, response to language may be part of the story. A quoted passage from *Schackoklak*, a novel by Roger Manderscheid in Luxemburgish, consists of the narrator's comments on his response to German, the language of the occupier in World War II. Hallet sees the novel in connection with Holocaust literature; one could also stress parallels with postcolonial discourse and resistance to languages of power. Yet reader response is only possible for those who are familiar with the language. ²²² Hallet's model rests on a conception of **intercultural learning**, in which readers' negotiation of meanings is central. As a view of foreign languages that attributes a crucial role to learning about the other's culture, it continues a tradition in language education that prevailed for a long time until the emphasis shifted to communicative skills. What has changed in researchers' view is the focus on interplay, as opposed to mere transmission or locating the foreign language in a cultural context. Through this emphasis on the reader or recipient's role, the interaction of languages may be understood as plurilingual exchange. All the readers' languages and cultural representations contribute to meaning making.

For **migrants and newcomers to a language**, reading, in particular works of fiction in the new language, can hold a special role in processes of self-construction. Kramsch underlines the symbolic power of words which open unfamiliar dimensions for those who feel disoriented and look for new bearings in life. In her exploration of the subjective dimensions of language, she makes use of Kristeva's notion of "desire": "When we talk about desire in language learning, we talk about exploring various possibilities of the self in real or imagined encounters with others." (2009:15) Examining adolescents' and young adults' experiences with literary texts (and their attempts at writing), Kramsch observes that "[l]ike poetry and creative writing in one's own language, the acquisition of a foreign language can reveal unexpected meanings, alternative truths that broaden the scope of the sayable and the imaginable" (2009:15). ²²³

²²¹ Orr sees translation as a field of interconnectness and cross-fertilization between languages.

²²² See also the comment on a passage from Manderscheid in Hu (2012); Hansen-Pauly (2002), on other aspects of multiple language practices in *Schackoklak*.

²²³ « Desire in language » refers to Kristeva who describes it as "a passion for ventures with meaning and its materials" (1980:x).

Books or texts in the new language allow encounters with a desirable often fictitious other. In narratives, they find realities that greatly differ from the one that surrounds them and voices with whom they may wish to identify.²²⁴

Kramsch is aware that the role of literature in foreign language education has considerably changed over the past decades. “The Avatars of Literature in Language Study” (2000)²²⁵ is an article that documents the vicissitudes of literature, “used for the aesthetic education of the few (1910s), for the literacy of the many (1920s), for moral and vocational uplift (1930s-1940s), for ideational content (1950s), for humanistic inspiration (1960s-1970s), and for providing an “authentic” experience of the target culture (1980s-1990s).” The text is interesting as it seems to reflect some of the approaches of languages and literature that Welch and Joris also encountered as learners of foreign languages and thus use as backdrop for their memories. Students’ reading of literary works in English was mainly considered a link to culture, in imitation of what teachers of French and German did to keep “readers abreast of contemporary [...] literary scenes.” (2000)²²⁶

Migration as nexus for studies of translingual processes

Migration is a dominant theme in studies on multilingualism and the work of translingual writers, like Welch and Joris, shows that it is often difficult to dissociate language phenomena from issues of travelling. As both sociocultural research and literary studies are attentive to migrants’ multiple languages, a review of studies can point out similarities and differences in their approaches to texts, lives and writing processes. With a focus on experiences of migration and changing, interacting languages, they have a common corpus of (auto-) biographical work. Their approach of texts however differs, as a few examples of studies show.

For literary scholars, it is important to investigate migrant writers’ links to literary communities and changes in their positioning and relations to other writers and cultural centres.²²⁷ Key concepts of such

²²⁴ See Ch. 5 In their essays, Welch and Joris comment in similar terms on early reading experiences in foreign languages.

²²⁵ Claire Kramsch has written this article in cooperation with Olivier Kramsch.

²²⁶ Today literary texts in language education have become means to raise awareness of difference and develop intercultural competences. See also Adelheid Hu on multilingualism and *Kulturwissenschaften* (2004); Michael Byram and Melina Porto, “New Perspectives on Intercultural Language Research and Teaching. Exploring Learners’ Understandings of Texts from Other Cultures” (2016).

²²⁷ See for instance, Dirk Weissmann on Ilma Rakusa 2012 and on Yoko Tawada 2016; Sara de Balsa on Agota Kristof 2019.

studies are often hybridity, intercultural relations and border crossing, which involve the interaction of languages,²²⁸ as also emphasized in studies on Luxembourg literature.²²⁹

In the broad context of postcolonial theory, studies may analyse the language of writing as exemplifying resistance, with a focus on aesthetic and formal elements that challenge conventions (Boehmer 2018). In the wake of immigration in Germany at the end of the 20th century and the publication of autobiographic work on experiences of displacement and linguistic alienation, the interest of scholars was motivated by a combination of literary, linguistic and cultural concerns. This is the case for studies of multilingualism that focus on the so-called “Gastarbeiterliteratur.”²³⁰ For *Plurilingualität und Identität* (2003), the author-editors de Florio-Hansen and Hu have chosen an explicitly interdisciplinary approach reflected in the contributors’ academic positions. Similarly, in *Migrationsliteraturen in Europa* (2012), the author-editors Eva Binder and Birgit Mertz-Baumgartner include thematic as well as aesthetic aspects.²³¹

Applied linguists for their part look for examples of recorded experiences and situations to illustrate or elaborate key concepts linked to language acquisition, identity and social interaction. They are not interested in migration stories as a literary genre. With a focus on people, not on texts, these studies often explore notions of subjectivity and self construction that literary studies might approach from perspectives of form (issues of narration; choice of aesthetic devices). This is what the section above on language biographies and memoirs has shown.

The move from *migrant literature* to *literature of migration* is important to understand the difference between an exclusive focus on autobiographical details to an approach that considers migration as theme, concept and literary genre with its own stylistic features. For a consideration of multilingual aspects in texts, the second approach promises much richer insights for both literary, linguistic and cultural scholars. Not the autobiographical experience itself, but the nature of writing, of responding and reflecting on a multifaceted phenomenon count.

Comparing methodologies: The example of various readings of *Lost in Translation*

To illustrate the differences between literary, sociocultural and mixed critical approaches of multilingualism in migration literature, I have tried to compare several studies on the often discussed book by Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* (1989).

²²⁸ See Schmeling, “In jeder Sprache neu”: Zweisprachigkeit und Kulturtransfer bei Iwan Goll (1996).

²²⁹ See Honnef-Becker and Peter Kühn 2004; Honnef-Becker 2013; Glesener (2008).

²³⁰ See for instance, Sabine Fischer Denn du tanzt auf einem Seil. Positionen deutschsprachiger MigrantInnenliteratur (1997). See also Immacolata Amodeo, ‘Die Heimat heißt Babylon’: Zur Literatur ausländischer Autoren in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (1996) and Aglaia Blioumi, ed., Migration und Interkulturalität in neueren literarischen Texten (2002).

²³¹ See for instance Eva Hausbacher’s reflections on a poetics of migration (2012: 169-183).

A good example of a literary approach is chapter 6 entitled “Eva Hoffman Lost in the Promised Land” in Kellman (2000). In his analysis the focus is on a literary genre: a migrant’s memoir, embedded in a tradition of writing. He contrasts it with the work of Mary Antin, another migrant, and compares structures and ideas: both books for him are examples of “translingual imagination”, which he situates in the context of American Jewish literature.

Kramersch’s study (2009) of *Lost in Translation* focusses on how a multilingual subject documents and analyzes her response to languages. References to Hoffman’s work aim to show how important it is for language learners (and by extension for writers in another language) to speak about their experiences. Her comments on the narratorial self are particularly interesting to understand a writer’s subject positioning. Kramersch reads Hoffman against theories of self ²³² and makes Hoffman’s memoir a major source of her investigation of *The Multilingual Subject* (2009):

“[T]here is one aspect of published language memoirs that keeps nagging the reader. How do we know that this is how these writers really experienced things? After all, these are talented writers, who have carefully put together a narrative of language learning that borders on the literary. [...] These stories are undoubtedly true, but this truth might be of a different kind from the truth found in social science data.

Hoffman’s memoir [...] is a literary creation, produced by the narratorial self of a Polish speaker writing in English for an Anglophone audience. Somatic and ecological theories fall short of the crucial dimension of the multilingual self. This self [...] is highly conscious of her art and of her ability to combine narrated events [...] to evoke in the reader the very same emotions of pleasure and distress that she, as an author, experienced at the time. [...] (73)

The narratorial self brings into focus the indispensable role of memory and imagination in language learning: remembering how (past experiences and emotions) and imagining what if (future scenarios for action). (74)

In Kramersch’s analysis, one notices her reliance on the above mentioned issues of constructedness in memoirs and an emphasis on narratorial or authorial positioning, which are intimately linked to skillful evocations of language acquisition as ambivalent experiences. She disregards links to literary traditions or an investigation into possibly innovative writing practices, as noticeable in the complex structure of Hoffman’s work. Similarly, Lantolf and Pavlenko (2000), see Hoffman’s writing as an example of reconstruction of social and linguistic identity, in which phases of loss and (re)construction alternate.

Yasemin Yildiz, in *Beyond the Mother Tongue. The Post Monolingual Condition* (2012), includes a comment on Hoffman’s presentation of her first language. In the course of her argument in favour of a new conceptualization of the mother tongue, she refers to Hoffman and the way her attachment to the mother

²³² Welch’s essays in *Seismographs* show interesting parallels with dimensions of remembering and narrating highlighted in Hoffman’s work.

tongue has been interpreted and generalized. She believes it is wrong to speak of a monolingual paradigm: Hoffman's case cannot be turned into a concept with universal value. As the role of the mother tongue is also a recurring topic in the Luxembourg poets' work – varying from rejection, relative indifference to some occasional identification with its sounds and what it represents – the position that Yildiz takes in relation to Hoffman is worth quoting:

Eva Hoffman's memoir of being "lost in translation" provides such an account [i.e. the account of the painful experience] of leaving behind her beloved Polish to become a new person in English. The readings in this book lead me to argue that while the "mother tongue" may indeed be experienced as a wholesome unity by some, the problem lies in the monolingual paradigm's insistence that this is always and exclusively the case. (205)

Two scholars with a multidisciplinary background approach the work through innovative views on translation. In *Borrowed Tongues* (2012), Eva C. Karpinski offers a feminist view on how in writing a migrant can position herself as a woman and as a newcomer in the language of the "other." In a chapter entitled "Experimental Self-Translations" (129-171), Karpinski analyses the work of two migrant academic women in North America, Eva Hoffman and Smaro Kambourelli. Fiona Doloughan, in *English a Literature in Translation* (2015), devotes a chapter to Eva Hoffman and shows how through a study of literature and through her own writing she finds her voice and the benefits of a bifocal vision.

A juxtaposition of these various readings of *Lost in Translation* reveals that despite differences in focus, the studies are complementary. Primarily literary readings (Yildiz, Karpinski, Doloughan) show sensitivity for linguistic issues, while applied linguists (Kramsch, Pavlenko) will read a book like Hoffman's with awareness of literary features, such as narrative perspective and the use of metaphors.

In their work with texts on migration, literary studies and sociocultural studies meet for a while, draw their own conclusions, exchange ²³³ and then continue on their routes of research, each in their own direction. *Translaton* as key word in the title of Hoffman's memoir and taken up by scholars like Karpinski and Doloughan points to a conceptual dimension of translingual writing, which is auspicious for a study of Welch and Joris. Interdisciplinary encounters around multilingualism promise further insights and show that the binary opposition between literary and sociolinguistic views is but one source for insights. What other perspectives can bring is the object of 3.2 and 3.3.

²³³ According to the bibliographical references added to the diverse studies, exchange between scholars is however scarce beyond disciplinary boundaries. Both Kellman and Kramsch are mentioned in the newer studies, usually in relation to shared concepts. See for instance Yildiz 2012; Lauret 2014; Doloughan 2015.

3.1.7 Summing up and moving on to nomadism

The state of the art on multilingualism in literature has already brought some answers as formulated in relation to research questions. It has shown that researching across disciplines and across geographical spaces provides changes of perspectives; concepts are compared and further elaborated (cf. 2.2.1 e.g. Mieke Bal). If one considers all the studies on multilingualism and translingual writing, a complex network appears, with connections between researchers' locations, particular areas of inquiry, their academic positioning, and the manifold openings to further disciplines.²³⁴ The comparison of studies from different academic viewpoints on *Lost in Translation*, for instance, shows that despite differences in their focus, the studies are complementary. Literary readings of the book include sensitivity for linguistic issues, while applied linguists can read the text with awareness of literary features, such as narrative perspective or use of metaphors. Both fields, literary studies and applied linguistics, take macro- as well as micro- level approaches of multilingual issues; in many cases they are intertwined and stress the link between socio-cultural context and the writing practices of individuals.

Another observation concerns case studies and their great diversity in backgrounds and language repertoires, from which a variety of research foci emerges. The work of each writer appears to have its own characteristic features, a fact that points to the importance of contextualization; yet it also accounts for the difficulty to find overarching commonalities and tools of analysis.

A benefit of the broad overview results from *researching multilingually*. From a focus on terminology in different languages, clusters of terms have emerged, for instance those that refer to aspects of mixing languages (e.g. creole, "mischsprachig," hybrid, "métisse") or that emphasize otherness ("hétérolingue," "anderssprachig," exophonic.) In the beginning, the differences in terminology and outlook are confounding for the researcher, yet at a second look, the apparent discrepancies provide rich potential for further investigations.²³⁵ They raise crucial questions about underlying concepts and translation processes. In the present study, the juxtaposition of terminology is already part of the investigation into multilingualism in literary texts.²³⁶

²³⁴ For instance, researchers situated in German speaking environments deal with Chinese, South African or Caribbean experiences of multiplicity and movement in their studies; North American scholars recall Eastern European views on language and combine migration with gender studies; Francophone writers may move from Jewish and postcolonial perspectives to a radical questioning of all notions of language and identity.

²³⁵ See also Anokhina and Sciarrino, (2018) who comment on a *flou terminologique* around *plurilinguisme littéraire*; for comments on challenges and benefits of multilingual research see Lüdi (2015).

²³⁶ The multilingual approach was largely inspired by *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies* (2004), a good example of conceptual enquiries based on differences between languages. For Cassin, the dictionary is primarily a tool for thinking about otherness and complex relations between fundamental notions.

The juxtaposition of studies shows how accepted views on language and literature are questioned (ownership of language, linguistic authorities and literary institutions; borders between and within languages). When it comes to describing texts, it often proves difficult to dissociate monolingualism from certain forms of multilingualism or intralingual multiplicity.

References to *doubleness* – double voices, two mouths, two eyes – are a recurrent feature in many studies: Doubleness is both a recurring *theme* (also as dualism and even duplicity) and a literary *device* (e.g. the image of the double voice). The question is how appropriate doubleness or binarism is for a study of *multiplicity* and interrelations of voices or languages (see the references to palimpsestic relations).

The overview of studies has revealed connections between reading and writing which appear highly relevant for the study of Welch and Joris.

Writing and reading: two interrelated faces of translingualism

Reading activities as mentioned in different studies require a closer inspection. They represent articulation processes between languages which will prove crucial for a study Welch and Joris. References to reading in fact have two different functions. On the one hand, studies refer to reading processes and the role they play for the *writer*, who in the first place is a multilingual reader. This dimension will be extensively covered in the study of the work of Welch and Joris. On the other hand, by their own investigations, critics raise the question of the *reader's response to multilingual texts*. They focus on *how* texts with foreign or heterolingual elements can be approached. Reading from different perspectives (text based close reading, discourse based reading, including reading against the grain) then turns out to be an integral part of the methodological approach which underlies the present study.

A first step consists in identifying heterolingual elements. The reader's response appears to be a valuable criterion to recognize otherness in a text. Suchet's notion of *embrayage hétérolingue* or heterolingual shifting is very helpful: it evokes a similarity with a motorist's gear changing whenever road conditions change. Higher and lower gears correspond to a different mode of moving; the terrain determines the speed. (2014: 37-42) In other words, this means that whenever a foreign element turns up in a dominant language, the reader noticing a break in the text slows down and adjusts his understanding. This is how one may imagine encounters with visible heterolingual elements – visible because their spelling points to a language different from the dominant language of the text. I would include encounters with audible forms of heterolingualism too: mentally adapting to a different rhythm and pronunciation also requires a momentary adjustment or gear shifting. Heterolingual aspects as obstacles also raise questions about the readers' familiarity with other languages: though often the writer provides props that support the reader,

for instance in the form of paraphrase or translation.²³⁷ Moreover, a text may confront readers with *invisible* forms of heterolingualism through words or names that refer to another geographical, cultural, space without involving an explicit change of language. (For a detailed analysis of the heterolingual spectrum, as noticeable in the work of Welch and Joris, see ch. 7.1.)

Language multiplicity is often understood thematically. In that case, literary as well as sociocultural studies tend to concentrate on situations of *migration*: it is a vast field, in which involved languages and backgrounds vary tremendously. In view of the huge diversity of experiences, a further conceptualization of space and movement, as provided by nomadic theory, is necessary for an overarching framework of analysis. It should prevent a hasty categorization of the work of Welch and Joris as migration literature and provide further perspectives. Nomadic thought appears as the missing conceptual link to grasp the dynamics of people, texts and languages in movement.

²³⁷ See also Suchet's comments in relation to a heterolingual ethos. I will argue that ultimately heterolingualism is a question of tolerance: How much otherness does a *text* tolerate and how much otherness do *readers* tolerate? See conclusion in ch. 10.

3.2 Nomadism and nomadic multiplicities: a wide range of perspectives on a concept-in-use

The poets' diverging views

Welch and Joris both claim to be nomads. For Joris nomadism is the core of his poetics while Welch rather sees her wandering as a way of life, with an unquestionable impact on her writing. For Joris *nomadic* means above all multiplicity, movement and interrelations:

The millennium will be nomadic or it will not be: this is
paradigmatic, unless we learn the art of moving & connecting all
contents, all languages, all machines we will be the tail of the 20C
tail wagged by the 19C dog.²³⁸

"Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics" 2003: 55

This is a declaration with the unmistakable tone of a manifesto ²³⁹ though its presentation in verse form recalls a poem. It highlights several closely related ideas that should mark the 21st century: movement, comprehensiveness, multiplicity and connections. The lines suggest that this view does not only apply to poetry but also to a general understanding of the world, to which poetry can significantly contribute. *Machines*, we may assume, is a term borrowed from Deleuze/ Guattari and suggests technology. ²⁴⁰ The passage ends on a humorous picture: readers should imagine a time line likened to the elongated body of a dog reaching from the present (the tail) into the 19th century (the head), with the 20th century squeezed together into insignificance. The dog's movement into the past is in direct opposition to the nomadic forward thrust. So we may wonder if this is the key tension Joris feels at the core of the poetics whose main lines he attempts to evoke. Like the theories of Deleuze and Guattari, Joris's image of nomadic movements and connections contains a metaphorical strain; yet it remains abstract in the sense of lacking references to geographical or physical spaces that the nomad would cross.

Welch, for her part is more concrete in the description of the nomad's territories, which she describes in an autobiographical essay:

Every year I live seven months in Sackville, from September through April. After the Canada geese have honked their way back north over our territory, my own migration instinct awakens and I long for the nomadic life of the road, for the crags and streets of Luxembourg, for the peaks and friends

²³⁸ In line with his belief that all writing, all language, echoes somebody else's words, Joris in this general motto of his poetics *détourne* the words of Michel Foucault who repeatedly claimed that "*the century will be Deleuzian or it will not be*" or a little less radically "*Perhaps one day this century will be Deleuzian*". Joris adapts the declaration to his situation and focus – the millennium, languages and writing – yet indirectly acknowledges the reference to Deleuze, which is central in the whole text. See explanation in "A Nomad Poetics Revisited" 2017, under point 3.

²³⁹ For the controversy raised by this term, see below (Nomadic theory and reception of Joris's poetics).

²⁴⁰ For an interpretation of this term see below. In *Anti-Œdipe* and *Mille plateaux* Deleuze and Guattari present the body as a desiring machine, a combination of mind and matter evoking their conception of a new materialism.

of the Dolomites. Yet when I leave New Brunswick for Europe in the spring, the ground withdraws from under me: not only the hard frozen earth of winter and the flaming maple one of autumn, but also the ground from under my words. (*Seismographs* 1988: 52)

She refers to actual places that we can situate on a geographical map. The image of Canada geese, which also appears in other texts, hints at the long-distance travelling of migratory birds. The regular, seasonal movement between the New and the Old World are part of her way of life. Besides a few typical epithets describing the places (crag for Luxembourg, peaks for the Dolomites and flaming maple for Canada) a more personal image is worth noting. The Canadian ground that “withdraws from under [her]” also withdraws “the ground from under [her] words”: she feels incapable of writing (poetry) as soon as she leaves Canada, however much her “migration instinct” impels her to travel to Europe. Travelling marks a break or rift: her life is split into two separate parts, the nomad needing settled circumstances for writing as much as the sedentary poet craves for taking “to the road”.

For Joris and Welch nomadism is essential for writing, yet they look upon it in quite different ways, pointing to the diversity of interpretations that the term has raised. Putting the poets’ views in the context of those of other writers and thinkers is to shed more light on the implications for a study of their work. The wide range of uses of the term in recent decades aims at situating the poets’ diverging understandings of nomadism and their ensuing conception of language multiplicity. Consequently, the juxtaposition of theories and reflections takes only those in account that may have a bearing on a reading of Welch and Joris’s work.

3.2.1 Nomadism, a cluster of concepts and words

The introductory chapter (1.3.2) provided a rough idea of how the figure of the nomad or nomadism can become *a fil rouge* to investigate the poets’ lives and translingual writing processes. The present chapter follows the principles of Bal’s description of concepts-in-use, as never given, as always created and constantly changing (2002: 51). Ideally, the juxtaposed positions should be read as an imaginary, on-going dialogue between those who have approached nomadism from various angles. The aim is not to give an exhaustive account of studies; it is rather to see what the concept can do and what questions it raises for an approach of poets’ multiple contacts and various forms of wandering. For Bal, the use of concepts as tools is linked to a *problem*: the present focus is on aspects that can be connected to translingual writing and the problems it raises for writers and critics.

Nomadism as an object of study includes a wide range of scopes in the humanities. Since the last decades of the 20th century, it has travelled from philosophy, political, historical and geographical studies to social

and cultural studies and literary criticism.²⁴¹ From formerly either idealistic notions associated with the simple lives of wandering shepherds, or with notions of uncontrolled outsiders,²⁴² nomadism has turned into a useful concept to study phenomena of mobility as well as aspects of social and cultural transformation.

The following survey highlights several perspectives, which all touch in some way or other on the questions raised by the work of nomadic poets. The proposed distinctions in practice are often complementary aspects. My interest lies in the tensions inherent in the concept of nomadism, as opposed to settled and established ways of life or thinking, and its implications for language uses, notably writing practices. After general considerations of terminology, an enquiry into four areas is expected to reveal the broad range of uses to which this flexible concept can be put:

- In historical studies, nomads appear as perturbing elements; nomadism is either leading to integration or to resistance to existing practices and ideas.
- Critical, sociocultural views stress the ambivalence of the nomad's condition.
- Nomadic theory – the central section of the chapter – agrees on notions of multiple becoming, yet the works of Deleuze and Guattari, Kenneth White and Rosi Braidotti also show important ramifications of thinking.
- Nomadism as concept to approach wandering languages and literature underlines issues linked to mobility and identity.

3.2.1.1 A fuzzy concept and its terminology

A concept cannot be reduced to one single word. A few preliminary considerations on the terminology should avoid later misunderstandings. On the one hand, the concept of nomadism is expressed through a cluster of words with the same root. The etymology of *nomad* shows that the origin of the word is Greek and derives from *nemein*, to graze, to feed animals on pasture, and *nomos* sg (*nomas* pl.) for pastor.²⁴³

²⁴¹ The work of Deleuze and Guattari accounts for a particularly rich development of the concept in Francophone critical studies. It has spread to other cultural contexts and is often associated with related concepts, like migration.

²⁴² See Immanuel Kant: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* - 1. Auflage - Kapitel 3: "Anfänglich war ihre Herrschaft [die Herrschaft der Vernunft] unter der Verwaltung der *Dogmatiker, despotisch*. Allein, weil die Gesetzgebung noch die Spur der alten Barbarei an sich hatte, so artete sie durch innere Kriege nach und nach in völlige *Anarchie* aus und die *Skeptiker*, eine Art Nomaden, die allen beständigen Anbau des Bodens verabscheuen, zertrennten von Zeit zu Zeit die bürgerliche Vereinigung. Da ihrer aber zum Glück nur wenige waren, so konnten sie nicht hindern, daß jene sie nicht immer aufs neue, obgleich nach keinem unter sich einstimmigen Plane, wieder anzubauen versuchten. (<https://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/kritik-der-reinen-vernunft-1-auflage-3508/3> ; emphasis added)

²⁴³ See for instance: Empr. au lat. d'époque impériale *nomas*, *-adis* «membre de tribu de pasteurs itinérants», surtout au plur. pour désigner des peuplades errantes d'Afrique du Nord, empr. au gr. νομας, -ας «qui change de pâturage, qui erre à la façon des troupeaux ou des conducteurs de troupeaux d'un pâturage à l'autre» dér. de νομεν «faire paître» <https://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/nomade>

On the other hand, nomadism is also related to a cluster of concepts, with a lexically and semantically similar but not identical meaning.

A comparison of words with the same root shows that suffixes may indicate interesting shades of meaning. The person is called a *nomad* (noun)²⁴⁴; nomadic is the adjective; nomadically, the adverb. Nomad can also be used as noun adjunct or attributive noun.²⁴⁵ To *nomadise* is an intransitive verb and means: to lead a nomadic life; to live as a nomad. Used with an object it means: to make (an area or person) nomadic in character. *Nomadism* refers to a nomad's way of life (or the way things are done); the ending *-ism* can also be interpreted as an ideology. *Nomadity* is more rarely found; the ending in *-ity* denotes a quality or a condition; it often suits the contexts discussed in the present dissertation.²⁴⁶ Occasionally, one also finds the terms *nomadicy* and *nomadacity*; ²⁴⁷ they are used in relation to technology, but also stand for the tendency of a person, or group of people, to move with relative frequency; they are also found in association with mobility. In *nomadics* – the ending *-ics* denotes a branch of study or a science. *Nomadology* is another term, which Deleuze and Guattari use in the title of their study of the phenomenon and the concept, included in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

A cluster of related concepts will include words like *migration* (*migrancy*), *travelling*, *tourism*, *wandering*, and *peregrination*, each with their specific meanings, while in some contexts nomadism is associated with *exile*, *refugee*, *diaspora*, *pilgrim*. Translations and near synonyms can open further perspectives, and possibly cause confusions: as does, for example, the French word *errance*, when used in an English text, through its echoing of “erring/ error”.²⁴⁸ French poets and critics often use *errance* as near synonym for *nomadisme*.²⁴⁹ As some of the following references include French sources, a look at the meanings of the French word *errer* already shows that unlike nomadism it has no obvious link to shepherds and pasture. The stress is rather on aimless roaming:

²⁴⁴ From a gender-oriented perspective, it is striking to notice that nomads in the majority of studies are referred to as men; I follow this practice and consider pronouns in this context as non-gender specific, unless they refer to a person's biographical details.

²⁴⁵ Massumi, the translator of Deleuze/ Guattari (*Mille Plateaux*) speaks of “nomad thought”, using the noun form to qualify another noun (thought). Joris similarly, calls his work, *A Nomad Poetics*.

²⁴⁶ *-ism* is a suffix that often – but not always – denotes ideology, by comparison with capitalism, communism (but not alcoholism). *Isms* usually expresses disapproval, referring “to a set of ideas or systems or beliefs or behaviour: *You're always talking in isms – sexism, ageism, racism.*” (OALD, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). For this reason, it may be preferable to use other terms, which have no ideological connotations. Aware of similar responses to terms like multilingualism and plurilingualism, I also use alternative expressions, which underline the search for a variety of approaches (multiple voices, multiplicity of languages).

²⁴⁷ Cockelbergh uses *nomadacity* in relation to Joris's life (2011:19).

²⁴⁸ The German words *umherirren* and *Irrungen* seem to have the same origin or connotations.

²⁴⁹ See in particular Édouard Glissant and Francophone writers related to postcolonial literature.

- Aller çà et là, à l'aventure, sans but précis ; rôder : Vagabond qui erre la nuit.
- Être égaré et aller sans direction précise en cherchant son chemin : Il errait dans ce labyrinthe de ruelles.
- Aller sans direction précise, ou se manifester de façon fugitive, imprécise : Laisser errer son imagination.
- Littéraire. Tomber dans l'erreur, se tromper : Errer dans ses calculs.
(<https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/errer/30845>)

Awareness of words as used in different languages has proved important for a search of studies on nomadism, which may be found under different labels. The diversity in the terminology confirms a certain prevailing conceptual uncertainty, which is reinforced by links with related concepts.²⁵⁰

3.2.1 2 Nomadism, travel and migrancy

The figure of the nomad shares features with several, quite diverse figures such as the tourist and the migrant. Critics who work with these concepts often attempt to specify their understanding of related terms. In *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (1994), Iain Chambers offers a good example of such conceptual differentiations, for instance through the use of the term *migrancy* rather than migration. Chambers prefers *migrancy*, thus foregrounding economic motivations and habitual movements, like those of seasonal workers in search of labour. He further adds a clear distinction between migrancy and travel:

[T]o travel implies movement between fixed positions, a site of departure, a point of arrival, the knowledge of an itinerary. It also intimates an eventual return, a potential homecoming. Migrancy, on the contrary, involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the promise of a homecoming – completing the story, domesticating the detour – becomes an impossibility. History gives way to histories, as the West gives way to the world. (1994:5)

On several points, Chambers' description of migrancy is close to an understanding of some forms of nomadism. If he prefers *migrancy* to analyse ways of being and approaches of identity and culture, he presents nomadism as an aspect of language, in a passage that concisely renders the orientation of the present study:

For the nomadic experience of language, wandering without a fixed home, dwelling at the crossroads of the world, bearing our sense of being and difference, is no longer the expression of a unique tradition or history, even if it pretends to carry a single name. Thought wanders. It migrates, requires translation. (1994:4)

²⁵⁰ See for instance, studies that cover related phenomena of travelling and migration in literature though nomadism is not used as a driving conceptual tool. For instance, Ottmar Ette, *Literatur in Bewegung, Zwischen Welten Schreiben* where the author proposes various models of movement. See also under 3.2.5 and 3.3.1.

In Chambers's work, the linguistic aspect, especially as emerging in literary writing, is absorbed in the cultural perspective on postmodern conditions.

In an essay entitled "Nomaden und Migranten" (2009), Rolf Kailuweit establishes the difference between the two groups on a distinction in their movements, migration for him always happens between two points, thus involving return movements, while nomadism is an ongoing zigzagging movement between multiple interconnected points. This view could start a comparison between Welch and Joris but it leaves out other perspectives which are relevant for their use of languages.

Ethnologists and anthropologists look on travelling as the overarching concept. Discussing terminology issues for cultural comparison James Clifford, in "Travelling Cultures" (1992), explains his preference for "travel", rather than displacement, nomadism,²⁵¹ pilgrimage and migration. He concludes: "There are, in any event, no neutral, uncontaminated, terms or concepts. A comparative cultural studies needs to work, self-critically, with comprised, historically encumbered tools." He calls "travel" a *translation term*, by which he means "a word of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way." (110). Nomadism, for the present study, should work in a similar way.

Among studies of travel, two works by Mary-Louise Pratt (2008) and Caren Kaplan (1996) stand out as providing valuable considerations for an approach of mobile poets, looking for their position between cultures.²⁵²

The diversity in the terminology confirms a certain prevailing conceptual uncertainty; *nomad/nomadism* is a fuzzy concept that may be diversely interpreted. Juxtaposing terms, and discussing them in the contexts in which they are used or problematized is part of the research process. As Bal writes, concepts "are always in a process of becoming, a process that involves developing relations with other concepts". (2002: 51) This fuzziness gives nomadism great potential for the exploration of literary multilingualism; as the fuzziness or variations in interpretation are linked to critical perspectives, I propose to distinguish between uses and references of the term in historical, sociocultural, philosophical and literary studies.

²⁵¹ Here his comment on nomadism: "I prefer [travel] to terms such as "nomadism," often generalized without apparent resistance from non-Western experiences. (Nomadology: a form of postmodern primitivism?)" (1992: 110).

²⁵² Mary-Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (2008), which highlights the importance of the gap between observer and observed and the way the travelling observer's gaze shapes their own and readers' perception of places. In the case of Welch and Joris, the concept of the colonialist, imperial perspective could be changed into a European gaze and a particular sensitivity to differences in French, German, Italian, Luxembourgish voices. In *Questions of Travel* (1996), Caren Kaplan explores the various metaphoric uses of travel and displacement in literary and feminist theory, traces the political implications of this "traveling theory," and includes many references to nomadism. She wrote her dissertation, *The Poetics of Displacement: Exile, Immigration, and Travel in Contemporary Autobiographical Writing*, under the direction of James Clifford, Donna Haraway, and Teresa de Lauretis. The work of Clifford Geertz is equally inspiring for its comparative approach of cultures (1973).

3.2.2 Historical studies of nomadism

Le nomade comme élément perturbateur (Chaliand 2006:22)

Historians' views are particularly helpful to understand the relation between studies of "real" (historically recognized) people and a metaphoric, conceptual use of nomadic figures and nomadism.²⁵³ Yet, it is important to remember that histories of nomads are a posteriori theories.²⁵⁴ The aim of the selected examples is not an overview of nomadic people but merely the identification of a few characteristics that promise a link with translingual practices.²⁵⁵

The historians' interest lies in reconstructing realities of the past, with little concern for metaphorical connotations. So what is it that they stress in their accounts of early nomadic populations? I have tried to extract a few core notions that appear to be relevant. However far away these people are from contemporary poets, it is striking that some key aspects about early nomadic populations seem to have survived in the concepts and metaphors that interest us today.

Historians are likely to remind us of the etymology of the word *nomad*: "Nomade vient de *nomos*: qui fait paître. Les Chinois disaient des nomades : « Ils suivent l'herbe et l'eau. »" (Chaliand 2006: 29) The origin of the word indicates that early tribes were shepherds, whose pastoral lives followed the movements of their herds, in search of food.²⁵⁶ Climatic conditions regulate bi-annual migratory cycles from the north to the south or from grassland in higher altitude to lower places when the cold sets in.

The word *nomad*, however far back it can be traced, was probably a designation used by settled people in urban settlements to refer to those who lived a different life of wandering. The connotation of outsiders and strangers has been there from the beginning. Yearly migrations are another feature associated with nomadic life. They mean constant movement but also some regularity and dependence on external conditions. Although quite wide ranging, the nomad shepherds' roaming space was not unlimited.

²⁵³ Among the studies I have consulted, the general introduction of Gerard Chaliand, in *Les empires nomades de la Mongolie au Danube* (2006) provides a relevant overview of general features.

²⁵⁴ It is reminiscent of the Greeks' construction of the notion of barbarian. See also Deleuze/ Guattari: "History is always written from the sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus, at least a possible one, even when the topic is nomads. What is lacking is a Nomadology, the opposite of a history. (1988; 2004: 24)

²⁵⁵ The range of people called nomads range all over the world, the best known historical populations roaming from Central Asia to Europe; they also include the Bedouins of the Arab peninsula and North African nomad populations, like the Touareg, but also other wandering, non-sedentary people like the Sinti and the Roma, the Sami and the Inuit. Not all are warrior people, but all represent cultural otherness and seem to be in some conflict with sedentary people. For a sweeping survey of nomadism across history, see Jacques Attali, *L'homme nomade* (2003).

²⁵⁶ See the question Robert Kelly raises in relation to Joris as a nomad poet: "What is it then that nomad poets care for and follow in their wandering?" in Cockelbergh, *Pierre Joris. Cartographies* (2011).

In sharp contrast to pastoral, travelling populations at war with sedentary societies stands the biblical figure of the Good Pastor.²⁵⁷ The image of a benevolent, caring shepherd, often visually represented amidst an idyllic landscape,²⁵⁸ points to the inherent multifacetedness of the nomad as pastor and warrior, with either an emphasis on close links to life in nature or to progress, confrontation and change.

Historians have shown the crucial role the nomads have played in military history and technological innovation – this is a point that Deleuze and Guattari also emphasize in their philosophical enquiry. Conflicts have marked travelling people's contacts with sedentary people. Nomads are not attached to a bounded territory; once they do not find grass for their animals, they move on, invade and attack. Compared to settled, well-organized populations, nomads are usually a minority who will use diverse strategies to reach their goals. Strength based on strategic skills is therefore another key feature highlighted by historians (Chaliand 27). It is seen as characterizing a group of people – nomads are rather studied as tribes or communities than as individuals.

In historical accounts – by sedentary people – nomads have been known as troublemakers (*des éléments perturbateurs*), as disruptive forces aiming at destabilizing the well-organized States. But nomads are not only warriors. Living on the fringes or peripheries of settled territories, they engage in trade with sedentary people. Sometimes, they become sedentaries themselves (accepting the rules of the State apparatus, as Deleuze and Guattari put it), or they establish their own empires. Nomads are also known as creators and innovators contributing to new orders of stabilization, as well as to the development of the arts.²⁵⁹

It is this double, sometimes ambiguous role, which is important to remember for a study of nomad people today, in particular the work of mobile and multilingual poets.²⁶⁰ Moreover, the fact that they engaged in trade points to interrelations and exchanges – another distinguishing mark for nomads. For instance, nomads may well have carved the routes of the famous Silk Road long before merchants came to use it. Historical studies show that nomads were not, as popular views might suggest, disorganized hordes or

²⁵⁷ Jesus called himself the "Good Shepherd" in John 10:11.

²⁵⁸ See representations of ancient Acadian shepherds, at the origin of pastoral literature – a line of thought which will not be further pursued.

²⁵⁹ Samarcand was built by descendants of nomads, Chaliand 13.

²⁶⁰ Speaking of the Asian nomadic empires, Chaliand writes: « Dans ce rapport perpétuellement conflictuel de façon ouverte ou masquée, les nomades ont souvent triomphé. Mais toujours de façon relativement éphémère. Pour que la victoire revienne aux nomades de façon pérenne, il leur faut adopter les formes de gestion des sédentaires, notamment sur le plan étatique. Les dynasties d'origine nomade s'urbanisent, même si elles restent guerrières et conquérantes. L'idéologie religieuse et la culture du sédentaire finissent par prévaloir. » (38)

unattached individuals living on their own.²⁶¹ They were members of communities, with a shared culture, though without a clearly bounded and organized territory.²⁶²

In historical accounts, very little can be found about traditional nomads' languages apart from the fact that they used a great diversity of languages; only few seem to have had a written language (Chaliand, 14) – though some, like the Bedouins, had their own literacy and a highly developed literary tradition. Yet, it is clear that the presence of nomads within settled, organized states (often with one shared language developing as mark of a cultural and political centre and identity) raises questions of language contact, adaptation, and transformation.

From historical studies of nomads one may retain several points for an approach of contemporary travelling, multilingual poets. Nomadic movements are remembered because they have caused major upheavals and changes in the distribution of power. Sedentary societies looked upon them with distrust, as outsiders likely to cause trouble. Yet history also shows that nomads have interacted with sedentary people and brought about significant innovations. It is this latter point that one must keep in mind to investigate the possible innovatory impact of multilingual nomadic poets' work.

What one may also take from historical studies is the need to shift attention to nomads' own perspective and to move from a focus on nomads as a group or people, to *nomads as individuals*. Tentatively anticipating the inquiry into the poets' work one must remember that Welch and Joris have not been travelling as members of a group. Nor have they, as natives from a very small country, on arrival in North America, joined an ethnic community with whom they might identify through a common origin. They have to be seen as individual nomads, who can invent their own model of hybrid or nomadic identity. By adopting the English language as their writerly language and by accepting positions in established academic institutions, they share some features with nomads who become integrated in society.

²⁶¹ For a discussion of the solitary intellectual nomad, see below (cf. Kenneth White, *L'esprit nomade*), with David Henry Thoreau as one of its best known representatives.

²⁶² See also Salman Rushdie's account of the passage from ancient nomadic life to communities ruled by religion: "He learned a world. And in that world one of the world's great religions was being born. They were nomads who had just begun to settle down. Their cities were new. Mecca was only a few generations old. Yathrib, later renamed Medina, was a group of encampments around an oasis, without so much as a city wall. They were still uneasy in their urbanized lives. A nomadic society was conservative, full of rules, valuing the well-being of the group more highly than individual liberty, but it was also inclusive. The nomadic world had been a matriarchy. Under the umbrella of its extended families, even orphaned children had been able to find protection and a sense of identity and belonging. All that was changing. The city was a patriarchy, and its preferred family unit was nuclear. The crowd of the disenfranchised grew larger and more restive every day. But Mecca was prosperous, and its ruling elders liked it that way. Inheritance now followed the male line. This, too, the governing families preferred." From *The Disappeared*, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/09/17/the-disappeared>

These considerations foreshadow debates on nomadism in the recent context of globalization and threatening economic crises.²⁶³ The change in sedentaries' mentalities with regard to mobile, 'nomadic' parts of the population, in particular after the 9/11 attacks in the US, bears remarkable parallels with the history of nomads. In the past decades, several studies have discussed the reasons for a growing distrust of nomadic people in contemporary society, which in some places goes along with a general distrust of foreign languages.

When Joris and Welch call themselves nomads, one may wonder about their attitudes to institutions in the places where they come to settle (Welch) or stay in permanent transit (Joris). Do their language practices (notably writing) signal a way of acquiescing to – or resisting – these authorities?

3.2.3 A wide array of critical views on nomadism today²⁶⁴

Critical voices have arisen in the last decades of the 20th century as response to mass movements of populations across the globe. Many refer to the aftermath of the Holocaust, to exile and life in the diaspora, while post-colonialism is another frequent frame for studies of modern forms of nomadism and displacement. In contrast with historical approaches, the focus in these studies is often on the predicament of individuals and nomadism has evolved into a conceptual tool to analyse complex, often contradictory experiences.

The texts I have selected to underpin these complex features all reflect writers' perspectives on some form of nomadism, which they have experienced themselves. They are presented here not to sum up the writers' work but specific features that help outline a map of nomadism and its connected notions. Moreover, these texts often include considerations about the role of languages and writing to cope with otherness.

In these critical considerations, nomadism receives diverse interpretations. Most texts stress the ambivalence of a nomadic condition and highlight specific aspects. Often, it is perceived as an enforced condition, synonymous with homelessness, loss and great distress, while other texts see in nomadic life the expression of freedom and choice, which may stand for a condition associated with promises of new opportunities. The distinction is crucial. Especially in the past decades, with on the one hand a growing number of people chased from their homes and, on the other hand, a rise in global mobility as a result of

²⁶³ See as an example of critical views on nomadic lives: Dick Pels, "Privileged Nomads. On the Strangeness of Intellectuals and the Intellectuality of Strangers" (1999).

²⁶⁴ *Critical* is here used in the sense of giving opinions and involving careful judgments based on variant readings of a text or situation; it also refers to the sense it is given in "critical theory", used in the broad sense and including all approaches which aim at emancipating thinking (notably postcolonial criticism).

an increasingly capitalist economy, the dichotomy between nomadism as an enforced condition and a desirable life has become ever more striking.

Welch and Joris as voluntary exiles cannot be seen as refugees; yet as displacement always entails some form of between-ness and hybridity, all experiences of nomadism are worth exploring for further insights. In the selected critical works by Palestinian-American Edward Said (1935-2003), Czech-born cosmopolitan Vilém Flusser (1920-1991), Tunisian-French Albert Memmi (1920-2020) and Tunisian-Canadian Hédi Bouraou (b. 1932), I will focus on the ambivalence in attitudes to nomadism. The indication of hyphenated identities are merely attempts at suggesting the diversity of linguistic and cultural connections, which are not to be seen as signs of definitive identities: for most of them their nomadic lives would require one or more national (and linguistic) references.

Nomadism and exile

In “Reflections on Exile” (2002), Edward Said points to the danger of seeing exile as a dead end and he proposes nomadism and mobility of thought as a possible form of escape.

The opening words of the essay stress the fundamental ambivalence of exile:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. But if true exile is a condition of terminal loss, why has it been transformed so easily into a potent, even enriching motif of modern culture? Modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, émigrés, refugees. (2002: 138)

Said describes multiple aspects of the hardships of exile, for instance, exile as “a solitude experienced outside the group” or as “a discontinuous state of being”. Towards the end of the essay, he proposes an answer to the questions initially raised about the potential strength of exile, and then explicitly refers to the necessity of perceiving certain movements in the life of exiles: “Exile is life led outside habitual order. It is *nomadic, decentred, contrapuntal*; but no sooner does one get accustomed to it than its unsettling force erupts anew.” (149; emphasis added)

He warns against any form of stasis and a refusal by exiles to envisage change with new connections and commitments. He considers exile “as an *alternative* to the mass institutions that dominate modern life... provided that the exile refuses to sit on the side-lines nursing a wound, there are things to be learned: he or she must cultivate a scrupulous (not indulgent or sulky) subjectivity.”²⁶⁵ (146-147). In this context, Said refers to the role of language and the views held by Theodor Adorno whose reflections are informed by the belief that “the only home truly available now, though fragile and vulnerable, is in writing.” (147) Said,

²⁶⁵ The complex role of subjectivity in nomadic theory is investigated later, in relation to Braidotti, Kristeva, Cassin and the poets’ positioning.

like Adorno, stresses the importance of the exile's detachment, his ability to discern discrepancies between concepts and what they actually produce. Nothing should be taken for granted, and this applies to language too.

"Life outside habitual order" requires many forms of movement; exiles are border crossers literally and figuratively speaking:

The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Orders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience. (147)

When he calls exile *contrapuntal*, a term borrowed from music, he describes the bi- or multifocal vision of exiles:

Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is contrapuntal. (148)

This description of exile as *polyphonic* is reminiscent of views on intercultural relations and very apt to evoke the necessity of nomad's decentred movements. Thus three aspects, nomadic mobility, contrapuntal creation and a decentred vision, become a view of a productive form of exile, which should be included in a framework for the analysis of multilingual nomadic poets.

Anticipating a nomadic world with "home" as multiple interconnections

Nomadism involves reconsiderations of home, in which language and communication are central elements. Among the late twentieth century thinkers who regard migrants and nomads as heralds of a new society in flux, the Czech-born Jewish philosopher Vilém Flusser is a remarkable multilingual protagonist. Himself a nomad from the moment he left Prague at the outbreak of World War II, Flusser sees travelling and an unwillingness to settle down in one place as expression of freedom. In the essays included in *The Challenge of the Migrant* (2003) ²⁶⁶ he seems to use the terms migrant and nomad indiscriminately: both conditions involve what he describes as *homelessness*, as being without *Heimat*, clearly differentiating between *Heimat* and *without home*:

People think of *heimat* as being a relatively permanent place; a home, as temporary and interchangeable. Actually, the opposite is true: one can exchange *heimats* – or have none at all – but one must always live somewhere, regardless of where. (2003: 12)

²⁶⁶ A translation of the German original of "Wohnung beziehen in der Heimatlosigkeit", in: *Bodenlos: Eine philosophische Autobiographie* (1999).

The strength and appeal of the condition of the migrant–nomad as Flusser conceives him or her – is a freedom of choice of contacts, locations, partners and languages. He actually wrote in several languages. He also insists on the importance of responsibilities but responsibilities that the nomad freely chooses: “[H]eimat for me consists of the people for whom I choose to be responsible.” (93) The way he resolves the tension deriving from the rejection of *heimat* and the need of a home consists in conceiving a future where *heimat* will be replaced by the relationships based on the circulation of information and communication. Flusser anticipates a future when information and new forms of communication replace notions of *heimat*. To evoke the future nomad’s life, he refers to the original meaning of nomads as pasture seeking people and elaborates on the metaphorical meaning that tents as homes can have. With their permeable canvas walls, tents let voices and information pass through for travellers. Always new relations will become the dominant features of such a nomadic life.²⁶⁷

Reflecting on conditions of exiles and nomads, Said and Flusser come to highlight some not so negative features that experiences of displacement offer on life and thought: new forms of communication, and the benefit of contact with multiple cultures and languages. Actual travelling eventually is not the core feature of these reflections on nomadism: what counts is the wandering of thoughts. Flusser has been seen as a precursor of *digital nomadism*, a notion that cultural sociologists have further developed.²⁶⁸ Zygmunt Bauman (2000; 2016) has analysed the nomadic life of professional people, for whom mobility has often become an attractive option, if not a condition, for a successful career. A nomadic life is associated with new forms of capitalism; it is seen as the privilege of a very rich elite, who feel “at home” anywhere in the world.²⁶⁹

In studies of nomadism as a reflection of globalization, questions of language often turn around the role of international languages, notably English (David Crystal, *English as a Global Language* 1997) and its impact on culture, while socio-cultural approaches of languages and literature foreground personal tensions and issues of identity.

²⁶⁷ Canvas walls evoke the notion of porosity and transborder relations. Joris uses a similar image of nomads’ tent when he speaks of travelling texts and languages as multilingual intertextuality and evokes the nomadic poet as wandering from tent to tent to get the news (ReadySteadyBlog in Justifying the Margins).

²⁶⁸ Among the first writers to use the term were *Tsugio Makimoto and David Manners* who used it as the title for their book: *Digital Nomad* (1997) where they predict, “Within the next decade [...] most people will find that the geographic tie is dissolving. It will happen gradually and people will be slow to realise that a revolution is occurring but, by the end of those ten years, most people in the developed world will find themselves free to live where they want and travel as much as they want. [...] [H]umans will be able to ask themselves: ‘Am I a Nomad or am I a Settler?’” (2-3), in Antonia Scholz, *The Reinvention of Nomadic Identity*. <https://nomadthinktank.com/the-reinvention-of-nomadic-identity/>

²⁶⁹ See the very derogatory comments on “intellectual strangers” in Dick Pels, 1999; in 3.2.6)

Critical views oscillate from the precarious conditions of homeless people to the praise of limitless mobility thus reflecting the ambiguity of globalization. The various interpretations of nomadism as a way of life hint at underlying tensions, at ethical challenges and associated concepts, such as *the stranger* and *hospitality*.²⁷⁰ 'In the fluid stage of modernity,' Bauman writes in *Liquid modernity*, 'the settled majority is ruled by the nomadic and extraterritorial elite.' (2000: 13) *Nomadism* is seen as a general trait of the "liquid modern" man as he flows through his own life like a tourist. Sixteen years later, in *Strangers at Our Door* (2016), Bauman expresses his dismay when he observes those societies that have constructed their success as well as their cultural values on nomadism and migration reject the new nomads, desperate and homeless refugees and victims of war and poverty.

3.2.4 Nomadic theory: From Deleuze/ Guattari to Kenneth White and Rosi Braidotti

Approaching nomadism as a way of thinking is already a characteristic of all those who state their critical views on a political, cultural, social or individual and subjective nomadic condition. Since the 1980s, some philosophers have further developed ideas on nomadism into a body of principles and a general tool for meaning making. Such theories aim at conceiving forms of mobility and change as a driving force for an understanding of being and becoming. For post-structural thinkers, nomadism is more than a cultural topic, a social issue or a way of life in a world of growing mobility. Thought itself must become mobile and nomadic. It must evolve so as take into account multiplicity, give room to hitherto ignored processes and creatively reconceive relations with the human and non-human environment. Such thinking should also have an impact on conceptions of languages and speakers in movement.

A specific aspect of nomadic theory is thus that it combines thinking about movement with an investigation which is in movement too. The object of the enquiry and the methodology used for the enquiry are both based on the same principle of mobility and transformation (of society, of individual subjects language practices). This means findings should always be considered provisional, as openings to new routes.²⁷¹

Nomadic theories have led to the formulation of poetics based on the same concepts. Travelling and deterritorialization have become central routes of investigation for poets and philosophers, for whom nomadism has become a way of understanding the world, an approach that allows combining a content

²⁷⁰ See Julia Kristeva, *Étrangers à nous-mêmes / Strangers to ourselves* (1991) and Jacques Derrida, *Pas d'hospitalité / Of Hospitality* (2000). See more references later in the text.

²⁷¹ See the epigraph in Kenneth White, *L'esprit nomade*, a quote by Lefebvre who deems it is poets' and philosophers' task to solve the conflict between "modèle et voie" by merging both: paradigm and route.

in movement with the movement of their writing. For all of them philosophical figurations of nomadic thought are dynamic tools for a radically innovative view of life, culture and society.

Central ideas are found in the numerous writings of **Gilles Deleuze** and **Félix Guattari** (notably in *A Thousand Plateaus*, which includes a section entitled “Treatise on Nomadology—The War Machine”). Poet-philosopher **Kenneth White**, a Scottish-French academic, works with similar ideas, which he links with his poetic practice and the concept of geopoetics. In *L’esprit nomade*, he offers an extensive overview of different expressions of nomadic thought in philosophy and poetry. **Rosi Braidotti**, who started from Deleuze’s ideas, has elaborated her own nomadic theory. Nomadism has helped her think through feminist ideas and led to conceptions of posthumanism. She is also very articulate about the role of multiple languages and writing for the nomadic subject.

Although the three thinkers share central ideas on movement, multiplicity and becoming, their work also presents significant variations in their interpretation. This diverging emphasis on connections of nomadism with technology, nature and multilingual subjectivity offers the keystones for an approach of different views on nomadic writing and language multiplicity in the work of Welch and Joris.

3.2.4.1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: A conceptual tool box

In any contemporary debate on the concept of nomadism, the work of Deleuze and Guattari is likely to take pre-eminence. Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) was one of the most influential and prolific French philosophers of the second half of the twentieth century.²⁷² For the present context it should be enough to say that Deleuze regarded philosophy as the production of concepts and developed his own metaphysics. In relation to his study on nomadism it is important to know that in his thinking the concept of multiplicity replaces that of substance, event replaces essence and virtuality replaces possibility. Next to his philosophical writings, Deleuze also produced various studies inter alia on the arts and literature. In 1968, he met Félix Guattari (1930-1962), a political activist and radical psychoanalyst, with whom he wrote several books, among them the two-volume *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, comprised of *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980/2013).²⁷³ The innumerable non-philosophical references in this work indicate the authors’ vast reading in all fields of knowledge and account for the influence of the

²⁷² For more detailed information about their work see the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (online).

²⁷³ References in the following presentation go to *A Thousand Plateaus* (the English translation 2013), mostly to chapter 1: Introduction: Rhizome (1-27); chapter 4: November 20, 1923: Postulates of Linguistics (87-128), chapter 12: 1227 Treatise on Nomadology – The war machine (409-492); Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* (1975); occasionally also to Gilles Deleuze et Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (2008). Although Guattari’s psychoanalytical approach is a constitutive part of their collaborative work, the present investigation does not elaborate on this dimension, as it would unduly expand the study of the poets’ multilingualism.

works in many fields beyond philosophy. As we have seen, Mieke Bal draws many ideas for her work with concepts from Deleuze, especially from *What is Philosophy?* (1991), the last book he wrote in collaboration with Guattari.

Most readers and commentators agree on the difficulty of Deleuze's writing style, in particular in *Mille plateaux*. It is highly allusive prose; concepts are developed while in the process of further elaboration, they may be partly undone in an effort to do justice to the complexity of situations. Deleuze intends to keep readers on their toes and to force them to rethink previous assumptions. The importance of *thinking through* is a feature of nomadism that is very useful for a reflection on multilingual poets' approach of words and writing.²⁷⁴ For the present study, the work of Deleuze and Guattari is particularly important as main inspiration for Joris's poetics.

In view of the enormous output of Deleuze and Guattari, references are limited to those points that foster insights into movement and space as dimensions of translingual writing processes. To highlight the novelty of their approach, Brian Massumi, the English translator of *Mille Plateaux*,²⁷⁵ in the "Translator's Foreword", succinctly sums up the features of traditional models of philosophy for which Deleuze and Guattari seek fresh alternatives in their work:

The annals of official philosophy are populated by "bureaucrats of pure reason" who speak in "the shadow of the despot" and are in historical complicity with the State. They invent "a properly spiritual ... absolute State that ... effectively functions in the mind." Theirs is the discourse of sovereign judgment, of stable subjectivity legislated by "good" sense, of rocklike identity, "universal" truth, and (white male) justice. "Thus the exercise of their thought is in conformity with the aims of the real State, with the dominant significations, and with the requirements of the established order." (2013: vii, the quotes are inserted by Massumi from other texts.)

Massumi also comments on the complex structure of the book, where historical examples constantly mix with figurative meaning and abstract reflections. This process requires an "intensive state of thought", which turns out to be a characteristic of nomadic theory and poetics:

Each section of *A Thousand Plateaus* tries to combine conceptual bricks in such a way as to construct this kind of *intensive state of thought*. The way the combination is made is an example of what Deleuze and Guattari call consistency – not in the sense of homogeneity, but as a holding together of *disparate elements* (also known as a "style").²⁷⁶ (2013: xiii; emphasis added)

²⁷⁴ For the notion of *thinking through*, central to Joris's conception of poetry, see below, and also in relation to White's observation on translation.

²⁷⁵ Massumi is also the respondent in Joris's "Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics". See in chapter 6.

²⁷⁶ *Style* is an important notion as for Deleuze and Guattari it refers to how disparate elements of a language, or variations, are assembled, for example in the writings of bilingual writers like Beckett or Kafka (2013: 113-114); more about style in relation to Braidotti's views on nomadic writing (she speaks of a style of resistance of a style of ethics).

He adds that “the authors steal from other disciplines with glee, but they are more than happy to return the favor” (2013: xii). Deleuze uses the image of the “tool box” to speak of concepts, which can be used in new constellations. Their work thus appears like a rich “tool box”, from which we may select elements that contribute to the discussion of relations between multiple languages in nomadic poets’ texts.²⁷⁷

An important point to remember is their view of concepts as never being fixed entities; all elements always have to be considered in relation with other ideas. For a study of nomadic poetry, three core concepts appear particularly useful:

- nomadic movement and a reconceptualization of space,
- rhizomatic multiplicity and growth,
- the notion of variations and assemblages in relation to languages and literature.

These “conceptual bricks” are interconnected. Deleuze and Guattari fundamentally question stable aspects of thought. Without entirely rejecting them, they raise awareness of the important role played by the mobile counterpart and come to argue for a general reconceptualization of *being*, which on all levels is to be replaced by a focus on *variables*, and on *becoming* or transformation. They avoid thinking in purely oppositional terms and aim at re-figurations, for instance of space, and focus on complex assemblages, like language. The goal is not a new *system* of thought but rather a radically different way of thinking.

This is a promising approach for considerations on language and multiple variations. Deleuzian thought does not bank on separate systems: it rather regards *multiplicity* and change or transformation as constituent factors of concepts in process. What this means should emerge from a succinct presentation of key ideas.

Nomadic movement, the role of war machines and a reconceptualization of space

In Deleuze and Guattari’s work, the nomad operates on both a literal and a figurative level. For instance, the title of the “Treatise on Nomadology – The War Machine” includes a date (1227 AD), which, as Massumi explains, refers to the moment when the nomad war machine “existed in its pure form on the vacant smooth spaces of the steppes of Inner Asia” (2013: xiii). For nomads today no such precise location is given: what counts are the thoughts created and developed from this early figuration of nomads.

Calling it a treatise on nomadology, Deleuze and Guattari confer a scientific character to their text, yet one must remember that their aim is a revision of knowledge; thus it cannot be read through the lens of conventional understandings of scientific systems. “Nowhere do we claim for our concepts the title of a

²⁷⁷ Mieke Bal, in her presentation of work with concepts does not hide her indebtedness to Deleuze whose thinking very much relies on intensive thinking about the creation of concepts and a combination of views that derive from many fields.

science. We are no more familiar with the scientificity than we are with ideology; all we know are assemblages.” (2013: 23-24)

A baffling yet crucial aspect appears in the subtitle: *The war machine*. The connection with aggressive movements suggests that nomads are in constant clash with settled people and above all with the established State apparatus in the territories into which they move. They are invaders but remain in transit, unless they decide to become sedentaries themselves.

The notion of machine is omnipresent in Deleuze and Guattari. Let it be enough to say that *war machine* i.e. that which characterizes the nomad, is exterior to the State apparatus (409). It is the invention of the nomads, and insofar it is exterior to the State apparatus and distinct from the military institution (442). A machine has no consciousness but is capable of doing complex tasks; a war machine is an assemblage that is in movement and brings about change. Machines are also considered together with the notion of a body without organs, another challenging idea linking the non-organic and the unconscious.²⁷⁸

The extensive references to war machines, weapons, motors and tools as they have evolved account for the association with technology, which has frequently been drawn from “Nomadology”. The machinic view of nomadism is one of the aspects that Joris foregrounds in his poetics. On this point, Kenneth White does not follow Deleuze and Guattari, he rather emphasizes the connections of nomads with the natural surroundings that they cross and the close contact with natural elements that their travelling entails, which is more appropriate for a study of Welch’s work.

Nomadic movement implies a revision of traditional views of space. Deleuze and Guattari differentiate between smooth and striated territories, and it is in this context that they refer to differences between migrants and nomads. From their elaborate descriptions, I take only some ideas, which should prove relevant for considerations of movements that stand out in the work of Welch and Joris. Deleuze and Guattari do not deny the notion of territory in relation to nomads but reconceptualise it as open space, which is constantly refigured by nomads’ movements. For nomads, space is an in-between, situated between points of transit or relay where nomads pass:

The nomad has a territory; he follows customary paths; he goes from one point to another [...] although the points determine paths, they are strictly subordinated to the paths they determine, the reverse of what happens with the sedentary. The water point is reached only in order to be left behind; every point is a relay and exists only as a relay. A path is always between two points,

²⁷⁸ In connection with a revision of psychoanalysis, see chapter 2 of *A Thousand Plateaus*; it is entitled “1914: One or Several Wolves?”, which is taken into consideration here.

but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a distinction of its own. The life of the nomad is the intermezzo. (D/G 2013: 443)

The distinction between *striated* and *smooth* spaces follows a process of mapping, in which striated spaces stand for geopolitical divisions and boundaries whereas the smooth spaces remain the open and undetermined territories of nomads:

[T]here is a significant difference between the spaces: sedentary space is striated by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures, while nomad space is smooth, marked only by "traits" that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory. [...] The nomad distributes himself in a smooth space; he occupies, inhabits, holds that space; that is his territorial principle. (D/G 2013: 443-444)

The emphasis on *detrterritorialization* is reminiscent of the notion of *decentring* in postcolonial theory, yet more radical as it excludes reterritorialization, which characterizes migration in opposition to nomadism:

279

[N]omads have no points, paths, or land, even though they do by all appearances. If the nomad can be called the Deterritorialized par excellence, it is precisely because there is no reterritorialization afterward as with the migrant, or upon something else as with the sedentary (the sedentary's relation with the earth is mediated by something else, a property regime, a State apparatus). (D/G 2013: 444)

As happens so often with Deleuze and Guattari, notions are reformulated in order to stress an aspect that was not sufficiently foregrounded. So *detrterritorialization* does not mean that nomads are *not* situated or located. On the contrary, considerations of nomads' movements and spaces are always situated and must not be confused with generalizations:

The nomad, nomad space, is localized and not delimited. What is both limited and limiting is striated space, the relative global: it is limited in its parts, which are assigned constant directions, are oriented in relation to one another, divisible by boundaries, and can interlink [...] [The nomad] is in a local absolute, an absolute that is manifested locally. (D/G 2013: 445-446)

Critical and postcolonial texts on mobility show that the distinction between nomads and migrants, with the related often shared notions of exile and diaspora, is not always easy, especially as movements are rarely predictable: descriptions or analyses often occur post factum. Deleuze and Guattari insist on the specific features of nomads:

The nomad is not at all the same as the migrant; for the migrant goes principally from one point to another, even if the second point is uncertain, unforeseen, or not well localized. But the nomad goes from point to point only as a consequence and as a factual necessity; in principle, points for

²⁷⁹ Nomads are also called "vectors of deterritorialization. They add desert to desert, steppe to steppe" (445). This is a notion that Joris takes up in his poetry (cf. desert poems in *Poasis*).

him are relays along a trajectory. Nomads and migrants can mix in many ways, or form a common aggregate; their causes and conditions are no less distinct for that. (D/G 2013: 443)

Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between migrants and nomads provides some hints at possible differences in their relations to languages.²⁸⁰ Migrants are thought about in terms of origin: they come from a place that remains an essential aspect of their identity; consequently, migration is often associated with relocation – either with a new place to identify with – or with the (im)possibility of return. For language practices, this means that references to the mother tongue remain crucial for migrants; their other languages are usually discussed in terms of second language acquisition. In regard to nomads, notions of origin and of location as a feature of identity are irrelevant: transit and passage rather describe their movement, not belonging to or coming from a place. The reference to war machines in relation to nomads suggests a violent impact; Deleuze and Guattari do not seem to have considered this particular aspect of nomadic language movements.²⁸¹

Rhizomatic multiplicity and growth

For Deleuze and Guattari rhizomes are essential for a representation of the disparate ideas that constitute the vast philosophical project, which they expose in *A Thousand Plateaus*. They borrow the idea of the rhizome from natural sciences and show that its features of growth and multiplicity stand for all the principles that characterize their thinking about culture, language and society. A rhizome, unlike a root, is a type of plant stem situated either at the soil surface or underground that contains nodes from which roots and shoots originate. Rhizomes are unique in that they grow perpendicular, permitting new shoots to grow up out of the ground. When separated, each piece of a rhizome is capable of producing a new plant. Deleuze and Guattari insist on rhizomes being “absolutely different from roots and radicles. Bulbs and tubers are rhizomes.” They see rhizomes as an all-pervading form in nature: animals, like rats, are rhizomes in their eyes. So are burrows, “in all of their functions of shelter, supply, movement, evasion, and breakout” (D/G 2013: 5).

As the reference to rhizomes aims at introducing a conception of knowledge, books and languages, which is radically different from prevailing views, a succinct analysis could show key elements for an approach of multilingualism. Deleuze and Guattari do not explicitly associate nomads with rhizomes, yet as part of their overall thinking, nomadic movements are a good example of rhizomatic development. Nomads are

²⁸⁰ Braidotti takes up the distinction in relation to figurations in literature. She also gives some indications as to its impact on differences between language practices. (See 4.5.3.4)

²⁸¹ For an impact on nomads' language use, see for instance Braidotti, as well as the section on self-perceptions of writers in Luxembourg. The works of Welch and Joris should provide further insights.

constantly on the move; their origins are not important. They follow lines of flight and disregard the borders of well-organized States. Nomads have no roots, like trees. Joris, in fact puts his nomad poetics under the general motto of rhizomes.

Rhizomes stand for multiplicity in movement, for connections and heterogeneity; for non-linear growth and ruptures that have no particular meaning. Rhizomes stress the importance of processes: speaking of rhizomes means putting the focus on *becoming*, not on being or identity and remaining the same.

Rhizomes stand in opposition to trees, which have roots, remain immobile and always remain separate from other plants with roots. In arborescent schemas of thought, the tree has a central trunk from which branches reach out; structure, organization and unity with an emphasis on origins or genealogy characterize arborescent thinking. Rhizomes, on the other hand, follow principles of connection and heterogeneity: “any point of a rhizome can be connected to any other, and must be” (D/G 2013: 5).

Let us summarize the principal characteristics of a rhizome: unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; [...]. It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (*milieu*) from which it grows and which it overflows. It constitutes linear multiplicities with n dimensions ... from which the One is always subtracted ($n-1$). ... Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points and biunivocal relationships between the positions, the rhizome is made only of lines. (D/G 2013: 21-22)

It is worth pointing out these key notions of rhizomes that Deleuze and Guattari stress in relation to writing processes and the structure of books. For them multiplicity means *multiple dimensions* or *directions in motion*. This view requires that books too must become rhizomatic²⁸² and follow the principle of multiplicity:

The ideal for a book would be to lay everything out on a plane of exteriority [with all lines of flight], on a single page, the same sheet: lived events, historical determinations, concepts, individuals, groups, social formations. (DG 2013: 8)

Middle or *milieu* is a crucial notion; it marks the difference with origins and evokes a state of in-betweenness:

A rhizome has no beginning or end: it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb “to be,” but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, “and . . . and . . . and . . .” This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb “to be.” Where are you going?

²⁸² D/G reject the type of book they call root-book (3) - with the image of the tree emphasizing the central importance of a stem, of origins, of roots (that always remain separate from other roots).

Where are you coming from? What are you heading for” These are totally useless questions. (D/G 2013: 26)

The emphasis on middle and in-between-ness, has repercussions on writing, which Deleuze and Guattari conceive as another way of moving:

[P]roceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going, rather than starting and finishing. [...] The middle is by no means an average. Between things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that seeps one and the other way, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle. (26-27)

For an approach of languages in texts and writing processes, a few more notions are promising:

- Deleuze and Guattari see *A Thousand Plateaus* as a rhizomatic assemblage. The notion of *assemblage* (24) as something that is created or constructed and does not grow organically may be useful to investigate multilingual poets’ writing as showing features of rhizomatic assemblage.
- Notions like trace and trait as well as lines of flight are related to space and movement: they take different shades of meaning. Looking at the original French will uncover more connections, e.g. *lignes de fuite* (*fuir* and *s’échapper*) does not evoke quite the same as lines of flight (to fly and to flee) in addition to the meaning the phrase has in relation to arts and drawing, *point de fuite* being a key word for a drawing of perspectives
- The notion of *exteriority* (versus subjectivity or the Freudian subject may uncover further dimensions of relations, notably the outsider position of the nomad (see also Kenneth White’s use of the concept of exteriority).

What Deleuze and Guattari write about rhizomatic growth concerns methods of enquiry, in particular enquiries into the nature of language:

There is always something genealogical about a tree. It is not a method for the people. A method of the rhizome type, on the contrary, can analyse language only by decentering it onto other dimensions and other registers. A language is never closed upon itself, except as a function of impotence. (D/G 2013: 6-7)

They reject models like Chomsky’s trees and plead for a principle of **mapping**. (11) Key characteristics of maps are that they are not closed upon themselves. As open constructs, they constantly foster new connections between all kinds of dimensions:

“The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation... It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art,

constructed as a political action or as a meditation. [...] A map always has multiple entryways.”
(D/G 2013: 12)

A rhizome is a map (12), not a tracing of units; only a map can account for rhizomatic multiplicity and movements. Such a view of mapping rhizomatic growth shows parallels with the approach that they advocate for minor literature: they emphasize the need to conceive multiple entryways, which are different from those used for major literature – *other dimensions* need to be considered, especially dimensions that take into account connections between various languages. (Compare to ch. 2.3 on mapping as research strategy.)

Notion of variations and of minority versus majority in relation to languages and literature

When Deleuze and Guattari speak of nomads, sedentary people and migrants, they do so in terms of space: The nature of space as they conceive it also determines language practice. When nomads pass through a well-organized striated space marked by clearly defined and regulated institutions, they challenge the prevailing order of unity, which also controls knowledge about language and regulates its practice. One may infer that on the other hand the smooth open nomadic space does not impose such constraints on language use and endorses heterogeneity and connections as they occur. *See above 3.5.1.1.*

In many parts of their texts, Deleuze and Guattari evoke alternative concepts of language, which they oppose to systems defined on the general principles of a State apparatus. Language that is conceived nomadically ignores strict structures and boundary lines; their interest is in how it breaks out of these constraints and constantly creates new connections. Two dimensions on which they elaborate appear particularly relevant: **the variability of language and so-called minority languages**. Their aim in both cases is a recognition of aspects that do not correspond to requirements of standard languages promoted by those in power.

A long extract from the opening chapter on rhizomes is worth quoting as it is a concise formulation of the authors' understanding of the principles of language:

Our criticism of these linguistic models is not that they are too abstract but, on the contrary, that they are not abstract enough, that they do not reach the abstract machine that connects a language to the semantic and pragmatic contents of statements, to collective assemblages of enunciation, to a whole micropolitics of the social field. A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous

linguistic community. Language is, in Weinreich's words, "an essentially heterogeneous reality." There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity. Language stabilizes around a parish, a bishopric, a capital. It forms a bulb. It evolves by subterranean stems and flows, along river valleys or train tracks: it spreads like a patch of oil. It is always possible to break a language down into internal structural elements, an undertaking not fundamentally different from a search for roots. There is always something genealogical about a tree. It is not a method for the people. A method of the rhizome type, on the contrary, can analyze language only by decentering it into other dimensions and registers. A language is never closed upon itself, except as a function of impotence. (6-7)

The baffling opening statement with its reference to the *abstract machine* anticipates explanations on machines as standing for complexity.²⁸³ This passage outlines many of the authors' key ideas such as multiplicity, connections and heterogeneity in language. They reject the tree as linguistic model, because it does not incorporate enough dimensions of language:

- A rhizome on the other hand can much better account for all kinds of connections for meaning making.
- They do not accept any linguistic universals and consider all kinds of language acts, including dialects and specialized languages.
- The socio-political dimension of language use is foregrounded. Language is always situated; like society or a community, it is inherently heterogeneous.
- They dismiss the notion of the mother tongue and rather point to the existence of a dominant language, which represents those that hold the power.
- Language spreads far and wide, yet parts of the rhizome structure can be analysed separately: not language itself (as a system) but dimensions of language, however without reference to a centre.
- Language is always an open structure.

A rhizomatic approach of language thus must remain open and should not exclude outsiders. It proposes a broad understanding of language, which encompasses writers and literature that used to be discarded from views controlled by centralized instances of power.

In "Postulates of Linguistics", another chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, the authors further develop their ideas. The two points that could interest a study of translingual writers are their views on language variations and their defence of minorities, which should not be placed in a hierarchical relation of subordination to majorities.

Looking at variations in language, they observe that such variations are inherent in any system. They cannot be discarded as outside elements interfering with or breaking the order of a system. Variations are

²⁸³ It may also be read as dismissal of subjective approaches – an interpretation that will account for Joris's general reticence towards any aspects of nomadic or multilingual *subjects* in his poetry.

not the outcome of interacting systems but integral aspects of language. “Every system is in variation” (*A Thousand Plateaus*) and defined not by its constants and homogeneity but on the contrary by variability. They dismiss the notion of one standard language as model to follow with criteria for quality evaluation. The belief in variability is a blow against the efforts of imposing one dominant language as representing a totally consistent system. Languages appear all the more variable (changeable, fluctuating) once you start considering their multiple dimensions (phonology, grammar, regional variations, social and cultural variations, registers like scientific language etc.). A language is always multiple; only mapping various dimensions can clarify what aspects you are considering. The sole approach of linguists will not do.²⁸⁴

For them, “All languages [...] are in immanent continuous variation ...” (113) Belief in language as an immutable system fails to acknowledge many of its aspects and ongoing changes. Bilingual writers, like Beckett or Kafka produce “a language within a language.” (114) But a writer can also be a foreigner in his own tongue; as Proust said “masterpieces are written in a kind of foreign language.” (114)²⁸⁵

It is vain to believe that language can be made homogeneous. “But the abstract machine of language is not universal or even general, but singular.” (116) Multiplicity is an intrinsic feature of any language. For Deleuze and Guattari, linguistic and literary practices that exploit the benefits of language variations should be recognized as creative work: It is wrong to dismiss them as *merely poetic* or to stigmatize them as marginal, or as the meaningless discourse of children and lunatics.

The interest that Deleuze and Guattari take in multiple forms of language is undeniable. Their principle of heterogeneity is reminiscent of Bakhtin’s concept of *heteroglossia*. Their attention mainly goes to intralanguage multiplicity (*innersprachliche Mehrsprachigkeit*). The numerous references to bilingual writers like Beckett reveal their awareness of a broad vision of language: Should we deduce from this that once you accept the general principle of the variability of language, connections between different, named languages either become irrelevant or work along the same lines?

²⁸⁴ They compare language variations to variations in music – the comparison with major and minor modes places their comments on major and minor languages and literatures in a context that is quite different from the political or hierarchical context in which it is often understood, this dimension however requires some knowledge of musical theory which I do not have.

²⁸⁵ “[I]t was Proust who said that ‘masterpieces are written in a kind of foreign language.’ That stammer is the same as stammering, making language stammer rather than stammering in speech. To be a foreigner, but in one’s own tongue, not only when speaking a language other than one’s own. To be bilingual, multilingual, but in one and the same language, without even a dialect or patois. To be a bastard, or half-breed, but through a purification of race. That is when style becomes a language. That is when all language becomes secret, yet has nothing to hide as opposed to when one carves out a secret subsystem within language. One attains the result only by sobriety, creative subtraction. Continuous variation has only ascetic lines, a touch of herb and pure water.” (114)

Major and minor languages and literatures

The analysis of the concept of minor and major languages in *A Thousand Plateaus* has many similarities with the authors' earlier published and much discussed long essay «Kafka: pour une littérature mineure» (1975).

With an analysis of these two, by now very controversial categories of minor and major,²⁸⁶ Deleuze and Guattari mainly aim at criticising homogeneous systems established by linguists for the scientific study of language. One could say that as comparative forms (of the Latin words *magnus* and *parvus*) they can only qualify something in relation to something else. They show the relativity of these terms with the example of Afrikaans, which could be called a locally minor or major language depending on the type of relations to other languages that are being considered at a certain moment. The emphasis on *locally* is fundamental; one could also add a temporary dimension as such relations of languages towards others change over time. As they write, Afrikaans, for instance, “was a locally minor language struggling against English” though its position in relation to Bantu dialects must be considered differently. (119)²⁸⁷

For an analysis of translingual writers, their views on minority and majority remains relevant if one remembers that their distinction is no value judgment but rather a way of approaching variables and creativity. “The major and minor mode are two different treatments of language, one of which consists in extracting constants from it, the other in placing it in continuous variation.” (D/G 2013: 124).

For Deleuze and Guattari, the terms major and minor do not qualify two different languages but rather two usages or functions of language. (121). They challenge the common views on these notions and stress the role of constants in so-called major languages, while they underline the creative possibilities of variations that minority writers display: “Majority implies a constant, of expression or content, serving as a standard measure, by which to evaluate it” (122).

Against the common objection to an alleged poverty or preciousity (or lack of authenticity) in texts by minority writers, they foreground the inventiveness of writers, in circumlocutions, for instance, and refer to the extra *thinking through* that writing for these writers situated across or between languages involves.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ See Julia Kristeva's critical account under 3.2.5.

²⁸⁷ One could also take the example of Luxembourgish, which is in some domains and at certain moments a locally major language, within the borders of Luxembourg, but which is also a minor language from many points of view (numbers of speakers, literary output, cultural recognition) when considered in relation to other languages.

²⁸⁸ D/G (2013: 121-123) elaborate on the mistaken views of minority languages in terms that are reminiscent of what Steven Kellman says about translingual writers and which becomes a key position in Joris's poetics.

3.2.4.2 Kenneth White: Poetic figurations of nomadism and translingual writer

For a study of nomadism in literature, the work of Kenneth White, the Scottish-French poet and thinker, auspiciously complements the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari. His deep interest in nature, the earth and the cosmos as source of thinking offers a related yet differently oriented perspective on travelling, language(s), writing and poetics. He has roamed across mental and geographical spaces that share significant features with the literary and linguistic experiences and diverse approaches found in both Welch and Joris.²⁸⁹

Born in Scotland in 1936, White studied French and German literature as well as philosophy and Latin at the University of Glasgow, then went to Munich and Paris.²⁹⁰ Unlike Deleuze, he has travelled widely all over the globe. An academic and a poet, he constantly moves between his native Scotland and France, where he has spent most of his life and devoted his time to notions of nomadism, which have gradually evolved into a project of what he calls geopoetics.²⁹¹

Lists of his work demonstrate his bilingualism but also a strict separation between works in French and English. While he has written essays and theoretical texts in both languages, his poetic work is originally produced in English, and then translated into French.²⁹² This clear differentiation between the two languages may express personal preferences but it also reflects the constraints imposed by publishing houses and readers. As his writings show, other languages constantly emerge through various references in his works. However, his focus in nomadic theory is on language and what language can do rather than on the explicit comparison between languages.

For Kenneth White, the nomad is a wanderer and explorer of thoughts and landscapes: he travels widely in order to understand links between the configuration of the earth and culture. Exploring for the nomadic poet means not so much discovering entirely new worlds than looking at the hidden details, at phenomena that usually pass unnoticed. Writing about them is part of the process of discovery and becomes a way to communicate his new understandings about life.

²⁸⁹ Neither Joris nor Welch seem to mention Kenneth White nor does he refer to their work.

²⁹⁰ For details about his various locations, wide-reaching interests and countless travels all over the world, see <http://www.geopoetics.org.uk/what-is-geopoetics/kenneth-white-biography/>; <http://www.kennethwhite.org/accueil/>; <http://www.kennethwhite.org/biographie/origines.php?tag=1575104713>.

²⁹¹ In a biographical notice, he writes. « [In 1979] Adopte la nationalité française (sans toutefois perdre sa nationalité britannique). Se considère de toute façon comme un citoyen du monde, mieux encore, un habitant de la Terre. » (*Un Monde ouvert* 2006: 366)

²⁹² Most of the translations of his work into French are by his wife Marie-Claude White.

White's most relevant theoretical study for a framework of multilingual nomadic poets is *L'Esprit nomade* (1987)²⁹³, which as part of a considerable cultural project provides insights into his own route across conceptions of nomadism. He devotes the first part to an outline of the nomadic intellectual; the second part consists of five essays on individual poets, who for White represent various aspects of nomadism; the last part, entitled "Poétique du monde" is an introduction to a nomadic poetics, which he comes to call a geopoetics. This key notion of his thinking is gradually elaborated in other texts.

The following survey of the three dimensions of White's thoughts on nomadism should highlight the core notions that underpin a mapping of complex relations in translingual poetic work.

L'esprit nomade: situating a multifaceted notion

The nearly untranslatable French expression *l'esprit nomade*, the title of White's book (1987), evokes the frame of mind of both those who travel around the world and of those "immobile" nomads, who reading and thinking roam across vast spaces of thought (like Deleuze or Memmi who have mostly stayed "at home"). In the first part, « Esquisse du nomade intellectuel » (15-103), White situates his work. The first motivation for the travelling thinker is a desire for knowledge, which reaches beyond formally bounded territories. Because this knowledge is vague and scattered (*diffus, dispersé*) it requires a "nomadic spirit," a mobile mental attitude, and its own cartography, with new coordinates and connections: « [I]l est question d'esprit *nomade*, et de cartographie : de (nouvelles) coordonnées, de (nouvelles) corrélations, de liaisons diverses et parfois, sans doute, dangereuses. (11) »²⁹⁴ New connections may appear dangerous because they do not follow the usual logic of thought. This is how White further characterises the nomad:

Le nomade, c'est aussi celui qui quitte l'autoroute de l'histoire, ainsi que les cités pathogènes qui la jalonnent, et qui s'enfonce dans un passage où il n'y a parfois plus de chemins, plus de sentiers, tout au plus des tracés. (1987: 11)

These lines reveal key features of White's nomadic figure: he moves and lives outside the usual, fast and easy tracks, "far from the broad avenues of history": the image suggests marginality as well as solitude. It is the opposite of what he calls "sick" city life. The link with natural surroundings at once foregrounds a key dimension that Deleuze and Guattari do not consider. Moreover, White presents this *outsider* as an *intellectual*:

²⁹³ *L'esprit nomade* was published in 1987 in French; it contains two essays originally written in English. There is no English version of the book. My references are to the 2008 edition.

²⁹⁴ These new relations remind us of what Bal calls clusters of concepts.

[I]l est avant tout un intellectuel d'un nouveau genre, mobile et multiple, abrupt et rapide, n'appartenant à aucune intelligentsia, ne s'attachant à aucune idéologie et ayant la solidarité difficile, sauf avec l'univers. (1987: 17)

The French expression *esprit nomade* is closely linked to the notion of *nomade intellectuel*, here presented as a “novel type of intellectual”. In French, *intellectuel* has positive connotations, while for many English speakers the term could start alarm bells ringing through an association with (excessive) theorizing and being too cerebral.²⁹⁵

In other texts about nomadic movements, White has used the expressions *figure du dehors* and *homme du dehors*.²⁹⁶ A figure from the outside evokes the position of the traveller who remains external to a social centre of activity. Yet *dehors* can also stand for outdoors, for being in the open; it then describes a person in contact with natural surroundings, which is another important dimension of White's work.

White's nomad is a solitary walker, who pursues his investigations *modo peregrino*.²⁹⁷ He sees his place among those who have introduced new thoughts about the human condition and proceeds to situate the intellectual nomad as descendant of a line of Western thinkers.²⁹⁸ He points to links with Marx and Engels (*décomposition de l'esprit absolu*); with anarchists and individualists (mostly travellers, in search of new landscapes of thought, in pursuit of a philosophy that is not metaphysical); with nihilists (especially in Russian literature); with rebels, such as Albert Camus; with archipelagian thinkers who reach beyond European-Mediterranean centrism to India and Far Eastern thought; with thinkers like Merleau-Ponty (*l'importance de matrices d'idées*), or Guy Debord and the notion of *dérive*.

These disparate features of nomadism contribute to our understanding of a flexible concept, which always remains on the move. Even a cursory presentation of the Luxembourg poets' lives and work has for instance shown that Welch is rather the solitary traveller who seeks for meaning in natural surroundings, while Joris seems more of an archipelagian thinker and poet trying to reach out to “remote” writers

²⁹⁵ This may explain why English readers seem to distrust White's work for its intellectual, erudite and suspiciously elitist quality. See below, conclusion on White: Is nomadic poetry elitist (in the eyes of many readers) because it is perceived as too erudite through its numerous references to past and present literary figures from all over the world? Yet, for White, (and for Joris), poetry is primarily a source of knowledge, a different way of expressing insights that ordinary, traditional science cannot take into account.

²⁹⁶ *La figure du dehors*, is the title of an early essay published in 1982; *Henry Thoreau, l'homme du dehors* is the title of the original essay included in *L'esprit nomade*; see note (under Remerciements, page 6).

²⁹⁷ He speaks of « un cheminement qui s'accomplit en dehors du discours culturel habituel ... modo peregrino ». The term « *cheminement* » evokes the nomad's wandering; a literal translation is not possible.

²⁹⁸ « Nietzsche constatait la mort de Dieu. Foucault annonçait la mort de l'homme. *Le nomade est celui qui, sans lamentation, prend son départ dans cette situation extrême* et qui, contournant le domaine des sous-dieux et des surhommes, traversant le neutre, s'aventure dans un champ de forces inédit, le long de plages insolites. » (2008: 10 emphasis added)

situated far away from Western cultural centres. Are they rebels? This is a point to explore with close references to their writing and their attitude to philosophy and metaphysics.

In the investigation of nomadic thought, White puts the emphasis on what these intellectuals do, not on who they are. By travelling, especially by travelling mentally, to far off territories as well as to the past, the nomad hopes to discover a part of himself, which so far had remained hidden (see 40-41).²⁹⁹ Another important point is that nomads travel across fields of study, reaching out beyond their initial area of expertise and opening up new spaces of inquiry. White is particularly interested in the role of art and poetry for an understanding of nomadic thought and activities. He refers to Merleau-Ponty: « [D]ans ses derniers travaux, Merleau-Ponty propose d'aller de la métaphysique à une physique, de la dialectique à une poétique: « Ce qui est irremplaçable dans l'œuvre d'art – ce qui fait d'elle non seulement une occasion de plaisir – c'est qu'elle contient mieux que des idées, des *matrices d'idées*. » » (2008: 42) White's emphasis on such matrices of ideas recalls notions of clustering and interdisciplinary work. Moving across academic disciplines and concepts, art and poetry provide a possibility to analyse aspects of reality that traditional, bounded fields of knowledge are not equipped to address. Exploring so-called "vague zones" is mental work, which, as White writes, implies decentration (« décentrer, distendre, solliciter vers un nouveau sens notre *imago* du monde et les dimensions de notre expérience. » (2008: 43)) and it is inextricably linked to movement: « Il n'y a signification que par un mouvement. » (2008: 43; White quotes Merleau-Ponty, *La Prose du monde*.)

Another crucial aspect of movement that White links to nomadism is that of *dérive*.³⁰⁰ The notion – as experience and as practice – had started with the dada and surrealist movements. It was theorized by a key figure of the Situationist international (movement), Guy Debord, and was a key text of the May 68 student revolt against capitalism and consumption.) White quotes Debord:

« ... la dérive se présente comme une technique de passage hâtif à travers des ambiances variées. Le concept de dérive est indubitablement lié à la reconnaissance d'effets de nature psychogéographique et à l'affirmation d'un comportement ludique et constructif, ce qui l'oppose en tous points aux notions classiques de voyage et de promenade. » (2008: 48) ³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ See White's views on Jean Grenier and Albert Camus: « On peut donc voyager non pour se fuir mais pour se trouver. » (2008: 39)

³⁰⁰ *Dérive* is also a key concept in Joris's work, see below.

³⁰¹ Taken from L'Internationale situationniste, No 2, see <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Situationist-International>

Later, for his own writing White is not so much interested in urban political or in purely abstract forms of *dérive* than in thinkers' and walkers' practices. *Dérives* (1978) is the title he chose for an account of his early peregrinations.³⁰²

White comes back to the notion of *dérive* in *Dialogue avec Deleuze* (2007), where he alludes to different forms of *dérive*, and by extension to nomadism in literature. He also positions his approach as different from that of Deleuze; he is not only a mental but also a real traveller in contact with places and spaces as they present themselves to the random wanderer:

Ce qui caractérisait ce mouvement de dérive décelé par Deleuze chez Nietzsche, et par la suite chez quelques autres écrivains ex-centriques, était avant tout un rapport au dehors. [...] Il y a donc accord total entre moi et Deleuze-Guattari sur ce besoin d'un dehors, d'une évolution dans un dehors. Mais il ne suffit pas d'en « parler », d'en faire soit de la logorrhée philosophante, soit de la poésie bucolique, soit de la littérature voyageuriste. (2007: 26-27)

As the second part of *L'Esprit nomade* shows, White feels closer to poets that travel, or travellers that write poetry, than to indoor philosophers. He knew that Deleuze had shown an interest in English and American literature for its focus on nomadic themes:

La littérature anglaise-américaine, écrivent Deleuze et Parnet dans *Dialogues*, ne cesse de présenter ces ruptures, ces personnages qui créent leur ligne de fuite, qui créent par ligne de fuite ... Tout y est départ, devenir, passage, saut, démon, rapport avec le dehors ... Le devenir est géographique. (2008: 65)

But later White comes to realize that Deleuze's approach is mostly intellectual with little concern for the actual land (for the *geography*, as White says) where the poetic figures circulate.

Nomadic poets as travellers and translators

In part 2 of *L'Esprit nomade*, White offers five extensive portraits and analyses of nomadic writers, which provide a number of features to remember for an analysis of the work of Welch and Joris. They belong to different cultural, linguistic and professional contexts.³⁰³ Some of the nomads that White has selected are quite well known (Henry Thoreau, Hugh MacDiarmid); others less so (John Cowper Powys, George Borrow and Victor Segalen). They are all travellers but in various ways, some are adventurers who go to exotic

³⁰² En mai 68, Kenneth White perd son emploi, c'est pour lui l'occasion de prendre son sac à dos et de partir voyager à travers l'Europe. Il va vagabonder dans Londres, Glasgow, Dublin. Il parcourra ensuite la Bretagne, la Belgique, Amsterdam, Barcelone avant de faire une halte à Marseille pour se rendre au Maghreb et goûter au plaisir du désert. *Des pérégrinations poétiques et littéraires*. Pas de but précis autre que d'apprécier le moment et les rencontres. Il visite des lieux en rapport avec un poème, un livre, un écrivain. Lors de ses dérives, il rencontrera des artistes, des drogués, des personnages hauts en couleur. *Il ne sait pas où il va, mais il y va.* (emphasis added) <https://le mot et le reste.com/litteratures/derives/>

³⁰³ Thoreau is American, MacDiarmid Scottish, Powys and Borrow are English; Segalen is French.

places while Thoreau is rather a walker around the near-by pond. They are poets; for all of them the writing process is a core feature of their intellectual nomadity. It is as if true nomads must be writers, as only through their language they can communicate the knowledge discovered through moving. The nomad poets he describes are, most of them, exceptionally gifted for languages; some are proficient in an impressive number of languages.

The only one who does not travel far, Henry Thoreau, is probably the most addicted writer. He clearly positions himself as outsider going as far as openly stating his 'civil disobedience': this is reminiscent of the historians' views of nomads standing in opposition to established organized society. The case of Hugh MacDiarmid is perhaps the most interesting for an investigation into possibilities of multilingualism. White devotes an extensive analysis to Hugh MacDiarmid's efforts in search of a poetic language for the specificities of Scottish culture and nature and shows how he eventually aimed at inventing a new universal, multifaceted language beyond national identity, political considerations, cultural differences and scientific progress.

As nomadic writers, all White's examples are above all readers of texts by other thinkers, in several languages. Reading is a form of travelling or nomadizing across languages. Not all of them are proficient speakers of several languages but they are translators: it is as if the comparison of languages enabled them to get a richer grasp of the world they watch. In their writings, they express their close relationship to nature or the environments they visit – exotic or close at hand: only through language and poetry can the poets make sense of the landscapes they observe and come to terms with inherent tensions. What White stresses is the particular knowledge about being and the world that nomadic writers aim to communicate.

Not aesthetic qualities motivate these nomad poets in the first place. Their creative drive appears as part of an acute desire for knowledge. Why, we may then ask, do they choose poetry to communicate their insights? The answer that these portraits suggest is similar to the explanation given by Deleuze and Guattari: the experiences that these writers have acquired while travelling go beyond the boundaries of traditional, separate fields of study; the knowledge they assemble is so complex that only a literary form can render what they wish to communicate.

White's concept of geopoetics

In the last part of *L'Esprit nomade*, as response to the many examples of nomadic writing, which he has described, White frames his vision of a *poétique du monde* and comes up with the concept of geopoetics,

as its natural sequence. He has further developed its principles in many other writings, notably in relation with the *International Institute of Geopoetics*, which he founded in 1989.³⁰⁴

The following short presentation cannot possibly give a complete view of White's rich and evolving ideas. The focus is on those considerations that one may also look for in a study of Welch and Joris as nomadic poets:

- the type of knowledge poetry aims at, views on culture and intercultural relations, poetic intelligence,
- the role of multiple languages and of translation for the process of writing, the notion of (a multi-dimensional) poetic language,
- underlying concepts of space, place and movement; poetic approaches of nature and ecology.

White provides a succinct presentation of geopoetics as knowledge and poetic intelligence:

The geopoetic project is not one more contribution to the cultural variety show, nor is it a literary school, nor is it concerned with poetry as an art of intimacy. It is a major movement involving the very foundations of human life on earth. (The Scottish Centre for Geopoetics)

White's poetics describes a way of experiencing the world, of expressing its diversity creatively and of promoting radical cultural renewal.³⁰⁵ Geopoetics has nothing to do with rhymes and meters; it aims at expressing knowledge about relations in the world, which philosophy and science, each alone, are not able to communicate.³⁰⁶ Its transdisciplinary scope is confirmed in a presentation of the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics:

Geopoetics is deeply critical of Western thinking and practice over the last 2500 years and its separation of human beings from the rest of the natural world, and proposes instead that the universe is a potentially integral whole, and that the various domains into which knowledge has been separated can be unified by a poetics which places the planet Earth at the centre of experience. Geopoetics looks for signs of those who have attempted to leave 'the motorway of Western civilisation' in the past in order to find a new approach to thinking and living e.g. in the writings of intellectual nomads such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Arthur Rimbaud, Henry Thoreau and Patrick Geddes[...] It also seeks to express that sensitive and intelligent contact with the world by means of a poetics i.e. a language drawn from a way of being which attempts to express reality in different ways e.g. oral expression, writing, visual arts, music, and in combinations of different art forms.

<http://www.geopoetics.org.uk/what-is-geopoetics/>

³⁰⁴ See The Scottish Centre for Geopoetics: <https://www.institut-geopoetique.org/en/59-map-of-the-archipelago/the-scottish-centre-for-geopoetics>

³⁰⁵ For the cultural and intercultural dimension of White's poetics, see the study by Mohammed Hashas 2017.

³⁰⁶ "This is a view of poetry as a form of knowledge that Joris shares with Kenneth White – both drawing inspiration from Deleuze. It applies to Welch to some extent too.

The position of the poet that derives from such an approach also stands in contrast with popular views of the poet. For White, being a poet involves a wide range of writing activities, which aim at uncovering usually overlooked relations between distant fields of knowledge.³⁰⁷ They require the concentration of a sharp mind that moves fast, almost as if speed could reduce the distance between different areas of thought and enquiry (e.g. geology and philosophy): Geopoetics breaks or transgresses intellectual borders and leads the way to a new conception of space, which is always open, able to reveal ever new connections to the traveller. *Open World* (2003) is the title which White has chosen for a major collection of his poems from 1960-2000. On several occasions, White speaks of *poetic intelligence* to indicate the kind of complex mental activity he has in mind: “[T]here is no language for being/ you can outline it/ with poetic intelligence.” (*Open World* 2003: 78; quoted from Mohammed Hashas 2017: 116).³⁰⁸ *Musical intelligence* introduces an interesting notion that we can relate to the approach of poetry as a form of knowledge.

It is the poetics of a solitary wanderer in the sense that White does not aim at proposing a new system, or theory or school of thought or of poetic practice, which would involve defining a territory with its own borders and stable governing principles. This would be contradictory with the open world or space across which the nomad moves, along a road he discovers for himself. Solitary progress is a fundamental aspect of White’s poetics. Nonetheless, it involves the presence of many mental travel companions: White’s texts abound with references, epigraphic inscriptions, quotations. The nomad creates his own community of travellers, including philosophers, scientists and above all wandering poets (Thoreau, Rimbaud et al.), all writers in whose work exploratory and reflecting features are connected through a particular use of language. He considers the connections resulting from these encounters as constellations, in constant movement.³⁰⁹ Unlike the digital nomad who concentrates his thinking on the movement of machines and technology, he looks for connections and networks, which he observes in nature. But he never speaks of truth; what counts is watching, reading, thinking and moving on, perhaps with an improved vision of goals for poetic expression.

³⁰⁷ White: “I don’t like being labeled a poet because of all the connotations [...] I’m not only interested in writing poems. I write poems, it’s a bit like the spearhead of my work. But I also write prose books, I write books on thoughts, I write theses. It’s a multifaceted and polymorphous activity, isn’t it, that also implies a certain life.” see <https://fresques.ina.fr/europe-des-cultures-en/fiche-media/Europe00099/kenneth-white.html>

³⁰⁸ See also his response to Goethe’s scientific writings: « On y voit à l’œuvre une pensée poétique. – une pensée en liaison avec la poéticité de la Terre: une intelligence poétique du monde. » (*Lettres aux derniers lettrés* 2017: 46).

³⁰⁹ White does not explicitly refer to Glissant’s poetics of relation, yet in 2004 was awarded the Édouard Glissant prize from the University of Paris VIII for his ‘openness to the cultures of the world’. <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/kenneth-white>

Some of the key features of this poetics allow anticipating promising entryways into the work of Joris and Welch. The linguistic dimension needs further comments.

The role of multiple languages in White's geopoetics

What makes White's *L'Esprit nomade* a fascinating road to follow in the context of multiple languages, is his own meandering across a wide range of languages to his outline of *a poétique du monde*.³¹⁰ *Reading* appears as a core activity from which he draws as many reflections as from his walking across natural expanses.

White always writes in one language, French or English (with the occasional quotation from other languages emerging in his poetry). Yet for his texts the poet relies on several languages: a truly nomadic work is intrinsically *multilingual*³¹¹ in its rendering encounters with people and texts. Not in his outline of geopoetics but in other texts, he includes many oblique references to the role of multiple languages and deals with language dimensions in literary studies (notably Comparative Literature) that have marked his writing and which he continues conceiving in his own way. (*Lettres aux derniers lettrés* 2017) In the chapter entitled "Le grand atelier de la traduction", White speaks about his own experiences with language learning (from Latin to modern languages) and his interest in translation. He describes how translation of poetry from various languages has given him a sense of language structures and of poetry. He knows about the benefits of juxtapositions and comparisons of poetic texts in different languages: « [L]oin d'être une activité subalterne [...] la traduction est une pratique intellectuelle, littéraire, culturelle de premier ordre » (2017: 109-110), a commentary that anticipates on Welch and Joris's views on translation.

Yet, despite his interest in multiple languages (including an acquaintance with Chinese and Japanese poetry), White also admits that there is a limit to learning foreign languages. It is too time consuming: What eventually counts more for him is a universal poetic language, or the possibility for the poet to communicate his understanding of relations to the earth and the universe.

In order to express his insights into meaningful connections, the nomadic poet is particularly interested in words as "ontological equivalents", which become cognitive tools opening new perspectives on being in the world.³¹² He is wary of metaphors, because they may be remnants of dead conventions, but also because they lead away from the desire for precise new insights. Geopoetics, and nomad poets, are in

³¹⁰ It has some features of Glissant's *Poétique de la Relation*, 1990.

³¹¹ for a definition of multilingual for the context of White's work, see Dirk Weissmann on Herta Müller and Ilma Rakusa.

³¹² Michèle Duclos, *Etudes Britanniques Contemporaines* n° 4. Montpellier: Presses universitaires de Montpellier (1994).

need to ‘invent’ a new language for their poetry, inevitably influenced by their extensive reading in many languages. As he explains in a *Note finale*, his reliance on multiple languages includes animal voices and sounds heard in nature (2017: 123-125).

Spatial interconnections

As the term *geopoetics* suggests,³¹³ in White’s project actual landscapes, geology, coastlines, rock formations, and tidal moves play a key role. This approach of natural surroundings shows parallels with *postmodern* geographers, like Doreen Massey, and reflect White’s interest in primordial landscapes (for instance, Labrador) maritime areas (around the Atlantic) and the sea (the Pacific in *Le Plateau de l’Albatros*). For White, every piece of writing is however locally situated, in Brittany, Scotland or any other part of the world: the general is not possible. White is not interested in political or ideological dimensions. His theoretical reflections in essays offer tools for an approach of Welch’s poetry about New Brunswick and the Dolomites or for Joris’s references to rocks and woods in his early poetry and to the desert in later works.

The spaces of White’s reading and knowledge of languages is enormous and transpires in all his writings. White defends a view of culture and literature, which everywhere tends to disappear. It transpires in the title of a recently published collection of essays: *Lettres aux derniers lettrés* (2017). The French word “lettré” is interesting as a quick, automatic translation into English might bring “literate”, while the French word derives from *les (belles) lettres*, a near synonym of literature. That meaning has all but disappeared from English usage and is becoming obsolete in French usage, too. The first word, *Lettres*, refers to a genre which has not disappeared but as a form of communication stands in competition with new electronic practices.

The nomad for White can come in various guises: like himself he can be a poet, a critical thinker or a researcher; his examples and references in his *geopoetics* include all those perspectives and show how intricately linked they can be. The question might arise whether this form of erudite nomadism is not a form of (un/intentional) elitism, which can also be discussed in relation to the work of Welch and Joris. The notion of *mapping* is particularly apt to render White’s endeavours: what he creates is maps of both physical phenomena and of mental activities. Some of his work includes graphic and cartographic material (see in particular *Le Plateau de l’Albatros*). The nomad’s attention goes to mental connections as well as to connections that can be observed in the natural world, rather than to individual people or human consciousness; the nomadic poet as White understands him, shies away from subjective, personal

³¹³ See a recent update of his poetics in *Le plateau de l'albatros : Introduction à la géopoétique* (2018).

responses. This does not mean he aims at generalizations, but rather that he looks at relations between natural and cultural aspects or events, which can be located in physical surroundings.

The omission of a subjective dimension and the aim to present “objective” accounts or responses are announced right at the beginning of *L’Esprit nomade*:

Le nomade qui est en chacun de nous comme une nostalgie, comme une potentialité, n’a pas la notion d’identité personnelle, la “conscience de soi” lui est étrangère. Ne disant ni « je pense », ni « je suis », il se met en mouvement, en chemin, il fait mieux que « penser » au sens pondéreux du mot. (13)

White shares this position with Deleuze, while as we shall see another follower of Deleuze, Rosi Braidotti, unambiguously places subjectivity at the centre of her nomadic theory.

White and Deleuze

White has extensively dealt with parallels and differences between his thoughts and those of Deleuze (*Dialogue avec Deleuze* 2007). Despite a shared focus on movement and transformation and the role of interaction or connections, their conceptions of nomadism show major variations.

Probably the differences between their approach of the world and their ways of life account for some disagreements. Deleuze is primarily a philosopher with a strong interest in social changes; White is the poet whose thoughts move in response to landscapes and nature. This does not mean that White is unaware of philosophical traditions; on the contrary, but his approach is different from that of Deleuze who follows a sociological leftist tradition of radical thought. Yet Deleuze too gives evidence of literary sensitivity through his frequent in-depth references to writers, like Proust and Kafka. Deleuze looks upon nomadism as a force moving against capitalism; White regards nomadism as an intellectual stance which remains attached to the physical environment.

The two diverging views of nomadism are particularly interesting as they contain significant elements, which can account for the difference between Welch and Joris. Yet both Deleuze and White views also point out the dynamics and the tensions that underlie writing processes and approaches of language multiplicity.

3.2.4.3 Rosi Braidotti: the nomadic and polyglot non-unitary subject

Rosi Braidotti’s nomadic theory adds several significant guidelines for a reading of mobile, multilingual poets. At first, this may look surprising as Braidotti’s main concern is with feminist thinking and the posthuman. Yet her work includes numerous reflections on the nomadic subject (a dimension that Deleuze/ Guattari and White avoid), on multilingual writing processes and on what it means to be regarded minoritarian.

The auto-biographical dimension of Braidotti's nomadism

Already a few biographical details give a hint of her nomadic life spent between several languages and cultures. She was born in Northern Italy (in 1954) and at the age of 16 emigrated with her family to Australia. After taking her first degrees at the Australian National University in Canberra, she did her doctoral work in philosophy, at the Sorbonne in Paris where she met Gilles Deleuze. She then moved to the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands where she has devoted most of her academic career to women studies. She is above all an intellectual on the move, who has never stopped gathering ideas across the domains of several disciplines. The concept of nomadism has become the driving force behind her innovative work. *Nomadic Theory* is the title of *The Portable Rosi Braidotti* (2011), a collection of the most important work she had produced by that time.

In *Nomadic Subjects* (2011) she includes thoughts on her own multilingual *parcours*, which illustrates a constant attempt to situate her search for new figurations of the nomad in lived experiences. In a section entitled "The Nomad as Polyglot" (2011: 29-43), she explores her nomadic biography. Locating core moments in her life within a vast geopolitical and cultural context. What appears is a wide net of intersecting routes, with many references in the next sections of the book to the role of writing processes and language switches for nomadic subjects. (2011: 43-54)³¹⁴

In line with rigorous thinking, she uncovers the key elements of the cultural and linguistic multiplicity that underlies her theoretical work. Accordingly, she points out the importance of particular configurations, such as the fact that she, an emigrant from Europe, read Foucault in Australia (and approached the work from this particular perspective). Moreover, she wonders about the impact of her early life in a region (Northeast Italy) with a rich historical context of borders and marked by its proximity to other languages and cultures. She shows that her nomadic theory is also the result of contact with quite different academic cultures of learning. Braidotti describes her route as that of the migrant who becomes a nomad, for whom, beyond physical displacement, nomadism involves mental travelling and transformation. Not surprisingly then, her writings offer a great wealth of ideas for links between nomadism and multilingualism. (For her distinction between nomad and migrant, see below.)

Nomadism as a theory of becoming

Becoming is at the centre of all her thinking. Braidotti positions her theories in line with those of Deleuze, yet develops her own ideas, because as she says, theories too are involved in a process of becoming. Thus,

³¹⁴ See in particular the section entitled "Writing on the Threshold of Multiple Becoming" (2011, 43-55); it is integrated in the first chapter "By Way of Nomadism". In an essay called "Writing as a Nomadic Subject" (2014), Braidotti further enlarges her analysis of writing processes.

she introduces her book *Nomadic Theory* with Deleuze's words: "It's not enough simply to say that concepts possess movement; you also have to construct intellectually mobile concepts" (*Nomadic Theory* 2011: 1). Nomadism, as her work shows, is the mobile concept *par excellence*.

Her initial goal is to propose a new approach of feminist theories based on a consistent philosophy of "becoming" (in opposition to what she calls a phallogocentric culture). Admittedly, feminism is not at the centre of the present study of multilingual poets, yet Braidotti intends her investigation of the concept of nomadism to encompass general thinking for the humanities. *Becoming* has many aspects and the process towards transformation involves thoughts that directly concern the analysis of work by multilingual writers on the move.

Braidotti's conception of difference, change or transformation involves multiple dimensions. They concern body and mind, as well as location in time and space; languages appear as one crucial dimension of such nomadic becoming. Among her rich, complex and far-reaching ideas on what *becoming multiple*, *becoming other* and *becoming minoritarian* means, several interrelated aspects seem particularly relevant for an understanding of nomadic, multilingual poets:

- the nomadic multiple *subject* and its figurations,
- space and time: mapping different figurations of displacement,
- the polyglot nomad's writing processes.

Some further elaboration of these aspects should reveal the wide-reaching implications of Braidotti's theory for a study of multilingual nomadic poets.

The nomadic multiple subject and its figurations

In an interview with Sara Saleri (2018) on nomadism, Braidotti has summed up her view of the subject and the construction of subjectivity as alternative to a restrictive concept of identity:

I think we have to start from eliminating identities. We will never arrive anywhere if we [take] identity as a starting point. In fact the whole process of becoming is a process of abandoning identity and entering in the construction of subjectivity, subjectivity being per definition transversal, collective. (2018:n.p.)

In a theory of becoming, issues related to the non-unitary subject are central. However widespread this notion has become, there is no consensus about the implications of the loss of unity for a subject no longer defined by a central unity. Does this non-unitary or multiple subject stand for loss and deficit, or does the nomadic subject, rather offer a new vision, accounting for her philosophical investigation into political,

ethical and epistemological implications?³¹⁵ For her, the nomadic subject is always multiple: she refers to her project of nomadic subjectivity as “rhizomatic in itself [growing] organically from a cluster of central and inter-related ideas.” (2014: 167). This is how she describes her three-tiered project:

The project on nomadic subjects emerges from feminist philosophies, post-colonial philosophies and anti-racist philosophies, critical theory, social theory. And then it develops into an analytical tool to look at three classes of problems. First of all, the cultural mutations, which I call “the cultural cartography”: what is happening to bodies, identities, belongings, in a world that is technologically mediated, ethnically mixed and changing very fast in all sorts of ways. Secondly, there is a clearly political project: can we think other ways of being globalized, of becoming planetary, or are we stuck with this neoliberal model? Is there another way in which we can rethink at our interconnections? And then, finally, the ethical issue: what are the values of subjects who are not unitary but are split, complex, nomadic? (2018: no page)

Leaning on the notion of minority in Deleuze and Guattari, Braidotti sees the nomad as a minoritarian subject. She underlines the *wish to become minoritarian*, it is for her is a way to conceive subjectivity, not understood as individualism but as “a socially mediated process of entitlements to and negotiations with power relations.” (2014: 168). This appears to be a suitable approach of writers who position themselves, or are positioned, outside national frames of language and literature. What distinguishes Braidotti’s approach is the emphasis on an *affirmative position for* subjects who acknowledge their difference without regret.

Her focus is not so much on nomadism as an abstract theory than on figurations of the nomad as multiple subject. She explains how she understands her approach of nomadism as the development of “suitable figurations for different kinds of mobility (of human and non-human travellers)” (2014: 176) and shows the necessity to include embedded and embodied social positions in critical thinking about nomads. Nomadic subjects are located in space and time.

For Braidotti, figurations and mapping are part of constructive mental processes. Like Deleuze and White, she is wary of metaphors if understood as mere poetic devices which disregard reality: “A figuration is a living map, a transformative account of the self; it’s no metaphor.” (2011: 10) Proposing figurations of subjects is part of the endeavour to find representations “for the sort of subjects we are in the process of becoming” (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 11). It is a form of mapping, a cartographic project, which allows considering multiple dimensions.³¹⁶

One should always keep in mind that in Braidotti’s theoretical thinking the nomadic subject is a mental construction, or as she puts it “a myth, or a political fiction, that allows [her] to think through and move

³¹⁵ For the linguistic implications, see below: “The polyglot nomad”.

³¹⁶ For a similar position, see also her essay “Writing as a nomadic subject” (2014: 179).

across established categories and levels of experience: blurring boundaries, without burning bridges” (2011: 26). Her figuration of the nomadic subject thus develops from philosophical, abstract considerations while always at the same time remaining connected to real-life experiences of displacement, difference and interrelationships.

The focus of Braidotti’s thought on the nomadic subject may well be the most important aspect of her elaboration of Deleuze’s theory, which with its emphasis on the controversial notion of “the war machine” is usually understood as ignoring the subject. In Braidotti’s eyes, the *machinic* is often wrongly interpreted as cybernetic omnipotence, while she explains:

The machinic for Deleuze is yet another figuration that expresses the non-unitary, radically materialist and dynamic structure of subjectivity. It expresses the subject’s capacity for multiple, non-linear and outward-bound connections. (2005/2006: 2)

The reference to materialist structures marks the movement away from the nature-culture divide to subjects as physical bodies.³¹⁷ For a study of language use, from the perspective of new materialism in philosophical, mostly feminist theories, I will merely draw their call for new tools as also applying to the study of language as matter, as part of the body and embedded in particular situations.³¹⁸

Space and time: mapping different figurations of displacement: the subject as nomad, migrant or exile.

The key features of the figuration that she describes, notably the dynamic and multiple, non-linear developments, are guidelines for her understanding of specific literary representations of the nomad, the exile and the migrant.

Braidotti makes a significant distinction between these three figurations of displacement. She finds a confirmation of her views in different types of literature, where the particular positions also correspond to differences in style, genres and relationships to time. This is how she perceives descriptions of exile:

The mode and tense of exile style are based on an acute sense of foreignness coupled with the often hostile perception of the host country. Exile literature, for instance, is marked by a sense of loss or separation from the home country, which, often for political reasons, is a lost horizon: there is a diasporic side to it. Memory, recollection, and the rumination of acoustic traces of the mother tongue is central to this literary genre. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 59)

One notices the stress put on loss or separation, the importance given to memory, a general concern for mother tongue issues, but also a suggestion of hostility on the part of natives. The juxtaposition of hostile

³¹⁷ <https://criticalposthumanism.net/new-materialisms/>

³¹⁸ In particular in Welch’s work, the voice and the hand to write are crucial elements and tools for the nomadic poet.

and host is an allusion to the etymological link between both words, as also noted by Derrida. For migrants, the situation is understood to be different:

The migrant, on the other hand, is caught in an in-between state whereby the narrative of the origin has the effect of destabilizing the present [...] this migrant literature is about a suspended, often impossible present: it is about missing, nostalgia, and blocked horizons. The past acts as a burden in migrant literature: it bears a fossilized definition of language, which marks the lingering of the past into the present. [...] All the various hyphenated subjects that compose this human tapestry are pure immigrants, living in their own frozen sense of their cultural identity, behaving as if they were still in their countries of origin and speaking a language that is neither their mother tongue nor standard English, but a concoction of their own making. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 59-60)

The examples of migrant literature that Braidotti provides are writings by Australian authors. The emphasis is on static elements and the absence of movement or change. She speaks of an *in-between state* (not movement), *a suspended present*, *blocked horizons*, *a frozen sense of identity*. In this concise view of migrant literature, she also comments on features of *fossilized language*: it is neither the language of origin nor the language of the new country: it is the immigrants' own *concoction*. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 59-60) The migrant's view is characterized by looking backward, by *nostalgia* and missing what is gone.

We notice some overlapping with the description of exiles and the stress on the in-between situation of migrants hardly brings any improvement to the overall bleakness she sees in this condition. For anyone with a desire for a meaningful future, nomadism as she conceives it offers a significantly different outlook. To stress the particular position that the nomadic subject takes in her thinking, she clearly differentiates the nomad from the migrant and the exile, and insists on movement and *becoming*, without totally denying a certain sense of unity (which elsewhere she also calls "self"). Through the description of diverse patterns of movement she contemplates different ways of travelling, not only a constantly forward moving drive but also forms of seasonal displacement.

The nomad does not stand for homelessness or compulsive displacement: it is rather a figuration for the kind of subject who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity. It expresses the desire for an identity made of transitions, successive shifts, and coordinated changes without an essential unity. The nomadic subject, however, is not altogether devoid of unity: his mode is one of definite, seasonal patterns of movement through rather fixed routes. It is a cohesion engendered by repetitions, cyclical moves, rhythmic displacements. [...] The nomad enacts transitions without a teleological purpose. Deleuze gives as an example of this nomadic mode the figuration [of] the rhizome. The rhizome is a root that grows underground sideways. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 57-58)

The portrayal of the nomad is that of a forward looking figure who takes an affirmative stance towards the ongoing movements or changes that define his life.

What is striking is Braidotti's effort to create "soft borders" between her views of the nomadic subject and those views she would like to overcome. It may be surprising to see her using concepts such as identity, unity and roots, which she elsewhere rejects. But by modifying, clarifying or specifying their meaning ("an identity made of transitions": "without an *essential* unity"; "the rhizome is a root that"), she brings across her unmistakable features of a nomadic subject. Comparisons underline the differences.

For the nomadic subject, Braidotti claims a special relationship with time and the past, which will be further clarified in relation to the role of writing:

Nomadic thought [...] rests on a process ontology that challenges the traditional equation of subjectivity with rational consciousness, resisting the reduction of both to a linear vision of progress. Thus, instead of deference to the authority of the past, nomad thought proposes the fleeting copresence of multiple time zones, in a time continuum that activates and deterritorializes stable identities. It also offers a very dynamic vision of the time sequences of memory. [...] This vision of the subject enlists the creative resources of the imagination to the task of enacting transformative relations and actions in the present. (*Nomadic Theory* 2011: 209-210)

We might thus also speak of thinkers and poets as nomads in time; nomadism emphasizes the importance of multiple dimensions in considerations on the individual, society, culture or natural spaces.³¹⁹ By abandoning traditional, rational thinking processes, and highlighting the role of memory, Braidotti also highlights the role of imagination for creative, innovative thinking, especially in writing processes (see below). Space and time are co-present in her representations of thinking as movement.³²⁰

From this all-encompassing, multi-dimensional approach of nomadism derives her preference for **mapping** rather than concise definitions or clear-cut classifications. Mapping is an open form of positioning in process. Braidotti sees the figurations of the nomad, which she aims to develop as a cartographic attempt at representing multiple subjectivities as well as the process of change or becoming: "A figuration is a living map, a transformative account of the self; it's no metaphor" (*Nomadic Subjects* 2001: 10). In an interview, she further elaborates on the potential of mapping:

³¹⁹ Here we see a parallel with Kenneth White, for whom layers or dimensions of time are particularly important in explorations of nomadic thinking.

³²⁰ The following view on the movements of philosophical thought bears interesting parallels with nomadic poets' writing processes: "Thinking is about tracing lines of flight and zigzagging patterns that undo dominant representations. Dynamic and outward bound, nomadic thought undoes the static authority of the past and redefines memory as the faculty that decodes residual traces of half-effaced presences; it retrieves archives of leftover sensations and accesses afterthoughts, flashbacks, and mnemonic traces." (Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory* 2011: 2)

The crucial thing about nomadic subject is that it is post-identitarian: nomadic is a verb, a process by which we map out multiple transformations and multiple ways of belonging, each depending on where our particular location is and how we grow. So we have to map out the alternative cartographies of the non-unitary subjects that we are, so that we can get rid of any idea that there are subjects that are completely unitary, belonging entirely to one location. (2018: n.p.)

Maps allow combining seemingly disparate elements of the nomadic subject, languages, identity, itinerary, diversity. They become an “inventory of traces”:

The polyglot as a nomad in between languages banks on the affective level as his resting point; he knows how to trust traces and to resist settling into one sovereign vision of identity. The nomad's identity is a map of where she has already been: she can always reconstruct it a posteriori as a set of steps on an itinerary. But there is no triumphant *cogito* supervising the contingency of the self: the nomad stands for movable diversity; the nomad's identity is an inventory of traces. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 41)

Mapping is a method that suits the presentation of multilingual, or polyglot, nomad. The stress on the affective ³²¹ level means an emphasis on an embodied experience, which stands in opposition to a dominant, overriding *cogito*. In her extensive references to writing processes, she further elaborates on the role of the nomad's complex, in-between positioning, in which her languages play a significant role.

The polyglot nomad's writing processes

In *Nomadic Subjects*, Braidotti writes: “The polyglot is a linguistic nomad.” (2011: 29) This general statement is triggered by Braidotti's own experiences of moving with and across different languages. Physical displacement and mental travelling bring about constant changes in communication with others and a continuous adaptation of one's thinking to fluctuating surroundings. Unlike most theorists of nomadism, Braidotti explicitly investigates the role of language and the interaction of multiple languages. For her a nomadic becoming cannot be dissociated from writing processes.

Languages travel with the nomadic thinker and a key condition for a nomadic consciousness is the rejection of the notion of mother tongue.

My own work as a thinker has no mother tongue, only a succession of translations, of displacements, of adaptations to changing conditions. This has become a defining feature of my texts. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 21)

The language of texts is always to be read as a language in translation, with traces of various locations and encounters. Her view of language multiplicity points to those elements that multilingual writers' work is

³²¹ *Affective* (from Latin *affectus* or *adfectus*) is here used in the philosophical sense given to it by Baruch Spinoza and elaborated by Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Affect is a concept that places emphasis on embodied or embedded experience. The concept of affect takes on a different meaning in psychology and other fields; in common language it is related to emotions and feelings.

likely to thematise – explicitly or in a more indirect manner. In “Writing as a Nomadic Subject” (2014) she insists on the materiality and embodiment of language, on the nomadic subject’s unconscious or unreflected combinations of languages, on what one could call a nomadic memory that blurs linguistic details of difference:

Nomadism for me equals multilingualism. Although this entails large doses of lexical contamination and the occasional syntactical debacle, the real ‘creolisation’ effects ³²² have always been, for me, acoustic. Accents are the traces of my multiple linguistic homes. They spell my own ecology of belonging, my loyalty to parallel yet divergent lives. I’m always writing with an accent. (2014: 167)

“I’m always writing with an accent” is an allusion to the title of an article Braidotti wrote in tribute to Françoise Collin: “Thinking with an Accent. Françoise Collin” (2014). *Accent* starts from the fact that Collin was Belgian not French, not Parisian, and *accent* gradually develops into a multifaceted concept. This text is rich in ideas and also has references to Braidotti’s own experiences of (French) feminism, the position of philosophers and the use of French by outsiders, writing across genres. Françoise Collin, the French-speaking Belgian in Paris, coined the expression and the concept of *l’immigrée blanche*, which Braidotti also evokes in her texts. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 44)

Braidotti’s profound awareness of the polyglot’s multiple linguistic experiences is forcefully rendered in the following descriptions:

There are no mother tongues, just linguistic sites from which one takes her starting point. The polyglot has no vernacular but many lines of transit, transgression; some common habits are lost on him, for instance to be able to recall in what language he chants nursery rhymes, in what language he dreams, loves, or fantasizes. The complex muscular and mental apparatus that join forces in the production of language combine in the polyglot to produce strange sounds, phonetic connections, vocal combinations, and rhythmic junctures. A sort of polymorphous perversity accompanies a polyglot’s accent, which reveals the capacity to slip in between the languages, stealing acoustic traces here, diphthong sounds there, in a constant and childlike game of persiflage. The shifts are untranslatable, but not less telling. The best gift to anyone, but especially a polyglot, is a new word, a word she does not know yet. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 40)

The passage underlines the physical, embodied dimensions of language which interact with the more intellectual or mental aspects. The polyglot’s language is a voice with its own particularities (*accent*); it has its own rhythm, and like a singing voice it is indifferent to the national origin of words. Language is always a complex muscular and mental activity. Braidotti’s reflective, yet slightly mocking attitude (cf. “child-like game of *persiflage*”) expresses a certain distance towards a belief in the superiority of pure, separate languages. She prefers what she calls the “polymorphous perversity” of the nomadic polyglot.

³²² This is a reference to Edouard Glissant, *The Poetics of Relations*, 1997.

Her true appreciation of multiple languages however appears in her fascination with new words, which the polyglot collects as precious gifts.³²³

Language is the site of the subject's construction: For Braidotti, language multiplicity cannot be dissociated from her view of the subject understood as a multi-relational, embodied and socially embedded entity. Well acquainted with the various strands of post-structuralism,³²⁴ she analyses different postulates of language before exposing her views:

[L]anguage is a precondition for the constitution of the subject and in some ways 'external' to it, while at the same times it is constitutive of the subject. This means that the relation to others and to socio-symbolic structures is the defining feature of all subjects and of our common humanity. (2014: 164-65)

This is where she sees the importance of writing for the nomadic subject: in writing, the nomad, and in particular the nomadic polyglot has to come to term with the realities surrounding *her*. Multiple becoming, for Braidotti, cannot be dissociated from writing practices. Writing in her eyes is an indispensable tool for the nomad to "translate" changing cultural realities. Thus she opens a subchapter entitled "Writing on the Threshold of Multiple Becoming" with the following observations:

The nomadic polyglot practices style not as a decorative detail but as a pragmatic tool to play the politics of location, based on compassion for the incongruities, the repetitions, the arbitrariness of the languages he deals with. Writing is for the polyglot, a process of undoing the illusory stability of fixed identities, bursting open the bubble of ontological security that comes from familiarity with one linguistic site. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 43)

According to Braidotti, writing strategies to deal with particular situations that express monolingual permanence can vary. Such a strategy is what she calls style. She does not refer to literary devices but to different ways for the nomad to respond to surrounding ideas and language practices. Style is a tactical choice. She sees two options for the nomadic writer who can choose *resistance* or *ethics* as guiding principles.

Those who opt for *resistance* oppose what she calls the "master signifier" or the dominant practices that surround them. They attempt to "loosen the despotic grip of language over the process of subject formation and of making sense." (2014: 165). Meaning making and the writer's own constitution as subject are more important than conformity with existing practices. The critique includes institutions that uphold and sustain power, like the university or specialized journals and research practices. The other

³²³ This emphasis on individual, unusual or "untranslatable" words and the world they open up is particularly relevant for the analysis of texts by multilingual poets.

³²⁴ She became acquainted with post-structuralism during her doctoral studies in the late 1970s at the Sorbonne where she obtained her doctoral degree in 1981. Her studies included encounters with a large range of thinkers like Lacan, Irigaray, Deleuze, Derrida and Kristeva.

option, which she calls *ethics* consists in unveiling the complex and paradoxical political economy and exploring its complexity and inner contradictions. By exposing the details of current systems it comes to hold its practitioners to accountability.

By making manifest various forms of responsibility, the tactics of ethics may turn into a tactics of resistance. In fact, both approaches are not mutually incompatible. In both cases, the nomadic writer does not merely consider language as a critical tool but “rather feels inhabited by it as ‘another within’.” (2014: 165-166; the reference is to Julia Kristeva, *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*). The writing style reveals the way two or more languages clash, or interact, in the writer placed between them, or in their midst, with reactions to prevailing practices likely to change.

Braidotti also considers the impact of nomadic writers’ style on readers. Nomadic writers become transformers of intellectual energy, while the readers’ response will lead to an exchange of insights (2014: 168)³²⁵

She is primarily a philosopher but like other nomadic thinkers, she pleads for a “new alliance between philosophy, the arts and science” (2014: 163). What counts is imagination, which “propels in-depth and resists transformations.” (163). Though not a poet, she stresses the role of art as a creative nomadic response to the social and natural environment.

Her sensitivity to language issues reaches beyond the affirmation of the mixing of languages that underpins her writing. An important feature of writing, as Braidotti conceives it, is the mixture of voices or modes, which confirms her awareness of a general blurring of genres:³²⁶

I deliberately try to mix the theoretical with the poetic or lyrical mode. These shifts in my voice are a way of resisting the pull toward cut-and-dried, ugly academic language. In the philosophical circles in which I was trained, a certain disregard for style is conventionally taken as a sign of “seriousness” or even of “scientificity” (Kofman 1982), as if writing beautifully were the expression of a “soft,” i.e., non-philosophical, mind. This attitude fills me with both mirth and irritation, while its inherent functionalism disappoints me, as it rests on a categorical division of labor between the “logos-intensive” discourses (philosophy) and the “pathos-intensive” ones (literature), which I challenge very strongly. I would much rather fictionalize my theories, theorize my fictions, and practice philosophy as a form of conceptual creativity. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 66-67)

Such an understanding of combined modes, or genres as one would say in contexts of literary studies, is comparable to what writers like Joris do, who within the same text switch from critical to poetic writing often blurring the borders between them.

³²⁵ These are aspects that I approach under the concept of dialogue; the nature of the exchange also corresponds to what literary interviews achieve for both parties.

³²⁶ The confusion of distinct genres is a point which I foreground in my approach of nomadic poets’ writings. See above, Methodology, on text selection (2.3), and the sections devoted to Joris.

For Braidotti, autobiographical writing thus could also have its place in the nomad's work. She sees it not in the tradition of a fluid, well-constructed story but as *mapping steps on an itinerary*:

The nomad's identity is a map of where she has already been: she can always reconstruct it a posteriori as a set of steps on an itinerary. But there is no triumphant cogito supervising the contingency of the self: the nomad stands for movable diversity; the nomad's identity is an inventory of traces. (*Nomadic Subjects* 2011: 41)

The aim is not the creation of a unitary vision of the self but of a recording of key moments, *an inventory of traces*: the writer knows what traces to trust. She insists that for nomadic subjects, a sense of collectivity, of participation in a community must be part of a life story. In several contexts. Moreover, Braidotti shows awareness of the role that imagination plays in any type of writing.

These views are interesting stepping stones for an approach of autobiographical features in nomadic poets' writing and may need to be developed further.

3.2.4.4 Promising elements of nomadism for an investigation of translingual poets' work

The investigation of nomadism, which Deleuze and Guattari include in *A Thousand Plateaus*, is part of their philosophy of difference in which they set out to show how the unified objects of the world are products of historical and political forces in combat with other forces. Understood as an intellectual subversive power, nomadism stands in opposition to stable forces that advocate homogeneity and defend the primacy of origins. Nomadic movements are multifaceted and complex; they rely on speed, on rhizomatic growth and on a notion of space based on a concept of deterritorialization, which rejects (political) borders while pleading for innumerable, provisional interconnections that arise temporarily. The work of bi- or multilingual writers, for Deleuze and Guattari, is evidence of the strength of language mobility and contradicts the hegemony of monolingual nations and cultures. Differences with established State authorities include possible tensions with institutions that regulate language use or regimes and cultural practices.

Other thinkers have further elaborated the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari and provide perspectives that suit the diversity that the poets' work represents. For Kenneth White, nomadism involves physical and mental movements. *Poetry* is the place (and the activity) through which insights into interconnections can be revealed. Geopoetics, which White develops from the concept of an *esprit nomade*, emphasizes the importance of the nomad's awareness of natural phenomena and contact with the earth. Poetry is a form of knowledge: especially some natural spots of landscapes, which have not been disfigured through human activity, are perceived as space where the nomad gathers his understanding of wide-reaching interconnected and transformative movements. White's wide-ranging work also shows that the poet's

knowledge of multiple languages is an essential asset for the exploration of links between various cultural and literary manifestations of nomadic thought.

For Rosi Braidotti, nomadism implies thinking about otherness or alterity, in particular sexual difference. It involves a radical epistemology, which stands for *becoming* and transformation in general. She puts much emphasis on the nomadic subject, whose movements encompass multiple locations and multiple centres, which are more tangible notions than the concept of deterritorialization in Deleuze and Guattari. The process of becoming, as she conceives it for the nomadic subject, involves awareness of time, in addition to space. Encounters with heterogeneity become a key feature of a nomad's movements. For Braidotti, the subject's languages are an integral part of this multiplicity and writing is an active factor of transformation. Writing (or *style* as Braidotti calls it) can either become an act of *resistance* to prevailing forms attached to stable centres of physical or mental territories, or it reveals an ethical stance of *critical observation*. In her eyes, a writer can very well combine both styles.

Braidotti's analysis of the female subject uncovers many parallels between the nomad and the polyglot. One may wonder if it makes sense to approach multilingual features in the same way as she approaches the nomadic subject. Is multilingualism, like nomadism, an alternative vision of a thinker's and a writer's travelling, his moving forward or progress (*cheminement*; *Voranschreiten*), as it appears in the texts and writing processes? She puts an emphasis on an affirmative outlook in nomadic theory, thus denying the prevalence of loss and deficit often associated with migration and multilingual subjects. Is this appropriate for Joris and Welch?

Braidotti speaks of *nomadic theory*: *What if one approached a multilingual theory in much the same way, with an emphasis on movement, encounters, multiplicity, transformation (as becoming), resistance?* In fact, the question *what if* is a process of thinking that Braidotti has extensively commented. We may then also ask "What if becoming a multilingual poet were similar to becoming minoritarian, in the sense that she gives the term, implying transformation as well as a readiness to be different?"

Braidotti's use of figurations to discuss the nomadic subject lets us see the poets as figurations of multilingual nomads. Braidotti, we are allowed to imagine, would approach Welch and Joris, as figurations of becoming who break with traditionally static, well-defined and delimited notions of literature and language, whose work could be a contribution to new conceptions of writers' positions and dynamic relations to languages and cultures. In her eyes, "the nomadic state always has the potential for positive renaming, for opening up new possibilities of life and thought" (NS 2011: 299)

Braidotti's nomadic theory reveals some striking parallels with Joris's critical texts. Her views on feminist thinking have much in common with the poet's reflections on a nomad's forward moving process. Yet

texts do not show any direct relation between Braidotti and Joris: Deleuze is their common initial reference and accounts for the resemblance. Contrary to Braidotti, Joris avoids issues of nomadic subjectivity.

Summing up nomadic elements to look out for in translingual writing

A nomadic approach of work with multilingual elements will

look for elements of <i>resistance</i> to	will <i>foreground</i>
homogeneity and unity in texts	multiplicity of languages in texts echoes of other voices multiplicity of relations to otherness
stasis	movement for example of subjects (wanderers, travellers and migrants) across languages
- identity and sameness - roots and origin	references to <i>becoming</i> other (thematic aspect) references to change of transformation (in link to multiple languages)
otherness and difference	interrelations with otherness and a search for new outlooks
bounded places and borders	open space – as theme open space- as feature of the text on the page
institutions and (language) authorities	minority movements autonomy
transmitted forms	innovation in style a style that is fragmentary texts that mix genres and tolerate the insertion of heterolingual elements
unquestioned practices	creation and innovation metaphors of errance and confusion

3.2.5 Nomadism: a way of writing and conceiving multiplicity in literature

Kenneth White has extensively analysed core features of 19th and early 20th century poets whose nomadism was characterized by a love of walking, travelling, exploration or adventure. In the past fifty

years, motivations or causes of mobility have changed. Nomadic concepts have evolved in various directions. The following pages provide examples with relevant aspects for a study of Welch and Joris.

3.2.5.1 Poetics of nomadity: Rethinking (im)mobility and multiple belongings

Among the nomads who reflect on their lives on the move some are poets who position themselves between languages (See ch. 3.1) Especially Francophone writers from former colonies have developed pertinent ideas for a study of translanguaging. Edouard Glissant's all encompassing vision of creolisation³²⁷ proposes a concept of mixed language involving incessant movement and a nomadic identity (1990; with Gauvin 2010; with Noudelmann 2018). In his *Poetics of relation*, Glissant recalls concepts of rhizomatic growth and thinking. Travelling (*l'errance*) and encounters facilitate creolisation and the creation of the poet's own voice while his notion of *the tout-monde* fosters an open view on the world that changes. One could also refer to Derek Walcott, the Anglophone Caribbean poet, whose stories, notably his epic poem *Omeros* (1990) recall associations with ancient tales of displacement (cf. *Omeros*) as well as to Dionne Brand, the Canadian poet and essayist who in *A Map to the Door of No Return*, meditates on Blackness in the diaspora.

The contributions by Hédi Bouraoui, a Tunisian-Canadian poet, to a nomadic poetics are particularly relevant for the study of Welch's early writings. (See ch. 4.2) The title he chooses for a collection of essays, *Transpoétique. Éloge du nomadisme*. (2005), evokes a programme of writing for the translanguaging poet. In his poetics, Bouraoui underlines the nomad's readiness to move, as openness to the future, which distinguishes him from the migrant who will rather look back. His use of the French word *mouvance* to describe what he calls « *la nomaditude* » is particularly interesting: « *Se maintenir en disponibilité de mouvance* » (2005: 8). As near synonym of movement it stands for a state of flexibility. *Mouvance*, however, has other historical and political meanings connecting it with ideas of feudal subordination as

³²⁷ The notion of creole identity includes a reference to language mixing as the (second) etymology of the word shows. Étymol. et Hist. I. 1598 *crolo* « espagnol de pure race blanche né aux colonies » (*Hist. nat. et mor. des Indes de J. de Acosta*, trad. de l'esp. par R. Regnault Cauxois, fol. 176 b ds König, p. 85); 1643 *criollo* « id. » (*Du Chocolate*, par A. Colmenero de Ledesma, trad. de l'esp. par R. Moreau, p. 6 ds Arv., p. 205) [ces 2 attest. présentent le mot comme esp.]; 1670 *créole* « personne de pure race blanche née aux colonies » (*Lettre de M. de Baas, Gouverneur des Antilles, à Colbert*, 10 nov., *ibid.*). II. 1688 *langue créole* « portugais corrompu parlé au Sénégal » (M. J. de La Courbe, *Premier voyage ... fait à la coste d'Afrique en 1685*, p. 192 ds Arv., p. 208); 1826 *patois créole* « français corrompu parlé dans les colonies » (Hugo, *Bug-Jargal*, p. 106). I empr. à l'esp. *criollo* « id. », attesté dep. 1590 (Acosta, original de la trad. citée *supra* ds Fried.), lui même empr. au port. *crioulo* « noir né dans les colonies », qui n'est attesté que dep. 1632, mais dont le sens originel, plus archaïque, semble être « serviteur élevé dans la maison de son maître » (xvii^es. ds Dalg.), dér. de *cria* « id. », dér. régressif de *criar* « élever, etc. » (cf. esp. *criar*, s.v. *créat*). Il est prob. un empr. direct au port., en raison du sens et de la localisation de la 1^{re} attest. (v. Arv., pp. 204-208). <https://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/cr%C3%A9ole>

well as with the modern sense of dependence (and acceptance of dependence) on a group or State (a notion which also Memmi explores).

For postcolonial, displaced writers, nomadity is a way of evoking their writing itineraries and their positioning between cultures:

La notion d'écriture migratoire ne s'applique pas seulement à l'écriture des écrivains migrants, mais aussi au processus créateur qui fait *se déplacer l'écriture sur la page, comme les nomades impriment de leur pas le désert parcouru*. [...] La nomaditude se veut mise en lumière d'une *identité transitoire, ouverte et flexible* s'adaptant à chaque nouvelle étape du parcours. À la manière de l'immigré qui reste attaché à sa culture originelle, cet acquis rayonnant qui fait son particularisme, en découvrant et en adoptant une ou deux nouvelles cultures. (Bouraoui 2005:9; emphasis added)

Bouraoui corroborates various features of nomadism investigated by theorists: creative processes of writing resulting from an identity in transit, and a transcultural outlook, which remains open for new stages on the route.

The importance of mental mobility is foregrounded by Albert Memmi. The title of his book *Le nomade immobile* (2000) confirms his view that nomadic life does not always require much travelling.³²⁸ Memmi stresses not travelling but his multiple belongings – his *appartenances multiples*.³²⁹ He explains that he would have loved to have the four passports so as to prove his dependence on his multiple *patries* through his relations with their different languages and cultures: each and all of the four express part of himself. *Dependence* is an important concept for Memmi, apparently opposed to the freedom of the nomad but finally crucial to express the importance of relationships, which in many personal, cultural and material ways tie him to a community: « Nous sommes tous dépendants » (2000: 133-144).

This aspect of nomadism could be pursued further, for instance in relation with sometimes contradictory notions of subject, subjection, affiliation, allegiance, a language that is not ours, but a *gift* from a

³²⁸ A similar view of the nomad as somebody who may stay “at home” was already expressed by Deleuze : « [L]e nomade, ce n'est pas forcément quelqu'un qui bouge : il y a des voyages sur place, des voyages en intensité, et même historiquement les nomades ne sont pas ceux qui bougent à la manière des migrants, au contraire ce sont ceux qui ne bougent pas, et qui se mettent à nomadiser pour rester à la même place en échappant aux codes. » In : *Pensée nomade* (colloque « Nietzsche aujourd'hui »), <http://lesilencequiparle.unblog.fr/2012/09/17/pensee-nomade-colloque-nietzsche-aujourd'hui-gilles-deleuze/>; also quoted in Kenneth White (2007: 30), who sees in this position a major difference with his own views ; an allusion to Memmi's expression, *le nomade immobile*, appears in an interview between Bernstein and Joris, in Cockelbergh (2011: 160).

³²⁹ Finalement, j'aurai peu voyagé. Cela ne m'a guère manqué ; j'ai rarement trouvé ailleurs ce qui me comblait en Méditerranée. De loin, l'Amérique me fascinait ; lorsque j'ai pu m'y rendre, j'ai été effrayé par ses espaces démesurés, ouverts, venteux. Je ne me sens bien que là où je me retrouve, dans des villes que je peux maîtriser de mes pas, avec des maisons qui se chevauchent, des villes qui auraient pu, en somme, s'appeler Carthage. *Je suis une espèce de nomade immobile*. [...] je me réclame surtout de trois patries, et même de quatre : La France, la Tunisie, Israël et l'Italie. (Voilà que j'oublie la Grèce – ma patrie philosophique et celle de tous les philosophes dignes de ce nom). (2000: 110-111; emphasis added)

community, with echoes of Derrida's notion of hospitality.³³⁰ Dependence, for Memmi also comes to stand for provision, protection and care, which a nomad like himself is happy to receive wherever he stays. It is a viewpoint that underlines the importance of approaching nomadic lives as *situated* or *Located*, a point that nomadic theory also elaborates in various ways.

3.2.5.2 Nomadism, a versatile tool for literary critics

The figure of the nomad as well as the concept of nomadism have provided frameworks for numerous studies of travelling, transformation and innovative thinking about works and phenomena that do not easily fit into prevalent models (based on notions of well-defined mental and physical territories). Not surprisingly, most of these studies are situated in comparative literature or in transdisciplinary, cultural studies.

The concept of nomadism can generate new perspectives on the mobility of texts and of literature as border crossing phenomenon. In *Nomadic Literature. Cees Nooteboom and his Writing* (2010), Jane Fenoulhet implements Braidotti's theory of nomadism and becoming to reconsider the work of the Dutch writer, Cees Nooteboom, whose work does not fit in with traditional views of national literatures. We can see some parallels with Welch and Joris: Nooteboom is a restless traveller whose work cannot be read within the sole cultural and linguistic context of the Netherlands. His themes and characters are nomadic. Nomadic multilingualism in his case is however different from that of Joris and Welch. He always writes in Dutch but, as Fenoulhet argues, language multiplicity is created through the multiple translations of the Dutch texts into other languages. One may speak of wandering texts and a nomadic readership, a phenomenon best appreciated when approached through a philosophical lens of nomadism.

Studies of diverse patterns of nomadism or moving also provide readers and critics with tools to represent spaces and routes of writing. Ottmar Ette, for one of his studies, chooses the telling title *Literaturen ohne festen Wohnsitz* (2001). In *Zwischen Welten Schreiben* (2005), he shows how writers' travelling and the mobility of literary works should be imagined in a variety of constellations. Though he does not explicitly refer to the concept of nomadism, most of his key words echo similar dimensions as those elaborated by Deleuze, White, Braidotti and postcolonial writers. His graphic representations of *Figurationen*, *Konfrontationen*, *Oszillationen*, *Relationen*, etc. are memorable forms of the visual mapping of

³³⁰ See *Pas d'hospitalité*, title of Derrida's seminar of 17th January 1996. The ambivalence of the French title, which can be understood as *no hospitality* or as *a step towards hospitality (or being on the threshold of hospitality)* does not appear in the English translation published in dialogue form with Anne Dufourmantelle (*Of Hospitality. Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond*, 2000). See also 3.1.2 and in ch. 10.

movements. Though movements of languages are the object of a chapter entitled *Translationen* in most other sections, they are not specifically considered as part the travelling.³³¹

Books travel too. In an essay fittingly entitled “The location of Literature: The Transnational Book and the Migrant Writer” Rebecca Walkowitz (2005) questions the relation between locations of writing, publication and reading. This a question that eminently concerns the work of nomadic poets like Joris and Welch. Some critics have put other forms of literary nomadism at the centre of their enquiries: Maria Lauret in a book entitled *Wanderwords. Language Migration in American Literature* (2014) has for instance analysed the insertion of wandering words from all over the world, in American texts.

Her approach is reminiscent of an aspect of the translingual imagination that Steven Kellman investigates. Though he does not use the term *nomad*, what he writes perfectly fits under nomadity of language and literature:

It is a truism that poems travel where poets cannot. Even if only in samizdat, tamizdat, and translation, texts take life despite the boundaries of language and nation. The recovery of antique texts in Greek animated the Renaissance in western Europe, and writings in Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic – the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur’an – transformed the world. Kindle: Loc 92 of 3263

The two key notions associated with travelling poems are translation and transformation, which are to be explored further in relation to multilingualism in literature. What nomadism or nomadity may mean for a discussion of a multilingual, national literatures is shown in the context of Luxembourg literature.

3.2.5.3 Nomadity as key notion for Luxembourg literature³³²

Luxembourg writers’ self-conception

Critics have discussed Luxembourg literature in relation with notions such as the location of culture, vanishing borders, intercultural relations and hybridity (Honnef-Becker & Kühn 2004), of which poets too are acutely aware:

Wie eine „Aufhebung der Verortung“ literarisch gestaltet werden kann, zeigt auch Nico Helminger *grenzgang* (2003). Helminger, der von sich selbst sagt “I consider myself as a nomad, my poems are nomadic” (Helminger 2002)³³³, gestaltet in seinen *sequenzen* die poetische Darstellung von Übergängen, wobei nicht zuletzt die intertextuellen Bezüge zur amerikanischen, deutschen,

³³¹ See also Rolf Kailuweit on differences between nomadic and migration movements (2009) in Gesine Müller and Susanne Stemmler (eds), *Raum - Bewegung - Passage: Postkoloniale frankophone Literaturen* (2009).

³³² Nomadity, rather than nomadism, should refer to a way of life or writing rather than to nomadic theory as developed by philosophers. For the designation *Zwischenland* in literary studies, see 4.2. 1.3 and 5.2.3.3.

³³³ Helminger says in the context of the launch of the Single Currency across 12 members of the European Union: “Though I am a citizen of a country which is famous for its banks, identifying myself with a currency - or with money in general - would be a rather difficult exercise for me. I consider myself as a nomad, my poems as nomadic.” http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/programmes/twt_euro/euro_helminger.shtml

französischen oder auch italienischen Literatur die Transkulturalität des Autors belegen (vgl. das Gespräch mit Nico Helminger). (2004: 12)

The references to Homi Bhabha's work (*The Location of Culture* 1994), to the theory of cultural hybridity and to intertextual and transcultural aspects situate Luxembourg authors and nomadic writing in a broad context of late twentieth century critical thinking. Mobility and travelling are recurring topics that can be approached from many viewpoints.³³⁴

In a study of multilingualism as defining feature of literature in Luxembourg, Jeanne Glesener refers to the concept of nomadity to analyse instances of Luxembourg writers' self-perception ("Le multilinguisme comme caractéristique et défi de la littérature luxembourgeoise" 2013).³³⁵ Glesener's study considers a variety of terms that belong to what she calls the same paradigm and *champ lexical* as nomad, or migrancy.³³⁶ The process of analysis, which integrates different viewpoints, is to some extent comparable to the work with concepts that Deleuze and Bal advocate.

All the examples point to linguistic aspects that derive from the writers' position between languages:

L'errance constante entre les langues a donné lieu chez l'écrivain grand-ducal, à une autoperception qui se fait principalement dans le *paradigme de la nomadité et de la migrance*. Ainsi, par exemple, pour Batty Weber, la littérature luxembourgeoise d'expression allemande s'écrit « aus der *Diaspora* deutschen Schrifttums » (Weber 1929 : 345), formulation qu'il utilise dans une conférence radiophonique donnée en 1929, et où il relève aussi le risque qu'il y a, à cette époque, que la littérature luxembourgeoise d'expression allemande ne devienne une écriture *apatride* (2013:349, footnote, emphasis added)

The key words that she highlights are writers' own understanding; they are not linked to critical theories but express personal evaluations. The first key words evoke issues of location and position (*diaspora*), links to identity and home country (*patrie*) or rather the absence of such a notion (*écriture apatride*). For Glesener, it is important to recall that a conception of writers as nomads between several literary languages has not arisen with postcolonial or poststructural theory. Indeed, some of her examples go back to the first half of the twentieth century. Yet, interestingly, the terms used to describe relations to the languages of the "others" are similar to those of *belonging* and *borrowing*³³⁷ used in recent debates:

Le champ lexical de la nomadité se trouve déjà dans les essais de Frantz Clément publiés en 1921 et dans lesquels il esquisse le portrait des intellectuels luxembourgeois de son époque. Clément relève bien ici la tension entre le propre et l'étranger qui déterminerait, selon lui, leur condition :

³³⁴ See Hansen-Pauly, "The Languages of Literature as a Reflection of Social Realities and Traditions in Luxembourg" (2002).

³³⁵ See in particular the section of the article entitled "Autoperception de l'écrivain luxembourgeois" (132-134).

³³⁶ *Migrancy* is the terms that Iain Chambers uses (1994).

³³⁷ Cf. various writings by Derrida and Kristeva; Eva Karpinski, *Borrowed Tongues*.

Für ein allgemein Europäisches, für internationale Gedanken und Regungen allein haben wir ein bestimmtes Eigentumsgefühl, aber wir sind Fremdlinge im eigenen Haus, weil wir nichts mit Sicherheit ererbt haben. [...] Die Luxemburger sind etwas wie sesshaft gewordene Zigeuner, die bei ungünstiger Witterung ihr Haus im Stich lassen und sich sonstwo anbauen [...] (Clément 1921: 1).

Dans sa conclusion, il stipule que ce serait l'affiliation de l'intellectuel luxembourgeois à l'étranger qui serait à l'origine du sentiment de se sentir étranger à soi-même et à sa propre culture. Pierre Grégoire avance dans une direction analogue lorsqu'il évoque l'absence de racines [footnote] (Grégoire 1959 : 36) de l'écrivain luxembourgeois, qui, elle, résulterait justement du corps à corps perpétuel avec la langue étrangère choisie. (2013:133)

Though in this formulation unacceptable today, Clément's reference to gypsies or *Zigeuner*, evokes the conflict between natives and nomads, the latter understood as those whose language betrays uncertain origins. The lack of roots is perceived as a problem of identity and homelessness, which prevents writers from feeling at ease in the selected *foreign* language.

A little further on, Glesener quotes Anise Koltz, « poétesse luxembourgeoise de langue française » who calls the writer who does not use his first language a "tourist" (133-134):

L'écrivain qui a choisi l'une ou l'autre langue de ses voisins, soit les deux, paie d'un prix élevé l'avantage d'être polyglotte. S'il a été contraint d'apprendre ces langues, il n'y est nullement ancré. Il y restera un 'touriste' et aura toujours plus de difficultés à formuler ses pensées et ses expériences que son homologue français, belge ou allemand. (Koltz 1990:49-54)

Koltz puts *tourist* between quotation marks and alludes to similar situations when (Luxembourg) travellers abroad struggle with languages and are constantly reminded of their deficiencies. In the comment on Portante's sense of linguistic mobility and multiplicity (« la migration à l'intérieur même de la langue » (2001: 54)), Glesener foregrounds another dimension by distinguishing between nomadism *between* languages and nomadism, or migration, *inside* one language. This intralingual multiplicity is reminiscent of the concept of *innersprachliche Mehrsprachigkeit* coined by Mario Wandruszka (1979). In the article on multilingualism in Luxembourg literature, Glesener refers to Welch and Joris as extraterritorial, Anglophone writers (2013: 113), but does not include them in the analysis of selected writers' self-perception.

Nomadism as key critical feature of Luxembourg literature?

Un miroir aux alouettes. Petit dictionnaire de la pensée nomade (1999) by Corina Mersch (Ciocârlie) is an essayist's presentation of nomadism as the key feature of Luxembourg literature. A dictionary definition explains the image evoked by the title:

Miroir aux alouettes: instrument monté sur un pivot et garni de petits morceaux de miroir qu'on fait tourner au soleil pour attirer les alouettes et d'autres petits oiseaux ; fig., ce qui fascine par une apparence trompeuse. (Petit Larousse)³³⁸

The figurative meaning indicates the underlying irony, or at least it questions the fascination of those who leave with whatever attracts them abroad. *Un Miroir aux alouettes* is a personal account of themes linked to departure, travelling and all the connections that follow: including mental and imaginative movements and returns. The author, Corina Ciocârlie Mersch³³⁹, born in Romania living in Luxembourg for a while, is an insider–outsider herself. So the book is not only about Luxembourg writers on the move: the author's own experiences as nomad are interwoven in the reflections, mostly through references to the nomads that she links with her Romanian origins (the French-Romanian poet Émile Cioran), and her own literary studies (notably Jacques Derrida and Jean Baudrillard).

Her assumption is that travelling or nomadism may well be the *mythe fondateur* of Luxembourg literature.³⁴⁰ Though the book primarily focusses on the way natives are lured away to foreign shores, the book also suggests the fascination that Luxembourg holds on outsiders. This *Schlaraffenland* or *pays de cocagne* is what an oasis – and a fata morgana – represent for the traveller in the desert. The author is the nomad as outsider (*métèque*³⁴¹), who observes how Luxembourg writers decide to become nomads and outsiders in other places.

The book thus deals with questions of nomadism understood both as physical displacement and as mental activity. It contains many reflections on writers' language choices; usually indeed it is the foreign languages, French, German or English, that have lured them away. However, the issue of the nomad's language choice also concerns the author who writes in French, a language, which for her is a nomad's or foreign language as it was for Cioran or Derrida. *Miroir aux alouettes* deals with nomads' language choices but it is not a multilingual book: only very rarely do foreign words emerge. The writers that Mersch chooses are known for their travelling and dealing with issues of nomadism, like Portante. Unfortunately, references are only to texts available in French; thus quotations from Joris's work, for instance, are mostly drawn from the French translations of his poetry.

338 In English, the name of the lark is also used figuratively, yet with a somewhat different meaning: a lark is a joke or an activity done for enjoyment or amusement; to lark is to play tricks.

339 She has published under both names, Mersch and Ciocârlie.

340 See reference in *Inventing Luxembourg* (2010: 210).

341 The French word *métèque* is here used as near synonym of nomad, with various connotations. It is the example of a word that has nomadized around the Mediterranean. The present-day pejorative meaning in French was not originally attached to the Greek word which designed a foreign resident in an ancient Greek city. However, for many today it recalls the words of Georges Moustaki, a famous song writer with multiple Mediterranean origins: « Avec ma gueule de métèque/ De Juif errant, de pâte grec/ Et mes cheveux aux quatre vents. »

The entries, or chapter headings, selected for this “dictionary” evoke key nomadic experiences. *Babel*, *Destinerrance (sic)*, *Entre-deux (le pas suspend de la cigogne)*; *Frontières (bords, bordures, parages)*, *Hospitalité (Cosmopolitisme vs Xénophobie)*; *Odyssée*; *Rêve (américain) Traversée* and more. Ciocârlie’s work however has another nomadic dimension: its style and structure are meandering, its writing is nomadic in the sense that Joris gives the word. So should Mersch (Ciocârlie)’s dictionary be classified as criticism or rather as her own endeavour to produce a nomadic work in which she often follows a road traced by others? A closer look at one chapter, “*Rêve (américain)*” (172-180) can give an idea of the book’s nomadic approach:

- the mixture of genres; e.g. literary critical essay – that’s how the publication is presented; see also its extensive bibliography of on the one hand of Luxembourg (Francophone) literature and on the other hand of critical writing;
- a fragmentary style, the genre of the dictionary, as open form, for each entry further details could be added;
- the interrelations – no cybernetic work but the outcome of an attentive reader who with a quick mind detects connections between texts, and presents her zigzagging thoughts;
- a heteroglossic text with voices all mixing (and merged in a French ‘concocted’ by the author)
- the innumerable references and quotations, which could be criticized as exclusive erudition: only those who are well familiar with the works of the Luxembourgish writers and the writings of Cioran and Derrida can fully appreciate this “dictionary” – unless they are simply lured away by the mirrors of words;
- collage: her nomadic style is, to put it in Joris’s words, “a seemingly seamless collage” or assemblage: the way she integrates the lexis and style of others to create her text.

The *Miroir aux alouettes* also owes its place as example of Joris’s reception (see 6.3.6) because of its final piece: “Manifeste pour une poétique nomade: voyager avec Pierre Joris & Jean Portante” (195-200): where she describes Joris as *un nomade de la ville*; speaks about *dérive* and refers to Derrida (196) and nomadizing books, notably the works that writers read and share (giving the example of Portante introduced to American literature by Joris). It is noteworthy that she is the author and editor of several other books where Joris figures largely (see bibliography).

A focus on nomadic features of Luxembourg literature, for Glesener involved approaching texts through the lens of *writers’ positioning*. It permits her to bring together features of travelling with linguistic mobility while the selected text excerpts highlight identity issues and the outsider position of the multilingual writer. Mersch, for her part, in the proposed dictionary of nomadic thought, presents a long

list of themes connected to travelling and variously treated by nomadic writers. Nomadism and travelling thus appear as recurrent themes of Luxembourg literature and criticism. Research models based on work with concepts (Deleuze, Bal) show that concepts such as nomadism and multilingualism must be constantly re-questioned and approached from various perspectives so as to elucidate changing aspects or dimensions that so far may have passed unnoticed.³⁴² An investigation into signs of transformation, of space conceptions and different forms of multiplicity could shed more light on the relation between nomadism and multilingualism in the poets' work.

3.2.5.4 The role of writing for the polyphonic nomad

Several theoretical works by Kristeva have provided fundamental insights for an approach of "translingual" writers.³⁴³ Her biography and her writings confirm her position as a nomadic thinker; she has described her nomadic condition in the following terms in a speech delivered on the occasion of her reception of the Holberg Prize in 2004: «[Cette distinction] de fait honore à travers moi une citoyenne européenne, de nationalité française, d'origine bulgare et d'adoption américaine. Je me plais à imaginer ce choix que je qualifierais volontiers de nomade.» (quoted in 2013: 159)

In an interview, entitled « Penser en nomade et dans l'autre langue le monde, la vie psychique et la littérature »³⁴⁴, she elaborates on how for her « nomadism » (in the text it is used with quotation marks) is a way of being and thinking, but also a way of doing things and in particular a condition that underpins her literary, novelistic writing. Beyond the crossing of geographical borders she is particularly interested in intellectual or mental borders, which she conceives in terms of psychic borders and consequently of identities – always considered in the plural:

Quoi qu'il en soit, non seulement nous devons nous déplacer à travers les frontières géographiques, mais aussi à travers les frontières psychiques de nos "identités". [...] Ma propre traversée des frontières [...] m'a conduite à interroger les dogmes, les enfermements, les disciplines, à questionner l'identité, la multiplicité des identités. (159-160)

³⁴² Clément's expression *sesshaft gewordene Zigeuner* is a good example to illustrate what a concept-based approach could do. It requires investigating what Clément (and readers today) associate with gypsies: beyond being travelling people, they may be regarded as social outsiders, in opposition to established authorities and institutions, they may show a different sense of space and borders, reveal a pronounced sense of creativity, have their own sense of cultural memory, etc.

³⁴³ Notably, *Semeiotike, Strangers to Ourselves, Desire in language*. See Theories behind multilingualism; in chapter on Multilingualism, migration and literature.

³⁴⁴ Penser en nomade et dans l'autre langue le monde, la vie psychique et la littérature, Interview of Julia Kristeva with Irene Ivantcheva-Merjanska et Michèle E. Vialet, 2013

The link she sees between nomadism and inter- or cross-disciplinary work is a consequence of the nomad's difficulty to accept what looks like arbitrary borders, a point she also notes in relation to borders between literary genres:

Je n'écris pas pour appartenir à un genre, quel qu'il soit. Traverser les frontières des disciplines comme je l'avais fait (entre linguistique et psychanalyse, entre littérature et psychanalyse) nécessitait une ouverture d'esprit qui s'est encore accentuée quand j'ai commencé à écrire des romans. (160)

The disregard of a strict separation between genres is, it seems, a feature that most nomadic thinkers foreground as resistance to prevailing practices. She then explains why she started writing literary texts, her arguments being highly interesting to understand translingual authors' possible motivations for writing as well as the different stages in their *parcours* or writing process.

Kristeva's account of her decision to write imaginative work (classified as novels despite their specific features, which make them stand apart from conventional works of the genre) shows references to her involvement in psychoanalysis but it also echoes general experiences that she shares with many writers in exile.

As she explains, the first texts she writes in the new language are theoretical essays, which reflect her work as a student and young scholar. Despite her near perfect acquisition of the French language, she still feels linguistically (and emotionally) uprooted; as a "polyphonic" individual she is different and suffers :

A la fin de mon analyse, il m'a semblé que j'intégrais la langue française comme un enfant apprend sa langue maternelle, et le désir d'écrire s'en est suivi. A force de raconter mes souvenirs d'enfance en français, et non dans ma langue maternelle, le bulgare, je me suis aperçue que mon français un peu littéraire, un peu abstrait, un peu intellectuel, un peu « étranger » des débuts de mon arrivée en France s'était peu à peu modulé en une sorte de « baby talk », une langue intime qui laissait jaillir les sensations, les souvenirs anciens, les états douloureux (160-161)

Through everyday use and communication in the family, French for Kristeva becomes a language of proximity, "le français est devenu une langue de proximité, du quotidien" (161). She then decides to write literary texts, "stories", which require a very different kind of language from academic writing. For Kristeva, it coincides with the development in French critical thinking at that time.³⁴⁵

A la fin des années 70, un mouvement important de la culture française s'interrogeait sur les limites de la démarche philosophique et structuraliste et du métalangage, sur leur capacité de dire la vérité de l'expérience humaine. [...] Une sorte d'illumination, de flash, m'a saisie : la littérature c'est l'a-pensée, ainsi que je l'ai théorisée plus tard dans mes cours sur la révolte intime (d'où le livre du même nom), et dans les ouvrages qui ont suivi. La meilleure façon de penser avec

³⁴⁵ Welch and Joris must have been aware of those changes; Welch had to teach French critical theory, in particular feminist theory, while Joris in those years constantly moved between France and England (and elsewhere).

l'ensemble de ses capacités, de ses sensations, de ses désirs, de ses angoisses, c'est de travailler la narration et la langue. (161) ³⁴⁶

The notion of revolt, in this case a personal revolt, is a recurring feature of nomadic writing, which, as we shall see, writers have understood in different ways. Writing is Kristeva's response to a certain reticence, which she perceives around her towards nomadism and its modern forms:

"[L']individu polyphonique" [...] dérange, il inquiète. Pourtant, je suis convaincue que ce déracinement continu est une sorte d'élection, une chance, car il offre la possibilité de renaissance psychique, que le pari sur l'ouverture à l'autre est un avantage culturel. Beaucoup d'efforts, d'angoisse, et parfois de souffrance, accompagnent cette transformation – c'est inévitable – que j'essaie, pour ma part, de traduire en travail, en sublimation, en création. (160) [my emphasis]

The result – a transformation³⁴⁷ – puts Kristeva's views on "nomadic thinking in the other's language" very close to the core ideas of nomadic theory. Writing is making sense of the world and oneself, a process that is enhanced through awareness of otherness.

In another passage, Kristeva describes writing (novels) in French as reincarnation:

Aussitôt une certitude m'envahit: "mais je me réincarne en français". Ce sentiment de passage d'une langue à l'autre a été très douloureux. Maintenant quand j'écris des romans, moins lorsque je rédige des textes théoriques, j'éprouve ce même sentiment de renaissance. (169)

But for Kristeva it also means that something becomes dead inside her, that Bulgarian dies while the other language, French, is born. Yet, it thus seems that writing for the polyphonic individual is not truly multiple: rebirth is not possible without some kind of loss.

Though elsewhere Kristeva addresses issues of multilingualism, she here rather uses the word *polyphonique*, which evokes a multitude of different sounds but which she also opens to a broader understanding when she speaks of a "polyphonie des styles" (167). ³⁴⁸

The writer re-invents herself as a French language novelist and thus is also asked to position herself in relation to French literature. She is aware that as she is not a native French speaker, her literary work will be set apart from "genuine" French writers, it will perhaps be classified as an example of "minor literature" (as proposed by Deleuze and Guattari) or as Francophone literature. She rejects both terms as demeaning and depreciative:

³⁴⁶ For an explanation of what « l'a-pensée » represents for Kristeva, see: <http://www.kristeva.fr/la-chair-des-mots.html>. In the present work, the psychoanalytical track is not further continued. A recent interview takes up the question of novel writing for Kristeva: <http://www.kristeva.fr/la-personne-au-centre.html>

³⁴⁷ transformation and metamorphosis are core features of nomadic theory as developed by Deleuze and Braidotti

³⁴⁸ She jokily refers to polyphony as a form of "polytheism": Sous forme de boutade, je dirais que les Français doivent devenir polythéistes ... accepter que leur sacrés'ouvre à la polyphonie des mentalités et des styles que portent les nouveaux arrivants. (167)

Mais je n'aime pas ce terme "mineur". Il infantilise, et pourquoi dois-je me classer dans des cadres qui ne tiennent pas compte de mon expérience ? Dites plutôt que je pense en récit et pas seulement en concepts. [...] Il faut absolument éviter de parquer les écrivains francophones dans une catégorie annexe, et donc dévalorisée, de la littérature française. Il serait plus judicieux, je le répète, de les considérer comme des « écrivains de langue française. » (164-165)

She refuses a binary positioning as a hyphenated being, as Bulgarian French and insists on the importance of multiplicity in the expression of identity (for herself and for her vision of an ideal conception of "identity"). She proposes several ways of describing or evoking nomads. Refusing a binary labelling, she says, « je suis pleinement cosmopolite et errante » (170):

Un « sujet européen » est en train d'advenir qui rappelle un portrait à la Picasso : identité multiple transfrontalière et attachante pour la nomade que je suis, forcément... Le monde n'est pas binaire et une partie de plus en plus grande de la population va être constituée de cette espèce de personnes libres, transfuges, multiples. (171)

In this relatively short text (interview), Kristeva thus offers several core insights into relations between a nomad's writing and multiple ways of being and becoming. Above all, she shows the core role that a new language plays in the resolution of tensions that follow the separation from an earlier world of personal and cultural attachments. Psychoanalysis has helped her understand the passage; here it should be sufficient to underline the practice of writing in a new language as a powerful tool for transformation. On this point her views show many similarities with Braidotti's nomadic theory.

3.2.6 Nomads and the concept of hospitality

Nomads not only move on, they also make encounters with sedentary people as well as with other travellers. The nature of these relations has inspired Jacques Derrida with reflections on the range and limits of hospitality (with Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality* 2000). The original French title, *Pas d'hospitalité* is ambivalent, evoking at the same time a negation of hospitality and a step towards hospitality, which could also be associated with the expression: *sur le pas de la porte*, on the threshold. Judith Still has further explored the notion of hospitality and interrelationships explicitly referring to figurations of nomadism (cf. "Figures of Oriental Hospitality: Nomads and Sybarites" 2016).³⁴⁹ Seeing newcomers' and outsiders' responses to foreign languages as experiences of (in)hospitality allows considering the complex, inter-relational exchanges that an increased mobility involves, especially in multilingual societies.

³⁴⁹ For a study of various literary and cultural interpretations of hospitality, see also Nathalie Roelens, "La question de l'hospitalité" (2017).

Introducing a study on multilingual writers, Axel Gasquet (and Modesta Suárez) speak of language hospitality : « dans le sens où le plaisir d'habiter la langue de l'autre est compensé par le plaisir de recevoir chez soi (...) la parole de l'étranger. » (2007 :10)

In the introduction to *Le nomade polyglotte : L'excellence éthique en postmodernité* (2000), Jean-François Malherbe uncovers in the word nomad interesting additional notions to *pasture*. In the Greek term, he sees a link with « *némein*, partager » also with « *nomè*, la part (de pâturage), la loi, le territoire; » with « *nomos*, la part, ce dont on fait usage, et, par extensions successives: l'usage et la coutume, la coutume qui a force de loi, puis le droit; » and additionally with *némésis*. Having no knowledge of Greek, I cannot appreciate the appropriateness of these connections with the term nomad. As they confirm the link with hospitality, possibly also with the view of the nomad as positive force in interactions, they fit in well with a discussion of the nomad's position and his role, which one may extend to uses of language and writing practices.

Malherbe reminds us that for some the position of nomads has, wrongly, led to considering them as outlaws. In his eyes, on the contrary, nomads are sensitive to reciprocity and play a crucial role in understandings of hospitality.

One could also mention the link between nomadism and pilgrimage to highlight a spiritual dimension of nomadism, often found in poets. This is an approach that Michel Maffesoli takes in his book *Du nomadisme: vagabondages initiatiques* (1997, 2006), a study which revisits the links of humans to their environment, questions all forms of separation and proposes alternatives to values of identity and immobility in western thinking.

Many studies of nomadism do not mention experiences of language difference, yet their key notions of movement and quest show the way for a study of translingual processes in travelling poets' work.

For an analysis of nomadic writers' work, the notions of movement can be applied to the poet's quest for a comprehensive understanding of the world while the underlying tensions are reflected in experiences of language difference.³⁵⁰

3.2.7 Anti-nomadic thinking versus a concept of hospitality

Nomadic theory has been criticized from many perspectives; as language perspectives in nomadic theory receive little notice they are hardly mentioned in criticism. The originally philosophical concepts are used in many academic contexts. They are particularly inspiring for views on mobility, social changes and

³⁵⁰ Maffesoli's extensive exposition of nomadic features of life has not immediately seemed to present a relation to my study: I still have to identify the relevant ideas – or leave it out altogether.

related space issues. However, studies often point to the difficulty of accommodating the philosophical concepts to reality as conceived by economic or social studies.

In the past decades, a change has occurred in sedentaries' mentalities with regard to mobile, 'nomadic' parts of the population in the general context of globalization and threatening economic or migration crises. It bears some parallels with historians' observations of early nomads. The article by Dick Pels (1999) for instance is a sociologist's devastating critique dealing whole-sale blows in all directions (Chambers, Kristina, Braidotti, Said, Clifford and above all Deleuze, even going back to Bakhtin) blaming them for metaphorising and romanticising nomadic intellectual strangers. Other critical, though more balanced analyses of contemporary nomadism followed and demonstrate the wide range of political, economic and cultural perspectives.³⁵¹ In particular after the 9/11 attacks in the US, a general distrust of foreigners, and foreign languages may also account for a more hesitating or critical approach of the concept of nomadism. At first sight, these critical voices, often from non-literary fields, do not appear relevant for a study of nomadic poets' work. However, some of the underlying ideas point to tensions that affect the poets' positioning as well as the issues of publication (location, language, projected readership), which they have to face. (See Brian Lennon 2010 and David Gramling 2016 for observations on changing attitudes and practices)

Another argument in favour of integrating anti-nomadic thought in a presentation of nomadism derives from its power to defy fundamental principles. In a discussion with among others Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall, James Clifford says: "Once traveling is foregrounded as cultural practice then dwelling, too, needs to be reconceived – no longer simply the ground from which traveling departs, and to which it returns." (1992: 115) He proposes the notion of "dwelling-in-travel" and refers to issues of identity, also asking what stays the same even when you travel. He speaks of diaspora cultures and collective memory; though he does not mention languages it is obvious that they play a crucial part in the experiences that he considers.

Will it be possible to conceive alternative forms of nomadism? The term neo-nomads (e.g. Dagnino 2015) is not quite satisfactory. On the model of a term, like *autrebiography*, which Margaret Lenta (2003), has coined for a genre on the slippage between autobiography, and third-person accounts to describe J.M. Coetzee's texts that evoke a life like his own, one could think of a term that should render the shift

³⁵¹ John Noyes, *Nomadism, Nomadology, Postcolonialism: By Way of Introduction* (2004); Anthony D'Andrea, *Neo-Nomadism: A Theory of Post-Identitarian Mobility in the Global Age* (2006); Thomas Sutherland, *Intensive Mobilities: Figurations of the Nomad in Contemporary Theory* (2014); Walter Tydecks, *Das nomadische Subjekt nach Gilles Deleuze und Rosi Braidotti* (2015).

between migration and nomadism, between subjective and objective accounts (between being observed and self-observation), between self and other (dialogic relations in the poetry of Welch and Joris, e.g. Grandfathers, Ulysses, Dante ...) and including more than one language: like *autrement* nomade or *autre-nomadism*.

3.2.8 Summing up and moving on to a framework of analysis for translingual writing

Robert Kelly's general meditation on nomadism (2011)³⁵² could be an introduction for the contextualization of nomadic aspects in the poets' work. Yet, the questions it raises are equally appropriate for the transition between the presentation of theoretical work and the poets' own writing. Investigations into what it means to be a nomad and to create so-called nomadic work (*keep both perspectives on the writer and on the work, on the process and the product*) may be relevant for a study of the poetry of Welch and Joris. Vice versa, their work with its reflections on "nomadic" movements (in particular also Joris's *Nomad Poetics*) can contribute to general understandings of the nomad and nomadism or nomadity.

Today, the term nomad (with its derivatives) is broadly used in the humanities and science³⁵³ as a conceptual tool for wandering and roaming. The meaning of the term is not fixed and usage ranges almost as widely as nomads roam. Examples from different contexts seem at first to show few constant and agreeing elements; in social and cultural studies, for instance, a nomad may be either an attractive figure who stands for freedom or be considered as a disruptive element, with no respect of institutional constraints, who could even be associated with notions of terrorism.³⁵⁴

The only common reference is usually the origin of the term, the nomad as an itinerant or wandering herdsman who travels with his animals.³⁵⁵ The implicit hints at concrete situations, rather than purely abstract notions, account for the numerous non-literal or metaphorical interpretations of the term.³⁵⁶ In the present context, only views of the nomad which are pertinent for a study of poetic work are

³⁵² Robert Kelly is an American poet and writer whom Joris has known for a long time; he is one of the contributors of the collection of essays, *Pierre Joris, Cartographies of the in-Between* (2011).

³⁵³ 1799 entomol. subst. plur. (BOUDON DE ST AMANS, *Philos. entomol. (...) pour servir d'introd. à la connaissance des insectes*, p.138). <http://www.cnrtl.fr/etymologie/nomade>; in medicine, cancer cells that escape the primary tumor to travel to other organs are called nomadic.

³⁵⁴ See John Noyes, "Nomadism, nomadology, postcolonialism: By way of introduction," 2004.

³⁵⁵ "A member of a people that travels from place to place to find fresh pasture for its animals and has no permanent home" <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nomad>

³⁵⁶ see the example from Balzac's work: *un coeur nomade* (« je le vois séparé de la gloire par le *coeur nomade* d'une fille d'Opéra »), an expression now widely used in the media and for marketing ...

considered. The metaphorical connotations allow us to apply the term not only to people, to the poets, but also to words and languages and to focus on many forms of movement.

The word nomad argues a peculiar social condition—settled but on the move—that is thoroughly different from exile, homelessness, emigration. A nomad is a member of an almost invisible sodality made up of families who are citizens of, residents of, immense cities—cities that are streets, that stretch from grasslands to the high mountains, summer to winter, because they belong to their animals.[...]

We don't feel sorry for a nomad, the way we would for an exile. Instead, spot a nomad, pelt him with questions. We follow him around. Because all a nomad is, is someone following the grass.

Robert Kelly, "NOMAD: A Meditation on Joris's Nomad Poetics," (2011: 139-140)

Why call Welch and Joris *nomads* rather than wanderers, migrants (or simply travellers)? Robert Kelly, in the excerpt quoted above, brings first elements of an answer. He calls his text a meditation and offers some insights into the fascinating combination of reality, metaphor and concept. It is a response to Joris's work, yet the portrait it sketches of the nomad could serve to analyse the work of any poet who is not attached to a single location. The few selected lines of the excerpt seem driven by key questions: Who are the nomads? What response do they provoke? Where do they live? What do they do?

The text is a puzzling, thought-provoking association of realistic details of life in a globalized world and of references to ancient herdspeople who follow their animals, thus encouraging readers to interpret inconsistencies and possible contradictions, right from the beginning: "The word nomad argues a peculiar social condition—settled but on the move—that is thoroughly different from exile, homelessness, emigration." In this opening statement, not the person but the word *nomad* is analysed. It is said to suggest a social condition that points to an intrinsic ambiguity in the status, which is neither that of a sedentary nor of a traveller. The text moreover insists on differentiating between the nomad condition and its near synonyms "exile, homelessness, emigration." The distinction is stressed a little further: exiles arouse pity, while nomads provoke curiosity and encourage others to "follow" them.

"A nomad is a member of an almost invisible sodality." The important point may well be that a nomad is not a solitary wanderer, he is a member of a brotherhood or community, later stressed by the reference to "families"; but this fraternity is "almost invisible", as little known, it seems, as the term sodality whose connotation of religious guild underlines common ideals.

"[C]itizens of, residents of, immense cities—cities that are streets, that stretch from grasslands to the high mountains, summer to winter, because they belong to their animals." The description of the nomad's location marks the most startling break with traditional views: one term, "cities", stands for all the places in towns and countryside round the globe where the nomad families reside. Living in cities, they are citizens, not homeless outsiders. The end of the sentence takes us by surprise as it seems to turn common

assumptions upside down. One might expect to read that *people* live on a particular land because it belongs to them: not only are houses or land replaced by animals, the nomad families, belong to their animals, and not vice versa.

Who are the “animals” that (today’s) nomad follows? At this stage, the text leaves the answer to readers, who may guess the text is about nomad poets’ relations with their work, their language, a community of writers. There is one more “clue”: the animals follow the grass that feeds them, and so do the nomads. Animals and herdsmen become indistinguishable.

The text first looks like a fanciful quip full of wordplay and language games, yet it sums up the essential questions concerning nomad poets’ motivation for writing and a seemingly incomprehensible search for new places and texts to create. It certainly gives one good reason for calling some poets *nomads* rather than travellers or migrants: the connotations of the term open a very rich and specific range of images and metaphors. Though it confirms the rich potential of the term nomad for a study of a particular type of poets and their work, it also uncovers a *certain fuzziness** of the concept, which I have attempted to unravel at least partly through various perspectives on its changing understandings.

3.3 First findings and cornerstones for a study of translingual nomadic work

The review of studies does not provide a ready-made model for the work of Welch or Joris but offers a range of routes to follow. Putting side by side studies on multilingualism in literature (3.1) and an overview of nomadic theory (3.2) nonetheless allows making a few general observations.

A first one concerns the effects of researching multilingually and nomadically, by which I mean that information has been gathered from research carried out in various geographical, linguistic, cultural and academic environments

Another observation relates to parallels between nomadic theory and studies of multilingualism. Work on nomadism, with roots in philosophy, elaborates fundamental ideas for life on the move whereas it also shows many relevant points for a study that wishes to investigate the articulation between the poets' multiple languages and the language of their texts. Nomadic principles appear well suited for a theorization of movement and reflections on attending concepts (open space, intersections, transformation) while they emphasize multiplicity as process and rhizomatic growth. With a focus on general ideas, nomadic theory tends to eschew individual specifications which case studies of multilingual writers highlight.

3.3.1 Translingualism: a practice and a concept

Translingual versus multilingual: As a consequence of the conjunction of multilingual and nomadic notions, translingualism, is confirmed as the appropriate term to deal with lives of travelling, the way that multiple languages travel (their "traffic") and with poetic visions informed by the interaction of languages.³⁵⁷ With their connections to migrant literature, to postcolonial studies and historical fashions, notions of multilingualism (and *plurilinguisme*) in literature provide useful thinking tools, yet, in relation to Welch and Joris, they risk unduly constraining the poets' work within frames that do not quite fit in with their poetics. Translingual, which takes the presence of two or more languages for granted, provides useful starting blocks to study movement and process.

Compared to the numerous terms found in critical work to refer to language multiplicity, *translingualism* appears to be the best notion for a study of the lives and works of poets on the move and a focus on the passage from one language, and from one text or space, to another. Through its prefix, the term itself is related to transport, transfer, transit, transgression, transformation, transcendence and above all to translation. First coined in English, *translingual* is now also used in German and French (*translingue*)

³⁵⁷ See ch. 1 and 3.1.3.

though connotations can slightly vary. In English *translingualism* is felt to be close to translation; with new understandings of creative translational practices, *translational* and *translingual* are sometimes used indiscriminately (cf. Gentzler 2017: 198-199).³⁵⁸ In French and German, the link with translation is not quite so obvious but certainly present.³⁵⁹ But despite these resemblances and shared etymologies, translingualism is not translation. Scholars in various contexts have emphasized its specific dimensions, from which I draw those elements that appear meaningful for a study of the poets Welch and Joris.

Some features of translingual writing processes that one can gather from Kellman's descriptions (2000) are worth keeping in mind for a study of Welch and Joris. For some writers, translingual writing (or writing in another language) becomes a way to overcome the inadequacy of conventional speech (200: Loc 700; ch. 2). It helps writers' emancipation from a language that is too familiar or from the tyranny of a specific syntactical structure. By a complication of the writing process (Loc 672-680; ch. 2) through the interaction of two or more languages, translingual writers seek to reach a satisfying aesthetic form; writing in one's first language is largely automatic whereas the advantage of the "second" language is that it slows the writing process down (ch.2). It is a process of defamiliarization and linguistic distancing which has an impact on style (cf. Beckett).

Translingualism also appears as a challenge, as a way for writers to prove they can do what is often deemed impossible or to contradict the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (example of Oscar Wilde Loc 469). Often translingual writing expresses a wish to change; the creation of a new voice can contribute to the invention of a new self (Loc 510), sometimes reflected in the adoption of a new name. (Loc 491) In other cases, it is an expression of hybridity, which may be the affirmation of plurality and autonomy (Anzaldúa 1987) or, on the contrary, the use of a further language is compared to putting on a mask: it enables people say what could not be said in the first language, or to merge more securely with their new environment.³⁶⁰ (Loc 593).

Referring to research in neurolinguistics, Kellman notes how for some writers access to more than one language fosters "cognitive flexibility," (Loc 734) which they use for aesthetic purposes: the multiple meaning of words leaves room for ambiguity and wordplay while it may also consolidate an awareness of the relativity of things. Not surprisingly, avant-garde movements have relied on the effect of

³⁵⁸ Gentzler refers to the work by Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture and Translated Modernity, China, 1900-1937*, published in 1995, thus before Kellman introduces the term.

³⁵⁹ Etymologically, *traduire* and *traduction* refer to a similar process of leading across, whereas in German *Translationen* and *translatio studii*, terms used for literary translations, have comparable connotations. See also Ette 2005: 103-121.

³⁶⁰ The image of a mask can also stand for a feeling of inadequacy and loss of identity, as Norman Manea shows in his texts.

multilingualism. Speaking of translation, Kellman assumes the existence of distinct (national) languages; he comments on the practice of autotranslation (Loc 735 notably, in the case of Beckett) and notices that many translingual writers, as translators of others writers' work, become mediators (Loc 713).

Though Kellman has recently produced new studies encompassing further ranges of translingual examples (2019; 2020) he has not changed his original, succinct definition. (See 3.1.3) Without refuting Kellman's understanding of translingualism, other scholars have explored specific areas and opened further routes to keep in mind for an investigation of languages in the work of Welch and Joris.

Parallels with nomadic theory and movement.

Translingualism evokes **movement** and an in-between space for the representation of languages and writing processes. Studies often associate translingualism with exile and diaspora, with border crossing and with writing perceived as transgression (cf. choice of texts in Kellman 2003; 2019; 2020). Translingualism also stresses **relations** of all kinds, just as nomadic poetics do.³⁶¹ Nomadic theory underlines the transformative role of outsiders; so does translingualism, showing that not only the language is transformed, the speaker or poet is too. Metaphors used by nomadic and translingual writers confirm the link between their languages and movement. Here are just two examples: *Zur Sprache gehen* (2006) is how Ilma Rakusa entitles a collection of lectures in which she stresses movement in a reader and translator's contact with many languages. Yoko Tawada creates the word *Überseetzungen* (2002; 2013) to describe her perception of translingual processes. This is the place to recall that etymologically speaking the term "translation" with a Latin origin is the equivalent of the Greek word "metaphor."

Translingualism in critical literary studies

To understand the range of approaches, it is productive to ask *trans-what? trans-how? and trans-what for?* In other words, to enquire into the focus of studies on translingualism. Is it thoughts or languages or something else that texts transport? What happens during the process and what outcomes have attracted scholars' interest? Studies of translingualism put the emphasis on various aspects, seeing the transfer either as it affects texts, language or writers and readers –or in combination.

Usually, translingualism refers to texts born between languages. For Olga Anokhina, it means *écrire entre les langues* the interest lies in a close analysis of writing with a focus on textual genesis as part of creative processes (Anokhina 2009; 2012; Anokhina and Sciarrino 2018). Other studies on the genesis of texts see

³⁶¹ *Dia-* being a Greek equivalent of *trans-*, a link with dialogue emerges. The dialogical dimension of writing that results from contact with others and other languages is a characteristic of the work of Welch and Joris (see in particular ch. 6 on their poetics).

in it a fundamental aspect of literary plurilingualism, as does Weissmann (2018) in a paper on Celan's poetry collection *Die Niemandrose*.³⁶²

In Ottmar Ette's extensive studies on literature in movement,³⁶³ translingualism refers to literary in-between spaces and homelessness (*ZwischenWeltenSchreiben. Literatur ohne festen Wohnsitz* 2005), where the description of various patterns of travelling is foregrounded over the passage of words and languages into new contexts. In critical papers, however, Ette has dwelled in detail on language movements. Thus he describes the work of non-native German writers as "translingual follow-up" of literary works that cross language borders ("die translinguale Fortschreibung deutschsprachiger Literatur").³⁶⁴ He raises several questions that appear to be essential for a study of the interaction between language, poet, context and writing process. In relation to Tawada's own reflections on language, the question arises as to *what happens to a language* when outsiders come and use it in ways that are different from those of native speakers. This to me seems to touch the core issue of writers' and readers' interaction, while it also points to the transformative power that outsiders hold. Translingual, as Ette shows in his analysis of Özdamar's reflections on her language(s) of writing, also refers to interactions between languages, which underlie writing processes and account for an intricate link between themes, thoughts, languages and imagery.

Translingual writing therefore is also perceived as a process of self-translation, which can take many forms. For Karpinski, for instance, gender issues are an additional aspect of meaning making in migrants' life-writing (2012).³⁶⁵ Translingualism assumes that in addition to the dominant language of writing, one or more languages are associated in the language process. They may ostensibly erupt in the text or remain relatively hidden.

In recent years, studies in French have expanded and specified understandings of translingualism, often in association with the heterolingualism of texts. They start from the notion of *translingue*, borrowed from Kellman (cf. Ausoni 2018: 12), for in-depth studies of Francophone language memoirs, to investigate underlying processes of self-translation into the chosen language (Arribert-Narce 2013; Ausoni 2018; De Baisi 2019). Translingualism perceived as self-writing (*l'écriture translingue de soi*) shows parallels with

³⁶² Celan's poem is also one of the works that Suchet considers in her study of translations of work with heterolingual elements (2014)

³⁶³ See 3.2.1.

³⁶⁴ The complete title of Ette's essay is, "Über die Brücke Unter den Linden. Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Yoko Tawada und die translinguale Fortschreibung deutschsprachiger Literatur" (2007).

³⁶⁵ For insights into the scope of deep transdisciplinary engagement with trans/issues, see the essays that Karpinski et al. have edited in honour of Barbara Godard (2013).

language memoirs (cf. 3.1.4) ; seeing it as a literary phenomenon, studies also stress aesthetic means which contribute to self-representation.

Moreover, the work of so-called outsiders who adopt the French language is seen as significant contribution to Francophone literature, which has to affirm its place between metropolitan French and other languages (Ausoni 2018). Descriptions of Francophone literature, whose characteristics are based on linguistic, historical and sociological diversity (see Gauvin 2016), rely on translingualism as a crucial aspect of its specificity. Such findings seem prone for adaptations in other contexts beyond the Francophone context: Translingual writers can bring innovations wherever they write, in particular through a translingual imagination and the impact it has on how they write. They are pushed to position themselves in relation to established communities or to remain outsiders, but they are also free to choose relations that suit their interests – a point that is crucial for Welch and Joris.

Translingualism has still other facets. The invisible, mental dimension of translingual processes points to aesthetic particularities but also to the critical, cognitive potential in translingual poetry. Here one may mention research that does not foreground the label “translingual.” Under the designation of *exophony* (see 3.1), other studies have looked at linguistic features of writing at the crossroads of languages (Arndt, Naguschewski and Stockhammer 2007; Perloff 2010). Poets writing across languages, like Yoko Tawada and Caroline Bergvall, receive particular attention for their language games. The playful passage from one language to another is a device that beyond its surface of fun has great potential for questioning a range of serious issues. Some writers use the transformative potential of translingual writing to conjure social changes or may use it as political gesture of resistance.³⁶⁶

Luxembourg writers’ alternating between languages (*alternance des langues*, *Sprachwechsel*, *Sprooch wiesse!*) shares some features with descriptions of translingualism, except that the emphasis is not on the assumption of one primary language. (See Goetzinger 2004)

Translingualism in applied linguistics

As writing processes constitute a central dimension of literary translingualism, the link with *translanguaging* as understood in applied linguistics is obvious (cf. ch 3.1: references to Canagarajah and

³⁶⁶ See the presentation of a poetry event in Berlin entitled “Freily ausgefranst” (2019): Was macht translinguales Schreiben mit unserem Wahrnehmen und Verstehen? Welche Räume des Nicht- und Unverstehens öffnet es und was passiert dort? Ist es überhaupt übersetzbar? [...] // Translingualität wird gedacht als politische Geste des Widerstands, als abgelauchter Sprachmix, als dauernd wiederholter Übersetzungsvorgang, als Spracharchipel, als mediale Öffnung und als Textereignisse, die „unstatements“ produzieren. Was passiert im Raum, wenn alle irgendetwas nicht verstehen? https://www.haus-fuer-poesie.org/de/literaturwerkstatt-berlin/veranstaltungen/alle_veranstaltungen/freily-ausgefranst-translingual-poetics

García). Significant common points are an emphasis on writing as meaning making and on the mental negotiation between languages and cultures that underlies the writing processes.

Wrapping up and looking forward to the study of Welch and Joris

For a study of the poets' work, the analysis of *how* texts convey meaning across languages seems particularly relevant. A focus on *how* also implies an interest in the way established writing practices are challenged by otherness. Translingualism raises questions about writers' positioning in relation to other writers and communities of writers that transcend language borders. Some critics argue that translingualism should be acknowledged as separate literary category (Kellman; Ausoni 2018) – a challenging proposal in the context of debates on the position of national literatures, of comparative studies and World literature.³⁶⁷

A word must be said about the skeptics of translingualism who, rather than value novel perspectives and language use, disapprove of foreign influences and feel irritated by possible solecisms and calques. In critical work, however, the voices of detractors of translingual writing are barely heard. But publication constraints continue to work as barriers against texts with “foreign” elements.³⁶⁸ This is why literary prizes and academic studies are powerful tools of recognition (Kellman 2020): what seems needed is a translingual poetics for *readers*. The cornerstones for the analysis which follow should work as flexible framework.

3.3.2 Selecting conceptual cornerstones for a study of translingual writing

Translingualism deals with relations of space, movement and languages. From the wealth of aspects highlighted in the preceding overview of relevant studies, I derive four cornerstones of enquiry, each mainly but not exclusively focusing on one dimension:

- Translingualism as decentered and multiple voices: the language dimension
- Translingualism as movement between heterolingual elements in texts: the textual dimension
- Translingualism as positioning and becoming: the writer or speaker (enunciator's) dimension
- Translingualism as imaginative translational writing: the spatial and processual dimension

A cornerstone is understood as knowledge that has been assembled on this dimension of translingual writing; it is the ground on which I can construct my investigation and contribute new elements through a reading of the work of Welch and Joris.

³⁶⁷ See for instance Pascale Casanova (1999); Damrosch (2003; 2009).

³⁶⁸ See Lennon 2010; Gramling 2016.

The selection of these cornerstones is motivated by recent studies that question the meaning of fundamental aspects of language, literature, translation, of subject, movement and space, of multiplicity and otherness. Distinguishing different cornerstones makes us sensitive to the variety of dimensions that a study of translingual writers may involve. With the succinct presentation of the selected cornerstones, I wish to draw a conceptual and pragmatic framework for the subsequent investigations and situate the present work in a context of ongoing research.

The elaboration of cornerstones is a response to a situation with a complex set of interacting elements. It is comparable to the complexity paradigm that Aronin and Jessner propose to understand current forms of multilingualism (2015).³⁶⁹

Translingualism as decentered and multiple voices: the language dimension

With its emphasis on multiple voices and decentered languages, this cornerstone refers to studies that

- examine key concepts of language
- focus on multiple aspects of the mother tongue (Prade 2013)
- call the mother tongue a myth, in particular the mother tongue as only possible language for poetic writing, and re-conceptualize the mother tongue as multiple, other and changing (cf. Yildiz 2012)
- challenge the notion of monolingualism and call it a construction or invention (Gramling 2016)
- show that an individual's language is idiosyncratic, multiple and located (cannot be reduced to frames given by national linguistic institutions or authorities (Pennycook 2010)
- question clear-cut separations between languages and describe the porosity of linguistic borders and similarly reject borders between types of texts and genres (Doloughan 2015)
- consider translingual decentring movements as a source of creativity *versus* studies that underline the disorientation resulting from interrelations between two or more languages

Translingualism questions the existence of fixed centres: based on the notion of passage from one place, one language, one text to another, its space is always between. *De-centring* involves thinking about languages in terms of space and movement. It displaces language away from territorial centres, from

³⁶⁹ In "Understanding Current Multilingualism. What can the butterfly tell us?" (2015), they show that multilingualism is *complex but not complicated* and propose working with a cluster of concepts multiple agents, complex interactions, 'sensitivity to initial conditions', chaos, and emergent properties.

cultural and linguistic authorities, from conceptions that assume there is one, true correct model to strive after.

For nomads or writers on the move, language centres are likely to be multiple and variable. De-centring movements reflect key notions of nomadic theory, they create relations and discard origins: decentered languages work like rhizomes growing across an open space, without a centre that roots them to a particular territory. For individuals, centres are often connected to origins. Attempts at liberation from a central language authority may also lead to the recognition of diversity and transformation (cf. Bakhtin's analysis of heteroglossia).

Studies that have significantly contributed to this cornerstone of my enquiry foreground language diversity versus unity. They challenge beliefs in language as home.

Translingualism as movement between heterolingual³⁷⁰ elements in texts: the textual dimension

With its emphasis on difference and otherness, this cornerstone relies on studies that

- look at texts as spaces shared by a dominant or main language and elements of otherness (Grutman 1997; 2017)
- propose models for close readings of texts or micro analysis (case studies)
- recognize a wide spectrum of explicit and implicit heterolingual devices and distinguish between visible, audible and imaginary thresholds of difference (Suchet 2014)*
- develop a sensitivity for (underlying) voices in texts and investigate imaginary heterolingual relations (Glissant 2010)
- point to the distance that all literary texts create (*Anderssprachigkeit*) to which foreign elements bring an additional sense of defamiliarization (cf. Arndt, Naguschewski and Stockhammer 2007)
- focus on literary forms of latent linguistic otherness and its impact on readers (cf. Radaelli 2011).

*for heterolingual ethos, see next cornerstone, on writer positioning

Why is heterolingualism a crucial concept to analyse features of translingualism?³⁷¹ Rainier Grutman coined the term to describe multilingualism in literature: L'hétérolinguisme, c'est « la présence *dans un texte* d'idiomes étrangers, sous quelque forme que ce soit, aussi bien que de variétés (sociales, régionales ou chronologiques) de la langue principale » (1997 : 37).³⁷² Grutman has proposed it to refer to texts with

³⁷⁰ It largely corresponds to the German term *Anderssprachigkeit*.

³⁷¹ See in particular De Balse, who uses heterolingualism as it has been theorized by Grutman and Suchet to analyse the work of a translingual writer, Agota Kristof (2019).

³⁷² See also the chapter entitled "Du terrain aux textes" in the second edition of Grutman, *Des langues qui résonnent*. with a slightly modified subtitle: *Hétérolinguisme et lettres québécoises*. (2017: 39-77).

foreign elements next to a dominant or primary language. Heterolingualism does not discard an interest in the multilingual sociocultural realities that a text presents but the use of a particular term in literary criticism aims to turn the attention to its specificities, to the ways in which *texts* display difference in languages and interaction. « Bien que le contexte sociolinguistique laisse son empreinte en littérature, il gagne à être distingué de sa présentation textuelle (c'est-à-dire linguistique, puisque le texte est une œuvre langagière). L'hétérolinguisme permet précisément cela. » (Grutman 1997: 36-37)

Research on heterolingualism continues investigations such as those of Elwert (1960), Forster (1970) or Krynski (2002), who mainly considered poetry while Grutman's focus is on novels. The Greek prefix *hétero-* puts the emphasis on *otherness* rather than multiplicity and speakers' communication skills as multi- or plurilingualism do.³⁷³ Otherness suggests a gap between a dominant insider voice and outsider voices which are more or less perceptible in the texts.

Initially heterolingualism was mainly used to deal with the presence of different (national) languages or dialects in a text or an author's literary output. However, some literary works, like the writings of Welch and Joris, leave an impression of being multilingual although actual foreign elements are rare.³⁷⁴ Indeed, hints at cultural and linguistic difference are frequent in their work, though they emerge in different ways. It is therefore crucial to have more elaborate means of differentiation in approaches to "otherness" in their texts. The notion of heterolingualism as I conceive it covers both openly displayed and hidden dimensions of otherness; the main focus should be on the imaginary spaces that interacting voices create within a text (cf. Glissant's *Poetics of relations* 2010).

Its key features are also explored under different names, such as explicit and latent forms of multilingualism (see Radaelli who uses the "*Wahrnehmbarkeit*" as criterion of linguistic otherness)³⁷⁵ and intratextual multilingualism or exophony. Heterolingualism is well suited for a nomadic perspective on texts as the emergence of foreign elements reflects a rhizomatic multiplicity. Nomadism adds the dimension of movement and circulation: on the one hand, its sense of an open space blurs the separation between various textual elements while on the other hand, it underlines the outsider position that intruding voices present in texts. One may speak of expatriate words (Suchet) or nomadic, wanderwords (cf. Maria Lauret 2014).

³⁷³ Grutman refers to Bakhtin's use of the term heteroglossia to describe features of language multiplicity in novels. As Grutman points out it is a term that itself represents what it expresses (*a mise en abyme*): the juxtaposition of Greek (*heteros-*) and Latin (*lingua*). It precludes discussions about what a language, a dialect or a register is - encompassing all of these notions.

³⁷⁴ Also see various definitions of literary multilingualism, as succinctly presented by Schmeling (2004).

³⁷⁵ For a description of multilingualism in drama, see De Toffoli 2015 and Conter 2017.

Setting heterolingualism as a cornerstone for a study of Welch and Joris means having an open eye and a sensitive ear for a ring of languages inside texts: *ces langues qui résonnent* and the echoes they introduce (what Bakhtin calls the dialogue of words).

It also means a focus on the diversity that heterolingual features can take, including the often expressed belief that otherness is a characteristic of all literary and poetic language (see in Arndt/ Naguschewski/ Stockhammer) who evoke a double alienation / *Verfremdung*: heterolingual elements may indeed create an impression of double distancing or defamiliarization.

Translingualism as positioning and becoming: the writer or speaker (enunciator's) dimension

A focus on writers' self-positioning towards their languages profits from references to

- studies on the between position of nomads
- references to the sociological notion of *posture d'auteur* (Viala, Meizoz, see ch. 2)
- the recognition of a heterolingual ethos (cf. Suchet who elucidates the rhetorical notion in relation to a writer's communication about languages and otherness)
- ethical issues for writers moving between languages (Arvi Sepp 2017)
- translingual writers' meta-reflections on languages (Gauvin: "*surconscience linguistique*")
- distinctions between search of a (new) home in language and desire of staying *en route*, in the middle of several languages (corresponding roughly to a possible distinction between the migrant and the nomad's positioning)
- a theorization of desire in language (Kristeva 1980, Kramsch 2009)
- poets' relations with other translingual writers, with suggestions of how to conceive communities of translingual writers (Kellman 2000; 2020)

The innumerable case studies on multilingualism in literature stress the prominent position of research on writers' relations to languages. For this cornerstone, the observations on concepts of identity as identification with and subject as always in process discussed in relation to language memoirs prove relevant: The very notion of translingualism entails an emphasis on becoming rather than being.

A distinction can be made between the writers' *self-positioning* or self-presentations in their texts and scholars' attempts at **positioning** or locating translingual writers in broader contexts. The two approaches often complement each other as external views depend on writers' statements while writers also respond to others' views. As cornerstone for the study, *positioning* therefore also means looking at critics' attempts at locating writers as examples of minor literature (Deleuze/ Guattari) or situating them in the world of literature (Casanova, *La République mondiale des Lettres* 1999). With studies of translingualism

the debate continues and opens several perspectives. Thus, translingual writers are seen as creative, productive force inside existing literary communities (Ausoni 2018), as representatives of a separate literary category or simply as (good) writers whose work should not be set apart (Kellman 2020).

The notion of *heterolingual ethos*, developed by Suchet (2014) and briefly presented in ch. 2, is particularly useful to spot poets' attitudes to otherness.³⁷⁶

The heterolingual ethos complements the sociological understanding of *posture d'auteur* (as developed by Viala and Meizoz drawing on Bourdieu) by elaborating on rhetorical dimensions of positioning. In every text, we can look for traces (deictic terms, such as personal pronouns, but also words that express approval, empathy or the opposite) that indicate relations to others or convey beliefs about linguistic and cultural difference. In the work of nomads and migrants, references to middle positions and linguistic between-ness give clues about the writer or speaker's self-representation or heterolingual ethos.

Ethos rather than self-presentation (*posture d'auteur*) allows considering instances where no first person subject, no « I » is given. It is engaged in all writing, and not to be confused with the expression of subjective opinions. Evidence of a heterolingual ethos emerges also in texts about others; what counts is *how* a text speaks about otherness. For instance, how clearly are borders between languages stressed or do texts blur all differences with consistent transpositions into the dominant language?

As a notion derived from rhetoric, it also refers to the relation between poetic speakers and their audience, an important point for a study of texts with heterolingual elements. One may indeed distinguish between writers who conceal features of otherness under a monolingual dominant language and those writers who expose foreign elements. In the latter case, we may enquire whether the texts reveal a perceptible concern for readers, a desire for mediation, linguistic or cultural, which appears in added notes, translations or paraphrases, or whether the texts leave readers alone with linguistic enigmas.

To catch the ethos of a speaker, one has to hear the voices that speak in a text: what is relevant is the way one (the subject) speaks addresses a topic – more precisely the topic of language and otherness in language.

Watching out for the heterolingual ethos also involves considering a speaker/ writer's environment, social, cultural, natural to see how relations to this environment are expressed through language. What the poet

³⁷⁶ A heterolingual text, like any text, is a construction and tells us as much about the subject of the utterance as it does about heterolingualism: « L'hétérolinguisme n'est pas un simple phénomène linguistique repérable sur le plan des énoncés: au niveau de l'énonciation, il participe à dessiner la figure d'un sujet que l'on s'imagine responsable du texte. Les dispositifs de construction d'une langue comme étrangère fonctionnent aussi comme des dispositifs de production d'une image de soi dans le discours. La manière dont chaque texte hétérolingue construit la différence des langues renseigne donc sur le sujet de son énonciation. » (Suchet 2014 :182)

combines in writing may signal a political positioning or a becoming, a becoming other, that which in nomadic theory Braidotti has described in terms of styles of resistance and of ethical critical observation.

Translingualism as imaginative trans/lational writing: the spatial and processual dimension

Gratifying and constructive input for this cornerstone comes from theories and studies that

- investigate the creation of imaginary spaces (Glissant; Gauvin; Ette)
- link the process of writing and translating with nomadic theory and the creation of in-between spaces (Fenoulhet 2010)
- re-conceptualize trans/lational writing (Bassnett 2014; Bachmann-Medick 2014; Gentzler 2017), notably as metaphor of life writing for migrants (Karpinski 2012)
- explore notions of pseudo-translation (Rath 2012)
- focus on formal and aesthetic elements in writing notably metaphor and tropes in general as poetic translations of complexity (Ette 2007; Suchet 2014; De Balsi 2019)
- highlight the cognitive and imaginative power of language games (Sommer) and so-called untranslatables (Cassin 2006; Apter 2013)
- deal with aspects of space and language in poetry (Davidson 2007; Yeung 2015)

The part played by the multifaceted notion of translation as cornerstone of the study consists in asking what it is that poets attempt to translate and how their multiple languages contribute to the process: Do they rather reduce multiplicity and difference by one unifying language, or do they attempt to accommodate multiplicity? **How important is reading (in one language) and writing in another language in the creative process?** Cultural translation as mediation achieved through writers' work is a dimension that has frequently been foregrounded (Bassnett 2014; Bachmann-Medick 2014). In the case of multilingual writers, it implies complex questions of whose language to use and whose culture to translate. Some scholars based in both translation and literary studies of multilingualism focus on the genesis of texts and creative processes, which the passage between languages involves (Anokhina 2012): it means moving away from a deficiency approach to a recognition of specificities that result from this process.

Translation has always played a preponderant role in enquiries of multilingualism. It is in fact a wandering concept that has moved far beyond linguistic issues of equivalence between two texts. The focus on translation as process foregrounds movement, change and transformation. These processual aspects show parallels with nomadic theory and have been approached in a variety of ways that are relevant for a study of poets who write and move between languages. Translational writing as a creative adaptation

process is another aspect of this cornerstone that may bear on a study of the poets' response to works they have read in other languages than the one in which they write (Gentzler 2017). In relation with writers on the move or in exile, translation becomes a conceptual metaphor of migration itself. (Karpinski) Those who have left a country of origin to find a home in a new environment have spoken of an experience of reinventing themselves: living between two languages, they need to translate their lives and their selves in a constant process of negotiating.

3.3.3 Specifying the research questions: understandings of translanguaging

The literature review has provided information and examples of approaches which allow further specifications of some of the questions presented in chapter 1.

Kellman's approach of translanguaging has been enriched³⁷⁷ and the study of Welch and Joris should show which perspectives suit their writing best. It will also be interesting to see if their work can bring new insights into what translanguaging work means, in particular through references to nomadic theory. A related question for the study consists in seeing if their work conveys the belief that poetry is always already a foreign language.

Research on multilingualism in literature often foregrounds autobiographical elements and the poets' positioning. Part II investigates this dimension in the poets' work: How do Welch and Joris retrospectively present their experiences with languages? What views do they hold on the mother tongue?

This part of the enquiry also aims at pointing out differences between the two poets' understanding of nomadism, their views on language multiplicity and their beliefs about the role of poetry. Already a cursory glimpse into the works of Welch and Joris has revealed major divergences in their views on what languages mean for them. Do they correlate with different underlying understandings of their wanderings?

The majority of studies into recent cases of translanguaging writers look at work in prose: for this reason, the study will pay particular attention to what poetic translanguaging aims to achieve. What in their eyes, can poetry *do* and what is it *for*? Is it possible for readers to make out a specific authorial posture and heterolingual ethos (cf. Suchet)?

³⁷⁷ See above, for instance associations with heterolingualism as extensively discussed by Grutman (1997; 2019) and Suchet (2014); translanguaging practices as a way of creating legitimacy for new words, discourses and modes of representation (Gentzler, referring to Lydia He Liu, 2017: 198); translanguaging as self-translational writing (Ausoni 2018 and De Baisi 2019); Kellman's idea of translanguaging as participation in a literary tradition or community seems relevant for a study of interrelations with other poets.

In Part III an attentive reading of the poetry will focus on what language multiplicity looks like and what meanings it conveys. The analysis will rely on the spectrum of devices for explicit and latent multilingualism (or heterolingualism) that other scholars (cf. Suchet) have identified. It will also explore a possibly narrative dimension linked to translational writing and the emergence of new translingual spaces. The search for new (conceptual) tools of analysis centres on the palimpsest and its potential for elucidating translingual writing. Can a palimpsestic view of languages and texts enhance the spatial dimension with an emphasis on movement and interrelations, such as others' voices emerging in the language of the text, on connections between locations or on writing as layered spaces of response?

Accounting for differences between Welch and Joris

The framework is seen as a tool to approach the poets' multilingualism in relation to features of nomadism. Using the same framework for both poets, it also allows identifying the characteristic features of each poet's conception of multiple languages in writing as well as their understanding of the role of travelling in relation to their work.

"Styles" of writing

Style is here understood in the sense that Braidotti gives the term: a style is a nomadic writer's strategy to deal with situations that challenge principles of multiplicity, movement and transformation. A style may express resistance to existing forms and lead to innovations. Resistance can take the form of personal engagement, either through commitment to the writings of other poets or to changes in writing practices and language use. Style may also stand for what Braidotti calls an ethical, critical position; in that case, the poets' texts convey a sense of the underlying tension that opposed views on an issue involve.

For instance, in relation to positioning, poets may express their rejection of or resistance to prevailing views of the mother tongue; they may also take a critical stance and reflect on their own position and practices - hence the importance of linguistic self-analysis.

Additional perspectives of translingualism

The study of Welch and Joris should show which meaning of translingual best suits their work and look for further specifications, arising from the contexts in which they write their poetry. Yet, despite – or because of - the many distinctive perspectives on multiple language practices that studies have proposed in the past decades, it seems difficult to fit in poets like Joris and Welch. The assumption is that nomadic theory could help describe their translingualism.

The ensuing question thus is what representation of otherness in texts (heterolingualism) and on various forms of translational/ translingual processes help us analyse specific aspects of their writing as well as account for differences between Welch and Joris. Can the study reveal or develop tools, such as

metaphors or methodological procedures, which suit an analysis of movements in writing, in language and in texts. An important assumption is that the **palimpsest as conceptual metaphor**, presented in ch. 2.2, can significantly contribute to an understanding of translingual processes.

3.3. 4 Note on text analysis

Strategies to use for close reading or micro-analysis of translingual texts

The research, in particular the analysis of texts in Parts II and III, needs a few tools in addition to the conceptual cornerstones. In poetic writing notions of movement, translation and speaker positioning are presented in more or less defined situations and expressed through stylistic devices. The analysis must show deep awareness of linguistic and literary renderings as they emerge in the texts and balance the abstract features of concepts with instances of language experience.

Like a study of palimpsests, the reading of translingual texts requires attention to words and voices that emerge and merge on the surface. The poets' writings can be approached *as visual and audible artefact* which contain traces of transformative processes. The palimpsest as conceptual model asks us to look for instances of erasure, reduction and construction; for the emergence of traces and processes of reinscription; for effects of estrangement, movement and positioning of speakers in texts. It may be possible to make out an implicit narrative thread moving between the underlying text and the new inscription.

The notion of a multilayered text highlights all forms of dialogue and translation (cf. views on intertextuality): they are crucial elements to watch out for a scrutiny of translingual aspects. Webs of relations between many texts create occasions for significant articulations between languages and possible transformations.

For an exploration of multilingualism, the reader as researcher must be sensitive to the *voice of the speaker* in the surface text (Genette's hypertext), to *meta-reflections* on languages and positioning in regard to interfering voices. When voices, texts or languages mix, the poet is like a music director: the "orchestration" (Bakhtin 1981: 430-431) of multiplicity and diversity becomes an indicator of translingual strategies. Movement in text requires attention to the creation of new connections, allusions, connotations.

Among the range of poetic devices, particular attention is paid to *metaphor* and images, as important forms of expression for translingual writers. Like trans-lation, metaphor etymologically refers to the process of moving to another place or language. Metaphors, as seen in ch. 2 are also powerful conceptual tools that force readers and listeners to reconsider their views.

Speakers and words on the page always move within a certain *space*, which is meaningful for the analysis. Research also has to watch out for indications of staging: whether sketchy or detailed, most poems are likely to have a *mise en scène* for voices (setting, scene, atmosphere).

Movement as *transgression* in poetry leaves *signs of resistance* which one needs to look out for: for instance, resistance to formal conventions in writing, like monolingual texts or traditions of genres and themes: do translingual poets convey innovative views on the purpose of poetic writing?

Space for multiple voices may mean references to natural settings while it may also indicate the mental or literary environment or the spaces that texts create through relations. In Part II attention also goes to paratextual elements as indicators of space and relations.

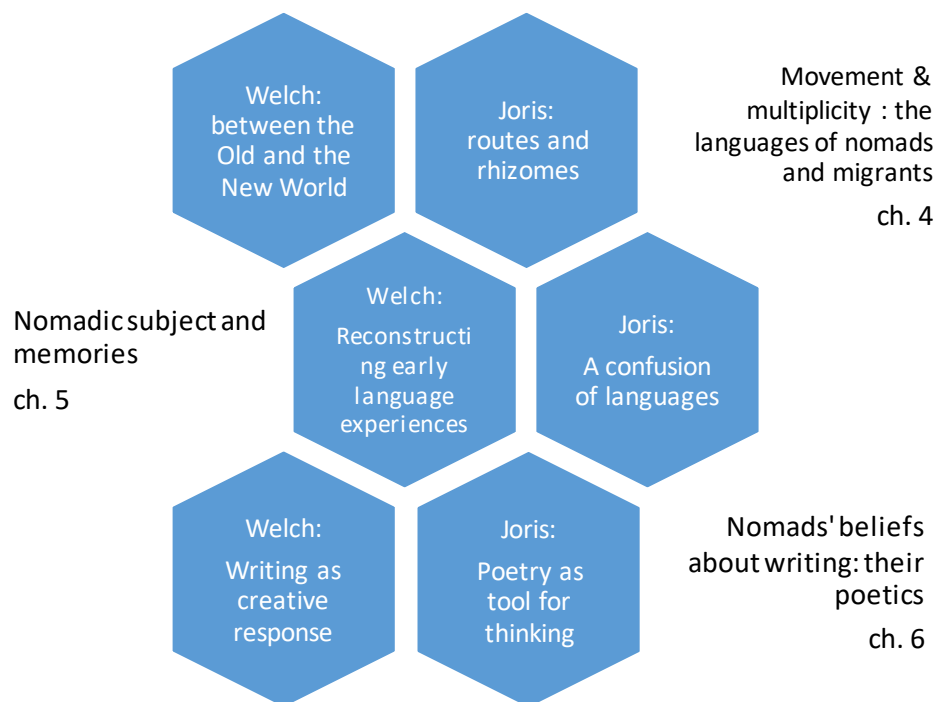
The analysis of translingual writing is often a reading against the grain: one needs to forget conventional monolingual practices and look for alternative approaches that resist monolingual practices. It is in gaps, interstices, breaks and contradictions that meaning is constructed.

3.3.5 A roadmap for the study of Welch and Joris

as complementary to the outlook given in ch. 1.5

Preview of PART TWO: The poets' nomadic lives and thinking across languages

The focus is on **context** and emerging webs of significance for each poet.



Chapter 4 mainly draws on nomadic theory, postcolonial studies and migration literature. Potential conflicts are between views on travelling as permanent condition (nomadism) and as search for home (migration).

Chapter 5 integrates views on the nomadic subject, on languages as experiences and on life writing. Chapter 6 puts the poets' attitude to multiple languages in the broader context of their overall poetics, which account for some fundamental differences between their views on the role of foreign elements in their writings.

The juxtaposition of Welch and Joris in each chapter provides a range of interpretations, which question the possibility of a clear, unequivocal definition of underlying concepts and translingualism.

Preview of PART THREE:

A translingual poetics in practice: Writing poetry as palimpsestic acts of language and acts of literature.



This part refers to selected poetic texts and their creative interpretation of key ideas, notably encounters with otherness, translation and the search for innovative spaces in writing.

The structure also reflects a juxtaposition of Welch and Joris in their writing.

Chapter 10, the conclusion, aims at making out answers to the initial research questions, allowing for differences between understandings of translingualism in the work of Welch and Joris. Together with

other conceptual metaphors, the palimpsest proves to be an excellent tool to conceive the complexity of interrelated languages and “trans-” movements.

Drawing on the insights gained from the study, I will attempt to outline a “poetics” or roadmap for readers of nomadic and translingual work.

PART TWO: The poets' nomadic lives and thinking across languages

My understanding of translingual writing is based on the hypothesis that there is a correlation between a writers' use of multiple languages in texts and their attitudes to travelling; that on the one hand one has the migrant in search of a new home and simultaneously looking for *one* language of writing, while on the other hand the nomad refuses to settle in one place, is open for ever new spaces to explore and looks upon all his/her languages as material for writing.

Part II puts the poets' languages in a broad context of personal and cultural exchanges. The sources consulted for these chapters range broadly. Notions of movement, de-centered languages, awareness of voice, in-between positioning and response to otherness provide the general frame. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Investigate responses to otherness: to places, encounters, languages and literary texts. They all aim at situating the translingual poetic processes analysed in Part III.

4. Mapping nomadic and translingual lives and work

The chapter aims at presenting biographical information, which is relevant for an understanding of the poets' travelling while also providing an overview of their work. It is seen as groundwork and contextualization for the poets' reflections on language experiences (ch. 5) and a study of their poetics (ch. 6). The focus on nomadic aspects of life and work requires tools that accommodate a constant readjustment of perspectives, i.e. not only a sequence of dates or lists of places and publications.

4.1 Lives and works of nomads: Mapping relations with otherness³⁷⁸

Presenting the multiple facets of poets' lives and work is not easy – and it should not be easy. It asks for tools that reflect a dizzying multiplicity of movements and activities. Not maps as static objects nor declarations about immovable positions will help; at best, we can propose discussions that correspond to active processes of *mapping* and *positioning*: the stress must be on a dynamic process.

Therefore, for this chapter, all kinds of paratextual elements and semi-literary documents have provided interesting information about underlying linguistic and cultural routes in their work. Next to critical essays by poets and critics, interviews, many forms of exchanges, like letters, and some visual material have offered insights into what nomadism and multilingualism mean for the poet.

The aim of mapping their itineraries is to outline the cultural and geographical contexts of their (physical and mental) travelling. The distinction between nomads and migrants, which Deleuze/Guattari and Braidotti propose, helps to make out some specificities of each poet's movements, their relation to places and a general outlook on the role of travelling (*posturing as nomads*). Other signs of nomadism may appear in their relations (or indifference) to origins, in their readiness for on-going changes and new encounters, their attachment to natural surroundings or their attitude to the notion of home. As indicated in the research questions, the assumption is that one may see some connections between their preferred ways of moving and their approach of poetic language. A more specific investigation into positions to language multiplicity is the object of chapter 5.

Most maps also have a temporal perspective. The *dimension of time* requires awareness of the poets' positioning at a particular moment, the distinction between the moment of writing and views on the past (past experiences and locations), as well as outlooks on possible futures. In nomadic theory, especially Braidotti recalls the importance of the past despite the apparent primary focus on a forward moving thinking.

³⁷⁸ For general considerations see ch. 2.2.

Moreover, the researcher's perspective inevitably introduces a further temporal dimension, a form of framing with additional perspectives that cannot be mixed up with those of the poets. Mapping, as I understand it here, is a form of construction that should facilitate further enquiries. It is a life-writing of some sort, combining the poet's perspectives, secondary information and the researcher's arrangement of information. Thus, for instance, for the present context of enquiry, the focus is on intersection routes and the movement of poets' languages in connection with changing locations. The presentations of both poets' itineraries (4.2 and 4.3) will also expose differences between their approaches of nomadism. The conclusion (4.4) is an opportunity to re-consider understandings of the migrant and the nomad.

The challenge in chapter 4 is to outline the poets' mobility and between-ness. It involves associating references to geographical territories, cultural and linguistic environments as well as imaginary spaces.

4.1.1 A focus on peripheries

Welch and Joris do not fit into categories of postcolonial writers, yet like postcolonial literature their work moves between centres and peripheries. In their case, the latter may be borders areas of nation States or cultural peripheries marked by centrifugal or centripetal forces which leave an impact on language use. In their early life in Luxembourg, they made the experience of the impact of cultural centres (like Paris and the French language) on peripheral territories, like Luxembourg, which despite its political independence remained affiliated to linguistic and cultural and literary models and standards borrowed from centres situated beyond its national borders. This initial experience may account for a later interest in other cultural and linguistic peripheries. The notion of periphery (and the related notion of border/ perimeter; fringe/ margin and *dérive*³⁷⁹) allows juxtaposing political and cultural perspectives, social realities and personal positioning, as well as comparing the views of poetic personae evoked in literary texts with views voiced in critical studies.

4.1.2 Routes or roots

Joris explicitly refers to the homonyms (cf. 4.3). More generally, "routes" and "roots" help represent links to languages and home. In the present study, the homonyms express two forms of nomadism, or rather the difference between on the one hand "true" nomads, who keep on choosing their routes and refuse leaving the road, and on the other hand migrants who after leaving their points of origin always remain in search of a new home, a place to which they can attach their lives and "grow" new roots. The pun, routes

³⁷⁹ *Dérive* as seen by social geographers (Soja 1996), postcolonial theorists (cf. Ashcroft et al. 2013) and philosophers (see ch. 3. on nomadism, in particular the section on Kenneth White).

and roots, also opens links to poets' various views on their attachment to language and language multiplicity. Routes and roots, in different ways, become part of their imaginary poetic spaces to be explored in Part III.

4.1.3 The poets as living maps of nomadic figures

In an attempt to describe and locate nomadic subjects, Braidotti (2011: 4) underlines the importance of cartographies. She pleads for a figuration of the nomad that works like a living map and can account for the nomad's positions and power relations that impact on his/her life as well as transformations that ensue. Her description fits a figuration of multilingual poets whose positions in language and literature are the outcome of their own projects. The challenge in chapter 4 is to represent mobility and an overall sense of being in the middle (between-ness) by associating geographical territories, linguistic environments and hints at imaginary spaces.

4.2 Liliane Welch: Nomadic itineraries and positioning between the Old and the New World

A mapping process aims to provide various forms of information, not a definitive document. Two aspects of nomadic theory guide the approach of the poet's *life and work*: Nomads are travellers who proceed in contact with changing linguistic, cultural and geographical surroundings. (cf. Deleuze/ Guattari and Kenneth White) and poetry is the space where the wanderer's reflections on the interface between writing (language) and movement takes place. In Welch's work, a primary attention goes to natural surroundings. A development in nomads' outlook and relations is the feature that thinkers like Kristeva and Braidotti highlight with an emphasis on writing as language experiences. Writing is a means for the nomad as subject-in-process to record encounters and changing positions.

The objective is to look for elements which point to translingualism. It means reading her life, her writings and reception *against the grain* of the (monolingual English) surface so as to uncover language dimensions that easily pass unnoticed. It means inspecting details that hint at relations between her wanderings and her language(s) of writing.

4.2.1 Moving centres and peripheries in a nomad's life

"Every place contains many journeys, meditations on self, predecessors and landscapes."

("On the way to Marburg," *Frescoes* 1998: 71)

Moving suggests that the centres and peripheries are not stable (for whatever reason): *moving* is then taken to be an adjective. Another reading should suggest that the poet is the subject who is moving or

deLocating her centers and peripheries; *moving* then is a truncated form or an elision of “she is moving,” *moving* in this case used as a transitive verb.

In the context of a study on poets’ writing processes, the title may also be understood as moving the research focus away from established centres of national languages and State authorities; moreover, it is a reference to a poet who positions herself on the peripheries of commonly recognized cultural and linguistic areas. Lastly, *moving* may be read as causing *emotions*, a word with which it shares a common etymology. In the present context, this meaning reminds us that poetry after all has to do with feelings, or that the words and lines of poetry are in motion, rhythmically moving across the page.³⁸⁰

4.2.1.1 A visual mapping of poetic sites and positions³⁸¹

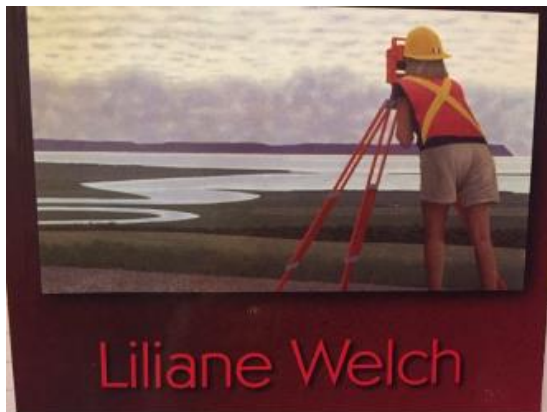


Figure 1. Liliane Welch, *Untethered in Paradise* (2002). Cover painting by Alex Colville

The cover of *Untethered in Paradise* (2002)³⁸² seems to be a good way to introduce Welch, the poet, who postures as cartographer. Approaching the book as a visual or multimodal means of communication gives a first impression of the poet’s positioning across geographical locations and imagined poetic setting, between art and reality.³⁸³ We see a woman surveyor pictured from the back, facing the flat shores of a zigzagging river or estuary and the sea stretching in front of her, with what appears as a compact range

³⁸⁰ See Derek Attridge, *Moving Words. Forms of English Poetry* (2013)

³⁸¹ For technical reasons, I have given up on providing more visual material at this stage. I may reconsider it later.

³⁸² The painting is a work by Alex Colville, a Maritime artist and friend of the Welches. He is known for his realism, and the extraordinary precision of his paintings. <http://alexcolville.ca/>; https://www.aci-iac.ca/content/art-books/25/Art-Canada-Institute_Alex-Colville.pdf. See also Liliane and Cyril Welch fonds of the national Gallery of Canada Library and Archives <https://www.gallery.ca/english/library/biblio/ngc106.html>. The Fonds consists of correspondence between Liliane and Cyril Welch and Canadian artist Alex Colville (1920-2013) and includes Colville's letters to Liliane and Cyril as well as typescripts of their letters to Colville and his letters to them.

³⁸³ The use of multimodality as an alternative or first step in language learning may also make sense for a first critical approach of literary works (see eg Kramsch 2009, 203-204; Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen *Reading Images* 1996). Also see the role of visual media that Yanoshevsky describes as posturing tools in *L'entretien littéraire* (2018).

of clouds or possibly mountains in the background. The body position of the surveyor suggests that she scrutinizes the landscape in front of her with great concentration and uses her instruments to make measurements of what looks like a lonely place.

Could we read this cover as a metaphor of the poet, as a *mise en abîme* of the writer absorbed in her observations and work? The painting, like a critic's comment, suggests the poet-surveyor's work. To chart the vast and empty land, she must shift her attention from close-by details (the gravel under her telescope, the grass) to the far off mountain range and the skies. The horizontal foreground is contrasted with the verticality of the clouds or an imaginary mountainous background – possibly an allusion to the poet's double attachment to the flat Maritimes and to the peaks of the Alps. The absence of movement may strike us as standing in opposition to the supposed nomadic wanderings of the poet. The focus is here on the perspective offered from the particular location of the poet-surveyor, who must stand still to collect measurements. Stillness, like movement, is part of the poet's work.³⁸⁴

The covers of Welch's publications present paratextual diversity in form and topics. Many visualize travelling and physical activities, like walking and climbing; others are portraits of women, sometimes self-portraits; reproductions of art works alternate with photographs. *More in 4.2.2. (Welch's publications)*

4.2.1.2 The multiple centres of a restless wanderer: A nomad's or a migrant's perspective?

Different forms of mapping are possible: One could chart the geographical locations and natural surroundings, which at sometime have played a role in her life: Luxembourg, Switzerland, the U.S., France, Canada, Italy, Germany, Switzerland and more; for each, one would have to specify distinct regions or cities (the U.S. for instance would include California, Montana, Pennsylvania). In that case an additional, complex chronological structure seems indispensable. For the poet, linguistic environments open up to textual and literary spaces. Therefore, if one tries to map Welch's languages, questions arise as to their location: where does French for instance belong: to Luxembourg where she first learnt the language, to the U.S. where she got her Ph.D., to New Brunswick as a bilingual province and the place where she is a Professor of French studies for many decades? One could also start the mapping from the opposition that Welch foregrounds in many of her writings: the contrast between the Old World and the New World.

For a focus on features in her work that are related to language and wandering, the writings themselves propose yet another mapping, with past and present as changing coordinates. When in a poet's life and work, centres constantly move, mapping involves awareness of temporal dimensions. The writings

³⁸⁴ Words and language are not part of the action, they will emerge later, in the stillness of the poet's study (*Seismographs* and Preface to *Manstorna*).

considered in the present study encompass Welch's most productive and creative time, from the mid-1970s onwards almost until her death. This means that the perspective on her childhood, youth and first two decades in North America is *retrospective*.

Welch's work during that period moves around four centres: three geographical locations to which the nomad or wanderer is particularly sensitive, as well as one broadly understood "mental" area: the realm of books to which she feels closely attached. Though they are all connected to nomadic roaming, they also represent *homes*, real or imagined, which means they correspond to a search for stability which remains in tension with travelling, that other fundamental drive for writing. Home and wandering are the core features in all accounts of her life.

New Brunswick, in Atlantic Canada, appears as the hub of her life and writing (see essays in *Seismographs* 1987). Simultaneously, she explores Italy as another multifaceted centre while Luxembourg gradually appears in her work, first as the site of remembered conflicts, then as a place she slowly (re)discovers. They are concrete, geographically located places, which she experiences with all her senses, before responding reflectively on her own position. The world of literature, in various languages, is the other, the fourth *home*, similar to a wide-spreading net that bonds the heterogeneity of her experiences.³⁸⁵ A brief evocation of what each of these centres represents for her aims at foregrounding nomadic and linguistic features. Underlying questions concern the nature of her nomadism, as the texts reveal many parallels with a migrant's wish to find a new stable centre: What is home for her, what attracts her to each of these places and what accounts for a recurring restlessness? What role do languages play in her attachment to a place? I will come to argue that each of her centres is also a periphery.

Welch's nomadic life does not begin in Canada. After leaving Luxembourg, she lived in various parts of the US, but as references to these years are scarce in her writings, they do not figure in this presentation of her nomadic itineraries.³⁸⁶

New Brunswick³⁸⁷ – a place for the poet as walker and writer.

³⁸⁵ The world of reading and literature is primarily treated in the chapters on languages in movement (ch. 5), and on poetics (ch. 6).

³⁸⁶ Cf. the comments by Richard Lemm in this introduction to *Seismographs*: "The essays [...] mention Montana and the Rockies only in passing, and there is no reference to the process by which she arrived in New Brunswick to teach French Literature at Mount Allison University. The impressions of her American years, and the importance of that part of her passage from Europe to New Brunswick, remain to be told (1988: 10)." In *Acknowledgments*, Cyril Welch provides some information on these years and their movements between North America and Europe; see the section devoted to Liliane (2009: 87-121).

³⁸⁷ New Brunswick is the name of the province; in Welch's work three related terms are used to name the area: The Maritimes (comprising New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island), Atlantic Canada (which includes the former, plus Newfoundland and Labrador) and Eastern Canada referring to all the provinces east of Manitoba, i.e. including Ontario and Quebec.



Figure 2. Liliane Welch in New Brunswick. Cover of *Seismographs* (1988)

Many passages in her autobiographical essays (*Seismographs* 1988) and in her early poetry suggest that arriving in Sackville, New Brunswick in the late 1960s, Welch is overwhelmed by this remote area, far away from locations of her earlier life and quite different from anything she had known before. The first encounter is almost literally *a coup de foudre*:

For me Sackville is a hamlet intercepted between the highest tides of the world. When I saw it first in a wild February storm, a desire arose to pierce the secret still withheld from me. A language had to be invented to make this ground sing. Since then, this tiny town has become my secret, my life-giver; it has grown with me, submerges me, threatens to withdraw, to dissolve into future writing and discoveries. I can best grasp this, my home, when as a text it sustains my days. ("Sackville, New Brunswick. Locus of Migrations," *Seismographs* 1988: 53)

In this extract, Welch describes a process of transformation, which is close to Braidotti's notion of becoming as main characteristic of the nomadic subject. It is significant that in those circumstances she should write poetry as a way to find her bearings and respond to overwhelming natural phenomena. Not only do the natural surroundings awe her; she feels she belongs to this place; this is where she could be herself. In interviews (some 30 years after arriving), ³⁸⁸ she insists on this identification with the land she was determined to make her home. Home for her means a place that she can explore on daily walking tours, where she feels in harmony with the natural surroundings, where she finds the time to read and gradually also to write her own poetry.

In Sackville the varying faces of my life are inscribed, along with the remembrance of many books read. At first I came here to teach French, then to mediate the great voices of our literary tradition, finally to write poems. It also happens that I live here for the sake of the land itself. ("Sackville, New Brunswick. Locus of Migrations," *Seismographs* 1988: 58)

³⁸⁸ See interviews with Lynes (1999) and with Compton (2000).

She also writes: “I feel at home in Eastern Canada because I write best here” (52); yet, all her texts about her Canadian home (essays, interviews, poems) show that her dream of an encapsulated, totally self-contained centre has a second facet. Indeed, she seems unable to conceive such a home without its opposites to her other, European, centres. In her work, it is difficult to find a passage about New Brunswick, which is not linked to the other places on her travelling routes.

In New Brunswick’s powerful ebb and flow of absence and presence, the voices of things past, present and future pound. As I wander over the lonesome dykes on Fundy’s lip and track across the overgrown mill-roads in the forests, the Acadian dyke-builders and the early mill-workers come at me. But it is also here that the memories of the Old World sound most clearly: the small post-war Luxembourg mining town [...]; the Alps and Dolomites [...] In this place, in the writing of poems, I find my orientation, where I came from and toward what I move. Here I gain the proper distance, and the courage to cut my path. (*October Winds* 1980: 5)

Sensitive to her environment, the wanderer sees ebb and flow as metaphors of emerging and receding voices from the past and present, from faraway and close by. The Canadian home always appears in contrast or connection with the spaces to which she returns, either in her thoughts while walking or during her summer migrations.

Her Canadian environment requires a short note on its hidden or not so visible multilingual dimensions. From the perspective of research on poets’ multiple languages, New Brunswick proves to be an interesting environment for the nomadic poet. In Welch’s work, the “surface” is monolingual, words and syntax are unambiguously English. If one cannot immediately make out NB as a multilingual centre in Welch’s work, several roads nonetheless cross there: her early work in particular reflects the lives of people whose languages are either spoken variations of Canadian English or French, including the ancient forms of Acadian French. It also has echoes of the multiple languages of her readings: literature in English (mostly Canadian and American), French poetry, German poetry and philosophy, and gradually also Italian, that other, new language in her life. How these experiences have contributed to her poetics is further explored in ch. 6.

Italy – a place for manifold nomadic roaming

Italy becomes an important centre of her life for several different reasons. For many years, she is eager to go rock climbing in the summer and the Dolomites become a counterpart of her Canadian life, while the artistic and historical wealth of Italian cities provide a compensation for the scarcity of cultural events in New Brunswick. Another ground for her fascination is the discovery of a mythical Italian grandfather (see ch.8.2). Lastly, learning Italian turns into a lifelong love affair with the language and its literature.

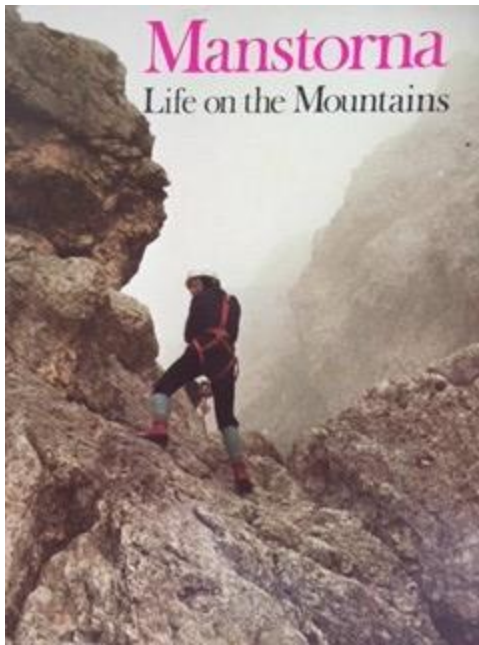


Figure 3. Liliane Welch, cover of *Manstorna* (1985)

Mountain climbing emerges as contrast to walking along the coast or in the marshy flatlands and both experiences prove equally indispensable for the writer who needs travelling and distance to create her poems.³⁸⁹ On the mountain she collects ideas that later, in her Canadian setting, she converts into poems:

My poems are born during the hard climbs on the mountain when the heart turns to stone to survive. For many days, however, they remain Locked within silence. Then, one morning, as I sit in my cedar house in Sackville, verses begin to flow in response to the growing pressure of multiple memories and misty bogs. [...] Then I understand that the mountain is a rite of passage, it incites me to live close to the genii of my horizontal Canadian place. (*Manstorna* 1985: 5)

Not surprisingly, these reflections on composition and writing turn into a personal poetics, a *cheirography* as she calls it, which will be further investigated in ch. 6 and 7.

The other Italian strand in Welch's work is related to her Italian grandfather, through whom Italy becomes also part of her own life story.³⁹⁰ Only by chance, long after she has left Luxembourg, does she discover a family secret that concerns her maternal grandfather, whom nobody ever seemed to mention. Investigating the mystery that surrounds his life, she suddenly feels quite close to him. She learns that, every summer, unable to keep up with the settled life of his wife in Luxembourg, her grandfather hit the road and wandered all across the south of Europe. Consequently, she comes to see him as the model for

³⁸⁹ Thus, in the Preface to *Manstorna* (1985) she explains how for her poems she imagines a nomadic and dialogic process, which involves the complementary and contrasting views of an Italian male guide and a female mountain climber, her alter ego.

³⁹⁰ The importance of this discovery and Welch's poetic transformation of an imagined past is the subject of chapter 8.1.

her own wanderings; he is the nomadic ancestor from whom she has inherited her restlessness and love of travelling.

This grandfather also becomes the key to roots she would otherwise tend to reject or ignore:

When I explore the paths of my background I write poems. In them the homeless grandfather moves from place to place, regarding all residence and relationship as temporary, taking things without regard for origin or consequence. He embodies already the new form of life which we live today, his entire existence having spelled out the deterioration and the death of the old order and the durable way of life of my grandmother. (*Word-House* 1987:9)

Welch's experience and poetic story-telling reflect the intricate link between nomadic features of restlessness and migrants' well-known efforts at retrieving roots through family stories.³⁹¹ The identification with Italian roots motivate her to learn the language, during summer courses at the Università per Stranieri di Perugia where she makes many experiences of a language learner.³⁹² She loves the sounds of the newly discovered language, which allows her to communicate with Italian people on her tours around the country while at the same time it gives her access to a whole new cultural and literary world.³⁹³ Italy thus proves a centre of multiple experiences for the nomad and the poet, a crucial interface of language and movement.

Luxembourg, the centre of her childhood and the nomad's many returns

Ambivalence is probably the best word to sum up Welch's complicated relations to Luxembourg. Her attitudes somewhat changed in the course of the years but in her writings Luxembourg is mainly the place from which she ran away, which she loves to remember, returns to for long spells every year – but is always glad to leave again. She keeps the attitude of the insider-outsider. Sometimes she gives in to wistful reconstructions of her past, yet these pleasant memories are quickly interrupted by a critical stance towards her former home and a repeated affirmation of her attachment to her new country, Canada. "Conveniats" (in *Seismographs* 1988: 45-47) is a text that well illustrates the conflictual and paradoxical relations with Luxembourg.³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ Migrants' stories often seem to focus on grandparents, see e.g. Katja Petrowskaja, *Vielleicht Esther* (2015); Nancy Huston, *Cantique des Plaines* 1993; for a critical approach of the role of grandmothers, see in Karpinski (2012).

³⁹² See the tribute she pays to her professor in Perugia, whose summer courses meant very much to her: (*Word-House* 1987: 11).

³⁹³ Every morning, for many years, Liliane and Cyril read a passage from Dante's *Divina Commedia*. When she died, they had read all three books several times. Cyril describes the process of this ritual in some detail (see ch. 9.1).

³⁹⁴ She describes with occasionally biting irony how on her regular returns to Luxembourg, she sometimes attends a gathering of her former school schoolmates. "Like powerful lenses, the Conveniats clarify my North American dream, they focus the differences of the worlds between which I'm torn [...] These women are positive and negative signposts for me" (46). What Welch, the nomad seems to resent most is "the collective wish of these women to guard the present by surges into the past" (1988: 47), their uncritical partaking in what for her is an intolerable consumerist lifestyle and their reluctance to consider any changes in outlooks. However, the text ends on a conciliatory tone: "I

When Welch ran away from home as a young adult, her escape amounted to a wholesale rejection of all that Luxembourg represented for her. Later, via the discovery of the Italian grandfather and the recognition her work received in Luxembourg,³⁹⁵ her attitude started to turn into a critical sometimes nostalgic appreciation of a place, which had changed too much – in the wrong direction. In “Change of Predators”³⁹⁶ she takes the stance of the knowing outsider, to address the deplorable changes she observes. Shocked by the wealth visible everywhere in the city of Luxembourg in the early 1990s, she speaks of “Klondyke days.” In this piece, nostalgia for the past – but a fictional, mythical past of literary figures – is part of her open condemnation: “My motherland used to be a cozy province, a haven where the Re’nert roamed. Its new hegemonies are bizarre and ruthless. I would rather be enticed by Melusine.” (“Change of Predators,” *Life in Another Language* 1992: 72) A free and enlightened life as exemplified by her favourite Luxembourg literary figure, *Renert*,³⁹⁷ a roaming fox, is no longer possible.

New friendships and cooperation with other artists in Luxembourg,³⁹⁸ as well as her membership in the *Institut grand-ducal* make Luxembourg again a home, or rather a *résidence secondaire*. *Re’nert* is the name she gives her house in Hespérange.³⁹⁹ The numerous texts she writes about the Luxembourg of her childhood and family are poetic recreations, where fact and fiction inspired by myths and local sagas, are interwoven with the stories of her parents and grandparents. Perhaps in response to Canadians’ questions about her multiple languages and her familiarity with various cultures, she points to the Latin and Germanic heritage of the lands on which her ancestors lived. Her semi-autobiographical texts, which contain many insights into her language experiences, are the main source for chapter 5.

Postscript: The nomad as cultural tourist

In critical studies, views on nomads, travellers and tourists sometimes merge (see ch. 3.2.1). For Welch, the returnee, Luxembourg is above all a useful pivot from where she travels across Europe to get her yearly fill of cultural events, which she misses in Canada. She is a purposeful cultural tourist who visits places well prepared and determined to enlarge her experiences of art and music. Mapping her travelling

can discover the harmonies that hold Europe and Canada together for me.” This essay yields many insights into self-representations analysed in 4.2.4 (the nomad’s positioning).

³⁹⁵ A poem entitled “Canadian Returnee” (1988) expresses the joy and pride of a writer who had run away from home totally misunderstood and now at long last is able to prove the power of her words. See ch. 8.2.1.

³⁹⁶ The title alludes to the power of the Church which in her eyes had been responsible for all the evils that had made life in Luxembourg so hateful for her in her youth. Bankers, she claims, now have taken their place.

³⁹⁷ *Renert* oder De Fuuß am Frack an a Ma'nsgrëßt. Op en Neis fotograféiert vun Engem Letzebreger, an epic poem by Michel Rodange (1872).

³⁹⁸ See contributions to poetry magazines like *Estuaires* and *Cahiers luxembourgeois* of work previously published in Canada); some collaborations in multimedia projects *Mosaics. Music, Scapes, Words* (1995); *Element 5* (1996).

³⁹⁹ She speaks with enthusiasm about it in letters to friends but does not mention it in her poems. (Fonds Liliane Welch / CNL L-190)

in Europe, as it emerges in her essays (notably in *Frescoes* 1998, and *Untethered in Paradise* (2002), and in her poetry collections, reveals a pattern of constellations, which include ancient Italian cities, mountain resorts across the Alps as well as numerous other cultural centres and museums, notably in Switzerland, France, (Belgium and Germany).

Welch does not simply collect names of well-known tourist destinations; she also offers reflections on the meaning of mobility for the travelling subject. Frequently, she ponders the sense of home in a life of travelling:

Why does the *syntax of travel* mesmerize? Why do we hunger for new images? Why do we need to prey on places unknown? ... [T]hese vectors urge us to acknowledge powers unexpected, they dip us back into a seeing and speaking more pristine. Yet foraging the thrall of new images and places also makes us yearn to return home. Not to wear again discarded attachments and selves, rather to *reinvent our gestures and tongues*. Travel displaces emptiness and closure so that at home life may still burn intensely in word and deed. (*Frescoes* 1998:5; emphasis added)

Home and travel appear as complementary facets of the nomadic poet's life. This may not be a particularly novel idea, however two expressions deserve closer attention as they foreground a relation between language and movement. "The syntax of travel" a metaphor drawn from linguistics refers to the arrangement of distinct elements (like words and phrases) for meaning making. Similarly the meaning of travel derives from a combination of separate small experiences that mark the nomad's route; writing will ensure an overall structure behind these movements. Home for the returning traveller is not a perfect recovery of pre-travel times. The text speaks of a wish "to reinvent our gestures and tongues"; it can be read as a concise description of the link between a nomad's travelling and her languages; whatever she has seen and heard – also in the form of foreign languages – is likely to leave traces.

The world of literature as the nomad's enduring centre

Besides geographical locations and their connections for the poet, books and languages constitute another core space in Welch's world. Chapters 5 and 6 investigate their specifically nomadic features. For a writer, an attractive form of travelling is through books. Welch's work gives ample evidence of her extensive reading habits, a form of intellectual nomadism, involving languages in movement and a view of literature that reaches beyond national borders. Works of literature, rather than the central locations in her life, help situate languages in her writing. An acute awareness of the difference between written and above all literary language versus the language of the street emerges on many occasions (See e.f. her correspondence with Rufolo).

If one wishes to locate *one* center in Welch's work, one will find it in literature, with examples reaching far in her own writing and giving evidence of her ongoing reading repertoire in English, French, German,

Italian and Luxembourgish. She is reticent to speak about the process of interplay between her different, mostly literary languages in her writing. American literary models which she met as a teenager have retained a central position in all her work: the poetry of Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, the writings of William Faulkner, Henry David Thoreau. In literary works she finds the yardstick for her poetic language; yet the rhythm of *spoken* (North American) English undoubtedly appeals to her most (cf. "On the Way to English" 1987), while in the imagery and metaphors of spoken Luxembourgish she also comes to recognize the potential of the vernacular as a literary, cultural language (see below, e.g. her article "E klengt Landt" 1979).

4.2.1.3 Welch's moving peripheries and multi-centred work

Considering the poet's world as defined by centres is an oversimplification. It would limit the perspective to closed, self-contained territories or phenomena like national languages and literatures. The nomad poet however has multiple *fidelities*⁴⁰⁰ which often overlap. Mapping her life and work, one has to take into account linguistic and cultural contexts *in movement*. Peripheries – especially when used in the plural – appear to be a useful notion to conceive border crossing interactions.⁴⁰¹ Periphery here is primarily understood as border region, in a literal and a metaphorical sense; periphery, like margin or fringe, means distance from central authority; hence it often stands for *less important* or *minor*.⁴⁰² Centres in Welch's life and work are often simultaneously peripheries, while her work shows that peripheries also function as centres.

Understanding how presumed national and linguistic borders and territories become blurred in a presentation of her life, makes it easier to approach her work as situated between and across boundary lines. Thus, for example, it seems that for some time Luxembourg is not a centre of her life, but rather a periphery of Italy in her imagination and efforts to become reconciled with Europe. Her relation to America – the US – reveals a similar switch: During all her years of study, the US was her centre, once she moved to Canada and started writing poetry, it moved to the periphery, became part of her past and her travelling destinations – though its literature kept a central position on her literary map.

A few notes on Welch's position in Canada⁴⁰³

⁴⁰⁰ *Fidelities* (1997) is the title of one her poetry collections.

⁴⁰¹ Periphery, like margin or fringe, means distance from central authority; hence less important or minor (more in other contexts, eg Joris's poetics).

⁴⁰² See also Deleuze and Guattari (1975).

⁴⁰³ These notes are reflections on New Brunswick and Canada when Welch started writing, when it had not yet gained full independence from the UK, when universities only began to think about teaching Canadian literature, which is now often called Canadian literature in English. To see how much the perspectives have changed in the current discussions on literary issues, see for instance, Vautour et al., eds., *Public Poetics* (2015) or Joseph Pivato, "Atwood's

Welch's Canadian centre, from many points of view, is also a periphery or even *multiple peripheries*. New Brunswick, is located far east from the influential and leading political and cultural hubs of Ontario and Quebec. Sometimes, they seem closer to the regions on the other side of the Atlantic, like Scotland or Brittany, with which they share similar landscapes, and more historical commonalities than with the Canadian west and the Pacific coast. Situated far from centres, like Montreal, and Toronto, the bilingual province of New Brunswick is also in a culturally and linguistically peripheral position. Francophones speak Acadian French, a variety which is associated with the long and tragic history of a community now spread as far as New Orleans or the Falklands /les Malouines, whose members still consider New Brunswick as their centre or origin.⁴⁰⁴ Much more could be said about the position of New Brunswickers in relation to multiple geographical, historical, linguistic, political and cultural centres. One may wonder what they consider the "centre" of their English/ Anglophone culture: is it Canada (Toronto), London or rather the Celtic peripheries in the UK, or does the influence of the neighbouring US territories that lie just across their southern borders prove to be more powerful?

Sackville, the home town of Welch, is mostly Anglophone. The origin of Mount Allison University where she taught goes back to the times of the British Empire while the department of French also held a central situation when she started teaching. So we may wonder how Welch, a teacher of classical French literature, who writes English language poetry, integrates linguistic and cultural multifacetedness in her writing.

The centre-periphery relation between the US and Canada constitutes another example of complex relations in Welch's work: during all her years of study, the US was her central point of attachment, which gave orientation to her life and her language.⁴⁰⁵ Once she becomes a Canadian citizen, the United States is no longer central: it moves to the periphery of her new home.

One should further remember that Anglophone Canada, as a member of the British Commonwealth, for a long time presented itself as a cultural "periphery." Welch started to write in the mid-nineteen seventies, which in Canada was the time when the growing awareness of a national literature, as different from that of England (the U.K.) produced a great wave of enthusiasm. Departments of Canadian literature

Survival : A Critique,"c (2020), a critical re-appreciation of Atwood's seminal study which points out the missing references to the wealth of cultural multiplicity in Canadian literature.

⁴⁰⁴ In New Brunswick, language borders are becoming blurred. For instance, Chiac is a vernacular Acadian variety, mostly spoken by the younger generations in the area of Moncton. It is a mixture of French and English with influences from English and to a lesser extent from various Canadian aboriginal languages. An example of mixed language writing is a novel by Jean Babineau entitled *Bloupe* (1993).

⁴⁰⁵ After acquiring the basics of the language at school in Luxembourg, it was in the US that she really turned English into her new mother tongue: that language, especially its literary models retained a central position in all her work: the poetry of Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, the writings of William Faulkner, Henry David Thoreau.

were created in the universities, usually however without attempts to consider literatures in French and English as one body of writing. Moreover, next to that country-wide awareness of a new literary independence, regional writers, too, felt encouraged to express their specificity.⁴⁰⁶

Work like that of Liliane Welch then appears to fit the general, slightly controversial label of *Minor* or preferably *Smaller* Literatures.⁴⁰⁷ For the present context, smaller literature is a term which in the case of Welch can be interpreted in more than one way: She is a writer originally from a country whose literature is qualified as small. As a Canadian writer, she does not belong to a dominant literature either, and within that literature, she would identify with a regional, provincial community and its aspirations. Moreover, through one of her collections of poems on her Italian grandfather, she also comes to be seen as a representative of yet another small literature: Italo-Canadian immigrant literature.

In her writing Welch maps the world of her poetry. Italy sometimes constitutes the centre, while in other texts it moves to the periphery of her mental territory. Occasionally, maps of Italy and New Brunswick/Canada seem to collapse and the space between them is suppressed. The poetic persona easily moves from mountain peaks in the Dolomites to the marshlands of Fundy bay and the study in her cedar house. Luxembourg, as periphery and linguistic and cultural border area (and *Zwischenland*)⁴⁰⁸ of France, Germany is a common idea – and a fact – that she relies on in several essays of *Seismographs* (next chapter) while she also points to the relation of centre and periphery within Luxembourg. Her work foregrounds border towns and villages, not the capital as representative of the establishment. In Welch's writing, the perspectives on centres and peripheries are in constant movement. Sometimes they (centres as well as peripheries) have their own, interconnected peripheries. For instance, in her writing, Welch constructs Italy as a centre of her life and writing, but through the connection with her grandfather it is also a periphery of Luxembourg, while in the (fictional) memories of the Italian grandfather readers in Canada recognize a voice of Canadian immigration.

⁴⁰⁶ How Welch perceives her position is discussed as an aspect of the reception of her work. See Interview with Jeanette Lynes: *Words Out There: Women Poets in Atlantic Canada* See 4.2.4.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. Jeanne Glesener, "On Small Literatures and their Location in World Literature: a case study of Luxembourgish Literature" (2012). Deleuze and Guattari are usually accredited with being at the origin of the concept of minor literature (1975).

⁴⁰⁸ See *Zwischenland! Ausguckland! Literarische Kurzprosa aus Luxemburg*, edited by Goetzing and Mannes (2009).

4.2.2 Books as thresholds⁴⁰⁹ to nomadic and translingual writing

As titles for her poetry collections, ⁴¹⁰ Welch chooses general and imaginative wording or evokes natural phenomena; only one title, *Manstorna*, refers to an actual location (Cima Manstorna is a peak in the Dolomites). Only a few titles have connotations with aspects of language, like *Life in Another Language*; *Word-House* and *Syntax of Ferment*; the views on language that they provide are discussed in Part III.

Especially book covers provide paratextual visual information of otherness and movement. In some rare cases, photographs of landscapes (*Frescoes. Travel pieces*, with a campanile against a backdrop of mountains; *Manstorna* with the mountain peak and (Welch) the alpinist) point to travelling and hiking (see also the walking boot on the cover of *Syntax of Ferment*). Most poetry collections however display paintings or collage arrangements, some of which are delicate combinations of the poet's travelling or souvenirs of Luxembourg (a painting of the mining area around Esch by the Luxembourg painter Harry Rabinger on the cover of *Fidelities*; collage work by her Luxembourg friend Ginette Knaff on the cover of *Dream Museum*⁴¹¹ and a water colour, "L'Église Saint Michel" (a church in Luxembourg city) for *Stealing the Flowers of Evil*. The latter title is a humorous wink at literature, indirectly linked to travelling. Its meaning is elucidated in a poem called "Robbed" (2008: 44): it refers, as one could guess, to Baudelaire's work *Les Fleurs du mal*, and the poem is about a dearly loved copy of the book that someone stole from her in a Florentine trattoria.

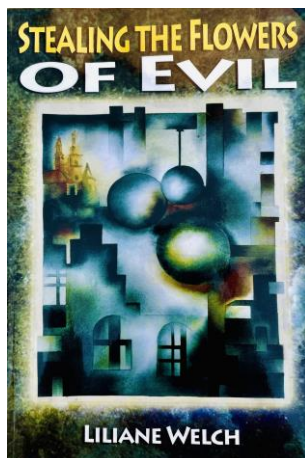


Figure 4. Liliane Welch, collage by Ginette Knaff on cover *Stealing the Flowers of Evil* (2008)

⁴⁰⁹ "Threshold" is a term borrowed from Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (1987).

⁴¹⁰ For details about publications by Welch, see information in ch. 1.

⁴¹¹ The monotype by Ginette Knaff on the back of *Dream Museum* is entitled "Life in Another Language" and dated 1992 – a subtle reference to both artists' work with different means as, the same year, Welch publishes her collection of prose poems also entitled *Life in another Language*. Also see details about an exhibition of Knaff's work in Sackville, Canada: <https://fogforestgallery.ca/exhibitions/paintings-and-collage-works-by-ginette-knaff>

A few covers include photographs of the poet and give some clues about favourite postures: as mountain climber (*Manstorna*), on a road in New Brunswick (*Seismographs*), as a young child on the title page of *Word-House of a Grandchild*, which on the front shows her grandfather while the back has a photograph of Liliane with her grandmother (more in ch. 8).

Books can have easily visible signs of travelling languages: the use of foreign words and phrases. Rapidly scanning the texts one notices that despite the references to linguistically diverse places (like Italy, France or Switzerland) and to literary works in many languages, the insertion of foreign words in the English text are surprisingly rare and even nonexistent in many cases.

Features of nomadism and travelling books⁴¹²

Writers travel while books and texts have their own ways of moving, for instance through readers, translations, and archives where records are stored. (Walkowitz 2006). *Paratextual* information in Welch's books reveal cosmopolitan or nomadic features linked to the reception of her work: The back cover and the back pages contain comments by readers (on earlier collections), whose personal details and perspectives point to their origins on both sides of the Atlantic.

Fenoulhet (2010; see 3.2) understands nomadic literature as encompassing the *translations* of a writer's work, which while travelling become transformed through encounters with new environments. Translations create communities of writers, but an inventory of poems by Welch that have been translated into other languages is not available.⁴¹³ *Anthologie*, edited by Koltz and Portante, and assembling work presented at *Journées de Mondorf* in 1995 includes French translations of her poems by Jean Portante and German translations by Nic Weber. *Von Menschen und Orten* (1992) is Nic Weber's translation into German of some of the prose poems of *Life in Another Language* (more in ch. 7).

Texts and books have more ways of travelling. Welch has noted on several occasions that as poetic creations, her texts are often first conceived during her travelling in Europe; in Canada they are written up and submitted for publication.⁴¹⁴ Books as *public* documents have a life of their own, which begins with publication – in various places – and may end in national archives. Such a perspective permits a few reflections on the nomadism of Welch's books, which start their lives in Canada and “come to rest” for

⁴¹² See also below, under Reception in Luxembourg.

⁴¹³ A note in the documents she left with the CNL says that some individual poems have been translated into a number of languages and published in poetry magazines in various places. They seem difficult to trace. A few translations into French are part of Fonds Liliane Welch (CNL L-190; I.1.5).

⁴¹⁴ For some of the ideas that follow I am indebted to Rachel Walkowitz, “The Location of Literature: The Transnational Book and the Migrant Writer” (2006).

posterity in Luxembourg.⁴¹⁵ Her publishers are Canadian;⁴¹⁶ comparing the details, one notices a considerable geographic dispersion: *Fiddlehead* is Located in New Brunswick, *Ragweed Books* on Prince Edward Island, *Borealis Press* in Ontario and *Sono Nis Press* on the other side of the country, on Vancouver Island. All the books have a similar note that acknowledges financial assistance by Canada Council to publishers.

Though Welch had all her books published in North America and consequently her targeted readership was mostly Canadian, she decided in 2000 to legate her literary estate not to a Canadian institution, like her university, but to the national literary archives in Luxembourg. It was a carefully considered decision, as appears from the exchange with the director of the CNL in Mersch.⁴¹⁷ In comparison, the file left with the Library and Archives of the National Gallery of Canada / Musée des Beaux Arts du Canada is very slim.⁴¹⁸

4.2.3 Welch an unacknowledged multilingual writer?

The extensive documents deposited at the Luxembourg literary archives testify of a dynamic form of multilingual writing. They reveal that her accomplishments in monolingual (English) publications have an important counterpart in her academic and private writing activities in and across several languages: French, German, Italian and Luxembourgish.

Depositing these documents alongside her published work can be interpreted as readiness to disclose aspects of her many languages, of which elsewhere there is little evidence. Biographical details included in her Canadian publications do not foreground her knowledge of French and German. She herself, as a writer, hardly ever seems to mention her other languages in contexts of self-presentation; this reticence appears especially in the posture she adopts in interviews (see below).

My approach is based on the assumption that the documents – letters, academic writing, drafts – are valuable information to *investigate the nature and direction of translingual processes*. This involves scrutinizing her positioning in relation to languages and linguistic otherness. In the analysis, the focus

⁴¹⁵ Of course, one could also imagine a study of the conservation of books in libraries or of international distribution which has grown worldwide. Not all of Welch's books however are easily available by these means.

⁴¹⁶ Individual poems have been published, usually reprinted, outside Canada, notably in multilingual magazines like *Estuaires* or *Cahiers Luxembourgeois*.

⁴¹⁷ See email dated 18 February 2000 to Germaine Goetzinger, the director of the Centre national de littérature (L-190 II.1 G).

⁴¹⁸ The Liliane and Cyril Welch Fonds consists of the correspondence between Liliane and Cyril Welch and Canadian artist Alex Colville. See <https://www.gallery.ca/english/library/biblio/ngc106.html#a0>

moves from indications of her relation to French, to evidence of language multiplicity and mixing in her correspondence and finally to signs of the evolution in her relations to Luxembourgish.

French, “the other language”⁴¹⁹ in her life and work

Welch was a professor of French at Mount Allison University for three decades.⁴²⁰ A few biographical details in the archived documents confirm her lifelong involvement with the language and the literature (Fonds Liliane Welch, CNLL-190; III). Her MA thesis and her doctoral dissertation deal with topics of French literature but were written in English. The study of the French novels by Julian Green, a bilingual writer, in her M.A. thesis is an interesting choice, though in her later writings Welch never refers to his work.⁴²¹ Her doctoral subject, the poetry of Baudelaire, anticipates her later critical work.⁴²² The archives also contain some copies of essays she wrote as a student, all in English, with some hand-marked corrections of language. A copy of the recommendation for teaching jobs by a professor from Penn State University highlights remarkable language skills in French and German. The archives also hold copies of academic papers in French, presented at international conferences (in Lausanne, Switzerland and Bucarest, Romania).

One document, entitled “La femme et la libération,” deserves particular attention as it conveys the *Canadian returnee’s* vision on language education in Luxembourg.⁴²³ When her former school, the Lycée de jeunes filles in Esch-sur-Alzette,⁴²⁴ celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1986, Welch was invited as key note speaker. The original typescript has no title and is not dated. When the speech appears in print (a photocopy of her typescript), a handwritten title, “La femme et la libération,” pointing to Welch’s main message is added. For the author, the liberation of women is intricately linked to an education based on the benefits of language and literature. Welch delivers her speech in French, as suited the formal occasion.⁴²⁵ The style is academic, the language often literary and poetic. She conveys a rich personal vision of education for young people and positions herself in multiple roles, as a teacher with a broad view

⁴¹⁹ In “On the Way to English,” (1988: 40); see also ch. 1 and ch. 5.

⁴²⁰ Welch arrived at Mount Allison in 1967 and taught there until her retirement in 2004.

⁴²¹ *Les Aliénés de Julian Green*, by Liliane Marie Mercer, MA thesis (Master of Arts in French 1961, Montana State University). The main text is in English with quotes in French; only Green’s books in French are considered.

⁴²² *The Problem of Nature in Baudelaire*, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Pennsylvania State University, Department of French, 1964. Included quotes are in French; the bibliographic references are mostly French with some secondary literature in English. The full text is available on ProQuest.

⁴²³ Calling Welch a “Canadian returnee” is an allusion to a poem analysed in ch. 7.2.

⁴²⁴ For Welch, it was still Lycée de jeunes filles though the name had been changed into Lycée Hubert Clément in 1971. Her typescript is not dated and has no title (apart from Allocution de Mme Liliane Welch); however, when published in the *Carnet d’accueil* of the school (1986-1987: 29-33) the text is entitled *La femme et la libération*.

⁴²⁵ Cf. From the formal words of address, *Altesse Royale, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs*, we can deduce the presence of the a member of the grand ducal family, of ministers and ambassadors.

on girls' education, as a woman, as a former pupil and as a poet. Welch frames her speech with a quotation from Arthur Rimbaud which she links to the challenges of the present:

Quand l'infinie servitude de la femme sera terminée, quand elle pourra vivre par et pour elle-même, alors ... elle aussi découvrira l'inconnu.... Elle découvrira des choses étranges, insondables. Nous les prendrons, nous les comprendrons. [sic]⁴²⁶

All through the text, she stresses the importance of language in an educational system that aims at empowering young girls. She evokes views on literature, which we find expressed in similar terms in her critical work: « Le monde de demain ne pourra être rédimé que si l'enseignement favorise chez ses élèves un langage qui devient parole adressée et reçue, dans l'ouverture sur l'autrui. » (Typescript, page 3) Though she defends the rights of women, Welch would not like to be identified with feminist theories. Her vision is wider, encompassing the whole world and acquiring a spiritual dimension underlined by a phrase rarely used in French today: "un monde rédimé" (reminiscent of *redeemed*, a more common word in English). In the text, she links this belief in a liberating power of literature with the voice of the sphinx, who initially raised her awareness of a quest that human, poetic language must pursue. The sphinx is « la parole par excellence, le premier grand quêteur de notre héritage occidental. »

Welch recalls the past of Esch as a mining town and combining a view of the past with a vision of the future, she concludes:

Il m'a semblé nécessaire de tracer une sorte de sketch provisoire de ce qui pourrait être la tâche des élèves de ce lycée dans un monde rédimé. Ce qui me semble évident c'est que cette jeunesse respire l'espoir de dire demain ce qui devrait être. Ce n'est que cette obstination que je voulais redire aujourd'hui. Et je vous remercie, chacun de vous, de m'avoir permis de le faire.

The text is above all the speech of a returnee who was once a rebellious adolescent impatient to change the world and now feels grateful for an education that contributed to the realization of her dreams.

As a Professor of French at Mount Allison University, Welch taught both language and literature classes, souvenirs of which turn up in her extensive correspondence with students. Her correspondence contains many letters in French.

Letters – a trans-language correspondence

On the one hand, letters are excellent resources to document a poet's nomadic itineraries and contacts. On the other hand, Welch's rich correspondence deserves scrutiny for an investigation of her writing

⁴²⁶ The quotation is an adaptation of Rimbaud's words, who writes, « Quand sera brisé l'infini servage de la femme, quand elle vivra pour elle et par elle – l'homme jusqu'ici abominable, – lui ayant donné son renvoi, elle sera poète, elle aussi ! La femme trouvera de l'inconnu ! Ses mondes d'idées différeront-ils des nôtres ? – Elle trouvera des choses étranges, insondables, repoussantes, délicieuses ; nous les prendrons, nous les comprendrons. » (La lettre du Voyant à Paul Demeny 15 mai 1871, *Oeuvres complètes* 1998 : 154)

practices in all her languages. The selected letters are to be seen as examples only: at no point, have I aimed to do an exhaustive study of Welch's correspondence.

A few preliminary remarks:

- The collection covers the time from the late 1970s nearly to the time of her death.
- Almost all the letters are sent from Sackville: the winter months seem a better time for letter writing than the summer time in Europe.
- Though it is a multilingual collection with letters in French, German, Italian, Luxembourgish, the bulk of her correspondence is in English.
- Most letters are neatly handwritten missives: for a long time Welch was reluctant to use e-mail messages.⁴²⁷

On finding the thick file with letters, I was confronted with methodological challenges, first wondering if only the most famous correspondents, like Martin Heidegger (see ch. 6), or other well-known literary European figures should be considered. Eventually, I browsed through all as found in the file and made my selection among those that either give evidence of some form or other of translingual writing, contain reflections on languages or deal with attachment to languages and identity issues.

An author's correspondence usually only contains the letters she has received, not the letters she sends. In the case of Welch, we are quite fortunate: she took letter writing very seriously, and frequently she kept pencilled drafts or carbon copies of her missives. This means one can follow some of her correspondence like an ongoing conversation. In general, the friendly small talk on weather (an important topic for a Canadian!), Local news or other events turn the reading into a pleasant discovery of Liliane's vast net of friends on both sides of the Atlantic. However, I am also aware that probably this huge number of letters is only a selection of her correspondence: they are those that she actually kept and decided to leave with the literary archive – letters, which in her eyes have some value for later readers and research.

Comments on language in her correspondence (in English) with Canadian friends and poets

One perspicacious comment has struck me as example of a poet's response to multilingual writers. M. Travis Lane, herself a poet and scholar from the Maritimes,⁴²⁸ ponders in a letter to Liliane (Sept. 92) about the problem to find the right words to speak about a place like Gros Morne [a national park in

⁴²⁷ Shortly after 2000, she gave up some of her reticence to e-mails. In 2004, she got a new email address and writes in a (handwritten) letter to Hansen-Pauly, (dated Dec 12, 2004): "If it's easier for you to write by e-mail, then by all means do so."

⁴²⁸ See the entry for M. Travis Lane in *The New Brunswick Literary Encyclopedia*. <https://nble.lib.unb.ca/browse/l/millicent-travis-lane>

Newfoundland] and asks quite pertinent questions about possible resources that multiple languages offer and about Liliane's use of them:

"How do the differences in sounds, echoes, literary references between the languages you live in stretch, inhibit, infest your verse? What sceneries for which sounds? Have you done a thoroughly hybrid ... brindled calicocat dachshund poem in several languages, echo on echo and so on up the rope? Would you want to?" (Fonds Liliane Welch / CNL L-190; II.1.L2F)⁴²⁹

Unfortunately, Welch does not seem to have answered these pertinent semi-serious, semi-playful questions⁴³⁰

One qualification for Welch's language in a letter by an editor of a collection of poems (Fonds Liliane Welch / CNL L-190; II.1.) has struck me for its relevance to a study of translingual features of writing. He has great praise for her manuscript ("It has been an honour to live inside your books. There are poems in there that should become classics.") Among the changes he suggests (punctuation and line breaks), he also proposes "to smooth some 'translator's' English."⁴³¹ The letter contains no example but the phrase suggests that anything sounding foreign, unusual or translated is inappropriate. It seems that such a word, phrase or rhythm, perceived as *calque*, could disturb readers and is considered a *flaw* in publishers' eyes. It is not seen as an instance of heterolingual insertion. In this context, Kellman's comments on calques show the importance of raising awareness for the innovative nature of translingualism: in his eyes, it is a category of writing, which slowly becomes main stream (2020).

Letters in French

Welch had artist friends in Canada with whom she carried a lively exchange in French. Among the letters in French, there are also some semi-formal pieces linked to her work as a Professor of Literature which evidence her eagerness to set up international contacts with well known writers and scholaras. They are invitations sent to potential *conférenciers* (Michel Butor,⁴³² Jean Starobinski, Yves Bonnefoy) who all declined the invitation on grounds of distance and long travelling.

Mixed language exchanges

The examples of bilingual exchanges are the most valuable for a study of Welch's positioning in relation to languages. She maintained a rich correspondence with many of her former students of French

⁴²⁹ Permission to quote by the author (e-mail dated 15/05/2021).

⁴³⁰ When giving permission to use the quotation in the dissertation, M. Travis Lane added she did not remember getting answers to her questions from Liliane. (E-mail dated 15 May 2021).

⁴³¹ I asked the author for permission to quote, but have received no answer; for this reason the name of the editor, the date of the letter and the reference to the relevant collection are omitted.

⁴³² Butor's answer is a wonderful collage of little pieces of postcards loosely tied together! See Welch's response his work in ch. 6.

literature; some write in French, others try for a few lines before switching to English. Welch adapts her language too.

Her correspondence with friends, colleagues, poets and artists in **Luxembourg** reveals many aspects of translingual practices and writers' attitudes to their languages. In many cases it is a mixed language exchange, Welch writing in English while her correspondents use French or German or after 2000 occasionally also Luxembourgish.⁴³³ With addressees who might be put off by English, she quite naturally uses their preferred language of writing. Some letters to and from colleagues and friends in Luxembourg contain interesting passages on writers' positioning towards languages, usually along with an apology for not writing in the other's language. For example, Frank Wilhelm, who contacts her about the entry in the "Dictionnaire des auteurs," writes on 9th January 1999:

Veuillez m'excuser de ne pas employer l'anglais. D'abord j'en ai perdu l'habitude ... et puis le français est ma carapace identitaire contre la « globalisation » étasunienne. Cela ne m'empêche pas de savourer vos textes, par exemple, quand vous voyez « America as paradise/ a gigantic meteor fallen from the future ». (Fonds Liliane Welch L-190 II. 1. W)⁴³⁴

Welch answers saying that she does not quite share the typical Canadian distrust of their big neighbour – a small hint at her attitude to the country that first welcomed her and was indeed "paradise" for her. For her writing in English is also a question of self-presentation and linguistic confidence. Another passage in her letter to Wilhelm is interesting for the evolution in her attitudes to Luxembourg:

When I read your entry about L.W. in the *Lexique des Auteurs luxembourgeois*, I was glad to have reached the age (61), when I can look on my country of origin with affection and can see the oppressive atmosphere of post-war Luxembourg as a character building exercise.

Letters like these mirror and complement her views expressed in *Seismographs* (1988).⁴³⁵

Her correspondence with Luxembourg painter, Gust Graas⁴³⁶ (with carbon copies of her letters Fonds Liliane Welch / CNLL-190; II.1.G2), is remarkable for reflections on poetic language.⁴³⁷ In her first letter to Graas, she uses French and speaks of her dialogue as a poet with painters: "Les paroles issues d'oeuvre d'art ne sont-elles pas plus essentielles que le bavardage, « le langage brut » comme disait Mallarmé, auquel nous nous sommes forcément livrés dans nos vies quotidiennes ? » In another letter, after a first page in French, she switches to English in a post scriptum: "I earn my daily bread with the French language,

⁴³³ My own correspondence (from 1987-2009) with Welch was all in English.

⁴³⁴ Permission to use the quotation received by email (17th May 2021).

⁴³⁵ See ch. 5: The letters provide numerous such fragments that reveal attitudes and prove to be valuable autobiographical documentation.

⁴³⁶ For information on Gust Graas, see *Luxembourg Dictionary of authors*. <https://www.autorenlexikon.lu/page/author/578/578/DEU/index.html>

⁴³⁷ See ch. 6 for insights into her poetics, which transpire from contact with Gust Graas.

with English I have an incessant love relation.” (5 May 1999, carbon copy). And a few weeks later, she quotes Hölderlin: “Seit ein Gespräch wir sind/ und hören können voneinander” [...] “Voll Verdienst, doch dichterisch wohnt/ Der Mensch auf dieser Erde” (2 July 1999, carbon copy). Graas always writes in French.

Records of her involvement with Italian

Her correspondence with Italian friends, in particular a mountain guide, puts her in the position of the learner who, beyond the value of exchange, sees in letter writing an opportunity to practise the language. (Fonds Liliane Welch / CNLL-190; II.1.E1)

In addition to the letters, the Fonds LW contains further pieces that document her active *translanguaging practices* and her fascination with the Italian language, echoes of which abound in her writing. Italian for Welch is the language she uses as a tourist but it is also a literary language that gives her access to the work of Italo Calvino, Natalia Ginzburg (see poem “La scrittrice è morta”); *Il Gattopardo* by Lampedusa (see “Bookscapes” in ch. 7) and the much admired *Divina Commedia*. Equally, Italian brings insights into the works of painters and sculptors (see essays on Giacometti family in *Frescoes*).

Among the documents linked to Italian (CNL L-190; I.1.5), one should mention several translations into Italian (in cooperation with native speakers); diaries of the 1970s which record her eagerness to improve her vocabulary; two booklets entitled “Dante’s Similes” filled with long lists of examples drawn from the various cantos, together with her translations into English. Especially, her auto-translations of the prefaces of *Word-House* and *Manstorna* into Italian are evidence of nomadic translingualism, which enlarge the space of her writing beyond Luxembourg and Canada.

Documents related to Welch’s views on Luxembourgish

Welch has not published any poetic texts in Luxembourgish. However, the documents legated to the CNL contain diverse documents that give insights into her relation to the language and into a certain evolution in her position. Clues about her attitudes to Luxembourgish come in disparate pieces included in the Fonds: letters; the draft of a play (“Maus Ginette”), an article published in Luxembourg, the extract from a private correspondence with Dana Rufolo (in a publication). The presentation follows no chronological order.

For a long time, one language, Luxembourgish, is missing in her correspondence. Though she had not lost her fluency and read the (few) classics of its literature (see “Wolves and Foxes,” in *Seismographs*), she never considered using it, even for casual exchanges. The change occurs quite late, via an exchange with Germaine Goetzinger (February 18, 2000): “Dear Germaine, How wonderful to have a message here this

morning in Letzebuergesch!”⁴³⁸ Welch’s answer is still in English, but she starts to learn the new Luxembourg spelling with great assiduity. Records of exchanges show that she soon comes to use Luxembourgish. This is what she writes three years later (January 5, 2003): “Villmools merci fir de superbe Michel Rodange cadeau – My Luxembourgish is too abominable to continue.” She promises to listen to one *Gesank* every night and is confident that by April, on her return to Europe, her Luxembourgish “will be in top shape.” (CNL L-190; II.1. G-1) The Fonds also holds drafts of letters she writes to neighbours in Luxembourg, where she expresses her pride in this newly acquired spelling competence. (CNL L-190; II.1.W3)

Quite early Welch produced one personal, critical text on Luxembourg and its language: “Mir sin e klengt Landt” (1978).⁴³⁹ The typescript (CNL L-190; I.2. 2E1) is in English with only the title in Luxembourgish. “Mir sin E Klengt Land” is the spelling used for the text published in Luxembourgish in the journal *Eis Sprooch*.⁴⁴⁰ In this article, Welch expresses strong positions in defense of the national language. It is not meant as a piece of linguistic scholarship; it is presented as an outsider’s – or returnee’s – informed outlook on Luxembourg, its language and culture. It uncovers perspectives that indigenous people seem to miss. Her harsh criticism targets above all the Luxembourg school system, while it also reflects her belief in the importance of a first language. As it expresses views which, in juxtaposition with other texts (see ch. 5), point to the conflictual nature of the migrant’s attitudes to her mother tongue, a quotation of her key position in this text is necessary. She accuses the country of a general attitude of “je m’en-fichisme”, mostly in relation to its language:

Luxembourg is one of the few countries in the world where the national language does not have bonafide status in the school system, where it is pushed to the side and taken up only briefly and almost as a foreign language. Through this pernicious tradition the Luxembourgish child is raised to believe that if he is really going to “make it” in life he had better become super-proficient in either German or French.

What happens to the Luxembourgish language in all this? Is it not relegated and confined to the status of a vulgar tongue serving only as a means of gossip or of conversing about market place matters? In how many Luxembourgish families do the parents read the Renert to their children? The sad fact is that the Luxembourgish child experiences from the first grade on, already an alienation from his own language, an alienation which carries over into his adult vision of the world as well as into his later actions. He is prevented from feeling at home in the rich dimensions of his

⁴³⁸ It is the same e-mail already mentioned in 4.2.2 (legation of all her literary estate to the CNL). The other interesting information concerns a Luxembourg poet: “Also many thanks for the rapid dispatch of the two Dune poems. My students already have them to work on.” See ch. 9 for more details about her students’ work on Dune.

⁴³⁹ It is not meant as a piece of scholarship and remains an outsider’s – or rather a returnee’s – view on Luxembourg, its language and culture.

⁴⁴⁰ The article in Luxembourgish was published in *Eis Sprooch* (Nr 9/ Nei Folleg / XVI Jor/1978: 30-31). The text is a translation of Welch’s original English version; the name of the translator is not indicated.

native tongue. In him is not at all fostered an attitude of pride toward either his own language or his unique culture. (1-2)

The passage deals with the role of a national language as means for children to reach personal fulfillment. Acquaintance with one's own tongue must go hand in hand with pride in one's language and culture as encountered in works of literature (*Renert*). Language is reified ("What happens to the Luxembourgish language?"); the native tongue is home; it is a natural possession; the emphasis on the language of others (French or German) leads to a dangerous sense of alienation.

"D'Maus Ginette" (CNLL-190; I.1.1-4)⁴⁴¹ is a handwritten pencilled draft on the model of the well known Luxembourg poem "D'Maus Ketti. Eng al Geschicht an neie Versen" (1936) by Auguste Liesch.⁴⁴² Her poem is a pastiche too; she imagines her Luxembourg friend Ginette (the city mouse) comes to visit her in Canada. The weather is a central theme:

*Et ge't lass mat feste Wandschlé
A grosse Wirbele vu Schnee
D'Landschaft ass an engem Zock
Eng weiss Héll enner Drock.*

Shocked by the life in the Canadian wilderness, she soon decides to return to Luxembourg

The text has several relevant features for a study of Welch, the translingual nomad. In many ways it is a counterpart of the essay "Conveniat" (*Seismographs* 1988: 45-47)) and becomes a means for Welch to emphasise the contrast between two ways of life. Thus the city mouse says

*Letzeburg, das schönste Kleid!
Genuch mat neier Welt a Natur
Ech gin zereck a meng schéin al Kultur.
Eddi, a bleiw flott, fitt a jonk.*

The text in a mostly authentic Luxembourgish (the German insertion is probably an allusion that escapes readers today) contradicts Welch's determination to renounce her mother tongue as language of writing. The use of Luxembourgish seems to show that translingual processes work in two directions: the English language poet here attempts to write in one of her "other" languages.⁴⁴³ By choosing a model from Luxembourg (folklore) literature, she shows that writing in a "new" language should be practised by

⁴⁴¹ "D'Maus Ginette" is fifteen pages long, and is written in Mount Allison University exam booklets. The spelling borrows on German, which suggests sounds that would be different in spoken Luxembourgish; nor is it always consistent; the text has corrections and some words seem illegible.

⁴⁴² For information on Auguste Liesch, see the *Luxembourg Dictionary of Authors*. <https://www.autorenlexikon.lu/page/author/414/4141/DEU/index.html> For Welch, the story has a particular relation as Liesch sets it in her maternal grandmother's village Bermereng. More in ch. 5.

⁴⁴³ Probably, she comments on the text in her correspondence with her friend, Ginette Wennig-Knaff. These letters are a late addition to the Fonds, which I have not yet consulted.

looking at existing texts. Is it a form of translanguaging as conceived by sociocultural linguists? Her views on literary language being quite different from ordinary speech would suggest such a position.

Welch has repeatedly expressed her interest in Luxembourg literature usually through references to *Renert* and *Maus Ketti*. In her study *Literature in Luxembourg* (2001), Dana Rufolo⁴⁴⁴ inserts an extensive quote in which Welch quite explicitly expresses her stance on Luxembourgish literature when asked about the potential contained in the Luxembourgish language:

Since I'm not a prophet or a clairvoyante I can't foresee what the future of the Luxembourgish language will be. I do hope though that the literature of Luxembourgish will continue to grow and flourish. Otherwise the Luxembourg identity will disappear.
I would be sad to see the special *génie du lieu* which I feel in that language, fall into oblivion.
The Luxembourgish literature (not the street language) can assure an authentic tie with the land...
Contrary to what some might say, for me the Luxembourgish language bears a pungent flavor of autochthony and historic reverberations. Full participation by the citizens in the fate of their own land pre-suppose having a language and a literature – this holds for Luxembourg and all other countries. (Private correspondence, 23 November, 1999; in Rufolo 2001)

Welch's view recalls the 19th century claim for one nation, one language/literature but she never actually puts her position in relation to scholarly work on language and identity issues. It is also significant for her understanding of literature to see how she sets its language apart from "street language."

In "Mir sin e klengt Landt" (1979) she defends a similar standpoint. Hence the question, how as an English language poet she can participate in Luxembourgian literary writing. On the one hand, she prefers her outsider position, on the other hand, invitations to contribute to magazines or publications open to non-English texts allow her to place her work next to pieces in other languages, a situation that seems to suit her well.⁴⁴⁵ Especially, multi-media projects reveal her poetic voice as response to music and photography the other languages of art.

4.2.4 Mapping the reception and the positioning of a nomadic poet

Welch's location in two literary spaces justifies a distinction between her reception in Canada and in Luxembourg; it should bring further insights into how her nomadism and her expertise in several languages with connections to different cultural worlds has been perceived. Reception entails positioning by critics, yet also by the poet herself in responses and interviews.

⁴⁴⁴ For more information on Dana Rufolo, see Nicole Sahl in *Autorenlexikon* <https://www.autorenlexikon.lu/page/author/237/2376/DEU/index.html>

⁴⁴⁵ Examples would be her contributions to literary magazines like *Cahiers luxembourgeois* or *Estuaires*, but also to multidisciplinary/multimedia projects like *Element 5*. (1996) or *Mosaics* (1998).

4.2.4.1 Literary dictionaries: two perspectives on translingual writers

The two on-line resources, the Luxembourg Dictionary of authors (*Autorenlexikon, Dictionnaire des auteurs*) and The New Brunswick Literary Encyclopedia (<https://nble.lib.unb.ca/>) have similar goals: inform readers and facilitate research.⁴⁴⁶ A comparison between Luxembourg and the Canadian province, highlights differences, mostly in size,⁴⁴⁷ but then also a few parallels. New Brunswick has two official languages, English and French, and the awareness for its multilingual literature is growing. In its general presentation, the primarily Anglophone Encyclopedia states its plans to include more Francophone authors and to add Acadian literature as a distinct, further category.

Juxtaposing the entry dedicated to Liliane Welch in the Luxembourg literary dictionary to the information provided in the New Brunswick encyclopedia, one notices a dissimilarity in perspective which shows how nomadic poets' position in literature can be perceived differently, notably in relation to their languages. The author of the Canadian presentation, Andrea Bell, in her entry for the *New Brunswick Literary Encyclopaedia*, writes for instance: "she came to Canada" (whereas the Luxembourg text states: "elle choisit d'émigrer"). The Canadian text refers to her as a newcomer, an immigrant: her poetry is said to be "coloured with first impressions of the new world" and shows "the fresh perspective of someone from a different place." Her work is said to show typical characteristics: "Like many immigrant writers, Welch was also drawn to writing of her childhood home." Such a statement hints at possible tensions, typical of immigrant writers who feel divided between two homes. The Canadian text also points to the numerous literary influences in her poetry but there is no reference to Welch's multiple languages.

The entry in the Luxembourg dictionary has some information not contained in the Canadian text and reflects a somewhat different perspective. The author, Frank Wilhelm, highlights points which readers in Luxembourg might consider enlightening and to which they can easily relate. For example, the text mentions the name of her school, of the town where she lived (Esch-sur-Alzette), and of the place where she died (Hesperange). It also refers to the Italian origin of Welch's mother, which points to a link with an important dimension of migration in Luxembourg.⁴⁴⁸ Unlike the Canadian text, this entry repeatedly foregrounds languages. The author insists on Welch's professional competence and involvement with French ("des études de lettres françaises, un doctorat en lettres françaises, nommée Professeure de littérature française") and draws attention to the fact that as a writer, she uses English: "Auteure de

⁴⁴⁶ See also ATLANTIC CANADIAN POETS' ARCHIVE another online resource <http://www.stu-acpa.com/liliane-welch.html>; an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

⁴⁴⁷ Though only presenting 0.7% of the Canadian territory, New Brunswick is 28 times larger than Luxembourg; the number of inhabitants is appr. 777 000. See online information: Wikipedia and Statistics Canada.

⁴⁴⁸ The Italian origin - in Luxembourg as in Canada – points to links with migration.

langue anglaise,” and a little later insists that all her work is in English: “des récits, des critiques littéraires et des essais rédigés en anglais.” Nic Weber’s translation into German of one of her collections is also mentioned. A few more details situate her work in a Luxembourg context: names of Luxembourg literary magazines, a reference to the Journées littéraires de Mondorf, to Claude Lenner, a Luxembourg composer, as well as Welch’s membership in the Luxembourg writers’ association (LSV, Lëtzebuurger Schrëftstellerverband). The Luxembourg dictionary also gives prominence to Cyril Welch, her husband, who has his own entry in the Luxembourg dictionary.

The repeated references to languages can be read as markers of an identity based on several languages and cultures. They may also be seen as a hint at possible, underlying tensions. Neither text mentions Lëtzebuergesch. Both entries refer to various prizes she has received in Canada and to her affiliation to the Institut grand-ducal, Section des arts et des lettres, as corresponding member.

4.2.4.2 Critical reception in Canada: interest in the immigrant’s poetic contributions

The selective overview includes examples of paratextual evidence (blurbs in books) and a critical voice (Hédi Bouraoui) while the analysis of interviews in 4.2.4.4 brings insights into the poet’s response to her reception.

Blurbs on the cover of her books usually include endorsement quotes by critics and readers, often well-known poets in Canada.⁴⁴⁹ Sometimes the back pages of poetry collections have further extracts from reviews and responses to previous work. Here are a few examples which acknowledge the nomadic features of her writing,⁴⁵⁰ such as the contrast between home and travelling, Canada and Europe:

Welch’s climbing poems are rugged and powerful and very stirring. Yet I am also moved by the quieter eloquence of her “home poems” where she is indeed “painting shadows with the soft hues of the heart.” (Tony Cosier, on backcover of *Anticipating the Day* 2007)

Liliane Welch is well-known to all lovers of poetry throughout Canada ... No one can make one feel Europe – really be there almost in the flesh – as she does ... (E.E. Cran in *Dispensing Grace* 2004: 93)

Welch’s depth of knowledge on art and the great artists; on Europe, especially her native Luxembourg; on Italy’s Dolomite mountains; and on her appreciation of New Brunswick mixes well with fine comparisons, apt metaphors, true reminiscences, and a fulfilling life. (Michael O. Nowlan, *Stealing the Flowers of Evil* 2008: 83)

Welch’s captivating chronicles of her summer travels illuminate the adventures of such other wanderers as Rilke, Nietzsche, Giacometti and Chagall, while also bringing alive the places where their creation occurred. (Maria Kubacki, *The New Brunswick Reader*, in *Frescoes* 1998: 2003)

⁴⁴⁹ Michael O. Nowlan is a New Brunswick teacher, poet, editor, columnist, and reviewer (<https://nble.lib.unb.ca/>); Tony Cosier, see <https://canlit.ca/>; E.E. Cran is a writer located in the Maritimes

⁴⁵⁰ I do not mention here the numerous comments on other aspects of her work, like its deep spirituality, her sense of rhythm, her imagery.

In his critical appraisals of Welch's work, Hédi Bouraoui⁴⁵¹ is particularly sensitive to nomadic dimensions in the work of Welch and his reviews have led to an interesting dialogue with the poet herself. Bouraoui is himself a new arrival in Canada, of Tunisian origins, a poet, novelist and academic who was educated in France and in the United States. Like Welch he is multilingual and in his writing shows a particular awareness of linguistic and cultural mobility in nomads' writing. He is one of the first critics to be sensitive to Welch's early poetic accomplishments (*Winter Songs* published in 1977). In a review entitled "Crystalline Vision" (1978) he highlights the nomadic features of her writing: a fresh perspective on Canada, the words of an exile with a sense of oppositions which reach beyond geographical polarities and travelling as spiritual quest:

"Liliane Welch's "Winter Songs" are powerful poems affording a *fresh perspective, not typically Canadian*, on the Canadian landscape and, by extension, Canadian culture."

"The poet's persona is defined as an exile in Canada. As such, she treats a series of polarities or binary oppositions between winter and summer, marshes and frost, indoors and outdoors, night and day, all parallel to her culture shocks."

"Many of the poems have a sacramental character. They are replete with images of communion [...] The sacrament is, in fact, a celebration of *language which passes from communication over to communion*. In Liliane Welch's crystalline vision, Canadian poetry welcomes an original and *cosmopolitan contribution to the Canadian mosaic*." (1978: 69; emphasis added)

A few years later, he publishes a full-length article entitled "Liliane Welch: A New Voice from the Maritimes" (1985), which offers an in-depth analysis of her five first books of poetry (*Winter Songs*, *Syntax of Ferment*, *Assailing Beats*, *October Winds*, and *Brush and Trunks*). He concludes:

Liliane Welch's dual culture has been of inestimable help in enabling her to fuse European historical relativity with the raw past of her new adopted land, New Brunswick. She adds a new dimension to contemporary Canadian poetry which will help to locate it on the world map. Her blending of past and present, traditional and experimental, personal and mythic, destructive and creative, make her a poet to be watched with close attention and interest. (1985: 249)

An active exchange seemed to connect the two poets. Welch, for her part, wrote two reviews of Bouraoui's work ("Ut Pictura" 1982; "Transmutations" 1983), which reveal critical writing as an example of response and dialogue. What is never highlighted is the translingual process involved in the exchange: Bouraoui publishes in French and English and Welch comments on his poetry collection "Vers et l'envers" in English. Bouraoui's book *Tales of Heritage*, prompts her to insert her own views on culture, which she understands as something one does, not simply as products ready for consumption:

Instead of understanding "culture" as something we do, as a pattern of creativity, we today all too often understand it (and teach it to our children) primarily as something which is already done, as

⁴⁵¹ See references to his work *Transpoétique. Éloge du nomadisme* (2005) in ch.3.

a finished product of consumption. But taking it as “something done” rather than as “something doing” – this is in essence “the death of culture”. (“Ut Pictura” 1982:100)

At the end of her review, Welch reinforces her view of the critic’s task in responding to writers’ ability “to speak with some success to our present-day condition”. She stresses the apparent difficulty of writing poetry today” and objects to a withdrawal into a personal perspective: “too personal to be shared by others, much too isolated to cleanse an opening onto anything else. Poetic calligraphies which focus on personal isolation can easily end up barring readers from making the poems viable response to the wasteland we all deplore.” (“Ut pictura” 1982: 104)⁴⁵²

One can argue that in Welch’s text those aspects of “the present-day condition” particularly concern those of people “on the move,” of “nomadity,” including the travelling of their languages and the cultural products (books and art) through which they express them. It is also, in Welch’s case, orientation among multiplicity and the search for unity, for one stable home.

It is noteworthy that the issue of personal writing (versus public figure) is taken up in later interviews with Welch (almost 20 years later). Indeed, one question that many readers seem to ask in relation with her work is the distinction between autobiographical, factual (or as she says empirical) and universal, poetic writing.⁴⁵³

Reception as an Italian-Canadian poet

Welch’s work that refers to her Italian origins and her love of the country has raised interest in her work. The most visible recognition is the award of the Bressani Prize, which Welch was awarded in 1992. A short explanation is necessary as this prize accounts for an important dimension in Welch’s positioning as a poet: “Organized by the Italian Cultural Centre of Vancouver, the Biennial F. G. Bressani Literary Prize was established in 1986 with the aim of honouring and promoting the literary work of Canadian writers of Italian origin or of Italian descent.”⁴⁵⁴ The use of the Italian language is not a requirement.

As a consequence, two poems by Welch’s are included in *The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Writing* (1998), edited by Joseph Pivato. Her work also figures in *A History of Italian–Canadian Writing* (Pivato 2015)⁴⁵⁵ Articles and an interview by Anna Foschi-Ciampolini⁴⁵⁶ have appeared in *L’Eco d’Italia* (an Italian

⁴⁵² See also <https://hedibouraoui.info.yorku.ca/tales-of-heritage-i/>, with a quotation from Welch’s review.

⁴⁵³ Some views of further Canadian reviewers (colleagues and poets) can be found at the end of ch. 6.

⁴⁵⁴ See <http://iccvancouver.ca/> More in the analysis of ‘translational’ writing in ch. 8. 1 on *Word-House*

⁴⁵⁵ See http://engl.athabascau.ca/faculty/jpivato/itcan_writing.php and the definition of Italian *Canadian* writing (in English) as opposed to expatriate *Italian* literature (in Italian). This view differs from views on multilingual Luxembourg literature which includes literature in English produced outside its territory.

⁴⁵⁶ Foschi-Ciampolini has also written numerous blurbs for Welch’s publications.

newspaper of British Columbia) and confirm interest in Welch's work all over Canada, especially in its Italian dimension.

4.2.4.3 Reception as an Atlantic or Maritime writer and as a woman poet

Welch's work has also received much attention in the Maritimes where she lived. She is holder of the Alfred Bailey Prize (1986), which is awarded annually by the Writers' Federation of New Brunswick. Especially prefaces by colleagues (Richard Lemm in *Seismographs*; M. Travis Lane in *Untethered in Paradise*) and interviews (see next section) give evidence of critics' desire to probe her position in the region or beyond.

4.2.4.4 Readers and critical response in Luxembourg

"A corresponding member," the description of Welch's membership in the Institut grand-ducal, reflects her position as insider-outsider on the Luxembourg literary scene. It is an official recognition; for many native Luxembourg readers, however, poetry in English presents a linguistic hurdle.⁴⁵⁷ The Anglophone expat community however has manifested a particular interest in Welch's work and two American, respectively British writers have produced critical surveys of her work: Dana Ruffolo (*Literature in Luxembourg* 2001, see above) and Ariel Wagner-Parker (2010).⁴⁵⁸

Poetry magazines have published reviews of Welch's work (see for instance Nic Weber 1988; Mylène Rizzi 2002). The correspondence also reveals the response of friends and poets to her poetry and usually involves a translingual exchange, for instance with José Enschedé, Gaston Rollinger, Nic Weber (see CNL L-190). In some cases, the exchange has proved a poetic inspiration for Welch (see for instance her dialogue with Gust Graas in ch. 6.2.3 and her response to work by Gast Rollinger about the Minette in ch. 9.1.4).

For Welch, the contact in Luxembourg with visual artists and musicians was as important as the encounters with writers. Numerous texts in *Dream Museum* (1995) give evidence of their readings of her work (see in particular poems referring to exchanges with Ginette Knaff and Ben Heyart). It is significant that she dedicates *Life in Another Language* (1992) to poets and painters in Luxembourg.

In addition to occasional reviews of her publications, a few critical papers and articles deal in some depth with poetic positioning and an understanding of dialogue in the work of Welch (see Hansen-Pauly, "Liliane

⁴⁵⁷ For information on the translation of some selected texts, see above (4.2.2).

⁴⁵⁸ For more information see *Dictionary of Luxembourg authors*: Pascal Seil on Ariel Wagner-Parker. <https://www.autorenlexikon.lu/page/author/237/2376/DEU/index.html>

Welch. Poetry, 'a Handcraft that Elicits a Time and a Place'" 1994; *Enetering Liliane Welch's World: The Dialogic Discourse in Poetry*" 2000).⁴⁵⁹

One article, "What Frontiers? Beyond the Borders of Small Countries. The Examples of Liliane Welch and Pierre Joris" (2008) approaches the poets' work from the perspective of borders and border crossing without however foregrounding language aspects: The regulations for conferences about literatures in English usually insist on the use of English, excluding at the same time an emphasis on non-translated material or reflections on translanguage matters. Only recently have nomadism and translingual matters become more prominent in discussions about literature.

4.2.5 The poet's presentation of herself

Self presentation is best observed in reflective writing and in interactional situations. All writers take on a certain *posture* (Meizoz), indeed writing is connected to a construction of identity, of self-presentation or "image". Once their work is published, interaction with others forces them to describe, elaborate or defend their position. They become challenged to "take a stand" on certain issues that readers discover in their work.⁴⁶⁰ I will consider one essay with an outspoken autobiographical approach before considering the interviews.

A nomad between continents

"Conveniat" (in *Seismographs* 1988: 45-47))⁴⁶¹ is an essay suffused with the outsider's, or rather the returnee's, partly humorous comments about a world where she no longer feels at ease. It sums up the almost irreducible conflicts and paradoxes she harbours about her own position. At some length, Welch explains how in her "simple fisherman's smock" (46), she feels out of place in the elegant country restaurant, in an "atmosphere of bourgeois chic and respectability" (45) among her former school pals, "who are authoritative about the books they read, the expositions they visit, the concerts and plays they attend, and who make a vocation out of the clothes and paints they hang on their bodies" (45).

They remind her of a past she has repressed for many years: "I struggle to own up once again to a childhood whose light glows up in this imposing troupe." (46) She wonders if she still has anything in

⁴⁵⁹ Papers produced in the context of Comparative Literature address issues of migration and between-ness: see Hansen-Pauly, "Liliane Welch: Poetry between the Old and the New World" 1991; "Immigration and Literary Identity: the Example of Liliane Welch, a Canadian-Luxembourg Poet," ICLA 1994 (not published).

⁴⁶⁰ See chapter 2: Methodology; Applied linguists have explored the link between writing and identity (Ivanic and Clark; Pennycook) literary critics influenced by sociological approaches have developed the notion of *posture d'auteur* (Viala, Meizoz) while Suchet foregrounds the heterolingual ethos that transpires in texts.

⁴⁶¹ See also "D'Maus Ginette," presented as its counterpart in Luxembourgish.

common with them. Yet, she cannot simply dismiss this European part of herself, not least because it now has acquired another core dimension of her life: every summer she returns there for several months to enjoy its rich culture, to attend concerts and visit museums. “Like powerful lenses, the Conveniats clarify my North American dream, they focus the differences of the two worlds between which I’m torn.” (46) She tries to reconcile what she perceives as two constitutive parts of her life:

I think that Luxembourg with its Conveniats is an exciting place to visit, yet that I wouldn’t want to live there. Canada is my true address, the pivot of my life and work. [...] When I walk near Fundy Bay, to watch the great ice slabs disappear in the cold brown water, the tensions that energize my life assume new significance. I discover harmonies that hold Europe and Canada together for me. (1988: 47)

We might say that as a nomad, especially a nomadic poet, she needs the tensions that arise from the contrast between both worlds. It is a view of dichotomies, of migratory movements between two poles that hold her life together.

Welch’s positioning in interviews with Canadian critics⁴⁶²

The interviewers’ questions reflect the interest of Canadians, themselves writers and academics, in a poet with a European background of migration. Two interviews were published within a relatively short span of time (1999-2001) and mostly refer to her recent collections (*Fidelities* 1997; *Frescoes* 1998; *The Rock’s Stillness* 1999).

“Liliane Welch’s *Fidelities*”, is included in a book by Jeanette Lyne’s *Words Out There. Women Poets in Atlantic Canada* (1999). The conversation with Anne Compton, entitled “Ascension: Liliane Welch Talks About Poetry,” was published in 2000.⁴⁶³

“*Who is Welch?*” In the interviews she is pushed to specify her position – but she tends to evade identity issues. Compton, aware of her complex position asks: “Do you think of yourself as a migrant, an immigrant, or a Canadian?” Welch replies: “I am a Canadian. I feel at home here.” Without elaborating on this, she adds: “I like the word ‘pilgrim,’ and I like the idea of journeying for adventure.” (Compton 2000: 131) By adventure she means mountain climbing though at the moment of the interview she no longer goes for extreme sport and rather enjoys the pleasure of alpine landscapes in painters’ work. The term pilgrim with its mystic or religious connotations suggest the poet’s sense of quest that she experiences in walking, mountain climbing and writing.

⁴⁶² Welch has not given interviews in Luxembourg.

⁴⁶³ References to Anna Foschi Ciampolini, the author of another interview, are given in relation to *Word-House of a Grandchild* in ch. 8.1.6. She is an active member of the Italian-Canadian community in Vancouver.

Lynes and Compton raise issues of *positioning*. Lynes points to the influence which other regional writers and reviews in the press must have had on her writing. But when asked “What is your relation to place, as a writer?” Welch answers: “I don’t think I’m a regional writer. I love this place and wouldn’t want to be in any other place, but I travel a lot. The themes of my work are not confined to this place. *There’s an attachment to place that is not in this very narrow sense of regionalism.*” (Lynes: 112; emphasis added) This last sentence is essential for an approach of Welch’s nomadic thinking and poetic writing:

The love of solitude could be connected to her view of art as only accessible to an elite. In the interview with Compton, she elaborates on her views of the arts which, unlike popular culture, cannot reach large groups. She speaks of art as linked to the esoteric, meaning mystic, semi-religious experiences. (Compton 2000: 134)

Though she positions herself as a Canadian writer, Europe plays an important role in her work. Compton puts it like this:

It seems to me that there are three Europes in your work. There is the Europe characterized by the church and domestic rigidities and social formalities – guardians of morality. Present-day Europe, which has replaced that earlier order, is characterized by bankers, finance and cities thick with truck traffic. Then there is the Europe of your mountains and museums. (Compton 2000: 138)

Welch does not contradict her but adds: “There is another Europe: the Europe of my friends.” She also underlines the cultural development of Europe and of cosmopolitan Luxembourg in particular with its extraordinary offer of musical events. (Compton 2000: 138) The poet has multiple fidelities. “Fidelity” is a notion in Welch’s poetry that has struck her interviewers. But it does not only refer to places, like New Brunswick or Europe. As Welch explains “What I meant was being loyal to three things: *landscape, artists, and home*. (Lynes 1999: 114; emphasis added) Fidelity appears as concise definition of her poetics of response (ch 6.2: “The nomad’s translingual writing as creative response”). Nonetheless, it is a puzzling description that needs further specification if one remembers the vehemence with which she had discarded ties to her first home. One may refer to the cover of *Fidelities* (1997) appears as a visual synthesis of her positioning (see ch. 9.1.4).

The nomad as outsider and transgressor

Nomadic theory sees nomads as strangers arriving in a place and likely to move on. Whatever they do there is an outsider’s work. Welch sees this as a general feature of all dedicated writers who must address the problems of their time and yet always remain outsiders. (“The Writer as Outsider,” *Seismographs* 1988: 90)

When asked about “her community of writers” (in Atlantic Canada), she will not mention anyone and says very clearly: “I personally don’t depend on others; *I’ve always been a loner.*” (Lynes 1999: 112; emphasis

added) What is important for her is the ongoing intense exchange with her husband and letter writing. All her writing echoes with the multiple voices of other poets: they are her “writing community.” The love of solitude could be connected to her view of art as only accessible to an elite. In the interview with Compton, she elaborates on her views of the arts which, unlike popular culture, cannot reach large groups. Being a *loner* does not only mean to write and create in the seclusion of her study, it above all refers to the deep religious or esoteric experience that contact with true art involves:

I believe the arts will always be for the esoteric. That doesn't mean that there won't be herds of people racing through the museums. The deeply felt and procreated experience of art is never going to be that of the wide masses of people. (Compton 2000: 134)

Welch cannot but approve Compton's suggestion that there is a link between travel and the transgression of limits: “All travelling is a transgression of boundaries. That is particularly true in mountain climbing, but it happens in reading too.” This leads them to speak about reading books from different cultures, but also stories of lives that are very different. Transgression and creative imagination work together.

The poet as “another”: as inventor of characters and situations

The combination of the personal and poetic creation often puzzles readers. Compton opens her interview broaching the question of an equation of poet and poetic persona. She asks Welch if *Fidelities* (1997) is her most autobiographical collection, with poems in the first section recalling her Luxembourg childhood. Here is what Liliane answers:

The question is discomforting for me because I do not believe that there is an autobiographical writing that is strictly autobiographical. All writing that is worth anything is fiction. Everything that a poet does with reality transforms it. Otherwise it is not art; it might as well be journalism. I don't really think that you can take the “I” who speaks in these poems as my empirical “I”. I believe what Rimbaud said, “‘I’ is another.” We receive from our experiences certain calls, and certain impressions, and they are the *trampoline* from which we leap into something else. I would be very uncomfortable to say that such writing is very autobiographical. (Compton 2000: 127-128; emphasis added)

The problem is that for readers the distinction between the empirical I and the poetic persona is not always easy. (See the analysis of her “autobiographical essays in ch. 5 and poetic transcriptions in Part III). For the “categorization” of the essays as either documentary research material or as poetic sources, the image of the *trampoline* is helpful.

Lynes approaches the issue differently when she says: “Your writing explores different personae, looking at things from different vantage points. Why does this interest you?” (115)

Welch's answer suggests that the poet's imaginative work is not entirely different from that of the novelist; this time she does not compare herself to Rimbaud but to Proust:

What is so magical about writing is that you can live the lives of many other people. Many of the things I write about have nothing to do with me, in the sense that I've cast myself as a character. In poetry, I would like to think I'm moving in the region of Proust who says there are two selves, the empirical self and the creative self. The creative self is being alone in your study with your pen, the words; you are a changed person. (Lynes 1999:115)

The last point, that writing changes the poet brings up the idea of transformation that Welch repeatedly refers to. Transformation is a characteristic of nomadic thought, Welch's words recall Braidotti's description of the transformation that the writing nomadic subject undergoes. (See 3.2.5) Pointing out a narrative dimension in her writing, Welch suggests that poets tell stories. In that sense her poetry shares some features with translingual processes, and in particular with the stories of migration literature. What counts in her poetic writings, is not an exact historical reconstruction but the creation of an imaginative, possible or wished-for world.

Summing up on Welch's reception and positioning

The careful reader of the interviews, keen on finding information about Welch's poetic ethos in relation to her languages will be surprised that neither the interviewers nor the poet explicitly refer to her multiple linguistic resources.

Are translingual processes of writing across languages so unremarkable that they need not be mentioned or are (were) they perceived as an out-of-bounds topic in Anglophone Canadian literature (at the time of the interviews)? One could argue that hints transpire in references to Acadians or to Proust and Rimbaud, and more generally through travelling and movement. Yet, the reception of Welch's work shows that translingual processes as defined in the cornerstones for the study (in 3.3) remain an under-researched aspect, to which a closer analysis of Welch's texts can bring insights.

Two features stand out for further investigation in a study of translingualism: The fact that she does not give more prominence to her multilingualism and her desire to keep her languages separate.

4.3 Pierre Joris: Mapping routes and rhizomes

For a presentation of Joris's life and work a combination of images and mental tools is indispensable. Mapping becomes a constant interplay of nomadic concepts and zigzagging routes across varying cultural and linguistic contexts.

It is not surprising that critical work on Joris is based on notions of cartography and *géographèmes* (Cockelbergh 2012). As the essays only marginally analyse the poet's wandering languages, the focus in this chapter is on translingual dimensions and the poets' positioning in texts published since then.⁴⁶⁴

4.3.1 Visualizing mapping processes

a map
or more :
 a topography
 where all the roads
end
in midair
complete (Pierre Joris, *Antlers* 1975:xi)

The lines or roads evoked in the poem do not describe an ordinary road map or a map showing the topographical features of the surface – rather a three-dimensional model with roads or paths leading above ground: a mental map, it seems. The extract is taken from a collection of poems entitled *Antlers* (1975). Indeed, the roads on the imaginary map are like antlers, which ramify or branch out. The image has many other connotations for readers to consider: for instance, the antlers grow out of the head of the animal, which sheds them every year; or the fact that only male deer grow antlers as underlined by the image of the stag on the cover of the second edition of *Breccia* (2014).⁴⁶⁵

What does this first, imaginative rendering of roads on a map mean in relation to the poet, his life, his work, his languages? What should one think of this paradox of roads that “end in midair” and yet are “complete”? Does midair stand for an unfinished journey or does it suggest a third or mental dimension? This nature of movement is what the present chapter intends to explore through a juxtaposition of various facts and documents, and a presentation of the poet's positioning versus outsiders' readings of the multiple roads they can observe.

⁴⁶⁴ Some parts of this chapter take up issues developed in an article whose emphasis is on Joris as mediator between languages and cultures (Hansen-Pauly 2017).

⁴⁶⁵ A close analysis of connotations would lead away from the main concern with mapping and nomadic features. For more information on antlers see <https://www.wildlifeonline.me.uk/animals/article/red-deer-antlers>

References to maps are a natural and productive way to approach Joris's life and works. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between* (2012), a collection of essays edited by Peter Cockelbergh, highlights a multiplicity of routes in the poet's work. Calling his spaces an "in-between" draws attention to aspects that usually fall outside a cartographer's - or critic's - work. In *Prendre le large*, the author has visualized the poet's wandering on a colourful map with his main stops (2014: 60-61).⁴⁶⁶

Routes, not roots

Joris himself frequently refers to maps, which are never the ordinary kind that chart a territory for travellers. On several covers of his publications, strange maps attract attention to the poet's characteristic way of conceiving geographical, mental and imaginative spaces

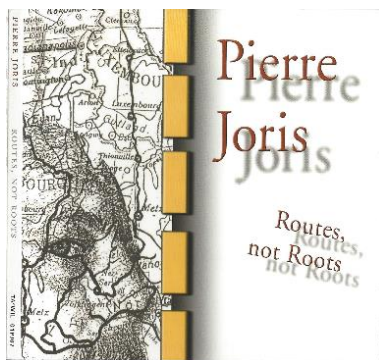


Figure 5. Pierre Joris, *Routes not roots* (2007). CD cover by Nicole Peyrafitte

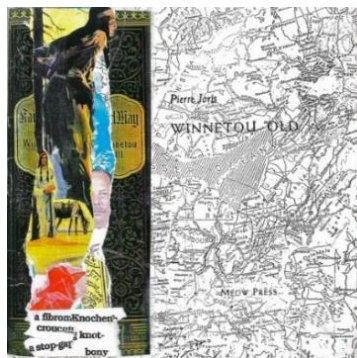


Figure 6. Pierre Joris, *Winnetou Old* (1994)

On the cd cover of *Routes not Roots* (2007)⁴⁶⁷ with recordings of the poet's reading from his own work, a cut-out of his face in profile becomes visible under a seemingly transparent map, *a particular form of collage*. At a second look, puzzling details of the map appear. Next to – or west of - the familiar contour of the grand duchy of Luxembourg, American place names such as Lafayette and Indianapolis appear.

⁴⁶⁶ See the author's acknowledgment: « Illustration de Carole Perret sur une idée originale de Corina Ciocârlie » (61).

⁴⁶⁷ In *Prendre le large*, the same heading is used for the chapter on Joris: "Routes, not Roots. Voyager avec Pierre Joris" (2014:60-91).

Traces of the poet's past locations are mixed up with other realities: what counts is not origins or roots but, as the title says, the routes along which the nomad travels. A similar technique appears on the cover of *Winnetou Old* (1994), with the title looking like a super-inscription on a map.⁴⁶⁸ The name is a direct reference to a work by the German adventure writer, Karl May; cut-out pictures of life linked to native Americans partly conceal the cover of the famous book *Winnetou*,⁴⁶⁹ which is placed next to the rather fantastic map. It is a collage that associates Europe and North America, suggesting the link between the poet's reminiscences of early readings and the thoughts that inspired the sequence of poems in the book. Translingual writing processes in these poems are the subject of ch. 8.2.

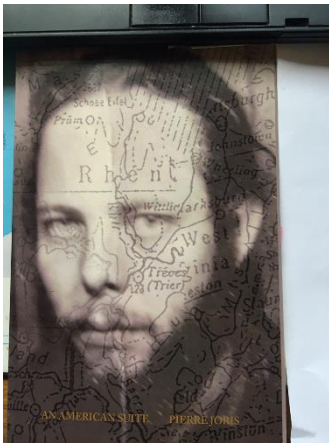


Figure 7. Pierre Joris, *An American Suite* (2016). Cover design by Nicole Peyrafitte

An American Suite (2016) is a late publication of early poems. Its cover design is similar to the above examples and shows the photograph of the young Joris merging with the background of a map. The details reveal interesting aspects of nomadic spaces: real place and river names are often mere fragments that appear next to broken lines and striations as well as smooth spaces, reminiscent of Deleuze's description of nomadic movements and spaces. If the centre of the picture displays German and French names, which despite their fictional disposition on the map echo features of the greater region around Luxembourg, the right-hand side of the cover reveals mostly Anglo-Saxon/ English names or syllables.

Approaching Joris's work with tools of cartography, allows focussing on two aspects that the imaginative, collage-like maps of book covers expose. The palimpsestic nature of maps and figurations, as I would like to argue, stand for the poet's writing processes or routes, in which places, texts and languages are associated and become rearranged in new ways. A close inspection of the cover of *An American Suite*

⁴⁶⁸ This picture is part of an entry in his blog dedicated to Karl May, in which Joris explains the context of his poems. <http://www.pierrejoris.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Winnetou-Old-Cover-e1333149424431.jpg>

⁴⁶⁹ Karl May's novels, and in particular *Winnetou*, were extremely popular with young readers in Luxembourg in the 1950s and 1960s. Welch too refers to *Winnetou* as a major inspiration for her dreams of escape to North America. (See *Seismographs*, discussed in ch. 5)

discloses a baffling mixture of languages in place names, which allude to multilingual *processes* of cross-linguistic thinking and remembering.⁴⁷⁰

One important space or continent in Joris's work North Africa and the Arab world, is missing on those maps that present, or rather merge, areas around Luxembourg with North America. However, on the cover and the title page of a recently published collection of essays, entitled *Arabia (Not So) Deserta* (2019), quite appropriately we find a map of an Arab part of the world. This time, the map is not a fictitious construction or a collage but an extract from a historical map, with the inscription: *Carte des trois Arabies: tirée en partie de l'Arabe de Nubie, en partie de diuers autres auteurs (1654)*.⁴⁷¹

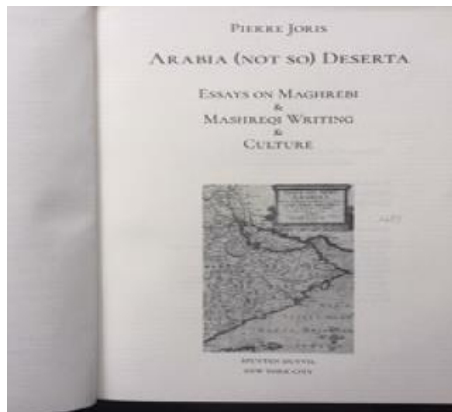


Figure 8. *Carte des Trois Arabies* (1654), in Pierre Joris, *Arabia (Not So) Deserta* (2019)

A possible conclusion we may draw from this historical map is that nomads cannot ignore the past. Though roots are not what defines them, they will not recast their memories on totally fictitious maps. They are aware that as travellers and wanderers they are marked by what happened under their feet before they pass there – culturally or linguistically, but also geologically speaking.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ Collage and palimpsest are terms – and practices – that will be further elaborated in the course of the dissertation as examples of nomadic processes.

⁴⁷¹ The map, *Carte des trois Arabies*, is easily available on the internet, see e.g. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005625325/>

⁴⁷² Cf. the views of cultural geographer, Doreen Massey, who investigates these multifaceted aspects of natural space (*For Space* 2005). For the road from notions of space to ecopoetics in Joris's work, see for instance a passage in the Barzakh interview, mentioned in relation to *The Gulf* (2014).

4.3.2 A nomadic life: routes, stops (*mawâqif*) and encounters

In keeping with his description of a nomadic century,⁴⁷³ rhizomatic multiplicity and between-ness are the overall features of his life. Born in France on 14 July, the French National Day, Joris is not French.⁴⁷⁴ Thus starts the nomadic life of Joris; it will however be some years before he hits the road again, this time himself as a medical student in Paris. Then, in 1982 he can already look back on the numerous stations of his nomadic life in the following words: “ “born 1946 Strasbourg : 18 years Luxembourg : 2 Paris : 4 New York : 3 Constantine : 8 London : tomorrow elsewhere : distrust vertical roots, history : the spread is horizon(t)al.” (*Tracing*, 1982, see blurb) This list adds up to 35 years; so by now it should be more than twice as long, with further locations, mostly in the U.S., including many years in Albany, New York, and a constantly growing number of years in Brooklyn since 2009. An inventory should also cover his continuous travelling and refer to his yearly transhumance, as he calls it,⁴⁷⁵ which takes him to the Pyrenees in the south west of France, the area from which his wife, artist performer Nicole Peyrafitte, moved to the United States in the late 1980s.

A similar multiplicity appears in a list of his activities: “a poet, but also [...] a scholar, prolific translator, critic/ essayist, anthologist, blogger, nomad travelling between languages & continents, editor, letter writer, radio broadcaster, teacher, performer, active poetry “communard” and so on. ” (Cockelbergh 2011: 15) For a focus on the relation between a poet’s nomadism and his multiple languages, all these aspects could be significant but in the present study some have to remain marginal or cannot be considered.

A list of Joris’s languages has to be variable and adjustable to the kind of language map one wishes to establish: the languages of his multiple environments as well as the languages he uses for reading, writing and translating. It should include, in the order of acquisition: Luxembourgish, German, French and English. Joris insists that it is American, not British English which after some hesitation he turned into his writing language. Joris feels attracted to several other languages, notably Arabic,⁴⁷⁶ which has had a tremendous influence on his poetic thinking, but also to languages that are closer to French, like Occitan, Italian and

⁴⁷³ See above: “The millennium will be nomadic or it will not be: this is/ paradigmatic, unless we learn the art of moving & connecting all/ contents, all languages, all machines we will be the tail of the 20C/ tail wagged by the 19C dog.” (*A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 55)

⁴⁷⁴ The biographical detail of his birth in France, as well as lack of information about the linguistic situation in Luxembourg, sometimes account for quick assumptions about his first language. In 1946, his parents lived in Strasbourg, because his father was doing an internship to complete his medical studies before returning with his family to his native Luxembourg.

⁴⁷⁵ See interview (Fowler 2012; Almeida 2016).

⁴⁷⁶ See for instance *Revolution Goes Through Walls*, 2018, by Safaa Fathy, which Joris has translated in cooperation with the author; cf. his website <https://pierrejoris.com/>

Spanish.⁴⁷⁷ Joris's writings often give evidence of his knowledge of Latin, while speaking of his repertoire he also likes to include "made-up languages", fictitious languages that one invents, similar to those of the heroes in Karl May's novels.⁴⁷⁸

Such inventories of locations, languages and occupations tend to disregard interrelations, crossings, in-between states and passages, which in fact are the most important features to consider in a study that shows how Joris the traveller becomes a nomadic translingual poet. Yet, even nomads sometimes need to stop and have a rest. The challenge, as Joris has realized, is to conceive the stations on the nomad's route in ways that reinforce rather than contradict the central notion of mobility.

Stations: *mawqif* or *mawâqif* (plural) on the poet's road

From Arab culture Joris has borrowed two concepts to "think through" nomadic features, which may also help approach a view of his life and work. One is *oasis*, which commonly designs a fertile spot in the desert, where nomads stop for a supply of freshwater.⁴⁷⁹ For Joris oases become the moments of creation on the wandering, nomadic poet's road. The other term he uses is *mawqif* (plural *mawâqif*), drawn from the work of Sufi poets: "The mawqif is the pause, the stop-over, the rest, the stay of the wanderer between two moments of movement, two runs, two sites, two places, two states." (ANP 47) Whether one uses *mawqif* to describe actual stops or mental stations or stages in Joris's life and work, the stress on its location between two poles remains important. The stops on the poet's road have to be seen in their spatial and temporal dimensions; their between-ness is conceived as a moment, or place, between many, opening up to possible new directions. Joris has described *mawqif* further:

[A]s a tension, a movement of a peculiar kind, & not as some static resting point – it is a momentary, moving placement on a smooth space, metonymic in relation to before & after [...] It is a (momentary) stance in relation to & with space, the horizontal, thus active, in motion, even if of a different motion than before or after. (*A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 47-48)

The *mawqif* does not fit into common conceptions of linear space and chronological time. It proves an important notion not only for a study of nomads' poetry but also as a metaphor for the poet's life and occupations. It involves opposition to a desire for at-homeness (*A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 26). This is one of the differences with many migrants' concept of movement as occurring between two opposed polarities

⁴⁷⁷ Evidence of his knowledge of these languages comes in his readings and translations, for example, of Giordano Bruno for Italian (see e.g. *Breccia* 1975: 149-151); of Pablo Picasso, *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz & Other Poems*, 2004, which Joris translated together with Jerome Rothenberg; of Occitan poets – "Two Occitan poets, Bernat Manciet & Marcela Delpastre, from an Assemblage in Progress," translated with commentaries by Pierre Joris & Nicole Peyrafitte. <https://jacket2.org/commentary/two-occitan-poets-bernat-manciet-marcela-delpastre-assemblage-progress>

⁴⁷⁸ See an autobiographical essay (*A Nomad Poetics*: 70), more in ch. 5.3.

⁴⁷⁹ Joris speaks of poasis in *A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 26). *Poasis*, 2001, is also the title of a collection of poems.

in their lives.⁴⁸⁰ *Mawqif* and *oasis* – and their relation to tensions in movement – are thus concepts that permit enquiring *what it means not to be at home, in particular not to be at home in a language or in language in general*.

However, *mawqif* as a concept derived from mystic Sufi philosophy cannot entirely cover the nature of Joris's nomadic life. Innumerable encounters and lively exchanges are the other key features.

Centres, peripheries, between-ness: always moving on⁴⁸¹

A centre for Joris is a place to move away from. He does it either through actual travelling or through the search for new mental contexts and connections, including those offered by his work of translation. Big urban centres, like Paris, London or New York where he has lived for various periods of his life, have marked Joris's work and thinking. Yet all the while, he has remained attracted to peripheries, especially literary peripheries such as the works by French Maghrebian writers or Paul Celan, the Romanian-born German language poet, many of whose writings he has translated into English.

Joris's texts do not present the centres where he has lived (like Paris or London) as areas or cities attached to national territories; they constantly remain in movement and reach out to other spaces, often margins or peripheries. Imagining Joris's spaces requires further nomadic notions such as *flight lines* (Deleuze), *un esprit nomade* (White) or the reliance on "invisible meridians" (Celan).

Peter Cockelbergh speaks of *multiple middles* to describe the mobile in-between dimensions in his life. (*Cartographies* 2011: 18). The notion of *multiple middles* fits Joris better than a merely linear account, which would start with the numerous routes *away from home*, a provincial town in Luxembourg, and include early travelling, encounters with adventure stories and first contact with poetry (Celan).

Important early experiences are mostly recorded as memories or elaborated in autobiographical pieces (see chapter 5). They are reconstructions of early exposure to multiple forms of text and language and are part of what one could call, in Braidotti's terms, the constitution of *the polyglot as nomadic subject*, or vice-versa, the nomadic subject as polyglot.⁴⁸²

To give a sense of his nomadic movements the following presentation focusses on a few important routes and stations, or rather traces,⁴⁸³ of his itinerary. It is not a perfectly sequential account, which could

⁴⁸⁰ See the emphasis on polarity and binary relations in Welch's life and work.

⁴⁸¹ The conversations with Peter Cockelbergh interspersed in *Cartographies* (2011) are a rich mine of information for all dimensions of Joris's nomadic life and work.

⁴⁸² Joris avoids any reference to the subject or subjectivity, because in his eyes it is contrary to nomadic thinking as conceived by Deleuze and Guattari. *Subjectivity*, a term philosophers propose in relation to the subject (Cassin et al. 2004: 1233) could cancel the negative connotations that subjective/ subjectivity, as (too) emotional and intuitive often has.

⁴⁸³ *Trace* and *tracing* are recurring concepts in Joris's work, which he has borrowed from Jacques Derrida (and Julia Kristeva); cf. the title of an early publication *Tracing* (1982).

suggest unity behind the sometimes chaotic or confusing movements of his nomadic errancy. It rather evokes the “multiplicity of his becomings” (Braidotti) through multiple routes and interrelationships.

4.3.2.1 Routes to and from Paris, or: From medicine to poetry

On his road to becoming a poet, Paris played a central role for several reasons: Here, instead of pursuing his medical studies Joris became enthralled by literature. Paradoxically it is not metropolitan French but Francophone and “foreign” languages and cultures that attracted him. Indeed, on the nomad’s itinerary, Paris was above all a European station to move away from (and later to return to on many occasions), literally and mentally.

After dropping out of medicine studies, Joris for a while got a room in the iconic English language bookstore on the Left Bank, the iconic *Shakespeare and Company*,⁴⁸⁴ a famous meeting place for Anglophone writers and readers, offering him first-hand experience of literature in English. (“A Glottal Choice” 2003: 62; Interview with Almeida 2016). In this location he also has his first encounter with Francophone literature from the Maghreb thanks to his room-mate Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine, who was to become one of the best-known Moroccan literary figures of his time. Through him he learnt that writing poetry demands total commitment, especially when you choose to write in a language that is not your own:

But what has remained core for me, more so than the literary and political information gathered from him, was the example his intensity set: he was the poet incarnate, a truly rimbaudian figure whose total dedication to his art awed me no end. I was still searching, unsure of myself, unsure that it was even possible for someone to become a poet in a language that was not the mother tongue, unsure if I could bear the absolute exile such a decision implied. Khaïr-Eddine was living proof that it was possible and that total dedication to the chosen path was the only aim to achieve this aim. (*Justifying the Margins* 2009: 55)

So it was through a poet from an area considered a periphery of French culture that Joris came to realize what writing poetry in a language that is not the mother tongue involves. If it was possible for an Arab speaking writer to use French, it should also be possible for him to write - or learn to write - poetry in English, a language that was not his own either. He discovers a freedom of language choice for the poet who does not feel bound to one national language: as he cannot / will not write in his mother tongue, why should he choose French or German, why not English, the language whose poetry appeals most to him? (See e.g. “Transitzone,” an interview with Cockelbergh 2010.)

⁴⁸⁴ See Sylvia Whitman, *Shakespeare and Company. A Brief History of a Parisian Bookstore*. 2012; also <https://shakespeareandcompany.com/35/history/36/a-brief-history-of-a-parisian-bookstore>

Another point to remember about his time in Paris is that despite the fact that he does not continue his medical studies, Joris will keep his interest in science: it accounts for many references or images and a general approach of poetry as a vector of knowledge (see ch.6).

Paris and France will remain regular stops on the nomad's circuitous routes. French thinkers like Deleuze or Blanchot, but also Derrida and Kristeva, exiles or like himself frequently on the move between Europe and North America, have continued to have an impact on his work.

4.3.2.2 The U.S.: Moving into American poetic spaces

Joris's experiences of America belong to two distinct periods in his life. First, there is his time as an undergraduate at Bard College that comes immediately after his departure from Paris. The second, still ongoing American period starts after a long intermission. It encompasses the time of his doctoral work, his career as an academic, as a poet, a translator and numerous other activities in the U.S. Since the late 1980s, Joris has had his residence in the United States. Yet for the nomad that he continues to be, it is best described in terms of routes.⁴⁸⁵ His routes inside North America turn up in frequent hints to actual or imaginative travelling, for instance with references to Jack Kerouac.⁴⁸⁶

As a student, Joris had direct contact with American life while intensive reading of American literature opened up fresh perspectives on writing. He discovers new voices and becomes aware of the difference between British and American English, which he has called his fifth language. In a conversation with Peter Cockelbergh (2011: 125-135), Joris offers an extensive account of his numerous encounters with poets, which started in Paris (at *Shakespeare & Co*) and become central to his *Lehr- and Wanderjahre*. Reading Joris's accounts about his meetings, one is at first overwhelmed by the number of quoted names, but also struck by his presentation of these poets as a group of friends, whom he obviously knows well and feels close to. In the long lists of names, each for him evokes a different *poetic voice*. Becoming an American poet asks for familiarity with the sounds and rhythm of the language. It requires a new form of *breathing*, which, for instance, determines the length of poetic lines. In Joris's references to the many poets he meets we notice the response of an observant poet in the making, who has an attentive ear and eye for lines, rhythm, images and ideas that motivate the creative drive.

His descriptions of different forms of breathing and related images, like "gaining air" (*Cartographies* 2011: 125), also with references to Paul Celan's *Atemwende*, can be read as a comment on translingual processes, with the non-native poet, travelling between languages looking for his own nomadic voice.

⁴⁸⁵ In the late 1980s Joris was back in the US, first in Binghamton NY and California (1989) before going east again to Albany NY until in 2009 he moved to Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. *Canto Diurno* # 2: a bilingual ode to Jack Kerouac, in Barzakh 2014: 17-24. See also Ch. 8.

In America, he discovers the importance of belonging to *a community of poets* – “what Creeley called the company”. (*Cartographies* 2011: 135) A community is not identical with national associations or ethnical groups; it is a group of real friends and kindred spirits. Contacts with innumerable poets reframe his own position. They allow him to acquire not a fixed stance, but the possibility to position as part of a large family of poets. Its space is not a circumscribed territory defined by national emblems or one language but by gestures of friendship:⁴⁸⁷ “[A]ll of a sudden you realize this is the company.” (135) But his space is never America alone:

If I chose English, or rather American English, it was because I found the poetry being written in that language the most exciting and inventive, both in terms of formal considerations and in terms of possible content, from Pound to Ginsberg, say. But I also realized as soon as I set foot on U.S. soil, that I was never going to become a simple, plain American — poet or otherwise. I instantly felt myself to be (as Charles Olson put it) a man of multiple occasions, one in many and many in one. (“Transitzone”, Interview with Cockelbergh 2010)

In this context, Cockelbergh speaks of Joris’s *transatlantic* writing (128) which reflects his reading/writing process as much as his actual, frequent travelling.

4.3.2.3 Crisscrossing lines across the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Channel ⁴⁸⁸

To represent Joris’s life, particularly in the intervening years between the two American stages on his route, one should perhaps imagine the kind of map included in the magazines of big air companies, which display their multiple routes and destinations through a web or net of crisscrossing lines across continents and oceans, evoking moving at full speed in both or multiple directions.⁴⁸⁹

After Bard College he went to London in 1973 to do graduate work (translation studies at Essex and King’s College). During his London years he becomes actively involved in the British Poetry Revival; he also makes an experience that is typical of nomads: once they have moved to a new place, they become more acutely aware of the characteristic features of the place they have left. Thus only when he had moved away from the US could Joris understand what American poets were doing. As he explains in the talk with Cockelbergh:

This also has to do with my nomadics: I began to really read these poets, Olson, Kelly, Duncan & so on in 1973, when I had moved to London & at that distance could get into them much better than when I was living on top of them or with them in the US. So it’s again a matter of space, of making space between ...

⁴⁸⁷ Joris’s writings contain innumerable references to writers from all over the world: I perceive this dazzling record of names as evidence of encounters, as marks of respect paid by the nomad to all those met on the road.

⁴⁸⁸ Look at conversation with Cockelbergh for a summary of the period from 1967 to 1987. (*Cartographies* 2011: 315-320)

⁴⁸⁹ See Hansen-Pauly 2017.

[Cockelbergh:] Breathturns, opening up space time and again?

[Joris] Yes, it has always been about gaps in that sense.

(*Cartographies*: 2011: 128)

For the nomad poet, distance, separation and an in-between position prove indispensable for new insights, especially into language and writing processes.

The years spent in Algeria after graduate studies in the UK bring many more experiences, which open a whole new and ongoing chapter in his life. The time in the UK however is over. In 1976, on his return there from North Africa, he finds a totally changed country, politically and culturally, so that soon he turns his back definitively to England. The UK, which for a while was an important hub in his life, thus disappears from his travelling routes, and with it British English and close contacts with British poetic developments (especially after the death of Allen Fisher).⁴⁹⁰

He goes back to France, where he works for France Culture, an opportunity for more encounters. For a study of the poet's multiple languages the period between his first stay in the US and his (definitive) return is particularly interesting. His incessant travelling and nomadic life involves a constant immersion in multiple languages. One should stress not only the tensions between American and British English, but also an inevitable, constant switch between English and French, between metropolitan everyday French, the French of journalism and the French of (post-colonial) Maghreb and its Francophone literature, with numerous cultural links to Arabic. His translation studies involve further languages, notably German, through his work on Paul Celan.⁴⁹¹

4.3.2.4 The Maghreb, an ongoing, multifaceted and transformative experience

The Maghreb may be the most enduring space in Joris's work. Connections appear in multiple contexts with references to culture, language, poetic form and personal experience. Even a succinct outline can suggest the scope of its impact on his writing.

Constantine in Algeria, where he worked for three years (1973-1976), was a crucial station on the nomad's road. Yet, as Joris soon realized on becoming familiar with the place and surroundings, his experience of North Africa had started long before when he read the first volume of Karl May's adventure novels :

Constantine led to incredible discoveries for me. [...] I realized all of a sudden that when I needed to go to Tunisia to get my passport renewed, I would have to cross the Chott el Djerid salt lake . . . i.e. the setting for the opening chapter of Karl May's *Durch die Wüste*, the first volume of his collected works! So the whole childhood reading becomes connected as one aspect of this move,

⁴⁹⁰ Details about Joris's relations with the UK, which he finds "too insular," and his final departure appear for instance in the talk with Cockelbergh (2011: 315-320) and in his poetry (*Poasis*: "A Note on Winnetou Old"; "Ruislip Visitation" (whose French title speaks for itself: "La dernière traversée de la Manche").

⁴⁹¹ See his indebtedness to Celan in chapters 6 and 7.

as I'm literally tracing the geo-topography of my childhood's imagination. In that sense, the Maghreb was both already totally familiar while, of course, in the reality of it all, it was totally unfamiliar. (*Cartographies*: 2011: 190-191)

The stay in Algeria was for Joris a first-hand experience of a postcolonial country, whose socialism stood in direct opposition to the understanding of politics in the United States. (*Cartographies* 2011: 191) It also reinforced his interest in French postcolonial writers and Francophone writers from the former colony that had started through his contacts in Paris.⁴⁹² As figures of *errance*, with particular relations to their different languages (Local variations of Arabic, standard Arabic and French), they become part of his poetic thinking.

Maghrib – Mashriq, or how east becomes west: an experience of reorientation: Travelling along the routes of past and present Maghrebian literature, leads Joris to discover the relativity of spatial notions like east and west. As he explains in the introduction to *Exile is my Trade*, his edited translation of selected poetry and prose by Habib Tengour's work (2012), Maghreb in Arabic means, literally, the place of the setting sun, hence "West", or the area west of Mashriq, another word for east, the place where the sun rises, while Maghreb also stands for a multitude of notions linked to travelling and exile. (2012: 8) Always interested in the etymology and formation of words, Joris explains:

We can gather the following cluster of meanings as offshoot of the word Maghreb [...] to go away, also to be a stranger, to exile, to expatriate, and even to become westernized, Europeanized. [...] This means exile is synonymous with West, to be in the west means to be in exile, wherever that may be. *If you live in Maghreb you are already in exile.* (*Exile is my Trade* 2012: 8-9; shortened; emphasis added)

Joris's enduring interest in the Maghreb thus reflects the discovery of changing perspectives on a nomad's movements and status as exile and stranger, with parallels to his own position.

Travelling inside North Africa Joris has gathered impressions that deeply mark his work.⁴⁹³ The Maghreb is an experience of difference, a dimension that remains central in his thinking. Joris insists that awareness of difference for him must lead to an enquiry into *how* things are different and what meaning this otherness conveys. North Africa, and the desert in particular, is a source of imagery and thoughts. Joris does not write conventional travel relations with descriptions of life and natural sites. For the Local to become part of his poetry it needs to be transformed through the nomad's contemplation and the connections that his wandering thoughts provide. "I think poetry is about taking the particular out of set

⁴⁹² In general, rather than British post-colonial writers, Francophone thinkers and poets have marked Joris's thinking, notably Edouard Glissant, Edmond Jabès and many writers from Maghreb.

⁴⁹³ See the background pictures of his website and blogs at various times, all accessible through his website <http://www.pierrejoris.com/>

structures & letting it find a new setting for itself. Poetry is about making new connections, & they're meaningful." (*Cartographies*: 193)⁴⁹⁴

A nomad's roads and itineraries also reveal long lasting connections such as Joris's relations to Habib Tengour, whom he first met when both were teaching at the University of Constantine:

"[T]here was this immediate obvious attraction, or knowledge that we were of the same company, the guild of the poet as & nomads & translators, so that nearly forty years later, we wind up doing the Maghrebian anthology together." (*Cartographies* 2011: 194)

His commitment to Maghrebian literature is reflected in his translations⁴⁹⁵ and volume 4 of the Millennium anthologies.⁴⁹⁶ Frequent references to the work of Jacques Derrida and Edmond Jabès also seem to have taken their origin in his experiences with the North African world and its difficult relations with France. Seeing himself related to a peripheral area of French culture, Joris could understand the ambiguity of feelings for a language which is never quite your own.⁴⁹⁷

On Joris's roads, the Maghreb is a hub of interrelations or an example of articulation (see ch. 1.4), which gives a voice to people and connects them to a space: Maghreb gives him an idea of what translingual processes may mean for his own poetic writing.

4.3.2.5 Luxembourg – a frequent stop on the exile's road

Every year Joris pays one or two flying visits to his native country. The short stay is usually part of regular circular trips across Europe, which include numerous other stops.⁴⁹⁸ Having decided to live in "permanent exile", Joris discards any nostalgia for the places of his childhood and adolescence:

I left – voluntary exile, nothing heroic about it, nor is there any desire to return for, say, more than 48 hours once or twice a year to see family – my home country and mother tongue in my late teens . . . Since then I have been living in other countries and speaking, thinking and writing in other tongues, so the natural condition of my being in the world is that of hajra, to use the Arabic word

⁴⁹⁴ In relation to the impact of desert imagery on his work, he explains how a word like mica becomes part of his writing life: "There are moments & themes that can be summed up in one word. "Mica" is such a word for me, in that it is that particular thing in the huge sameness of sand, this tiny object that glitters & appears, is there, all of a sudden as itself, separated from the other grains that make the mass of sand [...] And I like the word "mica"." (191-192)

⁴⁹⁵ Next to his translation of Tengour's work, one should mention Edmond Jabès. *From the Desert to the Book* (1989); Abdelwahab Meddeb, *The Malady of Islam* (translation in cooperation with Anne Reid 2003)

⁴⁹⁶ Volume 4. *Diwan Iffrikyā. An Anthology of North African Writings from Prehistory to Today*. This work of diffusion and translation of Arab writing is continued in *Arabia (not s) deserta* (2019). See also 4.3.3 (Mapping the nomad's work).

⁴⁹⁷ See Derrida (1998).

⁴⁹⁸ A summer stay in the Pyrenees, the region Nicole Peyrafitte, Joris's wife originally comes from, is another longer break on his route. He fittingly calls their seasonal travelling by the French word transhumance, used to describe the nomadic movement of animals between mountain and lowland pastures, see above.

(that is also the title of one of my collections of poems) that mean exile, going away, going forth and so on⁴⁹⁹. (*Justifying the Margins*: 46)

Luxembourg is a recurring station on the nomad's circuitous routes; Joris however is reticent to consider it as an important centre on the map of his poetic work. Admittedly, it is part of the experiential dimension of his writing, "But [...] I don't build my work on the experiential or the privately experiential; it is part of one's life and therefore it is part of the work and so it will come in tangentially in any number of ways." (*Cartographies*: 245) For Joris, Luxembourg is not a place to return to for a nostalgic trip. In his nomadic life, Luxembourg has to do with "ways out", with *routes away from it*, as he describes it in an evocation of flights out of the Luxembourg airport called Findel:

Findel: To find. Who? Alone, no longer here, not yet there. A *threshold*. Am I coming or am I going? As in Findelkind? Lost? No. Airport: a door in & through the air. I find myself at the airport. For years it meant yearning: watching the planes leave, wanting to leave. Hardly able to see over the balustrade of the old Findel's flight deck. Later, walking over the warm tarmac to the first plane: Madrid via Bruxelles.⁵⁰⁰ Then London. Then New York. Departures. Arrivals. Returns. Systole/Diastole of exile.⁵⁰¹ Circling a receding childhood from high above: farms, fields, cattle, fences. An expanding city. From above: the *Grund* – *der Abgrund*, the abyss. Off-rhyme with the Grand Canyon. Airplane dreams. Portage of plain paper reams of writing ferried between continents. Nothing to declare. But this: I love to arrive. I love to leave. It is the same. It is different. The continents no longer drift, therefore we have to. *Dérive*. *Départ*. *Décollage*. ("Remembrance Day in Patton-Town" 2016; emphasis added)

The reflective enquiry is mostly based on word games. First, he muses about the name *Findel*, as not related to anything found. Then watching (the) *Grund* and the expanding city seen from high he notices how his imagination works so as to combine an old part of Luxembourg-city with the Grand Canyon. *Nothing to declare*: the phrase here refers to nomads' goods - like languages or like the paper filled with writing (done on the plane), which can travel without being checked. Then he ponders on the nomad's love of anything linked to travelling, including the nomadic notion of *dérive* connected to other words with the same prefix "dé-."

Even if Luxembourg is mainly a place to depart from, he likes to return to it briefly in texts to discuss the role of languages in his life, from early childhood on. In that sense, Luxembourg appears pivotal for an exploration of his linguistic nomadism, which deserves a further investigation in his writings too: his memories of contact with various languages, his reading and his discovery of poetry. (*See next chapters*)

⁴⁹⁹ See above for links of exile with meaning of Maghreb.

⁵⁰⁰ For the reference to his first plane trip (to Madrid, in 1959), see picture in *Prendre le large* (2014: 68).

⁵⁰¹ See similar image in *Janus*, mentioned in 6.3.2 and 7.3.1.

Like on all stops along his route, encounters with other poets count most. Among them his frequent exchanges and cooperation with other nomadic poets, notably Jean Portante⁵⁰² and Nico Helminger, who have also translated his poetry (see 4.3.3.3)

Poetic projects in Luxembourg have included his writer residence at the Théâtre National de Luxembourg (2015) involving in particular the première of *The Agony of I.B.* and *The Gulf (between you and me)* which featured the writer himself performing his own poems, accompanied by the choir The Duke's Singers.⁵⁰³ On his stops in Luxembourg, he also gives interviews⁵⁰⁴ or participates in events⁵⁰⁵: these are just examples to underline his broad understanding of a nomad's language.

In 2020 Pierre Joris is awarded the Batty Weber Prize, Luxembourg's national literary prize, which goes to to a Luxembourg writer for his entire literary work.⁵⁰⁶ Though he left the country long ago, he has been eligible for the prize as he still has a Luxembourg passport – “proud of it or happy to have it when Trump was elected.” A recent collection of poems, *Fox-trails, -tales & -trots* (2020) was published in Luxembourg and contains a poem *op Lëtzebuergesch* along with its translation in English; the epithet is a quotation from Celan, in Joris's translation: “Because to speak like one's mother, means to dwell, even there where there are no tents” (2020: 98-104).⁵⁰⁷ Inserting these words signal the ongoing reflections on the role of the mother tongue and what “home” or rather “dwellin,” mean for the nomad.

⁵⁰² Cf. Jean Portante: « Écritures contre la langue maternelle. Portrait du poète Pierre Joris. » In: *Lëtzebuurger Almanach* (1987: 469-475); in *Cartographies*, “Justification of the Margin: Luxembourg in the Poetic Work of Pierre Joris” (2011: 234–244; see also Pierre Joris - Jean Portante Exchange: “Whales, ghosts and nomads” (2013); Portante's innumerable translations of poems and the collection of poems in translation called *Canto Diurno* (2017).

⁵⁰³ For more details, see the analysis of both pieces in ch. 9 and <http://www.pierrejoris.com/blog/the-gulf-in-luxembourg/>

⁵⁰⁴ He still speaks perfect Luxembourgish, as for instance underlined by a radio interview. “Invité am Moies Magazin D'Valerija Berdi am Gespräich mam Pierre Joris” 02. Jan 2019 - 10:04 <https://www.100komma7.lu/program/episode/234968/20190102100400/37>

⁵⁰⁵ In 2017, the *Simoncini* Gallery in Luxembourg organized an exhibition of his books and audio material together with drawings and paintings by Nicole Peyrafitte. It was also the occasion for a performance of both artists, a truly trans-language act, in which the poet's words became immersed in a multifaceted presentation, an example of what the couple calls “Domopoetics.” <https://www.nicolepeyrafitte.com/opening-weekend-at-la-galerie-simoncini-luxembourg/>

⁵⁰⁶ Fittingly a local paper writes: Der „Wortnomade“: Pierre Joris erhält den Prix Batty Weber. <https://www.tageblatt.lu/kultur/der-wortnomade-pierre-joris-erhaelt-den-prix-batty-weber/>

⁵⁰⁷ *Fox-trails, -tales & -trots* (2020) has been published by Black Fountain Press, Luxembourg's first publishing house for literature in English. Two pieces by Pierre Joris, “*The Cormorant*”, a poem, and his essay, “A Glottal Choice,” are included in *Fresh from the Fountain. English Writing in Luxembourg* (2018), an anthology also published by Black Fountain Press.

Joris's ongoing contact with the Luxembourg cultural scene is also confirmed by an exhibition that took place at Simoncini Gallery in Luxembourg in 2017, which featured artwork by Nicole Peyrafitte together with a display of copies of all his publications.

The CNL – Luxembourg's literary archives – holds a file of documents related to the poet's work (Fonds Pierre Joris / CNL L-342). Joris, however, has deposited the bulk of his files (from 1960-2000) in the Indiana University Archives, in Bloomington.⁵⁰⁸

4.3.2.6 The routes of the nomad as reader and translator

For Joris's nomadic and translingual writing, mental travelling proves to be at least as important as taking the plane. Reading opens multiple and intersecting routes, to which he constantly refers in his writings and in interviews. In his memories, an early fascination with books linked to travelling and multiple languages stands out. (See ch.5.) A book that marked his adolescence and first contact with literature in English was Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*,⁵⁰⁹ the American classic of Beat literature and counterculture.

Later, he becomes an avid reader of poetry and just two examples, Paul Celan and Ezra Pound, confirm the attention he paid to the voices and texts of wandering writers. Reading the work of Pound as a young poet⁵¹⁰ opened many perspectives on European as well as Oriental languages, in particular a sense for the ways in which texts can travel from one language to another. (*A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 111; see ch. 6.3) Reading and translation are intricately related processes and the works he has translated give a sure indication of his literary predilections. His life-long commitment to the work of Paul Celan sufficiently bears out this observation.

Similarly, the reading of early Sufi poetry has taken him on routes of texts, thoughts and languages that travel across literature. Joris would not think of his reading of Arab poetry as a linear movement; his recurrent references let his reading appear as a non-ending revisiting of texts in always new contexts.⁵¹¹ Evidence of his vast reading also appears in texts and interviews, with innumerable references to thinkers and poets. "Nomad Century Ahead," a piece of barely six pages has fifteen quotations as epigraphs and many more references inside the text. Reading accounts for Joris's citational practices in theoretical essays

⁵⁰⁸ http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/findingaids/view?doc.view=entire_text&docId=InU-Li-VAD7271

⁵⁰⁹ He got a copy by chance (*A NOMAD POETICS*: 61); Kerouac's French-English heritage is a feature that Joris remembers in a bilingual Ode, canto Diurno # 2 (*Barzakh*: 17-24).

⁵¹⁰ Joris has called Ezra Pound his third grandfather ("A Nomad Poetics Revisited" 2017).

⁵¹¹ See references to Sufi poetry, for instance in *Janus* 1988: 2-4; *A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 51-55; *Meditations on the Stations of Mansur Al-Hallaj* 2013; *Arabia not so Deserta* 2019: 13.

as well as in poetry. A few selected statements from this text, all in English translation, give an idea of his “reading routes” as paths to poetry and translingual writing:

“Reality is not simply there, it must be searched for and won.” (Paul Celan)

“Wandering creates the desert”(Edmond Jabès)

“I was much more interested in poetry than in prose – exactly because the poet is the one who creates his language, while the writer of prose, in the main uses language.”(Aimé Césaire)

“All live languages are creolized.” Edouard Glissant

[C]hora as “a temporary articulation, essentially mobile, constituted of movements and their ephemeral stases.” (Julia Kristeva)

The evocation of an “explosante fixe”, “a lingo-barocco” an an “explosante mouvante (André Breton)

(in *A Nomad Poetics*: 3-8)

Joris also stresses his interest in scientific books, which is connected to his overall understanding of the poet’s work: gathering information from diverse sources, notably scientific data because poetry is the place and means to convey complex relations. (See his poetics 6.3.2)

4.3.3 Mapping the nomad’s work: Looking for routes across nomadic translingual writing

From the inadequacy of a traditional classification to reflections on a rhizomatic presentation of works

Lists of Joris’s publications show the impressive number of books he has published.⁵¹² They also highlight a remarkable diversity of writings: poetry, essays, anthologies, translations. All in all, his bibliography presently (2019) includes about 35 books of poetry (including bi-lingual editions), 7 collections of essays, some 27 works of translation, one play, as well as 5 anthologies, which he co-edited. Such lists rely on classifications, which however disregard key aspects of Joris’s work. Approaching the work as rhizomatic development should uncover the missing nomadic aspects, such as the overlapping of genres and connections between key themes of poetry and translated works, or between locations, languages and imagined spaces.

How should one map Joris’s nomadic work? Fitting his work onto any existing maps proves problematic. Should one put his work on a map of American literature, as Joris has spent most of his life in the United States and has adopted American English as his language of writing? (See 4.3.2) Or, is he rather a Luxembourg-American writer, much of whose work has also been published in Luxembourg, sometimes in bilingual editions, thus fitting an enlarged map of Luxembourg literature? But either of these bipolar

⁵¹² See for instance the list of books given at the back of *Cartographies* (2011: 406-408), or the constantly updated bibliography included in the Luxembourg *Dictionary of Authors* (*Luxemburger Autorenlexikon*).

approaches would be an unjustifiable disregard of his commitment to Arabic and other languages and literatures. Such a view of literature implies a spirit of classification, linked to symbolic and pragmatic issues of national identity and institutional structures (like teaching and research or publication and archiving). It does not foster an investigation of changing processes and diverse languages and cultures contributing to the nature of a nomadic text.

Mapping, as process, offers a more flexible approach of texts. Its focus on interrelation, openness and readiness to adapt to change aims at crossing or disregarding borders of all kinds. It should help researchers follow routes of innovation (accommodate text types that disregard conventional genres) and break language barriers as well as translingual writers' movements between locations.

The succinct presentation of Joris's work in chapter 1 has confirmed the informative role of distinctions between genres, yet it has also shown the need to conceive other coordinates better adapted to translingual and nomadic work. However useful in many contexts,⁵¹³ a classification by genres proves unsatisfactory for research into nomadic and multilingual features of writing. Genres constantly overlap. Conventional distinctions no longer seem to hold for nomadic thinking: on the one hand nomadic work leads to the creation of new "territories," intersections and junctions; on the other hand it asks for the recognition of elements that tend to go unnoticed in traditional approaches.

A study of nomadic features in Joris's work with a focus on translingual processes profits from the **cornerstones** set up in ch. 3.3. In the presentation of his work special attention goes to

- the **heterogeneity and hybridity of texts**, *not to genres*;
- texts as a **multiplicity of interacting voices and languages**, *not to a static monological perspective or the use of one national language*;
- a writer's work as an **open space** to be considered from **multiple middles**, *not to origins and a linear chronological approach*.

The benefits of mapping and a rhizomatic approach are manifold:

- (1) Mapping should facilitate finding routes from Joris's *translations* of Maghrebian writers to an *anthology* of North African writings or to a *poetics* called nomadic, to related poems by Joris and their translations.

⁵¹³ Publishers and bookstores need distinctions for reasons of marketing. Likewise in literary contexts, critics and academics may speak of a classification by genre, based on various definitions of content, style and writing techniques.

(2) Instead of for instance calling *The Gulf* a long *poem* (included in *Barzakh*, a collection of poems) which belongs to American literature, or to literature in English, mapping considers the heterogeneous voices (literary and musical voices mingling with various contemporary voices or forms of discourse) that constitute the text, thus opening up to the bits and pieces in other languages quoted from the original or in translation. Mapping also means opening the space of the text from the date of the catastrophe to the future and to the past (for example, hinted at through the reference to Mallarmé); it means encompassing different geographical spaces, but also lexical dimensions.

(3) From an understanding of mapping derives the reference to the palimpsest as conceptual metaphor to approach superimposed voices and translingual processes in texts.

4.3.3.1 A nomad's *post-genre* writing

Nomadic writing challenges the concept of genres, as its key notions of open space and movement are a negation of bounded categories. Joris has not altogether abolished generic distinctions but he approaches them differently. *Post* refers to a later period, not to a negation; post-genre means that previous insights or practices are still there as starting points, from which they can be reconceived. *Post* is to be understood as the nomad's act of resistance to existing static forms.

Subtitles of his publications, such as "collection of essays or poems", often suggest a traditional classification, yet the content of books may take the reader by surprise. Many of Joris's books come across as a mixture of genres and often include texts that are hard to classify. For instance, *A Nomad Poetics* is called a book of **essays**: yet only few texts correspond to what would be commonly called a critical or a biographical essay. Some texts connected to issues of poetics come as loosely connected paragraphs or statements. For some critics "Notes toward a nomadic poetics" is rather a manifesto than an essay, or is it a mixed genre, a manifesessay, as Joris has suggested?⁵¹⁴ They strike us as very fragmentary writing – as if written on the road, with innumerable quotations from other writers and poems by Joris, or others, inserted into the text. The book itself is thus an example of nomadic writing, bearing the marks of an author who refuses to conform to established models and chooses to render his reflexions as well as the voices of those he meets "on the road". *A Nomad Poetics* includes an interview, as well as an open letter as response to another letter. They illustrate Joris's preference for dialogic approaches, which allow measuring his views in comparison with the opinions of others.

⁵¹⁴ For critics' views, see ch.6.3.6; see also Joris's response in *Samizdat interview* (*A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 128)

Interviews, talks and conversations must be considered a substantial part of Joris's work, significantly situated between the poet and enquiring readers.⁵¹⁵ They represent truly nomadic forms of interaction and dialogue. Printed or on-line, the literary interview in Joris's case is a hybrid text which could be mapped together with his essays or with continuing electronic forms of exchange.

Justifying the Margins (2009) is the second collection of essays that Joris has published. Though there is less fragmentary writing than in *A Nomad Poetics*, the texts still cover a wide range of discourse types. The opening piece, entitled "*Nimrod in Hell*," is a good example of nomadic writing with a mixing of generic features that baffles a reader who would like to situate the "message." The text in prose rambles around Nimrod's enigmatic babble ("*Raphèl mai amècche zabì almi*") and evokes elements of autobiography, switches to philosophical reflections on physicians, poets, hunters and translators. It moves from scholarly etymological questions into obscure passages of Dante's *Divina Commedia* while combining past and present, the Ardennes and a biblical figure of the *Inferno*. "Nimrod" is also the example of a text that has wandered into different publications in the US, UK and Luxembourg. Each context and targeted readership is likely to uncover different dimensions. Before it becomes the opening text in *Justifying the Margins*, "Nimrod in Hell" appeared in the poetry magazine *Samizdat* in 2001. In *Barzakh* (2014: 121-123), it figures as one of many "poems" in verse or prose and the subtitle "in Hell" is omitted. As opening piece in *Fox-trails, -tales & -trots* (2020), "Nimrod," also without the "hell" reference in the title, has moved again to a prominent position in a selection primarily addressed at readers in Luxembourg.

Joris's **books of poetry** display a similar nomadic diversity of themes and forms, of voices and routes. *Barzakh: Poems 2000-2012*, for instance, in addition to "Nimrod", contains several pieces that demonstrate a very open understanding of poetry as hybrid form. Next to texts that *look* like prose, it also has pieces that seem borrowed from corpus linguistics, with dozens of examples using the same term in different contexts. The key words (and titles) of these "Three Ontological Goggles" are "1. Diaspora is ..., " " 2. Nomadism is ..., " " 3. Poetry is ... " (*Barzakh* 2014: 109-119) The listed sentences are not to be mistaken for the poet's own views, but rather demonstrate the wide range of possible perspectives on crucial notions underlying his work.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵ See methodology with references to Masschelein et al., "The Literary Interview: Towards a Poetics of a Hybrid Genre" (2014) and Galia Yanoshevsky, *L'entretien littéraire: anatomie d'un genre* (2018).

⁵¹⁶ *Barzakh* also includes "The Gulf. From Rigwreck to Disaster. A triptych," which is the text for a performance accompanied by choir music. See ch 10 where the text is analysed as translingual piece and example of poetic space construction.

In the recently published *Arabia (not so) Deserta* (2019), the nomadic scope is still further enlarged. Joris alternates his own *Essays on Maghrebi and Mashreqi Writing & Culture* (all drawn from previous publications) with poems by women writers whose work already appeared in his earlier anthology, *Diwan Iffrikyia* or *Poems of the Millennium. Book of North African Literature* (2012). Nomadic work, in this case, is an astute re-arrangement, for today's readers, of writings that were separately created for various contexts. It is a mixture of voices, some coming in Joris' translation, which he has written or collected on his wanderings as reader, editor – or *troubadour*.⁵¹⁷

Translingual writing is often associated with self construction (see ch. 3). In Joris's poetic work, however, the rare narrative elements remain elusive; they are "lines of flight," which do not seem to attempt at "arriving" anywhere. *Chronology*, a key ordering factor in conventional presentations of a writer's work, is constantly questioned: For a mapping of Joris's work, not (only) the date when a text appeared is important, but the context, in this case the juxtaposition with other texts, by other poets or translators.

Moreover, references to his work in translation can further complicate the usual chronological order of publications. A good example is the *La dernière traversée de la Manche* (1995), a collection⁵¹⁸ that has no equivalent original in English.⁵¹⁹ It needs a sense of translingual and nomadic processes to follow the entangled traces. According to Joris's beliefs, the nomad rejects all linear tracks: *il brouille les pistes* and constantly looks for new roads.

4.3.3.3 Translation as dynamic twofold space and nomadic process⁵²⁰

Books and texts have various ways of wandering across languages, the most obvious being translation. For a mapping of translation in Joris's work one needs to project two spaces: one for his writings that have appeared *in* translation and another for his work *of* translation. They both contribute to the rhizomatic growth of his work.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁷ *Troubadour*: on several occasions, Joris explains that contrary to the commonly accepted belief, troubadour does not derive from a Latin root and thus does not mean the poet "who finds". Troubadour as he shows comes from an Arabic word and means singer. See *Arabia (Not So) Deserta* 2019:10.

⁵¹⁸ Translated into French by Jean-Paul Junk and Jean Portante (avec la collaboration de l'auteur); it was first published by Éditions Phi in 1995.

⁵¹⁹ Among Joris's collections of poems, none comes with a title alluding to a Channel crossing, apart from *Good-bye to England* (1987), for which there is no acknowledgment in *La dernière traversée*. The name of the French collection in fact derives from the title of a poem in the book with a very different title, "Ruislip Visitation," the original English poem appears in the United States only six years later in *Poasis*.

⁵²⁰ See Jane Fenoulhet (2010), who sees nomadic literature primarily in terms of translation (see ch.3.2.6).

⁵²¹ The work of translation mentioned here is but a small selection which illustrates the multiple interactions; for an extensive overview, see the entry for Pierre Joris in the Luxembourg *Dictionary of Authors*. Joris is reticent towards self-translation (interviews).

For instance, the publications of Joris's poetry in Luxembourg involve several poets, notably Nico Helminger, Eric Sarnier and Jean Portante, who have translated some of his work into German and French respectively, in cooperation with the author. The translations often assemble poems from different collections in English, for instance *Fin de siècle-Phantombild* (2004) consists of translations by Nico Helminger of work drawn from previously published collections (*Breccia* 1987 and *Poasis* 2001), while also anticipating two pieces whose original text appears in later English collections. The publications in French and German thus do not all correspond to original titles in English. Joris would call the original language *American*, as the French and German collections indicate: "*traduit de l'américain*; and *aus dem amerikanischen Englisch*." ⁵²²

This achronological whirling of poems in various collections and languages confirms the nomadic principle of breaking lines, blurring tracks and reconfiguring spaces – of *always proceeding from the middle*. A few books have also appeared in bilingual editions, allowing side by side comparisons of texts. ⁵²³ *h.j.r.*, published the same year (1999) in the U.S. and in Luxembourg (in a French translation by Eric Sarnier), is another interesting piece of travelling voices, especially as some poems from *h.j.r.* are also included in *Poasis*. ⁵²⁴

On a map of Joris's work, the second and larger space of translation should accommodate the numerous works in French and German that Joris has translated into English. He has translated all of Paul Celan's work ⁵²⁵ and to cite only a few more examples, one should mention work by Habib Tengour, Edmond Jabès; or the poetry of Pablo Picasso. ⁵²⁶ Joris's publications of innumerable works in translation is not the object of the study, yet for an investigation of translingual processes, his comments on insights gained through a juxtaposition of texts are crucial for his poetics and writing practice. (See ch. 6 and some poems discussed in Part III.)

⁵²² Sometimes the titles of individual poems become the titles of collections in translation: *La dernière traversée de la Manche* (see above); the poem "Fin de siècle. Identikit" in *Breccia* becomes *Phantombild*, figuring also as the title of a collection in German translated by Nico Helminger (2004); "Canto Diurno" a sequence of numbered poems becomes the title of a collection in French translated by Jean Portante *Canto Diurno* 2017).

⁵²³ *Aljibar* and *Aljibar II*: bilingual editions Pierre Joris & Eric Sarnier (2007, 2008); *The Book of U – Le livre des cormorans*, Pierre Joris & Nicole Peyrafitte (2017); *Conversations in the Pyrenees* – Adonis & Pierre Joris (2018).

⁵²⁴ The tri-consonantal Arabic root *h.j.r.* states the fact of *exile* in the nouns *hejer/hejira*: and points to a polysemy that Joris points out in an essay: "Writing is this exile, *h.j.r.*, *hejr*, *hejira*, Hagar, she, me, wandering in desert or city, that nomadcity." ("A Nomad Poetics Revisited: Poetry and Translation in a Global Age" 2013, under 1) no pagination). More on Arabic titles below.

⁵²⁵ He has worked on translations of Celan's work for more than fifty years and with *Microliths They Are, Little Stones: Posthumous Prose* completed the publication of all of Celan's literary texts in English in 2020. See ch. 6

⁵²⁶ See list included in *Cartographies* and Luxembourg *Dictionary of Authors*.

4.3.3.4 A place for multiple languages and voices inside the poet's texts

Language multiplicity and the wanderings of words across distinct languages, at first is not a well visible feature of Joris's texts and proves more difficult to map. One could attempt to map Joris's work according to languages, reserving a space for English, French, Arabic, Luxembourgish and "other languages". Soon one would have to realize that apart from his translations, the very vast majority of his writing would figure on a map of works in English. Yet this seems an unsatisfying simplification, as so much of the writing obviously echoes (his) other languages.

A distinction between multilingual *books* and the multiple languages of *texts* is helpful to make out the nature of some specific features of his writing. Work on the notion of heterolingualism and translingual writing are helpful (see ch.3.1 and 3.3) His books (collections of poems or essays) are never truly multilingual in the sense of a juxtaposition of pieces written in different languages.⁵²⁷ Nonetheless, *individual* texts by Joris present several features that give his work a multilingual dimension, the most frequent forms being quotations from foreign authors, a mixing of languages in a few rare poems, and in many instances short insertions of words or phrases in another language in the English text. (For details, see ch. 7.1.)

The analysis of such texts is the object of Part III; the question here is how to map his work with an awareness of language multiplicity. The multilingual dimension, based on heterolingual elements, is not always an explicit switch into another language, sometimes it is due to more subtle, implicit routes to the language and culture of "the other" and it happens inside the English text through instances of "translation without quotation marks."⁵²⁸

Quotations, coming either in the original language or in translation, are characteristic features of Joris's writing, and a sign of his nomadic reading before writing or during the process.⁵²⁹ In his theoretical essays, quotations situate his thoughts among a vast community of poets and philosophers. They often come as epigraphs, often filling a whole page. Thus, three quotations precede the text of "Notes toward a nomadic poetics": they are all in English though the one from the work of Abdellatif Laâbi is a translation. (*A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 25) *Justifying the Margins* also has three epigraphs, one a quote from a book on the Arab literary tradition by Stefania Pandolfo, a second one an excerpt from a poem by Osip Mandelstam (quoted

⁵²⁷ Like the multilingualism of daily papers in Luxembourg, which juxtapose texts in several languages.

⁵²⁸ Unmarked translation is connected to what Joris has described as "Polysemy without mask", a phrase borrowed from Celan, used as the title of the introductory essay of Paul Celan, *Selection*. 2005; see references in ch. 6 and 7.

⁵²⁹ For more about nomadic reading the chapter on Joris's poetics, see ch. 6.

in an English translation from the Russian), and the third, a statement from Philippe Sollers' book *Camet de nuit*, is given in the original French. Bibliographic references to works in French and German are further evidence of a multilingual process that surrounds the actual writing. They are a feature of critical essays while the poet as creative writer does not provide a list of his "sources."

In the poetry collections, numerous allusions echo of other poets or thinkers. *Breccia*, for instance, has two epigraphs in English and one in French. What all these epitaphs and quotations do is give the reader indications of the route on which the writer travels, they are the words that precede his text or which provide – or recall – a frame of thought.⁵³⁰ Some are comments on aspects of language use and multilingualism;

Les mots lèvent les pensées comme les chiens lèvent les lièvres. (Pierre Guyotat, *Explications*)
 Patientez s'il vous plaît. La langue que vous avez demandée est en cours d'élaboration. (Delta Airlines/ Vol 116 New York- Paris) (Aljibar 2007:13)

They are quite amusing observations yet they also question the the cognitive function of language and reflect on its constructed nature. Considering all these statements in the original and I translation, one can imagine the vast web of texts and multilingual voices, which emerges from an inventory of all the references and quotes found in Joris's works. Beyond the variety of origins in several national languages, these quotations also point to a great diversity of discourses and to a wide range of information from many disciplinary fields, like critical studies/ philosophy, anthropology, science, poetry, which reach from the present into remote past areas, like the references to pre-Islamic Sufism.

Mapping the poet's languages through inserted words in his poems shows the spectrum of languages that he knows well and those that have attracted his attention. They range from French, German to occasionally Latin, Italian, Spanish and Arabic words. Simply browsing through the books, one easily identifies examples such as for instance *mawqif*, *kleine Aster/ Kleine Mandel* (*Poasis*, 64); *La Manche* (*Poasis*, 119); *explosante-fixe*, *al-Ishk*. These words appear as nomadic elements traversing the dominant, English language, yet as nomads they are strangers and intruders that attract attention. They are characteristics of a thinker and speaker used to moving between languages: they allude to other texts

⁵³⁰ See Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré* (1982) and Antoine Compagnon, *La Seconde main ou le travail de la citation* (1979). Quotations will be further discussed in the analysis of particular texts, in connection with palimpsestic writing processes.

while they are also reminiscent of everyday language practices in Luxembourg (see ch.5) and raise questions about language hospitality.⁵³¹

Paratextual elements (Genette⁵³²), provide indications about the spread of books, their routes of travelling and indirectly also about the language regime to which authors have to submit.⁵³³ A quick look at bibliographical information shows that Joris's books have appeared in different countries with the vast majority published in the US and UK, where the reticence towards bi-lingual editions or multilingual writing is blatant.⁵³⁴ On account of these hurdles it is remarkable that Joris could publish *Meditations on the Stations of Mansur Al-Hallaj* (2013) in the United States, a book where the title of each poem includes a transcript in the Arabic alphabet. The bi-lingual English-French editions of *Aljibar* (2007; 2008) and the multilingual script of *The Agony of I.B* (2016) have appeared in Luxembourg, where editors accept to publish texts in two or more languages.

Joris questions the role of chronology as a line of events and appears to care more about the context in which a text is created. The moment and place of writing, as important elements of texts, are often scrupulously recorded in individual pieces. Dating and locating texts provides valuable information for a study that focusses on writing processes. Joris the nomad seems able to write anywhere, as the following details of information for an early poem show:

4/23/74 11.40 am Saturday
PAN AM FLIGHT 101 London → New York (*An American Suite*, 83)

On other occasions, he inserts comments on the travelling in the text, in particular while writing up his answers for interviewers' questions. Some poetic work is also explicitly linked to recent events (the Iraq War, the Deepwater Horizon disaster). These temporal dimensions require their own kind of mapping.

⁵³¹ For a distinction of practices used in the analysis, see ch. 7 and Appendix 2: The spectrum of otherness in translingual writing.

⁵³² Dans *Seuils* (1987), Gérard Genette désigne par le terme "paratexte" ce qui entoure et prolonge le texte. G. Genette distingue deux sortes de paratexte regroupant des discours et des pratiques hétéroclites émanant de l'auteur (paratexte auctorial) ou de l'éditeur (paratexte éditorial). Il s'agit du paratexte situé à l'intérieur du livre – le péri-texte – (le titre, les sous-titres, les intertitres, les noms de l'auteur et de l'éditeur, la date d'édition, la préface, les notes, les illustrations, la table des matières, la postface, la quatrième de couverture...) et celui situé à l'extérieur du livre – l'épi-texte – (entretiens et interviews donnés par l'auteur avant, après ou pendant la publication de l'œuvre, sa correspondance, ses journaux intimes...).

⁵³³ See Rebecca Walkowitz, "The Location of Literature: The Transnational Book and the Migrant Writer" (2006) for theoretical considerations.

⁵³⁴ For an analysis of hurdles to multilingual literary studies and productions in the U.S., see Brian Lennon, *In Babel's Shadow: Multilingual Literatures, Monolingual States* (2010) and David Gramling, *The Invention of Monolingualism* (2016).

4.3.3.5 Mapping the poetic spaces of other poets: the nomad as mediator

Joris's nomadic work extends over wide territories reaching beyond his own writings and shown by the space covered in several anthologies, while it also includes the spaces provided by electronic media of which he makes extensive use. Mapping these dimension of his work means following many additional routes between and toward different languages and cultural areas.

Anthologies, or “nomadology in action”

The editing and publication of anthologies, that is of collections of selected literary pieces by several writers, is the outcome of the nomad's multiple encounters with other voices and for Joris an eminently nomadic act. Anthologies involve a dialogical process through contact with selected writers and the cooperation with co-editors.⁵³⁵ Joris has been particularly interested in promoting so-called avant-garde work. Selecting mostly work of marginal writers or of writers who belong to literary cultures far removed from Anglo-Saxon centres is an act of resistance against existing canons. As an anthologist he is the mediator who adds comments and situates writers in relation to others. Moreover, anthologizing has often involved substantial translation work.

A selection of Joris's work as anthologist reveals a dimension of translingualism, which situates the individual writers in a broad context and ignores conventional categories of language and nation:

Matières d'Angleterre, a bilingual collection of new English poetry, was the first anthology he coedited with Paul Buck (1984). In a blog, published much later, Joris clarifies their motivations for this no longer available 400-page anthology, (which included many of his own poems) and the hurdles they met. It contained what they considered excellent, experimental, “avant, post-avant — or whatever adjectival moniker you like to stick to — poetry” which is rarely available to readers. He explains the difficulties the publication of such unconventional work involved and how it was published in France but not quite satisfactorily either—a truly nomadic publication.⁵³⁶ Interestingly, the introduction is one of the few pieces Joris has written in French.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁵ Co-editing for Joris has meant intense exchanges with Jerome Rothenberg (known for his contributions to ethnopoeitics) or Habib Tengour, a French Algerian poet.

⁵³⁶ When we did the book there was no way an English publisher was going to touch it with a ten-foot pole, & as we couldn't find a US publisher, we prepared from the start a bilingual edition to be published in France where it was scheduled to come out in *change sauvage*, a new series to be edited by Jean-Pierre Faye for Christian Bourgois Editeur. Just as we were ready to send the final ms., Bourgois decided unilaterally (the only way publishers make decisions, me thinks), to stop publishing any poetry under whatever guise. [...The] 400-page anthology came out without the authors' names on the book & disappeared a few months later from the shelves when it was replaced by the next issue of the magazine. <http://www.pierrejoris.com/blog/that-old-new-british-poetry-scene/>

⁵³⁷ In the blog, he writes that “an English translation by Peter Cockelbergh should be coming out in a feature on my work in an upcoming issue of Jacket.” It does not seem to have appeared yet.

Joris is much better known for the *Millennium Anthologies*, in particular Vol. 1 and 2 (coedited with Rothenberg)⁵³⁸ and Vol. 4 on North African literature (coedited with Habib Tengour)⁵³⁹. In an interview with Chris Funkhouser (1997), Rothenberg and Joris converse about their project. Joris admits that in terms of a nomadic poetics, published anthologies still have shortcomings: Despite the editors' wish to promote a multilingual view on literature, the anthologies are not really multilingual. Their multilingualism is mostly understood as translation. Moreover, as the editors readily concede, the texts are still but a limited representation of poetry in the world, since the books (with the exception of volume 4) remain centred on a North-American perspective. The anthologies are said to be "open", this also means they cannot be considered as complete or finished work. Yet, one may wonder if they will in fact be continued. The book *form*, despite all its attractiveness, might be the greatest obstacle.

The benefit of the anthologies is that as books they are no longer a mere vision, they exist, and as a project they have drawn attention to poets and texts that would otherwise remain unknown outside a limited Local readership. They are an invitation to scholars and readers and writers to think differently about poetry, writing, translating and teaching.

The space of "cybernomadics"

As Joris says (e.g. *A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 91-92), **cyberpoetics** could allow many additional opportunities for opening the canon; the interactive medium would also involve readers in the publication process. Mapping, better than lists, allows recording writings not linked to a geographical location. In line with nomadic principles, electronic media have come to play prominent role in Joris's work which he sees as texts produced by a nomad for nomadic readers. Hence my suggestion to speak of *cybernomadics*. (More in ch. 6, on his poetics in relation to Indra's net or the world wide web.)

Nomadics is the name of his blog, for which Joris gives a short description: "Meanderings & mawqifs of poetry, poetics, translations y mas. Travelogue too" (<https://pierrejoris.com/blog/author/admin/>) True to his belief in the importance of interaction, Joris offers the blog as space of information and response. It is regularly updated with literary news from many parts of the world, often with an emphasis on texts and events that involve other languages than English. It is a space for other voices and its tags and archives open up to many further spaces to explore. In addition, Joris has a personal **webpage** which updates his publications, while it is also a means to position himself as a poet in a carefully selected setting: the North African landscapes chosen as screen background displays the austere and barren rocks of high mountains

⁵³⁸ Volume 1: *From Fin-de-Siècle to Negritude*, and Volume 2: *From Post-War to Millennium*.

⁵³⁹ Volume 4. *Diwan Iffrikya. An Anthology of North African Writings from Prehistory to Today*.

(the Atlas?) – not the sands of the desert – offer no distraction for a world of thought (<https://pierrejoris.com/>)

Audio material, such as recordings of poetry readings, lectures and conversations, is also available online, for instance on “penn sound” a site of the University of Pennsylvania (<http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Joris.php>). On youtube, more material can be accessed, for instance, Joris interviewed by Paul Auster (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7kQ_HV3LL8) or a feature that relies on mixed media forms to present Joris and Paul Celan:

Eminent poet and translator Pierre Joris meditates on his 50-year engagement with the works of Paul Celan. A multimedia show, produced by Nicole Peyrafitte, the event integrates a range of elements including live narrative and translated poems, and a slideshow of visual materials including photographs, manuscript pages, etchings by Gisèle Celan-Lestrange, historical documents and other relevant and resonant materials. The recording was made during the Occupy Harvard movement and references are made to it at the beginning of the program. (Harvard University, November 15, 2011 at the Edison-Newman Room, Houghton Library <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6FIWKyqUyM>)

More work and performances co-authored with Nicole Peyrafitte are available in numerous videos on youtube.

4.3.3.5 Titles as signposts of a nomad's mental routes and linguistic explorations

The title of his first essay collection, *A Nomad Poetics*, is a clear reference to the writer's overall concern with intellectual nomadism. *Justifying the Margins* hints at an in-between position, on the fringes of cultural centres; the term *margin* is also an allusion to the work of Jacques Derrida, to whom he pays a warm homage in a personal valedictory text included in this collection. Real and imaginary places for nomads always merge in Joris's work, as the reference to *Arabia (not so) Deserta* as a historical prototype for all his texts about the Arab world suggests.

In a subtle way, several titles of poetry collections also give hints of his poetic nomadism and his linguistic expertise. *Breccia*, the title of *Selected poems 1971-1986*, is a geological term, whose explanation comes as a kind of epigraph:

- 1: a rock consisting of sharp fragments embedded in a fine-grained matrix (as sand or clay)
- 2: an agglomerate deposit of debris in a cave or other site occupied by prehistoric man.

Breccia thus is a way to describe Joris's poetry, more specifically the forms and style he uses in connection with what he attempts to convey. In the Preface, he stresses the fragmentary nature of his writing, on which he later elaborates as a characteristic of the nomadic poet, constantly on the move:

What I would have liked to come through in BRECCIA is the tension between the fragmentary nature of experience & knowledge, & the desire for a narrative syntax, for the whole story of the tribe, the telling of which does inevitably blur the sharp edges of those shards. Europe gave me my own history, those ghostly voices of the ancestors, real or made-up, lied to or listened to. America gave me geography, the space of my dance. My hope has been that language, or what little of it I have been able to serve, has made a threshing floor for their marriage. (*Breccia* 1987: 13)

In short, like experience and knowledge, poetry is fragmentary but like rock fragments which are given cohesion within a natural matrix, his writing strives to connect the two worlds that have most clearly left their marks on him: Europe and America.

The title of the next major collection, *Poasis* (poems 1986-1999) is, as far as I know, a word he has created himself to express a close link between poetry and oasis, the latter being a clear reference to the growing interest in aspects of nomadism, also reflected in the titles of other books. An enquiry into their meaning shows that they allude to views on poetry, and the task or the position of the nomadic poet:

h.j.r.⁵⁴⁰ : These three letters stand for three roots of the Arabic language; they may mean what Joris calls “the world of hajra” or exile to which he says he belongs: “[T]he natural condition of my being in the world is that of hajra, to use the Arabic word (that is also the title of one of my collections of poems) that means exile, going away, going forth and so on.” (“ReadySteadyBlog Interview, “in *Justifying the Margins* 2009: 47),.

Aljibar is an Arabic word that figures as the title of two bilingual English-French collections (2007 and 2008) as well as in the title of *Aljibar America. Poems 2000-2010*. In *Aljibar*, a preliminary note (here quoted from the text in French) shows the link between *aljibar* and *magazine* (another word of Arabic origin) mostly in the sense of depot for goods. The list of meanings drawn from a thesaurus is illuminating as it informs readers about possible functions of poems:

extrait du Thésaurus:

magasin.

[Noms] stock, fonds, gisement, veine, filon, carrière; source, fontaine; puits.

réserve ; amas (collection) [plus] ; trésor ; réserve, corps de réserve, bas de laine.

économies, bonne bouche.

récolte, moisson, tonte, cru.

Boutique, accumulation, magot, pil, meule ; provision [plus]

hangar, resserre, dépôt, cache, réservoir, répertoire ; entrepôt, magasin, garde-manger, grenier, conserverie, coffre ; thesaurus ; banque (trésor) [plus] ; armurerie ; arsenal ; dock, galerie, musée, conservatoire ; ménagerie.

⁵⁴⁰ As I have no knowledge whatsoever of the Arabic language, I rely on some explanations found in Joris's writings but hesitate to comment in any way.

réservoir, citerne, aljibar ;gazomètre.
 budget, carquois, badoulière, portefeuille ; caisse (réceptacle) [plus] .
 conservation, rangement ; magasinage. (Aljibar 2007: 7)

Barzakh is another polysemic Arabic word which refers to the nomad's in-between position and related mental states or states of being.⁵⁴¹ The literal meaning of 'Barzakh' is a veil or a barrier that stands between two things and which does not allow the two to meet. It is also the name of an online magazine, of which Joris is an editorial board members. He tells us that *Barzakh* is:

a word / concept that names the connecting link, the "between" of something, such as different spheres of existence. As a temporal concept it can be, and historically was, considered an interval of time— say, the time between death and Resurrection in the Qu'ran, similar to the Bardo Thödol of the Tibetans, or the travel between life and death as the Egyptians imagined it. Thus traditionally seen as a separator, it is however also and more interestingly thinkable as a "between" that links, and in that sense can be translated as "isthmus."

Diwan Iffrikyia : The title initially proposed for the *Anthology of North African Writings from Prehistory to Today*, which Joris edited together with Habib Tengour, was *Diwan Iffrikyia*, now used as subtitle. Originally a diwan was a register, while later it came to mean a collection of poetry (as used by J.W. Goethe in *West-östlicher Divan*).

Other Arabic titles are discussed in Part III, as part of the analysis of Joris's poetic work.

4.3.4 The routes of reception

Joris's publications have been widely reviewed in Anglophone, mostly American, but also British locations, as well as in Francophone countries and in Luxembourg. Here are just a few indications on general responses (more follows in connection with his poetics in ch. 6):

Pierre Joris is a genuine Luxembourgian Yankee, who has invaded the American language, not to plunder but to enrich us with his presence. The scope of the work is large, the thrust is synthesizing, the idiom particular and rich. Arenard-coyote, his accomplishment is there for all of us to see and hear. (Jerome Rothenberg)⁵⁴²

"A citizen of everywhere and nowhere" (Interview with SJ Fowler 2012)

The preceding sections have numerous references to *Cartographies of the In-between* (2011) but mostly to biographical details provided in the interviews, which are inserted between academic critical articles.

⁵⁴¹ Most of the information is drawn from an interview of Barbara Jane Reyes with Piere Joris and Urayoán Noel. "Shout Out: Barzakh.", Poetry Foundation, April 29th, 2010.

⁵⁴² See back cover of poetry collection *Barzakh*, 2014.

It is a full-length book with an impressive collection of texts edited and arranged by Peter Cockelbergh.⁵⁴³ Their heterogeneity may well have been the aim of the editor who invited contributions from a wide range of people familiar with the poet's work: scholars, poets, critics and friends. An important aim has been to make the work of Joris better known:

Pierre Joris is known to many – above all as a poet, but also as a scholar, prolific translator, critic/essayist, anthologist, blogger, nomad travelling between languages & continents, editor, letter writer, radio broadcaster, teacher, performer, active poetry “communard” and so on. It is curious, therefore, to observe that scholarship or criticism which actually engages Joris's work is virtually non-existent, i.e. that his writing always seems to slip through the mazes of – usually only nationally oriented – American, British, French, North African, Luxembourgish or German secondary literature. (Cockelbergh 2011:15)

This description of Joris's situation fits nomadic or transnational writers who do not fit into the conventional categories of academic institutions and research.

Cartographies has many features of a Festschrift, in which colleagues and friends pay tribute to the poet. It is a nomadic piece with contributors hailing from three continents and representing all the main routes of the poet's parcours. It also exemplifies a refusal to stick to one genre only: in addition to critical essays that constitute the bulk of contributions, the book opens and closes on poems that capture the nature of nomadic life and work. Moreover, between the main sections, talks between Joris and the editor are inserted; they are called *Géographèmes* and aim at contextualizing the essays but above all give a voice to the poet himself. The purely academic and literary discourse, in line with a nomadic poetics, is thus interrupted by passages of recorded conversations, which introduce through narration give life to the more abstract critical discourse of the essays. A strict distinction between poet/author and critics is broken; the book suggests the exchange within a nomadic community.

The complex overall structure of the collection corresponds to the process of mapping contained in the title, *Cartographies*, while at the same time it underlines overlapping and between-ness. Space and language/linguistics are combined in the French neologism of *géographèmes* used in headings for the subdivisions (“US–géographèmes; Maghreb, Algeria–géographèmes; Luxembourg–géographèmes; UK, France (,Germany)–géographèmes”).

The essays extensively deal with various aspects of nomadcity in Joris's life and work, often elaborating on conceptual elements (see for instance Cockelbergh, “justifying the Margins 337- 375) and how Joris

⁵⁴³ Peter Cockelbergh is a Belgian poet, scholar and translator living in Lille, France. <https://ebsn.eu/about-ebsn/members/peter-cockelbergh/>

has moved beyond merely applying Deleuze and Guattari's version of nomadism and minor literature. Traces left by other thinkers, like Derrida, are pointed out. References to Joris's multiple languages abound in the various essays. However, as "interdisciplinary" as the book appears to be, its focus is on Joris's poetic practices, mostly seen through the perspective of other poets, not on sociocultural features or translingual processes.

All the essays in *Cartographies* are in English or in English translation, yet the international team of contributors bring a diversity of cultural perspectives. For some English is the academic lingua franca behind which the reader can imagine voices in French (Brossard, Peyrafitte) with, as biographical details hint, echoes of many other languages, like Flemish/ Dutch, Arabic, Italian, Romanian. In ch 6 reception is further discussed as dialogue in relation to the poet's own positioning.

4.4 Summing up. The multilingual poet: nomad or migrant?

Cultural hybridity and historical contexts involving fascination with some languages and distance from others were particularly strong in the 1940s and the 1950s when Joris and Welch grew up in Luxembourg and were immersed in an educational environment marked by implicit images of cultural identity, difference and between-ness. Later they experienced, and indeed seemed to seek, other instances of periphery: Consciously or unconsciously, they seemed to fit most of their lives and work around places and literatures, which those in the cultural centres perceive as peripheries. Despite their voluntary exile from a small country, Luxembourg, and the attraction they have felt for a dominant language, English, much of their later interest has included participation and support of what may be perceived as smaller, or peripheral literatures from the perspectives of cultural centres.

Mapping the poets' itineraries is an investigation into modes of travelling. It gives some insights into how poets, their work and their languages wander across real and mental spaces. A juxtaposition of the information drawn about Welch and about Joris reveals some similarities as well as differences.

From mapping we gain key insights into the nature of movements as integral parts of language dimensions. On the one hand, mapping shows that through its connections with a life of wandering the poets' work fits with views on writing foregrounded in trans-national or trans-area studies. On the other hand, attempts at mapping the work of Welch and Joris points to differences which confirm the diversity of nomadic dimensions surveyed in chapter 3.

Both poets' work and lives would fit into Ette's concept of literature on the move or of *Zwischen Welten Schreiben* (2001; 2005) with its representations of diverse forms of literary movements. The routes followed by Welch and Joris too, seem suitable for visual representations, though it is not easy to identify

their travelling with one particular model of moving that Ette presents: their work shares common points with several of his models. For instance, it shows traits of imaginary trajectories that he sees in the literature of homelessness on the model of an odyssey; Welch and Joris are also examples of poets speaking with the words of others; Joris's writing appears as a construction that exposes traces of breaks and insertions; Welch's constant movements between Old and New World can be seen as oscillations, while both poets often attempt new configurations. Mapping shows that writing between worlds means remaining an outsider; both Welch and Joris agree that they need the experience of difference and distance that travelling offers for their own positioning in writing.

In the case of Joris, the mapping of his work means breaking with traditional genres and other conventions of classification. The nomad's writing space is a very open field, which remains mobile and ready to accommodate further areas of exploration. Welch's work, for its part, reflects a more conventional conception of poetic and academic genres.

Mapping their lives and work has also highlighted the dissimilarity of their travelling routes. Welch mostly moves between two poles, along fairly regular routes and according to some rituals and routines: Canada in the winter, Europe in the summer. Not surprisingly she likes the image of migratory birds to speak of her travelling and her returns. Joris prefers intersecting routes, is always open for new directions; some recurrent spaces mark his travelling – though it seems he always tries to reach or cross these spaces from different directions. Mapping his life and work must reflect a form of intense networking and interconnectedness.

A major question of my investigation concerns the relation between travelling movements and the poets' understandings of their multiple languages. Mapping reveals the complex links that appear between movements, locations and languages. Thus, none of the poets' languages is exclusively attached to one place (possibly with the exception of Luxembourgish). Moreover, the nature of their travelling (regular routes for Welch, or intricate networks for Joris) involves differences in the way their multiple languages transpire in their texts. Welch who tends to be on the move between two poles or two well defined and distinct spaces also keeps her languages quite separate. Her knowledge of French and German and Italian hardly ever seems to emerge on the surface of her monolingual texts in English. Joris, for his part, despite sticking to English as the dominant language, goes to great lengths to show connections with other languages and cultures.

These differences between both poets can be put in the context of the diversity of nomadic theories (seen in chapter 3), which reveal varying emphases on dimensions of space, of writing processes and multiple interacting languages. In particular, the frequent juxtaposition of migration and nomadism as two related

though not identical concepts points to factors that highlight links between travelling and relations to language.⁵⁴⁴

From a perspective of space theory, Kailuweit (2009) provides helpful clues for fundamental distinctions, which deserve further elaboration: he insists on the polarity of the migrant's world, the ongoing importance of origins, the resulting oscillatory movement between two spaces and the creation of a third space (cf. Homi Bhabha and Edward Soja). From his description of nomadic space I retain the reference to a web-like structure with multi-dimensional movements and interconnections, which perfectly fits Joris's itineraries.

In her mappings (or outlining) of figures of travelling Braidotti, for her part, underlines the differing role of language for nomads and migrants (see ch. 3) and her distinctions rely on a comparison of attitudes or positions. The nomad gladly accepts temporary stays and ongoing travelling, also in new languages, as part of a process of becoming, while the migrant, as she sees her, remains very much aware of origins and attached to the mother tongue. A feeling of loss prevails, though possibly along with the desire to find a new, stable home; there is none of the nomad's readiness for further travelling. One might also say that the nomad is primarily forward looking though accepting the role of past experiences, while the migrant tends to nostalgic backward looking, driven by a belief in the importance of roots.

This is an oversimplified summary of Braidotti's figurations of nomads and migrants, yet it should help see different forms of attachments to languages – to the mother tongue in particular. Joris indisputably corresponds to the figure of the nomad, while Welch's life and work gives a more ambivalent picture. She positions herself as the nomad who is glad to leave her past and the languages attached to her origins behind (at least in her writing); opting for English and fully committing herself to the new language, she looks forward, yet her work also has many hints at the need for a *home*, or rather for two homes. In her writing, roots and a reconstruction of the past are as important as looking ahead. The wish to make the language her home can also be seen as the reflection of a migrant's desire for stability and a new rootedness. She has compared her life to that of migratory birds that follow regular, yearly routes.⁵⁴⁵

Mapping provides insights into the poets' reconfigurations of centres and of peripheries and of connections to other writers. It also corresponds to the notion of "path" which in both works evoke a mental (or spiritual) dimension of travelling, sometimes associated with pilgrimage. For the nomad poet, space, separation and distance are crucial. In Welch's work, one notices the emphasis on constant movements between continents, which she deems indispensable for her poetic work. For her, the writing

⁵⁴⁴ See ch. 3 for more details on the blurred distinction between nomads and migrants.

⁵⁴⁵ For instance in a poem called "Migration" in *Word-House* (see ch. 8.1).

process starts with thoughts emerging during mountain climbs in the Alps while the actual writing takes place in her study in Canada. Moreover, whenever she is in Europe, she quickly longs to go back to her simple monastic life in Canada whereas in Canada she often glorifies Europe for its cultural events and rich heritage.

Inevitably, juxtaposition also involves a critical distance to signs of established practices and a refusal to fully identify with national entities or literary associations. Nomads need their own poetics to deal with encountered diversity and arising tensions. Both poets' readiness to drop their mother tongue – without regret, it seems – and memories of multiple language experiences are the subject of the next chapter.

5. Memories of multiple languages in movement

5.1 Introduction: Connecting linguistic and nomadic perspectives

The introduction sets the frame for an investigation of poets' memories of multiplicity in language experiences. At this stage, it is appropriate to identify a few aspects of language theories that allow connections between studies of multilingualism, notably in applied linguistics, and nomadic theory. The assumption is that the views of writers who are constantly on the move can enhance an understanding of multiple languages. As nomadic travellers, the authors have developed a particular sense of interaction, of *becoming* (i.e. of the transformative nature of language experiences) and of the space in which languages are observed.

Exiles' memories of contact with multiple languages cannot be expected to be rigorously argued critical pieces. Experiential dimensions prevail. As texts written by expert writers they will display the authors' concern for a linguistic expression that conveys the core of their experiences as accurately as possible. In the analysis of poets' early memories in the next sections particular attention goes to their use of images, their references to voices and evocations of space (see ch. 2 methodology). The aim is to situate a critical reading of their accounts in today's debates on language and multilingualism.

5.1.1 Contextualizing a critical reading of nomads' memories of early language experiences

The bases used for a critical reading of the poets' language memories should be looked for in studies dealing with the nature of language and multilingualism. Thinkers and linguists of various orientations have pointed out the profusion of theories and the sheer size of the research space. This vast field fits Wittgenstein's description of a country for which we have maps in many bits and pieces but no synoptic, overall view. (See Kenneth White.)

Thus, the title, which Julia Kristeva chooses for her comprehensive overview of issues that face the researcher speaks for itself: *Le langage, cet inconnu* (1981). In her investigation into the nature of language, she recalls on the one hand that language theories reflect the ways of thinking of the times in which they arise: "Car on ne saura assigner à sa place la linguistique, et encore moins faire une science de la signification, sans une théorie de l'histoire sociale en tant qu'interaction de plusieurs pratiques signifiantes." (1981: Kindle Loc 6428 of 6460). Joris and Welch are not properly speaking linguists, yet their views on languages reveal some familiarity with ongoing debates while memories linked to their childhood will need some contextualization in the Luxembourg surroundings where they grew up. On the

other hand, for Kristeva, thoughts about language cannot be dissociated from the (thinking) subject.⁵⁴⁶ In other words, not national, named languages are at the centre of her enquiry, but language (*le langage*) as a socially situated meaning making process. It is an instrument of thought, situated in a historical context and linked to a speaking and thinking subject. Especially, for migrants, exiles or nomads, continuously confronted with difference and otherness, the meaning making function of language is important – not least in their memories.

Several other core features found in many studies and their underpinning theories can guide the reading of nomads' memories.

- In "Is there a language behind 'speaking'?" (2013) Sybille Krämer gives an overall appreciation of significant changes in views on language across the 20th century. Language is no longer considered as a system of structures. The overall emphasis is put on acts of language and the performative dimension: language is a way of doing things with words. (See Austin)⁵⁴⁷ Derrida extensively explores the notion of *acts of language* which include his view of literature (see *Acts of Literature*, texts by Derrida, edited by Attridge 1992); Language is studied as a social and cultural practice. Pennycook explores the mobility of language (cf. "English as always a language in translation" 2008)) as well as its Local character (*Language as Local Practice* 2010).⁵⁴⁸
- The materiality of language is another frequent characteristic underlined through references to the body.⁵⁴⁹ A focus on language as embodied experience points to the role of speech organs, to ears and also to eyes and hands when approaches of symbolic forms of language, such as writing and reading, are considered. The view of language as embodied is particularly important for those who evolve multiple languages. The experience of difference implies moving between languages, as especially nomads do.

⁵⁴⁶ Hence her further research into psycho-analysis (which I will not pursue further). Cf.: ⁵⁴⁶ Car, en dehors de la linguistique, l'étude psychanalytique du rapport du sujet à son discours a indiqué qu'on ne saurait traiter du langage – quelque systématique que puisse paraître la langue – sans tenir compte de son sujet. La langue-système formelle n'existe pas en dehors de la parole, la langue est avant tout discours. 1981 : Loc 6416 of 6460

⁵⁴⁷ Cf. 3.1.2: See Austin's performative view of language (*How to do things with words* 1962).

⁵⁴⁸ Pennycook: "The notion of language as practice takes us away from a notion of language as a pre-given entity. [...] To look at language as a practice is to view language as an activity rather than a structure, as something we do rather than a system we draw on, as a material part of social and cultural life rather than an abstract entity." (2010: 2)

⁵⁴⁹ For references to embodied language, see for instance Kristeva 1981 ch. 1; Derrida 1998; Kramsch 2009; Bleich 2013; Busch 2013; 2017.

- The emphasis on language as embodied experience also involves the affective dimension of language experience; it may also lead to a consideration of gender issues, as emphasized by Rosi Braidotti (see ch. 3.2.4). This position is particularly important for a reading of Welch's memories.
- The existence of language plurality or multiplicity is not questioned but it has been diversely interpreted.⁵⁵⁰ The poets' memories will echo these diverging approaches and consequently allow links to notions used in other studies.

Views on the plurality of language or plurality in language are at the core of the present study. Despite their broad objectives of enquiry, many studies on language multiplicity reflect particular linguistic and cultural contexts: Hence the complexity of issues increases when theories rooted in different languages and academic cultures are juxtaposed. National and named languages often have their specific terminologies to speak about linguistic matters. Theories, for instance, differ considerably according to binary or ternary views. Romance languages distinguish between *langue*, *langage*, *parole*; German and English, like Latin, rely on a dual view (*Sprache and Rede*; language/ tongue and speech).⁵⁵¹ One may speak of *the nomadity of theories*, which while "wandering" across languages undergo transformations. A study of poets' memories of languages aims at combining a focus on texts (philologists' views) with a focus on speakers (applied linguists' views).

On the one hand, in an emphasis on aesthetic issues at stake, some literary studies offer a productive overview (Dembeck and Mein, eds, *Philologie und Mehrsprachigkeit* 2014). In his synthesis of case studies and underlying theories, Dembeck foregrounds notions of difference as well as the possibility of language universality (2014: 9-38).

On the other hand, language policies in the EU and in other parts of the world have triggered numerous projects on language multiplicity as it affects individuals, institutions and communities. The emphasis is on socio-cultural and educational issues; however important in scope and depth, these studies tend to eschew questions about the very nature of language. Here is how the editors of *Précis du plurilinguisme et du pluriculturalisme* (2008)⁵⁵² define plurality in the introductory chapter:

Plurality is approached [...]:

- as a complex aggregate, rather than as the simplified object of a communicatively oriented language pedagogy primarily concerned with intelligibility

⁵⁵⁰ Note on terminology and translation problems. I will use multiplicity as the general term and use other notions to deal with distinctive aspects (see Glossary in the appendix).

⁵⁵¹ Cf. Cassin, *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies* (2006) – various entries attempt to clarify the terminology used in different languages. See for instances, key words like *langue*, *acte de langage*, *sujet*.

⁵⁵² Translated as *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism* (2010), available on-line: <https://u-pad.unimc.it/retrieve/handle/11393/40435/804/HandBookCompleteLight.pdf>

- as a coherent system of relationships whose description cannot be reduced to a series of mechanical operations
- as a socio-historical construct, observable from many simultaneous, spatio-temporal points of view, such as that of everyday interactions or that of institutions whose symbolic force cannot be accounted for from one point of view alone (Zarate, Lévy, Kramsch, *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism* 2010:3)

The resulting wealth of ideas, the attending problems of translation and possible misunderstandings proves important for an analysis of views on language in texts by poets, who have lived with and between languages.⁵⁵³

5.1.2 Methodological issues for studies of remembered languages in movement

Memories of language experiences are central in many texts of migrant literature (for instance, Eva Hoffman; Ilma Rakusa; Elias Canetti and others). A critical reading of the pieces by Welch and Joris asks for an awareness of their attempts at rendering remembered sense perceptions (a phenomenological approach) through appropriate stylistic (aesthetic) means.

Early contact with languages in poets' memories is understood as experiences with words, spoken or written. This diversity corresponds to what has been described as *linguistic repertoire*. (Busch 2010: 59) The notion of repertoire is based on a speaker-centred understanding of language, for a study of which a phenomenological approach seems the most appropriate. (Busch 2010⁵⁵⁴; Inkipin 2016⁵⁵⁵) Busch insists on the embeddedness of language experience in speakers' *lebenswelt*, which involves dialogical processes of development:

Es ist eine Auffassung von Sprache, die Interaktion, den dialogischen Prozess zwischen den an der Interaktion beteiligten Partner/Innen als konstituierend für Sprache sieht. Mit Bachtin bzw. der Weiterentwicklung seines Modells durch Kristeva sehen wir jede sprachliche Äußerung als dialogisch, als im Hinblick auf ein reelles (oder gedachtes) Gegenüber getätigt. Der Text ist von intertextuellen Bezügen geprägt und etabliert unsere Kontinuität mit uns selbst und mit anderen, weil das Wort Spuren früherer Worte enthält (Kristeva 1988). (Busch 2010: 60)

⁵⁵³ The term plurality rather than multiplicity points to a Francophone vision; *plurilingue* in French refers to a subject's interrelated languages in contrast to *multilingue* as a description of places where several languages exist side by side. The expression "a coherent system of interrelationships" is somewhat puzzling.

⁵⁵⁴ "Das Konzept des Sprachrepertoires geht nicht von Sprachen als Entitäten aus, sondern nimmt eine sprecherzentrierte Perspektive an. Letztendlich ist es damit einem phänomenologischen Ansatz verpflichtet, der auf Edmund Husserl zurückgehend dem Erleben eine zentrale Stellung einräumt. / Ausgangspunkt sind nicht voretablierte Kategorisierungen, Abstraktionen und Quantifizierungen, sondern die Lebenswelt. Diese Lebenswelt, die – übertragen auf das Spracherleben – immer eine heteroglossische ist, wird nicht als statischer Hintergrund verstanden, sondern als dynamischer Horizont, als kollektiver intersubjektiver Pool der Wahrnehmung, als gemeinsames Erfahrungsfeld und Feld transformierender Handlungen. (Brigitta Busch, "Die Macht präbabilischer Phantasien" 2010: 59)

⁵⁵⁵ Andrew Inkipin, *Disclosing the World: On the Phenomenology of Language* 2016.

Busch also notes:

The notion of the lived experience of language which I am elaborating here emphasizes the intersubjective dimension of language as a gesture toward the other and casts light on the often-neglected bodily and emotional dimensions of perception and speech. Attaching particular importance to the perspective of the experiencing subject, the concept is based on phenomenological approaches, as developed in the 1940s by the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty. ("Expanding the Notion of the Linguistic Repertoire: On the Concept of *Spracherleben* — The Lived Experience of Language" 2017: 340)

Experiences appear to be embedded in the poets' *lebenswelt* (Busch), which one could also describe as language space, in which interactions and dialogue appear as constitutive parts or functions of language. This language space or *lebenswelt* is particularly important for descriptions of encounters with multiple languages.

For Inkpin (2016), a phenomenological approach shows how language discloses the world; like Busch, he refers notably to Merleau-Ponty (*Phénoménologie de la perception*). Inkpin's "surface" or minimalist phenomenological approach⁵⁵⁶ agrees well with our objectives, which are not of a philosophical nature. He combines it with other views on language, as found notably in cognitive sciences, which highlight the embodiment and embeddedness of language, as well as its enactive and extended nature (i.e. he looks at language as practice; "extended" means that features of the environment have a constitutive function in cognition). For language memories attached to all forms of learning through contact and various practices, Inkpin's reference to cognitive processes fits the poets' experiences, which start in the multilingual context of Luxembourg.

An aesthetic approach: Stylistic devices used to disclose views on language experiences

The main sources for the investigation into poets' views on language/s are essays, which include facts and traceable or verifiable information, like names of people and places, titles of books or dates. This factual framework, however, leaves writers room to select and organize the material, to present it from a certain perspective, to bring in narrative elements and various tropes (images, metaphors), which appear particularly appropriate for them to argue complex positions and a multifaceted search for language. Bakhtin's notion of the writer's *orchestration* of voices seems particularly relevant. (1981: 262-263)

Nomadic poets' accounts, from their retrospective standpoints, add dimensions on which a mere focus on language multiplicity or a migrants' perspective cannot dwell. The assumption is that their multiple outsider positions (for instance towards national languages, usually seen from doubly remote viewpoints)

⁵⁵⁶ For Inkpin, working with a minimalistically phenomenological method means there is no need to investigate further dimensions of phenomenology, such as Husserl's transcendentalism or Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology.

are different from the binary view of most migrants. As travellers they can cast specific looks on spaces and interactions.

5.2 Liliane Welch: Reconstructing early language experiences

“My words tap reality to decipher its sounds the way my hands slap the stone for secure holds when I climb. The words become seismographs; like the hands they want to catch the smallest noise.” (*Seismographs* 1988: 76)

“Awakening to Poetry”, is the title Welch has chosen for the first section of *Seismographs, Selected Essays and Reviews* (1988). It contains eight essays, which all deal with memories of her childhood and adolescence in Luxembourg. When the book was published in Canada, Welch had already become a recognized figure of Maritime Canadian literature, mostly as the author of several books of poetry.⁵⁵⁷ The cover, with a photograph of Welch against the background of a snow covered, flat New Brunswick landscape points to the autobiographical nature of the texts. It also indicates the perspective from which the texts are written.

In his introduction to *Seismographs*, Richard Lemm⁵⁵⁸ sees migration, movement and wandering as the hallmarks of Welch’s writings. As he notes, walking and other forms of movement are features that link her work to recurrent themes in Maritime literature. Highlighting the connection between Welch’s expertise at mountain climbing and her writing processes, he moreover situates the essays in connection to places in the Old World which she knows well, loves and writes about – but not to her languages. Linguistic multiplicity or movement between languages, as a characteristic of her writing, is not mentioned.

Admittedly, the (all-English) surface of her texts provides very few hints at an underlying language multiplicity.⁵⁵⁹ However, for a reader sensitive to issues of various facets of multiple language, the speaker

⁵⁵⁷ Some of these essays had previously appeared in various publications in Canada; one was published in Luxembourg, in a German translation by Nic Weber, “Großeltern: ein Fragment” (*Les Cahiers luxembourgeois* 1988: 63-68).

⁵⁵⁸ Richard Lemm is a Canadian poet and professor who lives on Prince Edward Island. (See Atlantic Canadian Poets’ Archive)

⁵⁵⁹ It reflects the language situation in literature in the late 1980s, when language difference in (Anglophone) Canada either passed unnoticed because irrelevant, with all the attention put on poetic (“pure”) language. Indifference to the language of the other is the outcome of a long, still largely enduring tradition of language separation in Canada. It is often referred to as “*Two Solitudes*,” a notion derived from the title of Hugh MacLennan’s novel (1945) which describes the perceived lack of communication, as well as a lack of will to communicate, between Anglophone and Francophone people in Canada. See Janice Kulyk-Keefer, *Under Eastern Eyes: A Critical Reading of Maritime Fiction* 1987: passim; Rainier Grutman, *Des langues qui résonnent* 2019: 17.

in the essays of Part one, entitled “Awakening to Poetry”, often evokes her growing awareness of language features, along with perceptions of difference and ensuing tensions.

All the essays in “Awakening to Poetry” are autobiographical accounts of the poet’s memories of her childhood and adolescence in Luxembourg, complemented with remembered or added reflections. They reveal Welch’s attempt at producing elements of her life narrative. It is a way for her to make meaning of experiences that account for her development as a poet. Understandingly, multiple facets of language constitute the core of most essays. The described language experiences vary widely according to the context in which they are set: family, school, church; often, they include experiences of reading and responses to cultural practices and literary characters.

Language aspects hardly appear in terms of national languages. Only somebody familiar with the multifaceted language practices in Luxembourg will know that in her family Welch spoke Luxembourgish; that the language of the Church and the catechism was German (plus, as she notes the occasional use of Latin); that the first books she read were in German, while reading in French and English came a little later. Nowhere in the essays (with the exception of “On the Way to English”) is there a reference to children’s progressive and simultaneous exposition to languages. Through the English text, experiences of specific language difference are blurred and may be hard for readers to perceive. On the one hand, this approach reflects Welch’s views on literary language, on the other hand, it may be a strategy to avoid confusion in the targeted Canadian readers. On a spectrum of heterolingualism in texts, as proposed by Suchet (2014: 79; see ch. 3), the non-English elements are close to a threshold of invisibility. It is this inconspicuousness that justifies a close reading with attention to hidden aspects of a developing language repertoire. The essays deal with *language related activities*, such as speaking, listening, reading, in diverse situations, yet a close inspection shows that Welch hardly ever uses the term *language*. It appears quickly that Welch’s focus is not on the multiplicity of national languages. Language is understood differently. How she has experienced its multiplicity (and the impact on her as a nomadic subject), is the object of the analysis.

5.2.1 *Seismographs*: Starting from a metaphor

The title *Seismographs* is a way for the poet to arouse her readers’ interest in her writing endeavours. She compares her texts to the work of a seismograph, or seismometer, the instrument used to detect earthquakes. It records movements in a certain area but can also register any movements of the earth, including underground movements that are not immediately perceived by the human senses or those that occur in remote places. The terms used to describe movements studied by seismographs show that

seismography registers destructive natural disasters (seisms, earthquakes), violent disruptions (upheavals) and shock waves as well as hardly perceptible shakings or tremblings, vibrations or quiverings. It is also important to recall that scientists rely on these records for subsequent studies.

When Welch uses the seismograph as metaphor for her writing, she foregrounds several aspects: on the one hand, she wants her text to be read as inventories of outstanding events that have shaken her life, while she also includes accounts of less perceptible vibrations. Through the process of writing down these memories, she can retrospectively analyze her experiences and (re-) construct what she remembers, in her body. Describing seismographic recordings, thus becomes a form of *(trans)linguaging*, *une mise en mots*, for which she needs “new” terminology, a poet’s words, to communicate the impact of subtle and complex “earthquakes” to readers. The texts she writes are seismographic studies in which the writer, like a scientist, can analyze what has been registered, earthquake-like events that have shaken her life, but also subtle vibrations that her body has remembered. On the other hand, her texts become documents for readers to inspect later: Such seismographic texts allow us to study not only language experiences, but also spatial relations and transformations.

Calling these seismographic accounts essays is somewhat misleading. They are autobiographical **pieces**, descriptions of her *Lebenswelt*, peppered with the later writer’s reflections on the world in which she first experienced language. In a very broad sense, they are short stories, narrative texts, with a gallery of characters and memorable situations.

5.2.2 Language in the family: Remembering heterogeneous, embodied voices

Sketching out short episodes, Welch renders her response to the very different ways of speaking of her mother, her father and her maternal grandmother. The essays reflect above all a growing awareness of a *diversity of words and voices* that struck the young listener, and which the later writer remembers as dichotomous experiences, some quite pleasant, others distressing and raising revolt. For the child, they are embodied voices, shown to correspond to each speaker’s outlook and *Lebenswelt*. Multiplicity is not linked to a diversity of national languages, but to personal and regional specificities.⁵⁶⁰

5.2.2.1 The magic of words and narratives: “The Hands of the Tongue”

In this essay (*Seismographs*: 26-28), Welch is looking for the source of her love of words and investigates the role her mother may have played in her poetic education.

⁵⁶⁰ In her last collection of poetry, *Crossings*, published posthumously (2010), three poems convey very similar memories of her early language experiences, often rendered in words that closely echo those of the much earlier essays. Her appreciation of those family voices is thus strikingly endorsed (cf. “The Maker” (2010: 18-19) is about her mother, “A Public Man” (20-21) about her father, while a third one is simply called “Grandmother” (16-17).

[M]y mother was the storyteller whose performances made the world richer for me. I would stalk her all morning until after lunch she took me onto her lap and told me one after the other the five or six stories she knew. Evidently, I craved these stories time and time again, and soon began to recite them word for word as they were being told. During the three years of this daily ritual, I gradually came to insist that my mother recount her tales in fixed and immutable forms like prayers, without innovation. ("The Hands of the Tongue," *Seismographs* 1988:26)

She evokes situations in which her mother appears as the teller and the maker, whose stories are as enticing as the products of her hands. Underlining the magical quality of her mother's storytelling, she also points to her discovery of a mystic dimension in fairy-tales: "An intuitive and imaginative woman, she opened up for me the world of mood and vitality. In her own way she had a craving for divination and mysticism." (26)⁵⁶¹ Words, Welch suggests, promise access to an enticing, invisible world, Welch also remembers her as the perfect housewife, an expert at all chores and skills including outdoor activities, in which she involves the young child:

During the afternoons when the smell of cooked sugar filled the house, those simple creations of my mother's hands were as startling, absorbing and as satisfactory as her stories. Picking raspberries and blackberries with her at the edges of fields and woods in Luxembourg was already choosing words, already manipulating these words with the hands of her tongue. ("The Hands of the Tongue," *Seismographs* 1988:28)

The association between berry-picking and cooking jam on the one hand, and choosing words and writing, on the other hand is unexpected. What links both activities, berry picking and choosing words, is a movement of the hand. Choosing an outdoor activity at the origin of the process hints at the importance of close contact with natural surroundings.

This startling metaphor aims at giving insights into what language and writing mean for the poet. It suggests that writing poetry is a long process of transformation; words need to be selected like ripe berries before being turned into the final product. It is seen as a sensuous, pleasurable activity that can be enjoyed, with all one's senses (cf. the smell of cooked sugar and fruit). The metaphor also underlines a view of embodied language: it is as if the poet picked and selected words with her hands; while taste appears as the culminating feature in the final image of "the hands of the tongue". While picking the berries, it seems, the child already anticipates the taste of the jam on her tongue.

Welch further elaborates on the link she perceives between hands and tongue, thus elucidating the title of the essay:

⁵⁶¹ She thus also mentions a mysterious book: "To interpret her dream-filled nights, my mother consulted regularly her "dreambook", an ancient yellow, very frayed volume hidden in her oak chest. I have often wondered whether her stories, "her dream book", her combative gossip did not stem from the ancient narrative impulse to gain entry through words into something hidden in reality." (*Seismographs*: 27)

“It was with the metaphors of her hands and her voice that my mother confronted and defeated darkness. For me, these action-mad hands were as convincing as the adventures in her stories. The verbal strategies of her narrations as well as the pre-verbal dance of her fingers prefigured the rhythmic muscle pleasure of poetry. Like a sculptor, her hands and her tongue knew how to carve and model what pushed up under the surfaces in materials. They taught me how to walk into words and hang in their vibrations. They acted as catalysts for the orphic impulse in me.” (“The Hands of the Tongue,” *Seismographs* 1988:28)

The jam making process turns into an image of the mysterious passage from her mother’s words in the native idiom, Luxembourgish, into the poet’s later production of poems in English. It appears then as a metaphor – far-fetched, perhaps – for *translation*, or the transformation of early collected words into poetic work in another language. Only a metaphor seems able to evoke this complex, elaborate process. In the context of an essay about her mother, the startling image of the hands of the tongue also subtly evokes the meaning of *mother tongue*, not seen as an abstract theoretical notion of linguistics but as a concrete physical and sensuous understanding of words. This essay however overlooks the difference between her mother tongue, Luxembourgish, the language her mother actually used, and the language she later comes to use as a writer, English (“her belated mother tongue”), for instance to describe her mother’s role in her development as an English language poet.

The essay is about the memory of a beloved voice and has a possible touch of nostalgia, but there is no hint at the poet’s loss of her mother tongue. The gap between languages is not thematized and indicates an understanding of poetic language that needs to be further explored. The quality of the experience, not the link to a specific idiom or language is highlighted. The body, it seems, remembers words, as in a kind of synesthesia it remembers the touch, smell and taste of berries. It can later transform these memories (through writing). Poetic transformation occurs beyond or outside language borders. In this essay, the speaker foregrounds two aspects of language that she associates with early experiences: listening to fairytales and the pleasure of collecting words the way you pick berries to make juicy jams.

On the one hand, a reading of Welch’s essay against metaphoric evocations of the tongue (see Busch and Busch, *Mitten durch meine Zunge* 2008) situates her reflections within a tradition of images used by translingual writers. On the other hand, the reference to very early experiences of unnamed languages fits in with descriptions of pre-babylonian fantasies (Busch 2010b).

5.2.2.2 Good voices and bad voices

Welch likes to describe her memories of language in childhood as a growing sense of the distinction between the voices that surround her. In “A Sense of Voice,” (*Seismographs*: 29-33) she tells us about a world marked by an irreducible dichotomy. The essay is about her response to two utterly discordant and irreconcilable voices, those of her father and of her maternal grandmother. Each of them expresses a

strong personality while also representing divergent social and natural spaces marked by quite different outlooks on life.

As the title suggests, the piece is also about acquiring “a sense of voice,” about coming to grasp with what a voice can express. It is not a theoretical text; it is rather the adult speaker’s account of several unforgettable situations with many descriptive details and reflections that help us get a better picture of what a voice, or the oral dimension of language represents for Welch.⁵⁶² Without the phrase being used, it is another account of her *éveil aux langues*, of a budding language awareness. As it follows the description of the response to her mother’s voice, we can read it as a next stage in her awakening to the language of poetry.

In the text, the speaker positions herself as a listener, who at first absorbs what she hears but gradually comes to evaluate and judge. It is the adult writer who presents and interprets the child’s listening capacity and who tries to make sense of what must have been above all sense perceptions and emotionally charged experiences. The descriptions have elements of a dramatic staging, e.g. walking with her father in the woods, listening through the stone walls of the house to the interchange between the father and the grandmother. They recall descriptions of author positioning (see ch.2.2) as *mise en scène* or *Selbstinszenierung* – though here as reconstructions of past experiences.

The father’s voice

Writing about voices requires providing substitutes for what the reader cannot hear. The essay proves to be carefully constructed around key aspects of voice. The opening sentences announce a particular situation, which has several features that should suggest what one hears as well as the feelings and impressions that listening brings about. “The rapid taps of my father’s walking cane punctuated my outings with him in the Luxembourg forests when I was a child. They set the pace for a fast trot, an almost military step.” (*Seismographs*: 29)

Father and child are walking in the woods, an activity which in Welch’s essays and poems is frequently connected to language, poetry and writing. The child cannot conceive speech without the environment in which it is produced. Voices are perceived in a certain space, here a forest compared to a cathedral and associated with “Celtic mysteries” still resounding among the trees. The father’s thunderous voice needs a space in which it can echo.

The importance of rhythm is suggested through its synonym “pace” and words like “rapid taps”, “fast trot”, “military step”. The voice, as the father tells the little girl, is produced through breathing and he

⁵⁶² The oral dimension of language is also elaborated in other essays all emphasizing the embodiment of languages, its affective dimension as well as the child’s emotional response.

imposes breathing exercises that should make her a good walker and develop her voice. But like all women she would never live up to his male standards. The military connotation of the father's voice are underlined through the use of verbs like drill and command, which remind us of the description of the priests' speech in other essays. Criticism of his macho bearings is obvious, the relevant point here is that Welch associates it foremost with his voice and his way of speaking. With great disdain, he speaks of women and girls as "*arm Geester*" (poor souls).

Cursing or words of abuse, quoted in Luxembourgish, are shown to punctuate his speech and his pace, a practice that is interesting for other reasons. They are evidence of the father's use of speech and voice (tone and inflection) to criticize and disparage all those individuals that do not fit into his outlook or cannot fulfill his expectations of social and moral behavior. A scornful and disparaging voice thus can reinforce the visual connotations of the discriminating words. She quotes the whole range of his discriminatory terms, *Fatzerten*, rag-people, and several other "linguistically juicy names like *Knascherten* or "dirtmugs," the primal *Drecksäck* or "mudsacks," the lascivious *Hourejeëren* or "whorechasers," the aromatic *Fuurzbeidelen* or "fartbags" (*Seismographs*: 29).

But in the obedient child, these words of abuse, arouse a growing sense of rebellion.

When, as a child, I had to march next to him through the cathedral-like forests with well-polished shoes, immaculate in my blue velvet coat and bonnet, listening to his pronouncements about breathing correctly, studying ardently and obeying elders, I looked with envious eyes onto the *Fatzerten*, who ran through the woods with dirty shoes and played in the streets at dusk while I had to go to church for evening services. ("A Sense of Voice," *Seismographs* 1988: 29)

Especially *Fatzerten*, who for instance wear blue jeans and appear free to move wherever they like, become appealing figures for the child who does not dare yet to vent her disagreement with the father. An intriguing aspect about these terms of abuse is that they are almost the only words in Luxembourgish that we find in *Seismographs* (and Welch's work in general).⁵⁶³ In retrospect, she seems to enjoy the sounds of the suggestive compounds and the visual connotations of these terms of abuse.

The *gender dimension* of her resistance is underlined in another essay entitled with her father's words: "In Girls a Family Name Does Not Live On". (*Seismographs*: 42-44). With retrospective scorn and mockery she quotes her father's repeated threat, "If you don't obey the priest and memorize the Catechism you'll become a cleaning woman in the hospital emptying bedpans, or in the mines scrubbing toilets."⁵⁶⁴ Such

⁵⁶³ The father's words of abuse also constitute a central part in the poem "A Public Man" (*Crossings* 2010: 20-21).

⁵⁶⁴ These words also figure on the backcover of *Seismographs*, as a kind of leitmotiv for the book.

speech only fueled her antagonism and she explains how it was her father's crusades against women which motivated her to emigrate.⁵⁶⁵

Should we read her (surprising) selection of Luxembourgish terms of abuse, or slang, as evidence of Welch's attitude to Luxembourgish? Associating words in Luxembourgish with her father, a man with whom she never sympathized, could account for an aversion to her native language or idiom, and possibly explain why she never even considered choosing Luxembourgish as her language of writing.

But it would be a rash conclusion as to her attitude to Luxembourgish and is not the full answer, as her position in non-literary texts has shown (see ch.4.2.3) Languages, as well as idioms and dialects, are embedded in a social, cultural and political context, which determines the recognition of a literary language. (See Glesener 2013.) Her dismissal of Luxembourgish as a language of writing is better approached from that perspective, together with Joris's and other Luxembourgish writers' choices of their writerly language(s). Welch displays a quite different attitude to Luxembourgish as national language (see the article "Mir sin e kengt Landt" 1979). Her numerous references to *Maus Kätti* and to *Renert* as representatives of literary writing, as well as her later involvement with the work of Luxembourgish literary institutions (cf. ch. 4.2) reveal a different facet of her linguistic positioning.

The link with voices of the Church

In Welch's essay, the father's tyrannical manner is repeatedly associated with the hateful, dictatorial, dogmatic and authoritarian voices of priests and nuns. At school she hated the weekly lessons of Catholic religious instruction, found Bible stories boring and describes Catechism as "that graveyard of rules and regulations which had to be memorized under threat of physical punishment." (*Seismographs*: 35) In these classes, she developed her lasting distaste for the Church as well as a sense of rebellion against any form of institutionalized authority or control of her life. She resents in particular the use that the Church makes of language, its commands and prohibitions (the "shalts" and "shalt-nots"), which included its condemnation of most great work of literature through the "Index."

Hating her father's voice, like the other dictatorial voices she encounters in her childhood, the young Welch looks – listens – for alternatives which correspond to her own inclinations and aspirations. She finds them embodied in her maternal grandmother and in the voices of her first fictional heroes (from Globi, to Winnetou, to hoboes in Steinbeck's work, and *Renert*, the fox in the Luxembourg epic.).

The Grandmother's voice

⁵⁶⁵ More in discussion about gender aspects in 5.2.4.4.

For the adult Welch, the grandmother's biannual visits are highlights of her childhood. In her memories, she associates this kind, though unfashionable farmwoman with the distinctive marks of her voice:

"Her steady country voice with its rolled r's and musical cadences enwrapped me immediately in a vast mantle of primordial words, a shield of earthbound images which became for three weeks a magic talisman against the paternal tyrannies. ("A Sense of Voice," *Seismographs* 1988: 30)

Through her grandmother, the child discovers differences in pronunciations, here in the form of a typically rural voice. An idiosyncratic accent appears as a feature of the child's experiences of language multiplicity: she connects it with country life and a generally desirable outlook on life. As was already the case with her parents' voices, the emotional dimension of her response is unmistakable. Pleasant musical sounds are opposed to the father's military tone. The core feature of this voice is its rootedness in the soil, its earthbound quality, which comes across as a term of praise, and is simultaneously linked to near mystical power.

Through many details, the essay underlines the child's strong attachment to the village grandmother whose "freedom of spirit, sober resistance and grave nobility" (32) account for views and habits which stand in opposition to her parents' more bourgeois tastes:

Her strong-willed courage and powerful wisdom stemmed from [...] incessant, solitary, silent tasks. To her animals she spoke in a low, patient voice. Slightly raised when addressed to humans, the voice echoed the discipline received from the taciturn earth. ("A Sense of Voice," *Seismographs* 1988: 32)

Her grandmother's "firm, fervent voice" (31) fascinates the child and lets her discover dimensions of speech that contrast with her father's dogmatic pontifications (preaching) and his total submission to anything that society deems proper. Her sense of the sacred, quite unlike the dogmatic language of her father and the priests, greatly appeals to her. In Welch's memories, a recurring situation of intimate exchange, a bedtime ritual, stands out:

The best time of the day during my grandmother's visits came at bedtime. Sitting next to me on my bed, under the beam of the guardian angel on the wall, she held my hand in hers and improvised prayers radically more compelling than those of the priests and my parents. The vibrations of her voice conjured up a space in which all saints and God himself spoke as natural phenomena. These rhythmical litanies, punctuated by the incantational recurrences of divine and natural names, sanctified language and made me experience for the first time the miracle of a secular transcendence. ("A Sense of Voice," *Seismographs* 1988: 32)

The grandmother's words of prayer are no longer "dutiful routines during which the mind may wander": they make her participate in "a sacred magic" (32). In this extract, several expressions are worth noting because they associate words with features that mark Welch's poetry: the grandmother's voice conjures

up an otherwise invisible space; in her speech, the sacred is linked to natural phenomena, not to churches and priests; praying strikes the child as appealing language through its alluring rhythm, naming and repetitions. The word *language* in this passage is one of the very few instances of its use in *Seismographs* and it is associated with the incantatory power of the grandmother's way of saying prayers.

With "A Sense of Voice", Welch presents a carefully structured essay, opposing the two voices and insisting on their violent word battles and the irreconcilable nature of their views: "the vowels of the fields would not mingle with the consonants of the town" (33). The narrative passages with the accompanying reflections aim to reveal how instinctively she classifies voices into good and bad, a distinction which she later recognizes as signposts of choice on her way to becoming a poet:

Even though I had not yet decided whether I would become a lone poet or an urban organizer, my grandmother's voice with its solitary contemplation, with its penetrating mysteries, exerted a primal fascination over my young mind. My father's exhortations and judgements which saw moral transgressions everywhere, the haste and rage of his utterances, made me experience claustrophobic suffocation. ("A Sense of Voice," *Seismographs* 1988: 33)

The essay shows that for the child language multiplicity emerges in differences of voice, sounds, register, accent, inflection – and subsequently in a discovery of language functions: giving orders, organizing, ruling versus praising, naming, evoking invisible realities. Significantly, the essay ends on the grandmother's words who says: "You speak like me." (33)

Geographical details further enhance the difference. Moreover the grandmother's village allows Welch to make another association: in a popular folktale it is the home of its protagonist, *Mouse Ketti*,⁵⁶⁶ the country mouse, whose simple tastes and lifestyle are opposed to those of her cousin's, a city mouse. The differences between the two is enhanced by their diverse speaking manners. As Welch writes about Mouse Ketti: "Hers was an ancient, intimate familiarity with her land, like that of my grandmother's. My father's roars and shouts, on the other hand, were not part of that life-style." (31)

For me the two worlds speaking out of those two voices already adumbrated my later life in words. My grandmother's ancestral world was measured by a solitary interaction with the earth. [...] the vowels of the fields would not mingle with the consonants of the town. ("A Sense of Voice," *Seismographs* 1988: 32-33)

Evocations of her maternal and paternal grandparents appear in various essays. They belong to different worlds, which geographical settings, origins but also details about their language or ways of speaking underline. In "A Sense of Voice" she opposes the allegedly more Germanic features of her father's

⁵⁶⁶ Written by Auguste Liesch and published in 1936, *D' Maus Ketti* (also spelt *Kätti*) remains one of the most famous stories in Luxembourgish. See also "D' Maus Ginette," Welch's handwritten draft of a play in Luxembourgish, mentioned in ch. 4.

language and general bearing with those of the maternal grandmother, who comes from a village situated on the French border – in fact quite close to Germany too, near the 3-Ländereck of Schengen. These geographical details reflect a cultural *imaginaire*,⁵⁶⁷ which is well perceptible in Welch's account of her childhood.

Part of Welch's authorial posture is to present herself and her Luxembourgish origins by references to literary works. She refrains from providing an outline of multilingualism in Luxembourg or from discussing geopolitical issues for her Canadian readers but rather uses the showcase of her own family to present her views of linguistic and cultural differences. This approach is consolidated in the essays which move beyond the family circle.

5.2.3 Becoming nomadic: The transformative power of written language

From that time on, the conflict between Old World and New World became a crucial tension for me and the compulsion to keep them separate never let me go. (*Seismographs* 1988: 36)

The analysis aims at seeing the world through the lens of the written word awakens and intensifies her views of differences. It is chiefly based on three essays, all included in "Awakening to Poetry," section one of *Seismographs*: "Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations," "On the Way to English" and "Wolves and Foxes." The reference to the Old and the New World sums up one key idea that is elaborated in the three essays: the growing awareness of two separate worlds, which in distinct ways help her make meaning of her mental or physical travelling and changing positions.

Gradually, as her memories show, Welch's experiences of language widen, mostly through reading and encounters with new voices. Books as well as language learning at school open new spaces for her to explore. They significantly contribute to an awareness of herself as a subject who may choose her own paths. Reading corresponds to the first stage of her still largely imaginary nomadism. What she remembers from books is an identification with nomadic or travelling protagonists and the fictitious dialogues in which she engages with them.

In her memories of the discovery of English, the first "named" and truly foreign language, experiences of multiple languages and a nomadic way of being become intimately linked.

Her later familiarity with literary discourse lets her reconsider the memories of early linguistic conflicts in the family. She has become the nomadic outsider who (poetically) conceives her own position in relation to origins marked by multiple voices and cultures, (as already indicated in "A Sense of Voice").

⁵⁶⁷ The French term *imaginaire* standing for the world of the imagination is also an allusion at Glissant / Gauvin: *L'imaginaire des langues* (2010). See also the historians' views on representations in *Inventing Luxembourg* (2010).

5.2.3.1 Moving into new language spaces through reading: meeting the multiple voices of fiction

Welch describes reading as a multifaceted language experience that transformed her life. In an essay entitled “Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations,” (*Seismographs*: 34-37) ⁵⁶⁸ Welch evokes a dichotomy reminiscent of the text on good and bad voices. Through various examples, she describes what books and their language can do to readers (“thrill or threaten”) while also foregrounding what “good” books empower readers to do (discover, dream, or conceive a different life and world order). Words in books may close in or open up the reader’s or listener’s world: either they limit it to the realm of dogma or they do just the opposite when their words reach beyond sounds and signs (signifiers) and open up new areas of beauty, adventure and freedom.

The beginning of the essay reads like the opening of a life story or an autobiographical narrative. The emphasis is on *a great sensitivity to language* and on her emotional response to books as objects, to the evocative power of pictures and to their potential for endless discoveries. She also perceives books as objects to enjoy alone, as opportunities to shield off boredom and fears.

Already before I could read, *the sight of books* entranced me. Holding one of them in my hands filled me with delight. Later *the sounds of their letters* entered my ears. What I loved was enshrined in them. (“Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations,” *Seismographs* 1988: 34; emphasis added)

Books are described through sense perceptions, with parallels to the young child’s experiences of oral language. She speaks of the sights of books and evokes the power of pictures in the first books that she remembers. Words as printed letters, the distinctive mark of reading experiences, are transformed into sounds: “the sounds of their letters entered my ears”, an observation which underlines Welch’s physical experience of language: She *hears* what she reads and thus can respond to it with her own voice.

Some books, or voices of books do not speak to her; she hates the Catechism with its prescriptions and prohibitions to memorize, Biblical stories bore her, while the *Index*, the list of works banned by the Catholic Church, stands for an ignominious rejection of great literature.

Characteristics of nomadic thinking rule her approach of books. Those that represent a static, immovable world of authority are *bad* books; good books, like adventure books, let readers conceive new spaces and interactions, propose movement, deterritorialization or a change of scenery, through which the reading subject is transformed or transforms herself. What priests, nuns and her father declare to be “bad” books are her “good” books to be discovered under many guises and always associated with adventures and exotic landscapes.

⁵⁶⁸ *Celebrations* is a notion that also comes back in texts about her views on writing (her poetics); see for instance the essay entitled “Praising the earth with Our Feet”.

Good books celebrate life; for readers, they become a form of travelling, an experience of nomadic thinking about others and self, in movement. Some words can provide sensitivity to the natural environment or a feeling for transcendental experience. They bring the reader “within an understanding of what might be revealed by a sunbeam on a mountain peak” (1988: 34). For Welch, stories promise escape from the claustrophobic and suffocating life of home, and become open spaces *for encounters with otherness*. Reading is also a nomad’s *experience of solitude*, as well as the way to (self-) empowerment and *self-determination*.

Her succinct presentations of books all point to their power of evoking as well as *celebrating* a world that is very different from her own life, while the list of books also shows a certain evolution in her views. Globi, Winnetou and Steinbeck’s hoboes appear as her favourite protagonists, with whom she strongly identifies. Books offer company and generate various forms of communication: the account of her memories gives some insight into the impact that the imagined contact with characters had on her. As a reader, she put herself in the role of the protagonists and took on their voice, or she imagined being their interlocutor. Such practices required adapting to the style and rhythm of speech, memorizing words and expressions, all of which she did in the language of the book. These *dialogic processes of language negotiation* (or *languaging*) and translation take place quite naturally. They are not presented in detail, yet some excerpts from the essay give interesting clues. This is what she writes about the Globi books⁵⁶⁹, which she discovered while staying in Switzerland shortly after World War Two:

Switzerland also brought an acquaintance with my first adventure books, Globi in the Jungle, Globi’s Adventures in America. A documentation by image and rhymed verse of a legendary beast’s world travels [...] I loved these books rapturously [...] Their stories were the miracles of my life. Globi, the globe trotter with the black beret, became a heroic figure, a benefactor of mankind. Books, ever after, exerted an infinite fascination over me. (“Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations,” *Seismographs* 1988: 36)

Books as she soon noticed also transmit an ideology or a world view. Karl May’s books describe “a new social order” that fascinated her; with the Far West “as a landscape where the natural order prevailed” (1988: 36):

Freedom drunk, I located myself on May’s pages, immersed myself in an exotic paradise of unlimited adventure. I have never forgotten the Indians riding across the solitary wide American spaces. Here I consorted with heroes, lean, wild and taciturn, with noble beings. Their names and

⁵⁶⁹ The title of the books are given in English but of course she read them in German (or rather a standardized form of Swiss German): *Freund Globi im Urwald*, 1950; *Globis Taten in Amerika* was published in 1962. Probably, she also knew the first and possibly the most famous book of the series, which was often reprinted, *Globis Weltreise*, 1935 or *Mit Globi und Käpten Pum um die Welt*, 1944. The series still continues today but there do not seem to be any English translations.

deeds overwhelmed me and presented an effective escape from the Index world of the catechism.
 ("Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations," *Seismographs* 1988: 36)

The text gives few details about these utopian lands, but they reveal vistas on new, open spaces, perhaps a dream world, standing in contrast with the oppressive life from which she wants to escape. For Welch "the Old World versus the New World" is not a cliché; her frequent use of the expression reflects an authentic awareness of irreconcilable differences:

I dreamed of emigrating to America and of making my life there. [...] It was also Winnetou who led me to read Hemingway and Steinbeck. Daily cohortation with the latter's adventurers and hoboes impelled me at sixteen to apply for an exchange student scholarship in the United States. ("Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations," *Seismographs* 1988: 36-37)

The words "consorting" and "cohortation" may best sum up her intimate relations with the heroes of books. Consorting stands for partnership, for keeping company, cohortation suggests companionship and association. She feels to be a member of the cohort of adventurers and hoboes she meets in the American novels. Hoboes are migratory workers, often homeless vagabonds with whom as an adolescent rebel she easily identifies: she imagines walking with her new companions across her home town as they replace the cohort of classmates to whom she no longer seems to belong.⁵⁷⁰

Descriptions of a passionate reader's appropriation of books.

Welch provides powerful descriptions of a keen reader's approach of the language in books. The preceding examples have shown how imagined dialogues gradually empower the reader. Food metaphors linking reading to compulsive eating suggest how the language of books becomes the reader's own. They express processes of assimilation.⁵⁷¹ About the Globi books, she writes: "I lived in them. I *swallowed* them." A similar image evokes her response to the May stories: "Like a *glutton*, I *devoured* the wildness of Winnetou," and to later reading habits: "My initial university years were dominated by *omnivorous* reading of American writers." The body, it seems, absorbs any words that speak to the (young) reader – *whatever the (national) language*. Whether it assimilates Luxembourgish, German, French or English words is contingent on circumstances or on the general appeal of books. This seeming confusion – or *linguistic indigestion* – makes us wonder what happens in a body and a head filled with such an apparent

⁵⁷⁰ See also the essay "Conveniat" where she writes about the missing common language.

⁵⁷¹ To assimilate: early 15c., in physiology, "absorb into and make part of the body," from Latin *assimilatus*, past participle of *assimilare*, *assimulare* "to make like, copy, imitate, assume the form of; feign, pretend," from assimilated form of *ad* "to" (see *ad-*) + *simulare* "make similar," from *similis* "like, resembling, of the same kind" encounters with written language (see *similar*). Meaning "make alike, cause to resemble," and intransitive sense "become incorporated into" are from 1620s. In linguistics, "bring into accordance or agreement in speech," from 1854. Related: *Assimilated*; *assimilating* <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=assimilate>

incongruous mix of words. How do they influence the subsequent translingual writing process? The essays however do not provide any explicit reflections on these issues.

In the essay, “Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations,” two comments by the author suggest contradictory explanations. On the one hand, she insists on keeping apart the different worlds in which she lived, and consequently also their languages: “[T]he conflict between Old World and New World became a crucial tension for me and *the compulsion to keep them separate never let me go.*” (1988: 36) On the other hand, her monolingual, all-English texts suggest that differences or otherness can co-exist under a surface of uniformity. The scarcity of references to distinct languages seems evidence of Welch’s belief that her language experiences all together constitute a totality, an undividable whole. For the critical reader, a palimpsestic view of multivoiced texts appears as an appropriate representation of the writer’s seemingly paradoxical position – an approach which is further pursued in the analysis of texts.

Memories of reading as reconstructed (language) biography

“Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations” gives a succinct chronological account of reading experiences as Welch remembers them or selects them for the present essay on basically two kinds of books: good ones and bad ones. In fact, what the essay presents is quite typical of multilingual reading experiences of children and adolescents in Luxembourg. Why does she not point more clearly to the language differences? Is it because her Canadian readers would not care or not believe her; or is it because she herself has considered this passage from one language to another as a natural practice that need not be commented on?

The essay confirms the lack of attention to distinctions between national languages in *Seismographs* yet it can be read as self-portrait of a young multilingual reader. For the young child, the language of books is indifferent: we may assume that at home stories were usually told in Luxembourgish. Then she learnt to read and write in German; the Catechism was always taught through German and the Bible stories too were read in German, (for songs in church there is a short reference to Latin). After the war she reads her first adventure stories, the books of the Globi series, in German. Perhaps significantly, they are in Swiss German, and in rhymes. Welch, the nomad *in spe*, discovers America through adventure books in German (Karl May’s Winnetou series) before she can read English books in the original, first Hemingway and Steinbeck, and later, once she has emigrated, books by Melville, Faulkner, Whitman.

In secondary school, Welch also read French books. French literature is mentioned in connection with the *Index*, the list of books forbidden by the Catholic Church. One could argue that through their connection with prohibitions (see the title of the essay), these French books acquire a particular appeal of transgression. She quotes some titles in English, *The Flowers of Evil* and *The Marquis de Sade*, without a

reference to their authors, almost suggesting they were English originals or rather that Luxembourg students read them in English.

Prohibition and celebrations: Opposed concepts of language

Although the word *language* never appears in this essay, it uncovers the poet's early positioning among languages mostly understood as voices. Welch's comments reveal key concepts of language as encountered in practice. The Church is seen to rely on an essentialist conception of language; words have one immutable meaning; the catechism and the Bible speak the language of truth which the community has to subject to. There is no room for imagination or interpretation; the Church's views on language, as presented in this essay, goes back to the concept of a universal, Adamic pre-Babel language.⁵⁷² It is a language that belongs to an incontestable, absolute authority. It is used to express commands, to forbid and negate; it dictates, prescribes, regulates and threatens.

The child in the text finds the stories of the Bible, as told at school, hollow and insipid. They leave no room to the imagination. Welch indeed positions herself with quite different views on language; for her, words represent a dynamic force which readers / speakers will freely use for their own development of ideas, emotions and desires. The language of books that is given emphasis (in opposition to the regulatory authoritarian language of the Church) fills with delight. It instructs but in very different way from the Catechism: it tells stories about exotic places, adventurers and unknown ways of life. It can also transmit a sense of poetry, give a glimpse of transcendence and inspire a sensitivity for all forms of life. Books and their language empower, they provide models and inspire; they give agency, which for some time she mistakes for absolute freedom. But choosing to live and write in the language of the other, also means accepting new limits or conforming to new sets of rules or outlooks.⁵⁷³

The last paragraph of "Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations" opens further dimensions of interest for an understanding of what books and words do.

(In the Rocky Mountains,) I met the man who became my life companion, his first sentence sufficed to show me at once that his concerns, like mine, were rooted in the reality of books. [...] I could have recognized in his words my sister soul. Our vocabulary, arising from books, was witness to a communality of interests which continues to persist outside or inside them, in the realities they rehearse. ("Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations," *Seismographs* 1988: 37)

Especially the last phrase, indicating words as instruments to *rehearse realities* is worth dwelling upon: Books give readers the words to render reality while also allowing exchange; *rehearse* is close in meaning

⁵⁷² Paradoxically, Welch's monolingual use of language in writing (English) has some similarity with a universal – poetic – language.

⁵⁷³ The question of freedom, agency and conformity is further explored in poetic texts, e.g. *Life in Another Language*, a collection of poems in prose, 1992)

to a *mental enactment* and so stands for doing something rather than simply expressing or representing reality.

5.2.3.2 Experiences of language learning and trans (cross)-language perspectives

“On the Way to English”

“English has always affected me physically and intuitively”

“Today, tied to English, my belated mother tongue” (40)

“On the Way to English” (*Seismographs*: 38-41) is a central piece for a study of Welch’s memories of language learning and of “the first intuitive lessons of [her] early multiple linguistic dwelling.” (41) Its focus on experience and response to linguistic phenomena well fits in with the metaphor of the seismograph. The writer-narrator, located in Canada, as we learn in the last paragraph, remembers her first contact with the English language in the school context of her hometown and attempts to render the intensity of an experience which was to mark her later life so decisively.

Already the title suggests that language – English – is perceived in relation to movement, space and transformation. English is presented as a place you move towards; it is a destination. If the expression *on the way to* literally means travelling to a certain place (cf. on the way to Rome, to Luxembourg, to school ...), it also stands for a process of some duration. The destination becomes a state to reach (cf. on the way to recovery, to success ...). Sometimes place and state go together, for instance: on the way to hell, on the way to the White House.

It appears that for Welch, too, English is neither a place nor a state, but rather a combination. The title already foreshadows the multiple meanings inherent in the text which refers to a 12-year-old girl’s walk to school and her English class (a place, an experience of activities, of contacts), as well as to her way to a new life in another language which she is about to acquire (a state of being). Moreover, the text offers a retrospective view: the speaker, at the moment of writing, has *arrived* and lives *in English* – to be understood as an English-speaking environment, a culture and standpoint from which she can look at her earlier life in a different linguistic environment. Consequently, the title also suggests difference: difference between places, while also hinting at difference or changes for the traveller affected by these places and movements.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷⁴ The question is how this difference affects the traveller. The essay raises many issues without however answering all of them. How and where does the new language (as place and state) mark the traveller? Does it affect her mind/thoughts and / or her body? Or her relations to other speakers/people? Is the way to English described as a smooth passage or does the text hint at obstacles? Is it (the way to English) presented as contingent on certain circumstances (as planned or as accidental) or as the result of the subject’s / young girl’s determination – or as both? Also consider issues of space, starting from the question of language linked to territory (bounded places) and

“On the way to...” is also a reference to Heidegger’s lecture “Der Weg zur Sprache” included in the volume entitled *Unterwegs zur Sprache*.⁵⁷⁵ Welch’s text echoes some of Heidegger’s ideas: the way to English is her route to the language in which she *is*, in which she recognizes herself. Language then becomes, in Heidegger’s terms, the “house of being” - an expression that accounts for the title of a collection of poems *Word-House of a Grandchild* (1987), published one year before *Seismographs*. (More on Welch’s appropriation of Heidegger’s views in 6.2)

Narrative perspective

In the opening paragraph, the narrator presents her first experience of English like the beginning of a story, with references to time, place and main characters (the speaker/ the 12-year-old Welch and her teacher) to ensure the authenticity of this semi-autobiographical⁵⁷⁶ the text. The present tense, often called the historical present, is used to heighten the immediacy of the narration; as an imitation of natural story telling it attracts readers’ attention: they are invited to imagine the scene rather than concentrate on arguments. (From paragraph two onwards, the past tense is used.)

The text opens with a date that marks a major upheaval in her life, not a destructive earthquake but a pivotal moment of change, which affects her whole body and being:

October 1949, I’m twelve years old, I’m on my way to the lycée. It’s a rainy and cold morning. The leather briefcase in my hand is heavy with books and notebooks for today’s classes. Each time I pass a store window I stop and perform. I watch my mouth pronouncing aloud English words with th’s and r’s: “the ruler,” “the theatre,” “the return,” “three throbs.” The obsessive utterance of these words is the tithe to be paid to enter another world. Walking to school I always have English in my head. I’m preparing myself for the class with Joffer (Miss) Metzler. (“On the Way to English,” *Seismographs* 1988: 38)

Learning English is presented as an embodied experience of change. The description includes several indications that refer to the materiality of language,⁵⁷⁷ to links with a social environment and to a close relationship with her teacher. Describing herself on the way to English lessons, the narrator is keen on

language which is deterritorialized (D/G), i.e. not linked to specific places but reterritorialized as associated with non-physical places, such as literary texts, or with way of being (nomadic).

⁵⁷⁵ See also Hofstetter’s translation, comments in 6.3 for Welch’s poetics with reference to article co-authored with Cyril Welch: “Martin Heidegger: Poetry, Language, Thought and On the Way to Language” (1972) and in 6.3 for Joris (in *A Nomad Poetics*), with a link in the choice of words between Heidegger and Celan.

⁵⁷⁶ Marie Metzler was Liliane Welch’s teacher of English at the *Lycée de Jeunes Filles* in Esch-sur-Alzette, and ‘Joffer’ is the word in which female (unmarried) teachers used to be addressed. *Seismographs* is dedicated to her teacher: “In memoriam Marie Metzler”; Welch has also written several poems that explicitly evoke her teacher as a very remarkable woman.

⁵⁷⁷ See David Bleicher, *The Materiality of Language* (2013), and the editorial review by Mary-Louise Pratt who highlights its insights into “the affective operation of language” and “the use of gender as a key normative analytical lens.”

recapturing the state of mind and the emotions of her 12-year-old self. The event is recalled as an experience that involves her whole being, she still seems to know what she felt in her body: carrying the heavy briefcase, perhaps feeling the rain, but above all perceiving in retrospect the novelty of the unfamiliar sounds in her mouth.

The new language as embodied experience requires exercising and incessant rehearsing; repeating difficult sounds becomes an obsession. The new words must be “performed” – not just memorized or spelt. Success – a satisfying performance of sounds – is not immediate, but she is glad to pay her tribute to enter another world. The language will change her: she looks for a first confirmation in the shop window, used as mirror. This emphasis on an oral, lived dimension of language recalls the significance of others’ voices and sounds in the previously mentioned essays: now her own voice is given prominence. But the young pupil is not alone on her way, she has a model: her teacher, Miss Metzler, whose crucial role as mediator and facilitator is underlined all through the text. Grounded in a living, and much admired person, English is perceived above all as an oral experience. The real and the imagined exchange with the teacher underlines a dialogical dimension of Welch’s approach (already perceptible in the essays that focus on voices and the child’s often imagined responses):

In her [Miss’s Metzler’s] voice, English were redolent with exuberant promise. She infected me with a burning to learn faster, to speak fluently and to practice my tongue. I talked to myself obsessively in long English conversations and began writing to numerous pen pals from Anglo-Saxon lands. (“On the Way to English,” *Seismographs* 1988: 39-40)

Beyond an acquisition of speaking skills, language learning is response to the words of another (*a view that will later dominate the poet’s general view of writing*). Miss Metzler, to whom she has repeatedly paid great tribute, is not just a voice to imitate: she opens to the young student a whole new world: “In her classes I always felt as though I was in the middle of things, in an immensely vital and lucid intellectual landscape connected at once to reality and to my dreams” (39). The text acquires a **gender dimension**, reminiscent of the opposition between her father or the Church on the one hand, and her maternal grandmother on the other hand.⁵⁷⁸ For the young student, English becomes a way of being which promises an escape from the claustrophobic family life, in which she feels imprisoned.

Joffer Metzler, with her open speech, her cosmopolitanism, her enthusiasm, her authentic interest in her students, was a free spirit, a fearless woman, the living negation of my father’s phallogocratic outbursts most typically. [...] Joffer Metzler’s grip on her pupils’ imagination stemmed from her

⁵⁷⁸ Interestingly, she associates the language with *virile* powers: “She gave me the rods to plumb the depths of the English language, its undergrowth and virile waters.” (39) and introduces a sexual dimension: She is in love with the language whose sounds suggested “a dark voluptuous beauty, a burst of sensuality [...] connected with sexual love.” (40)

fidelity to an ideal of female education which was rooted in fierce individualism. Her teaching of English brought me close to an as yet unknown world for which I then yearned and which was later to become my true place. ("On the Way to English," *Seismographs* 1988:4)

English, the new language, is a promise of transformation, which she experiences in her body first and foremost as a change of voice: she recalls how at home she insisted on reading out aloud, several times, the first book she read in English, *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens:

On the fourth round of reading aloud that hard book, I had not yet unlocked the meaning, but I acquired instead the courage to acknowledge that a book contains much more than we ever suspect, that we need to go on reading to come closer to what a text conceals. ("On the Way to English," *Seismographs* 1988: 40)

With hindsight, she distinguishes the many steps that reading in a foreign language involves for the learner.

Languages in Welch's essays are located practices, so we may wonder *where* she situates English in this essay. What prompts or clues does she give us for mapping it? The essay shows her first contact with English as a located experience situated in a school building and a classroom; it is also set in a historical context⁵⁷⁹ and in a broader setting of a multi-cultural learning environment, in which the other school languages remain less well defined, but contribute to a framing of her knowledge:

In the old grey stone building of a sidestreet we devoured French poems and verbs, German novels and declensions; there history came into being as we looked at reproductions of Egyptian pyramids, Greek temples, Roman forums; there geography opened up exotic continents with expansive names; there I traced out the Mississippi and imagined Canada while following the *coureurs de bois* on the pages of *Maria Chapdelaine*. ("On the Way to English," *Seismographs* 1988: 38)

The memory is embedded in the general educational setting of the lycée which encompassed a wide range of subjects, notably languages. Her succinct description of language learning evokes multiple facets: "French poems and verbs", "German novels and declensions"; she similarly associates English verbs and culture, pronunciation and literature ("the vegetation of a foreign tongue and the headlands of a strange literature"). It seems that in her memory all language subjects covered similar aspects; what differed for her was her response to the different languages as she perceived them.⁵⁸⁰ English as taught at school evokes multiple aspects of learning: grammar (verbs); literature (novels); pronunciation. In her memories,

⁵⁷⁹ Welch gives some details concerning the institutional context of English language teaching in Luxembourg secondary education for girls. See also Hansen-Pauly, "Mapping English in Luxembourg schools until 1968: the emergence of new linguistic and cultural spaces" (2018).

⁵⁸⁰ See below her comparison between English and French. She does not comment on German, an important language in the school curriculum, also as language of instruction.

linguistic and cultural dimensions are associated. All activities seem to have appealed to her, for the same reasons, the sensuous qualities of the language.⁵⁸¹ Luxembourgish, the unremarkable, unnamed idiom is not mentioned and only briefly emerges through the use of two words: *Joffer and Kandt*.

English : a way of being in the world:

“English has always affected me physically and intuitively.” (40)

Like all her experiences of language phenomena, English to her appears as earthbound, as means to connect herself to natural surroundings. Several metaphors express this idea of English as a form of contact with the earth, of participation in natural surroundings. Describing English lessons, she speaks of “an ambience where my mind could refresh itself in the vegetation of a foreign tongue” (39)

Today, tied to English, my belated mother tongue, I often ponder the verbal energies which first implanted that language in my adolescent dreams and then transmuted it into my search for freedom. Joffer Metzler charged it with a dark voluptuous beauty, a burst of sensuality which had been missing in my life [...] Paradoxically, her classes simultaneously dramatized the lapidary aspect of English. My youthful ears savoured the words dropping like the boulders from alpine peaks, their vowels colliding in a hard music. (“On the Way to English,” *Seismographs* 1988: 40)

For Welch English becomes a way of being and moving; it has **an inflection, rhythm and music** that speak of freedom and turn the language into her new mother tongue. In Welch’s writings, we find little about hurdles she may have met on the way. Neither essays nor poetic texts deal with her first decades in North America.⁵⁸²

“[I]ncessantly comparing English to French”

In chapter 1.2.2 Welch’s relations to languages are introduced through a passage from (“On the Way to English,” *Seismographs* 1988: 40), in which she compares French and English, pondering about what each language has meant for her. As it is a crucial text for an investigation of her beliefs about languages and her positioning, I propose to juxtapose her contrasting imagery, which reveals quite different forms of perception and knowledge associated with each language: English for “a direct perception of sensuous reality”, while French stands for a rational apprehension of abstractions.

English	French
<i>remembered impressions/ experiences as young lycéenne</i>	
	The other language – the one with which she was later to earn her daily bread

⁵⁸¹ A short passage adds a certain sense of pride when for her Canadian readers she explains what the lycée for young girls represented in Luxembourg society: On entering the school after a “stiff entry exam”: “[Y]ou were now a member of an *élite* of ninety which in seven years of study would be pruned to ten or fifteen. As a *lycéenne* you were a special show-animal struggling to endure the bracing mind-shocks of intellectual rigour.” (38)

⁵⁸² The only evidence of some struggling with language appears in a few documents kept at the CNL: Essays written at university with occasional linguistic corrections by somebody else: a teacher or a friend?

English is monosyllabic	Already then she was sensitive to its polysyllabic beat
in its sounds she discerned the lurking of “darker energies, more visceral passions, something pagan, mythic, primal”	she perceived French as “something scholastic, Romanesque, civilized, straining towards essence, truth and abstraction”
an image of wild nature English “prefigured wanderings over the wide, lonesome and untamed Rocky Mountains. The movement and stillness of the English words were similar to the trance-like breath of hiking up a steep slope	an image of a formal garden dominated by order and symmetry the rhythm of French reminds her of “stroll through a manicured garden”
<i>comparisons made later, when she has become a teacher of French and an English-language poet in Canada</i>	
“More tailored to my temperament, the structure of English has always affected me physically and intuitively. Within it I can be receptive and alert to the physical, phenomenal world.	“In the mannerly, polished, embroidered, affected, more Latinate and rhetorical French you are forever living in the shadow of a tradition, the body of linguistic doctrines established by the French Academy;
Its extroverted words afford a plunge to the marrow of things while also conjuring up their flesh.	you use words more worn and rational, you play with images less evocative
The uncastrated word-forms of English open a direct perception of sensuous reality.	French words tend to encircle metaphysically the universal nature of objects.

One might call these distinctions clichés gathered from 19th century views, opposing English romanticism to French classicism. But I would rather approach Welch’s views of English in the context of a certain understanding of nomadism, which stresses concepts of **space** as emerging in contact with natural surroundings (cf. Kenneth White and geopoetics), language as expression of the development of a nomadic subject in response to the environment (Braidotti).

Nomadic theory helps us uncover the *transformative aspect of English* described as the experience of a walker and traveller. The 12-year-old girl is “on the way” or in the process of becoming another. Not only does she acquire a new voice, she also becomes aware of a different way of being in the world. “During these early stages of my love affair with everything Anglo-Saxon, the English cadences held out a promise, alertness, readiness. They abetted my romantic projections of North America.” (40)

A *translingual view on teaching* emerges toward the end of the essay. The essay’s backward-looking survey also establishes a link with the Canadian setting in which Welch conceives the essay. The last paragraph confirms that the way to English has led the poet to her destination: as enunciating subject, she writes up her memories from her Canadian location

*I have not forgotten the first intuitive lessons of my multiple linguistic dwelling: whenever I hear an energetic woman teacher, whenever I see a child bent over a book, whenever I pronounce words loaded with th's and r's, whenever my students battle with contemporary French poetic texts, my eyes, ears and tongue recapture my first expeditions into naming. Writing in my silent Sackville study or landing at the windy Halifax airport, I smell, feel, hear and become thrilled all over again by the wonderful freshness of English words. ("On the Way to English," *Seismographs* 1988: 41; emphasis added)*

It is a retrospective view, which mingles past and present experiences. On the one hand, Welch associates languages with *notions of home*: "my multiple linguistic dwelling" and "intuitive lessons" stand for her early life in Luxembourg, while the "silent Sackville study" is the Canadian home where the poet writes her work in a newly adopted mother tongue. On the other hand, a *nomad's* experiences with languages involve incessant physical and mental movement, such as "expeditions" into the meaning of words through "naming". Above all the discovery of a new idiom is an embodied process of transformation that involves "eyes, ears and tongue": The intuitive or spontaneous early learning becomes enlarged through self-reflection based on a phenomenological apprehension of language.

For an awareness of language experiences, this short passage also suggests the importance of an ongoing dynamic give-and-take between teacher and learner. Welch observes in her learners of French a similar struggle with sounds and sense as the one she experienced in her first encounters with English. She draws a self-portrait of an eager migrant not only ready to conform to practices but literally thrilled to let the new language become part of herself. Language experience appears deeply embedded in geographical surroundings and natural phenomena, as evoked by the strong winds in Halifax. The airport is a *threshold*, which anticipates a sensuous transformation through smelling, feeling and hearing, in which land and language are intimately linked. However, we also realize that it is only through travelling away from this place that the intense experience becomes possible. Though this text is not concerned with a literary ideal or a poetics, we may assume that these views on language experiences also underpin her work as an English language poet who transforms and is transformed through travelling and writing across languages.

5.2.3.3 An intermediary note on the historical context of linguistic tensions

We have seen how some of Welch's texts underline her early perception of "good and bad" voices, as attached to persons or institutions that she either admires or shrinks away from. But is it the language (speech) or the speakers that she likes or dislikes so passionately? In some cases the descriptions of people's peculiarities and pseudo-historical allusions sound like clichés or inherited prejudices: "The northern people were less clear-sighted than the southerners and more easily overwhelmed by the yoke and wizardry of the Church and, hence, more prone to fitful authoritarianism and childlike obedience. They were in some sense wilder, « less civilized. »" (*Seismographs*: 31)

In the essays, the repeatedly foregrounded differences are linked to historical and geographical contexts which should account for varying cultural and linguistic practices. The disparate personalities in her family and their conflicting voices are associated with their respective home villages Located in different parts of Luxembourg. Thus in a comment on her father's "northern" and her maternal grandmother's "southern" voice, she writes:

For the southerners, whose vocabulary was studded with "Luxembourgified" French words and whose manners were more "romanic" owing to the century-long ties of intermarriage and labour contracts with France, the "germanic" northerners like my father were headstrong, brutish and vulgar. They tolerated no contradiction and bore within them a rage that erupted unexpectedly – a mark of all uncultured, instinct-driven tribes. They were related to the barbaric northern hordes whose invasions had spelled the doom of the Roman Empire. ("A Sense of Voice," *Seismographs* 1988: 31)

Though for someone unfamiliar with spoken discourse in Luxembourg the distinctions may be somewhat baffling, the underlying message is clear. The speaker does not hide her partiality for the southern branch of her family, who are closer to a French and Latin culture than the "barbarians" in the north. It is Welch's interpretation of Luxembourg as *Zwischenland*,⁵⁸³ which has turned into useful concept to describe writers' position between cultures and languages.

Welch never makes a reference to her own childhood wartime experiences with languages. Yet, for anyone aware of the situation in Luxembourg at that time it is difficult not to notice underlying parallels in her distinction between "good and bad voices" and wide-spread attitudes to languages during those war years and for some time beyond: on the one hand, Luxembourgers' general animosity towards German and on the other hand the appeal of French. Thus Welch appears to transfer the features of a hateful Germanic voice to her father (and the men of the Church), while the maternal grandmother's language has all the charm of a "romanic" language.⁵⁸⁴

Some extra-textual information should reinforce this reading of her texts. It is a reading, which however does not aim to dismiss her generally problematic relations with her father; like a focus on gender issues, a historical clarification of her background is just one element in an approach of her literary transformation of memories. The incidents described in the essays reveal a very passionate response to

⁵⁸³ The word is borrowed from the title of an anthology, *Zwischenland ! Ausguckland! Literarische Kurzprosa aus Luxemburg*, edited by Germaine Goetzinger and Gast Mannes (2009). What in a "Nachwort" is described as a general characteristic of the anthologized texts could also be said about Welch's essays about Luxembourg in *Seismographs*: "[I]mplizit schwingt in allen Texten [...] sowohl das komplexe, multilinguale Kommunikationsgefüge Luxemburgs mit, als auch jene eigentümliche Stellung des Dazwischenstehens und der Referenz auf das Fremde, die bezeichnenderweise oft dazu dient, sich der eigenen Identität zu vergewissern." (368)

⁵⁸⁴ She dismisses the fact that the village of her grandmother though situated on the French border is also close to Germany and part of the 3-Ländereck commune of Schengen.

language. The world in general is perceived as either good or bad, the people she knows or meets are either friends or foes, with little or no space for nuances. This is not unusual for a young child's reactions, but the historical context of World War II could also account for a great sensitivity to antinomies.

Welch's early childhood was indeed marked by the German occupation of Luxembourg (1940-1945) with language issues at the heart of the population's resentment against the occupiers.⁵⁸⁵ She was not yet three when in 1940 together with her family she was evacuated to France, like all the inhabitants of her hometown. She started primary school in 1943, during the German occupation – a time to which she looks back, however, from a different perspective: "In 1943 when I entered primary school in Luxembourg, the world of literature was divided into two: good books and bad books, clean or useful ones and frivolous or dirty ones." She does not refer to languages but to the views of the priests and nuns, whose teaching she deeply resented, as opposed to the stories in the books of adventure that she likes.

Welch refrains from providing an outline of multilingualism in Luxembourg for her Canadian readers but rather focusses on her experiences to present her views of linguistic and cultural differences. She cannot have ignored the tensions that prevailed in the 1940s in relation to language practices in Luxembourg but in *Seismographs* she never discusses political dimensions of language issues. In contrast to French and German, Luxembourgish, her actual mother tongue, in *Seismographs* is an unmarked idiom - unmarked here in the sense that the child took it for granted, it did not need a name. Nor was it studied at school, as the other languages were. Despite its omnipresence as a spoken language, Luxembourgish was also unmarked in the sense of culturally unremarkable for the author of the essays. Her interest in Luxembourgish literature came later.

What is noteworthy is the deliberate avoidance of a direct discussion of national antinomies and distinct languages. On the whole, Welch does not seem interested in reflecting on differences between national languages; all her attention goes to the effect that words and their use can have, independently of the language in which they were used. Similarly, all questions concerning the translatability of her experiences into the (English) text which she has written appear to be irrelevant. A monolingual North American reader is unlikely to notice that in the essays she speaks of books that she read in three different languages: the titles are all given in English, *The Flowers of Evil*, *Globi*, the bible and the catechism. She takes the learner's passage from reading books first in German, then in French before turning to English as a practice that does not need any comments.

585 The occupant had decreed a general banning of French, and also of Lëtzebuergesch in public spaces, while the 1941 referendum revealed that the population nearly unanimously repudiated the imposition of German as national language.

5.2.3.4 Imagining a literary ancestry: Wolves and foxes to respond to cultural tensions

Welch turns to figures of folklore and a popular epic to create her own translingual family epic: “Wolves and Foxes” (*Seismographs*: 22-25). In this essay, linguistic multiplicity appears in still other guises than in the essays that describe the child’s early memories. Here Welch uses a literary framework to situate contrasts, animosities as well as their rootedness in diverse contexts. With the help of folktales and the national epic, *Renert*, she imagines (re-)discovering events and beliefs that shaped the lives of her parents and ancestors, including characteristics of their speech and cultural habits. She links her presentation of two quite diverse facets of her background to the home villages of her parents and simultaneously to the traditional animal heroes of folktales: the wolf and the fox.⁵⁸⁶

According to old legends, the inhabitants of her father’s village, *Méischdrëf*, are called *wolves* while, for Welch, the people in her mother’s village, *Bermereng*, are foxes.⁵⁸⁷ The contrast between the father’s and the mother’s villages and their ways of life appears through a juxtaposition of the stories told in both communities. The villagers from *Méischdrëf* love the morals of folktales, the principles of the church with religious language being quite similar for them to the old superstitious language of the tales. It is a closed community, unwilling to change by letting in influences from outside:

The inhabitants earned their nickname after one of the last wolves of Luxembourg met its end there in 1882. In *Méischdrëf*, amid the dark forests and the deep gorges, you heard about the solemn contracts between the people tilling the land and the uncanny apparitions haunting the river and the woods: the *Salzmännchen*, the *Schierener Bräitchen* and other invisible and frightening presences. (“Wolves and Foxes,” *Seismographs* 1988: 22)

Bermereng, on the other hand, is described as a crossroads where people have circulated since a very distant past:

Bermereng lies embedded in a hollow amidst the largest open agricultural lands of southern Luxembourg. Its protected and hidden position renders it nearly invisible to invaders, touring or otherwise, who only discover it when they are already in the foxes’ den. A stone’s throw from the banks of the Moselle River, where present-day France and Germany also meet, it is a bridge to the distant corners of human history. (“Wolves and Foxes,” *Seismographs* 1988: 23)

The encounter of a wolf and a fox, as it happened when her parents met and married, is a reference to Luxembourg’s national epic, the *Renert* by Michel Rodange,⁵⁸⁸ in which the cunning fox outsmarts the

⁵⁸⁶ It may be worth noting that the distance between the two villages is less than fifty kilometres. *Méischdrëf* (official name: Moersdorf) is situated (in central/eastern Luxembourg) on the river Sauer just across from Germany, while *Bermereng* (official name: Burmerange) is in the south, near the Moselle, another border river with Germany, and just a stone’s throw from France, a proximity which Welch likes to stress.

⁵⁸⁷ Both Burmerange and Moersdorf are really tiny villages, of comparable size. As of 2001, Burmerange had a population of 173, while Moersdorf, situated in the commune of Mompach, had a population of 293 (as of 2005).

⁵⁸⁸ *Renert* is the Luxembourgish rendering of the French *renard* and the German *Reineke*.

dumb, greedy and gullible wolf. Welch gives her own explanation for the link of Bemereng with the national epic: she refers to a pun based on names rather than a factual link with the literary text.⁵⁸⁹

The essay has numerous examples of cultural contrasts, embedded in the villages' divergent histories and enduring ways of life. While the *Méischdrëf* wolves are linked to "barbaric", backward outlooks, the *Bermerenger* Fiiss are known to use their wits rather than brawn or physical strength. Through the short accounts of folktales and an evocation of natural surroundings exuding contrasting atmospheres, Welch underlines the tensions between her mother's and her father's families.

Founding myth for a nomadic poet's dual roots in French and German

I would like to argue that what drives Welch to write a family story like "Wolves and Foxes" is the wish to acknowledge (to some extent) that both French (or Romanic) and Germanic leanings are part of her heritage, before showing at the end of the text that her place and her future had to be elsewhere.

The insights that she gains are largely linked to migrations and re-constructions of cultural spaces: They involve her parents' relocation in Esch-sur-Alzette, fragments of her life story leading from Luxembourg to North America, as well as her visit as a returnee to her parents' native villages.

To make sense of both legacies, she needs a kind of founding myth, which provides explanations for the conflicts and linguistic antagonisms that she experienced as a child in her immediate surroundings and that also account for her broad European heritage. Therefore references to movements of people include past migrations of populations that shaped her ancestor's cultural and linguistic practices; thus in relation with her father's village she alludes to ancient invasions by the Vandals and the Huns, while in Bemereng Roman roads are said to converge.

The text refers to a multi-centred heritage and reveals many details for a reading of its imaginary spaces and its latent heterolingualism (as described by Grutman 1997; 2017; Suchet 2014).

Location	Méischdrëf (the village of the father's family)	Bermereng (the village of the mother's family)	Esch-sur-Alzette (the town where Liliane grew up)
natural surroundings	dark, gloomy	open land	an industrial town, its soil red with iron ore
cultural connection	Germanic	Latin and French	
people's nickname	"Wollef"	"Fuuss"	"Minettsdapp"

⁵⁸⁹ As Welch repeatedly reminds her readers, Bemereng is also the home village of Maus Kätti, the popular figure in Liesch's poem, with whom she likes to identify. (See "A Sense of Voice" in *Seismographs*; "What are Poets for?" in *Frescoes* as well as her draft of a play entitled "D'Maus Ginette.")

connotations	static life based on unquestioned traditions and precepts of the Church; superstitious people	a crossroads of cultures; open-minded people	an area looking to the future
literary associations	legends supporting people's superstitions; stories orally transmitted in Luxembourgish; yet the written versions recorded in national collections of folktales are in German; story of the last wolf in Luxembourg (seemingly to suggest the backwardness of the place)	the story of <i>Renert</i> , the clever fox, in Luxembourgish, which is considered a literary masterpiece and national epic); the people of Bermereng are connected to this literary masterpiece by some debatable interpretation or a linguistic sleight of hand on the part of Welch who in other essays is also proud to recall the connection with Maus Kätti	no literary associations with Esch mentioned in this text (For a reference to another poet, Anne Blanchot-Philippi, linked to Esch and the Minette area, see ch. 9.1.4.)

A focus on border areas and the poet's positioning

It is interesting to notice that all the locations that Welch discovers in her family history are situated on borders. Although borders may not really be an unusual feature in view of the size of Luxembourg, the proximity to France and Germany nonetheless underlines the role of interaction and the inevitable impact of exchanges on linguistic and cultural practices. It is part of her answer to the assumed underlying questions about her familiarity with French and German.⁵⁹⁰

When her parents married, they moved to yet another border area, the Minette. France is but a stone's throw from the centre of Esch-sur-Alzette, the mining town, where Liliane grew up:

I was neither Füss nor Wollef, I was a Minettsdap and bore proudly this nickname given the people of the soil a bit west of Bermereng, a soil red with the iron ore that for a century brought the wealth of the steel industry to Luxembourg. Esch-sur-Alzette, my home town, looked toward the future, not toward the past. I was already up to my knees in fantasies about America, and the mud of family intrigues did not effectively influence me. ("Wolves and Foxes," *Seismographs* 1988:25)

The emphasis on border places suggests separation as well as exchange and languages in movement. It also points to the poet's positioning as a writer between languages and cultures. It is as if for Welch, the reader and listener there was only one language, in which elements from various sources mix. Welch's

⁵⁹⁰ Incidentally, the link to Bermereng has turned into a symbolic place for Europe: it is only a couple miles away from Schengen, the village on the Moselle, in the *Dreiländereck* where on 14 June 1985 the Agreement leading to the creation of Europe's Schengen Area was signed and internal border checks were abolished. When Welch wrote her essays, she may not have been aware of the importance that Schengen, was going to play in international relations. Despite its small size, Burmerange used to be a *commune* until it was merged into Schengen in 2011.

text, however, is in English, not a regional language but the language that allowed the adolescent to escape and overcome the family conflicts. In the essay, she speaks as the *returnee*⁵⁹¹ who translates, *translanguages*, and transforms her memories into a text for readers.

Turning to English is an *act of sublimation*, which expresses strong emotions and the desire to create a new poetic space based on the tensions that she wants to leave behind. It is a way to move the vile family intrigues into a culturally acceptable form. Writing up a literary version of the family feud also becomes a means for the poet to position herself among the protagonists of Luxembourg literature, siding with the more refined Renert rather than the rudimentary and less remarkable folktales: “The masterpiece of Luxembourg’s literature, the *Renert*, the glorious fox-epic, became in an altered version the national pageant of our family”. (25)

But one should not forget the warning about foxes’ penchant **for irony and self-mockery**:

The home of the Bermerenger was not beguiled by the fearful ghosts of the Méischdrëffer. The Fiss always defused their legends with irony and self-mockery. These men and women erected a village closed onto itself, finished and complete. At its centre all roads arrived. (“Wolves and Foxes,” *Seismographs* 1988: 24)⁵⁹²

Hyperbole is a common feature of mocking irony. Welch uses it to mark her own growing detachment from family feuds:

My mother never tired of exposing me to the crimes of the Méischdrëf Wollef. Her talk fulminated with conspiracies, disloyalties, incriminations and duels and climaxed in a *Götterdämmerung* where the Méischdrëf *Wollef* were pitched into infernal punishments more vivid than those of Hieronymus Bosch. (“Wolves and Foxes,” *Seismographs* 1988: 25)

“Wolves and Foxes” turns out to be a somewhat humorous attempt on the speaker’s part to tell the story of her family, which enables her to make meaning of her own position. It is a largely *mock-heroic tale* that Welch tells us, often tongue in cheek, yet the exaggerations as well as the apparent contradictions provide a plausible account of her origins. The daughter of a wolf and a fox is first a Minettsdapp, who then becomes a nomad and writes her story from the perspective of a Canadian returnee.

In 1987, I visit Méischdrëf and Bermereng, renewing childhood outings. Eating the smoked Ardennes ham with the Méischdrëf Wollef [sic], drinking a piquant Moselle wine with the Bermereng Fiss, means release from the glare of ancient feuds. (“Wolves and Foxes,” *Seismographs* 1988: 25)

⁵⁹¹ See ch. 7.2.1 about her poem “Canadian Returnee” (1988).

⁵⁹² Welch’s description of Bermereng, “a village closed onto itself” (in Luxembourgish, a village “wou d’Welt mat Brieder zougeneelt ass”?) is somewhat puzzling as she also praises the place as an ancient crossroads and a symbol of open borders today.

She leaves the ancient local antagonisms behind and looks forward to new horizons. The old stories and their clichés belong to the past, for the nomad and migrant, they are a stage on a route that will uncover further cultural and linguistic dimensions in her family: the story of a mysterious Italian grandfather, which she imaginatively reconstructs in a collection of poems entitled *Word-House of a Grandchild* (1987).⁵⁹³ Languages are an essential part of her life's narrative: through the re-enactment of her grandparents' *lives and voices*, she writes a literary language biography of her ancestry – looking both forward from “Old to New World,” and backward:

I have learnt from my genealogy that a family epic is something as forbidding, incomprehensible and ritualistic as a wilderness area ... I also learned that, whether remembering the web of experiences lived with my grandmother or examining the cast of characters in faded photo albums, unawares I was always penetrating from the outside of my background and antecedents into the inside of my own life's narrative. (“Grandparents: A Fragment,” *Seismographs* 1988: 20)

Like many essays in *Seismographs*, “Wolves and Foxes” is a piece of life writing, which echoes key features of memoirs and translational writing (see ch. 3.1). Part of Welch's authorial posture is to present herself and her Luxembourgish origins by references to literary works, a folktale and the national epic by Rodange. She refrains from providing an outline of multilingualism in Luxembourg or from discussing geopolitical issues for her Canadian readers but rather uses the showcase of her own family to present her views on linguistic and cultural differences. This approach is consolidated in the essays which move beyond the family circle.

5.2.4 Concluding thoughts on awakening to language multiplicity

5.2.4.1 Voices and words, not languages

Summing up Welch's outlook on language as it transpires in her autobiographic essays means disentangling her later positions from the early experiences. The texts indeed offer many reflections on the gap between voices of childhood and the poet's later attachment to her language of writing. The development of a heterolingual ethos emerges from her reconstructed accounts.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹³ In her writings, she becomes the subject in process: “When I explore the paths of my background I write poems. (“Grandparents: A Fragment,” *Seismographs* 1988: 19) For a detailed analysis of *Word-House of a Grandchild*, see ch. 8.1.

⁵⁹⁴ Cf. Suchet as presented in 3.; see also Arvi Sepp, who refers to Giorgio Agamben: “In Kindheit und Geschichte vollzieht Giorgio Agamben eine radikale sprachkritische Trennung zwischen Sprache als langue bzw. λόγος und Sprache als einem konkreten Handeln, als einer Stimme. Zwischen den beiden Polen sei eine Leere, die im Besonderen in der modernen Literatur zum Ausdruck gebracht werden könne: „Der Raum zwischen Stimme und Λόγος ist ein leerer Raum.” (Quoted from Dembeck and Parr 2017: 62)

In her memories, Welch stresses a heterogeneity of voices. Multiplicity in language does not appear as an accumulation of different national languages; their presence in her life, her reading and writing remains largely implicit. She does not foreground a discussion of policies nor does she deal with interactions between languages in her own use of speech or writing. In “On the Way to English,” she shows that national languages for her remain separate areas, like distinct school subjects. They can be compared (as she does with French and English) but she does not see them mingling. Similarly, her life is divided between her tasks as a teacher of French (literature mostly) and her personal commitment to her poetic work in English.

In her essays, multiplicity appears *in* language; it is a form of heteroglossia (intralinguistic multiplicity as described by M. Bakhtin⁵⁹⁵) represented through encounters with multiple and diverse voices. Such meetings with diversity often occur in connection with movement (walking for the young child or in association with migrations of individuals or of populations, notably in “Wolves and Foxes”).

Welch takes a largely phenomenological approach,⁵⁹⁶ often attempting to recall what the child’s perspective on situations (meetings with diversity) must have been. She does not see language as a closed system but stresses the subject’s sense impressions. Language is perceived through all senses, including a response to rhythm, hence also the importance of an affective dimension and of emotional responses to certain experiences of language difference. (“The Hands of the Tongue”; “A Sense of Voice”)

The oral dimension of language predominates in the described memories and is present in reading experiences as well: she (the persona in the stories) hears what she reads. In fact, encounters with real people or encounters with characters in books lead to similar forms of response.

In books she imagines meeting the characters she can identify with – whatever the national language in which she encounters them: they are rebels and people on the move, or figures attached to their place – but always asserting their own position (against a hostile environment). Reading stands out as a crucial experience for an awareness of language diversity. Reading also permits the creation of imaginary spaces with voices that appeal to her. (“Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations”)

Through the phenomenological approach we get insights into the impact that conflictual language experiences (voices) have on the child and adolescent, as a subject in progress (Kristeva). We see how multiple contacts mark her development and eventually motivate her to run away (immigrate to North America) from voices she cannot identify with. (“Wolves and Foxes”)

⁵⁹⁵ See references in 5.1 and 3.1.2.

⁵⁹⁶ See references to Inkpin and Busch in 5.1.

5.2.4.2 A hidden understanding of language multiplicity

In her essays, Welch never refers to theories of language and literature. It is as if she enjoyed leaving behind her time as an academic critic, now keen to devote her writing exclusively to creative, poetic writing.

In the *Seismographs* essays, references to various distinct or national languages are mostly implicit, with no reference to “trilingualism,” the long prevailing term used to discuss language practices in Luxembourg, (see for instance *Inventing Luxembourg* 2010) or to pluri- or multilingualism as practised in current social, educational studies or the humanities.⁵⁹⁷

Welch’s approach of language diversity through a comparison of *voices and their contexts* gives glimpses into a perspective of difference between languages and inside language, which is mostly based on the reader’s (or listener’s) perceptions and her understanding of intended messages. Her essays suggest the possibility of a novel (or not so novel?) and different understanding of multiplicity, not primarily experienced as distinct languages but rather as representations of diverse forms of expression and communication between the author (or the persona) and the reader or listener. What a language *does*, the multiplicity of things it can be doing to a reader, is more important than what a language *is*. The essays are not about language as academic object to be studied in isolation but about language as inseparable from speakers and the spaces in which it takes its origin and is used.

The texts occasionally contain references to several national languages with which the speaker is familiar, but the differences between them appear as either personal response (see her intuitive comparison of French and English) or as only one, perhaps not so important, facet of a much broader range of diversity in linguistic expression. They invite us to revisit our current views on mono-, bi-, multi- or plurilingualism, which despite the emphasis on interaction seem to ignore many other underlying dimensions of otherness and interplay. Language as expression of multiple responses to life, as means of interaction with one’s surroundings, of understanding the world, as a form of meaning making seem to be at the core of the many essays in *Seismographs*.

Absence of “language” as a named concept

The following passage reflects on how to come closer to Welch’s implicit understanding of language.

⁵⁹⁸ Welch’s essays provide many insights linked to language experiences described in terms of words,

⁵⁹⁷ The notion of trilingualism was reinforced with the law of 1984, of which Welch must have been aware. The discussions about multi- and plurilingualism became more prominent in Europe and in Canada in the 1990s, after the publication of *Seismographs* in 1988.

⁵⁹⁸ It is an ex-post methodological reflection that the careful reading of the texts revealed.

voices, speech, vocabulary and books. Yet, paradoxically, a close inspection shows that Welch hardly ever uses the term 'language'. In all the essays presented above it occurs only once, when she speaks of the grandmother's "sanctified language" ("A Sense of Voice," *Seismographs* 1988: 32).

In *all of Seismographs* (which contains many more essays that have not been mentioned above) I have found eight instances. They reflect not one specific theory but the poet's own views.⁵⁹⁹ In view of the contexts in which she uses the word 'language', I would propose three connotations, which however in some cases tend to overlap.

(1) Language as referring to distinct national languages:

This meaning applies to instances found in an essay where she refers to the works in her own library: "There are many literary journals on the bookshelves in my office. They speak four different languages." (*Reviewing: Mediation or Assassination," *Seismographs* 1988: 85).

In this sense, the word is also used in an essay on translation:

We always live and move immersed unconsciously in our language, Yet often only when we have to translate something do we become fully aware of the powers of language, do we begin to ask about our stand in language, do we start to understand our own tongue. [...] Having left the foreign-language peaks, and not yet acclimatized to your mother tongue, you see for the first time how you have so far crafted your own language." ("Climbing the Mountains of Translation," *Seismographs* 1988: 83)⁶⁰⁰

In this example of the translator's movements between languages Welch also alludes to the second connotation:

(2) Language as a way of being in the world:

Language is a state of being, an indication of the subject's identity; it is inherited and part of the self:

In Perugia, Angelo Chiuchiù, a Professor helpful, creative and alive, taught me my first lessons in Italian – the ancient, beautiful language which all along had pulsed in my veins. He helped me rediscover the thread of the Latin heritage which shaped the story of my life. ("Grandparents: A Fragment," *Seismographs* 1988: 20)

Language may also refer to a more general environment in which the writer invents her texts. She craves "to hang in the vibrations of language, to immerse [her]self in stories more compelling than the deadly routines of poetry tours." ("The Poet as Frustrated Rhapsode," *Seismographs* 1988: 88)

⁵⁹⁹ Undoubtedly marked by the views of linguists (Saussure), literary critics (Barthes), poets (Mallarmé) and philosophers (Heidegger) and the ideas of Cyril Welch, who is the author of two books on language: *A Sense of language* (1973); *Linguistic Responsibility* (1988).

⁶⁰⁰ See also a passage on comparisons of languages in a review of translated poetry: Attending above all to the texture of the words and the general movement of the rhythms, Cogswell abandons the French alexandrine and replaces it with the pentameter, a form more natural to the English language." *Review of Fred Cogswell's translation of Emile Nelligan's poems* (122)

(3) Language as a mystical or transcendental experience

Language in Welch's texts often takes a religious connotation, as in her memories of the Grandmother's voice.⁶⁰¹ This dimension is central for the poet: "Language, the poet believes, is basically incantatory. With this faith in the incantatory power of language, the poet works with words to make them sing [...] the trinity of Poet, Audience and Language." ("On Reading Poetry to Others," *Seismographs*: 81-82) In this transcendental meaning, references are not only to human language. Several examples point to language as belonging to natural phenomena that the human listener may perceive:

Solitude belongs to the mountains, also to the alive language of ice and rock. ("Marshes/ Mountains," *Seismographs* 1988: 59)

Fundy's wind speaks the same language of innocence and simplicity as the cold mountain wind ("Poetry as Cheirography," *Seismographs* 1988: 65)

The ancient language and cycles of the earth, the voyages of the suns and stars, the migrations of animals speak with equal sublimity and menacing grandeur when we face the presence of the monolithic mountains. ("A Sense of Wilderness," *Seismographs* 1988: 73)

Reconstructing her memories of language, Welch already outlines core elements of her poetics (see ch.6).

5.2.4.3 The role of Luxembourgish versus English

Luxembourgish is the mostly *silent language* in the overall English texts. In the real world of remembered childhood experiences it was central, but in the texts it is transformed into English, with hardly any visible traces of the passage. For readers, it largely remains the *unnamed and unremarkable language*: they are never told the name of her mother's tongue or what one calls the language (or idiom or vernacular) that the child uses in the family.

Only a few rare words in Luxembourgish are inserted in the analyzed essays. They are mostly used for *naming*: in forms of address (*Joffer, mai Kandt*), the title of the national epic and nicknames of villagers and as terms of abuse (cf. the father's swear words or slang). In the first cases, they add some *couleur locale*, in the father's case, they rather stand for all the hateful world that he represents. Welch's views in *Seismographs* seem hard to square with those in an earlier article published in Luxembourg, entitled "Mir sinn e klenkt Land" (1978 ; see 4.2) where the emphasis is on the importance of a national language and literature. Did Welch change her mind about her native language or do reflections about "English, her belated mother tongue" trigger new perspectives? Or should we conclude that Welch expresses different

⁶⁰¹ See 5.2.2: "The vibrations of her voice conjured up a space in which all saints and God himself spoke as natural phenomena. These rhythmical litanies, punctuated by the incantational recurrences of divine and natural names, sanctified language and made me experience for the first time the miracle of a secular transcendence." ("A Sense of Voice," *Seismographs*: 32)

views according to targeted readers, adapting to Canadian and Luxembourgish readers? It seems that above all she makes a distinction between her language as a poet in exile and her views on language policies in Luxembourg.

5.2.4.4 Life Writing and Gender issues ⁶⁰²

Life writing as meaning making involves thinking about power relations. The ongoing references to conflictual relationships with her father, whose dictatorial voice is shown as the most characteristic feature of his dogmatism and of his contemptuous attitude towards women, point to a link between language or *linguaging* and gender issues.

In “On the way to English,” her teacher, a remarkable woman, is the personification of her desire for the new language, which becomes a promise of freedom and liberation from her father (and the dogma of the Church). In the essay “In Girls a Family Name Does Not Live On,” she writes about her reaction to her father’s plans for her future: When he declares, “Boys need a university education, girls don’t”, she retorts “I’ll go to America!” and comments:

I would show them that even “just a woman” could create her own name in the New World. I became indomitably resourceful in plugging my ears to my father’s methodical contempt. I escaped into books, into my American fantasy-world from which power-sodden male autocrats were excluded and in which girls had unrestricted movement. (“In Girls a Family Name Does Not Live On,” *Seismographs* 1988: 42-43)

Yet, however virulent the attacks on her father are – without any changes in later writings (see *Crossings*), Welch shrinks back from a radical position on gender issues. As a professor of French literature, she was well familiar with the tenets of feminist theory; it was part of the subjects she had to teach within the broad area of French as an academic discipline. But in her writings, she refers to her own experiences to express her position:

Involved for many years in the battle of the sexes, I can see now that masculine victory or feminine triumph is not the ultimate issue in life. Among true climbers on the mountain, the gender of the rope partners matter little. What counts is that they love the mountain enough to climb effectively together toward the peak. (“In Girls a Family Name Does Not Live On,” *Seismographs* 1988: 44)

If often, in her memories of Luxembourg and its linguistic practices, Welch’s sympathies go to women characters, it would however be inappropriate to call her a feminist writer.

⁶⁰² For studies on gender issues linked to language practices see: Busch 2015; Pavlenko 2001; Pavlenko and Norton, “Imagined Communities, Identity, and English Language Learning” 2007; Kramsch, *Multilingual Subject* 2009; Burck, Charlotte 2011. See also 5.2.2

5.3 Pierre Joris: A confusion of languages: early memories of multiple voices

This chapter deals with Joris's reconstruction in writing of his early language experiences. Consequently, it is also an investigation into the constitution the polyglot as nomadic subject (cf. Braidotti). In his poetry, Joris avoids subjectivity and direct references to himself as subject. However, in texts which bring in memories and reflections on his own language experiences, the subject dimension as understood by Kristeva as "subject-in-process" (1980) and Kramsch (2009), for example, is crucial for it permits to emphasize nomadic notions of development, mobility and change.

In autobiographical pieces, Joris re-constructs his becoming in language/s, and reflects on what languages have meant to him and how he has responded to difference and multiplicity. Writing up his memories means arranging them in structured texts - however *fragmentary* they appear; it also involves carefully choosing appropriate images for complex ideas. Hence, the recording naturally becomes a means of positioning for the writer. The texts show how the poet sees himself and how he would like to be seen, while they also aim at preventing misinterpretations about his linguistic background.

The selected texts are scattered in work that stretches from the 1980s to today.⁶⁰³ These essays and fragments were published in various places, for different readers (for instance for readers of his poetic work in the UK and the US; for a more specifically Luxembourg readership or for an internet community that follows his work). Some passages in interviews provide further clarifications.

The early essays are mostly conceived as explanatory texts for others, for readers curious to know more about Joris's languages and multicultural contacts. He tries to demystify the exoticism that monolingual readers may attach to his multilingualism. Later texts contain more reflective inquiries into connections and passages between his languages. They reveal the poet's attempts at making sense of his own development, for himself, as speaker and as a poet who reconstructs experiences through the lens of concepts of movement and multilingualism acquired later.

I see all these documents as preliminary – or circumstantial – texts for his poetics (see ch. 6). In this chapter, the focus is on general responses to language, not on his views on literary writing, though some reflections point to a natural development from a phenomenological response to language experience to deliberate poetic writing.

⁶⁰³ They comprise two essays included in *A Nomad Poetics*, but written earlier: "The Case of the Missing 'M'" (1990); "A Glottal Choice" (1999) – originally written in French; autobiographical pieces available on-line: "Late Prose of First Years. Autobiography." (2015); "Foghorn. Extract from an Autobiographical work in progress." (2016); essays edited by Ciôcarlie in collections dedicated to 'migrant' writers or to a specifically Luxembourg context; interview(s): notably with Peter Cockelbergh and SJ Fowler.

5.3.1 Fragments of a language biography in progress

The two autobiographical essays included in *A Nomad Poetics* (ANP) seem to have been triggered by enquiries about his mother tongue, his multilingualism and the choice of English as his language of writing. “A Glottal Choice” opens on the question “Why, how, to write in a language that is not the one called the mother tongue?” (ANP: 59), while in “The Case of the Missing ‘M’” he comments on his discovery, many years later, that he had written his first poems in English:

And that fact was in a way a clue for me, when later I came to have to justify, or at least have to explain my decision to write in English, usually in front of an interlocutor who, sympathetic to my work or not, would bring up the old chestnut of the impossibility of writing poetry in any other language than the “mother-tongue.” (“The Case of the Missing ‘M’,” ANP: 69)

The essays are not short, straightforward answers, they are retrospective views and attempt to situate explanations in a broader personal context with reflections notably on the author’s *later position* as a writer. “I was born between languages.” (ANP 59) This is how Joris describes his natural immersion in several languages. He gives his American or international readers some information on the origin, or rather the circumstances of his familiarity with multiple languages, showing that he acquired them quite naturally, though as separate and interconnected languages. He refers to language policies that marked his childhood and education, which made it simply impossible for him to consider his mother tongue, Luxembourgish, as a language of writing: at school, he had never been taught how to spell it and was unaware that it could be used as a codified tool for literature.⁶⁰⁴

Struggling to find words for the description of his early childhood among several languages, each with its own not too clearly delineated area of use, he resorts to an image and speaks of the *rainbow spectrum of languages*:

My childhood, language-wise, was atomized – no, not atomized, as that would imply some sort of pre-existing actual totality somehow more or less randomly fragmented; it was rather as if my gaze, my language-gaze if I may say so, went through a prism and was broken up into a spectrum of languages, or vice versa, to turn this image around, it was as if a rainbow spectrum of language-particles flew at me and were all supposed to go to some prism in my ear or wherever they are supposedly realigned into a single white beam of light understanding itself. (“The Case of the Missing ‘M’,” ANP: 68)

⁶⁰⁴ Joris explains that when the first law on language regimes in Luxembourg was passed in 1984, with a formal recognition of Luxembourgish as “la langue des Luxembourgeois”, he had long left the country and already opted for English as his language of writing. (See “A Glottal Choice,” *A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 59.)

The combination of tropes tentatively evokes languages as atoms, as fragments, as particles going through a prism.⁶⁰⁵ The explanations point to the physical nature of language experienced through the body. The child's perceptions of multilingualism turn into a synesthetic experience in which light and sounds, the ear and the eye (or gaze), are one. Being multilingual appears as an inevitable condition for anyone struck by multiple light or language particles. Yet, it is not an experience of division: the body (including its mental capacities), it seems, ensures the reestablishment of unity and wholeness: the diverse elements are "realigned into a single white beam of light understanding itself." Joris's image of the language spectrum succeeds in expressing the complexity of multilingualism as an experience of separate elements and simultaneously of a whole in constant fluctuation. Borders between colours, or languages, are blurred. The experience is not an instance of magic, of exceptional dispositions or genes, as Joris shows by adding factual information: "My first spoken language was Letzeburgesch, this frankish-mosellan dialect that both father & mother & sister spoke. But between the ages of two and twelve I had nursemaids who spoke German, uncles and aunts who spoke French." (ANP: 68) Contact with symbolic dimensions of language occur in parallel with these direct forms of communication. All his texts on language experiences insist on the crucial role played by reading. "And the essential encounter with the book, with reading, both at home and in school, happened in German first, then quickly, a year later, in French, so that, & I realized this only much later, *I never read what I spoke.*" (ANP: 68; emphasis added)

Once the rhizomatic growth of his languages has started it continues to develop further: "Then, in high school, Latin & English & Spanish were added, & for some reason still unexplainable to me, I had an immediate sense of kinship to with English." These few passages already reveal the key points, to which texts about his language "autobiography" continuously return: the early foundations for multilingual practices; the role of reading and silent languages; the discovery of foreign sounds; a special relation to English.

5.3.1.1 Reading and listening as springboards for multilingual practices

IN THE BEGINNING WERE THE WORDS. And the words were double from the word go: the cool black on white words in the book, & the loud, fast & hot words on the radio.
(*"Late Prose of First Years: Autobiography"* 2015)

"I never read what I spoke." Awareness of the discrepancy between written and spoken language during his childhood strikes Joris only when he recalls his practices much later, from the perspective of an outsider who has become used to monolingual contexts. As a child, he only read books in languages that

⁶⁰⁵ The images of fractured elements are reminiscent of the paradigm used by Yasemin Yildiz who describes migrants' multilingualism as "disaggregated mother tongue." (2013)

he hardly ever used for speaking (outside school) and vice versa one could say, he spoke a language, Luxembourgish,⁶⁰⁶ which he never used for reading.

Quite early Joris unravels the mysteries of written or silent language. He learnt to read when he was five ("Late Prose" 2015) and has remained a keen reader from that early age. So it is not surprising that in an account of his languages during childhood and adolescence he dwells on memories of his reading. Among early books that he read, Karl May's adventure books stand out. They were to have a lasting impact on his views on travelling and on imagining exotic far-off worlds of freedom, but above all on his conception of language and language multiplicity.

Like every kid of that generation in a German-speaking area, among the first books shoved at me were Karl May's *Reise Erzählungen*. Adventure stories. Set in the Wild West, in the Orient, the Balkans, Siberia, wherever, liberally sprinkled with sentences & sentence fragments in Arabic, Mescalero, Apache, Sioux, Persian, Chinese – or at least in what May tried to pass off as such. And it was this totally heterogeneous language matter that fascinated me most. ("The Case of the Missing 'M'," *ANP*: 69-70)

Whatever the authenticity of the languages which May introduces into his novels,⁶⁰⁷ the young reader is fascinated by their particularities, secrecy, exoticism. Reading about them triggers his own desire for writing. With many sensory details, he then describes the unexpected form his own first text productions take:

I remember how, in my grandparents' farm house, using huge ancient-looking & smelling hardbound cattle-registers, & those red-on-one-end, blue-on-the-other end pencils I'd copy out all those sentences, plus May's translations, or what passed as such, & tried to make up my own – secret – language out of all those shards. ("The Case of the Missing 'M'," *ANP*: 70)

Imaginary languages and the creation of his own secret language thus appear as an early dimension of his conception of multilingual writing. These practices – in retrospect – appear as an (unreflected) example of collage in a language made of "shards" gathered from a variety of speeches. Joris describes how he collects them in diverse lists:

I spent my time scouring Karl May's travel and adventure novels, copying out the Mescalero Apache, Sioux, Comanche, Arab, Persian Russian, Spanish, American language *microliths* embedded in the 72 volumes. From this perfectly heterogeneous language matter I shaped my first writings which were hero-lists, kinship-lines, tribal schemata, ready-made sentences for

⁶⁰⁶ Until recently few books in Luxembourgish were available for children and the spoken idiom anyway played no role in literacy processes. "I never read what I spoke is an indirect observation about the cultural and symbolic status of *Luxembourgish* as Joris (and Welch) experienced it.

⁶⁰⁷ Features of language multiplicity in Karl May's work have recently attracted scholars' attention in discussions of multilingual and intercultural marks of writing (See for instance, Till Dembeck, "Mehrsprachigkeit in der Figurenrede," in Dembeck and Parr 2017: 167 ff.)

explorers and nomadic wanderers, expletives et cetera. I had name Nikunta, Hadji Halef Omar, Tatanka Yotanka, Winnetou, Gall . . . (“A Glottal Choice,” *ANP*: 61; emphasis added)

The word *microlith* deserves a short comment. It is a term used by archaeologists for a minute blade tool often set in a bone or wooden shaft.⁶⁰⁸ Joris’s use of it is a strong image, which like *language shards*, appropriately describe the look of multilingual texts, where inserted foreign words or quotations from other languages break the uniform and homogeneous surface of a dominant language. They hint at Joris’s early sense for linguistic diversity and provide some clues for an approach of his multilingual poems, in particular the collection entitled *Winnetou Old*. (See ch. 6 and 7.)

Joris’s analysis of the origin of his multilingual texts shows some parallels with the approach practiced in genetic criticism and studies relying on theories of cognition for their analysis of multilingual writing.⁶⁰⁹ His account of early experiences of reading and writing is also an example of ex-post observation. As a child he could not have explained the processes in these terms. Over the course of time, he has repeatedly revisited his early impressions and added memories that have provided him with further insights.

(Un)-Remarkable language switches

In his latest autobiographical pieces, Joris again investigates memories of early language experiences and shows that language multiplicity as well as switches, though unremarkable at the time, have always been a feature of his contact with languages. When he was a child, they were as much part of his own response to language as they were constitutive of language in general in his surroundings. He gives several examples of his exposition to diverse languages and highlights the double experience of spoken and written languages. Thus, in “Late Prose of First Years: Autobiography” (2015), Joris realizes in retrospect that, on the one hand as a very young boy he tried to teach himself reading through a German book that he found in his parents’ library, while on the other hand, around the same time he started listening to the radio with his father, to a French channel.

The first book he remembers reading, *The Idiot* by Dostoevsky in a German translation, was an unexpected choice:

I read laboriously no doubt, and in secret to begin with, this book I remember only physically: a white hardcover with black print & black ink drawings. The Idiot. Chapter One, paragraph one – so this are the first sentences I deciphered, the first silent written language that traversed me: *Towards the end of November, during a thaw, at nine o’clock in the morning, a train on the Warsaw*

⁶⁰⁸ Most probably, Joris has borrowed the term *microliths* from Paul Celan, whose collected posthumously published prose is entitled *Mikrolithen sind, Steinchen* (2005). Joris’s translation into English was published in 2020. See also 4.3.3 and 6.3.5. Joris mentions this experience in two separate texts: the introduction to *4X1* and in *A Nomad Poetics*, with slight variations.

⁶⁰⁹ See Olga Anokhina, “The Genesis of Texts: Planning and Interior Language” (2009) and *Multilinguisme et créativité littéraire* (2012).

and Petersburg railway was approaching the latter city at full speed. [...] But these were not the words I read – the book I had with me under the covers was in German, was a translation, i.e. something I would spend the rest of my life getting in & out of. ("Late Prose of First Years: Autobiography" 2015)

What this passage foregrounds is the importance of written language, which need not be the same as the spoken language around him. The expression – and image – which he uses to describe the experience evokes its significance "*the first silent written language that traversed me*". The language is silent because it is written; yet German (Hochdeutsch), the standard form, was also a silent language because he probably never heard it spoken before going to school. It "traversed" him, passed through him, and was part of him at least during the moment of reading.

Awareness of the *confusion of languages* – a Luxembourgish-speaking boy trying to read a German text, which was itself a translation – occurs to him much later when he realizes further complications, discovering more folds (*plis*) to his language experiences, through recollections of first contacts with French. For the young boy, it was another unremarkable, normal language, "always available" especially on the radio. He associates his early memories with a famous French show "*Ça va bouillir, Zappy Max!*", and with hindsight, more significantly, with the sounds of an Arabic name: *Krim Bel Kacem*,⁶¹⁰ heard in the news that followed:

What has stayed with me more essentially was something else: a sequence of sound I couldn't make sense of but were the most seductive, the most wondrous and mysterious language-sounds I had ever heard. And that inscribed itself immediately and forever in my brain. This sound sequence would come over the radio in the program my father listened to after *Zappy Max*, the one o'clock news. Later on I translated the music the vocables made into semantic meaning: it turned out to be a name, much in the news at that time: *Krim Bel Kacem*. I can still hear it in the singing French inflections of the news announcer – returning, repeated, over and over: *Krim Bel Kacem Krim Bel Kacem Krim Bel Kacem*. ("Late Prose of First Years: Autobiography" 2015)

The name of the then famous Algerian revolutionary politician seems to anticipate the important role that North Africa was going to play in his life. The passage also shows that for the child the name he heard in "the singing French inflection" first evoked meaningless but pleasingly musical sounds before, much later, they became associated with the man who stood for Algerian independence:

With no semantic referent to attach to the sound sequence, I was utterly seduced by its sheer musicality, from the repetition of which I drew an immense pleasure I recall to this day ... "*Krim Bel Kacem*" was my favorite word sequence for that marvelous childhood play consisting in repeating a sequence of words without pause or interruption until any semantic meaning is rubbed

⁶¹⁰ Krim Belkacem was an Algerian politician, leader of the *Front de libération nationale* during the war of independence. Joris perceiving the name as a fascinating word sequence spells Bel Kacem in two words.

out and all that's left is the pure *jouissance* of a sound that now arises from the very *chora* of language. ("Late Prose of First Years: Autobiography" 2015)

Most of Joris's memories of contact with foreign languages focus on what he read – on the silent language – and foreground encounters with thoughts, knowledge and text. This episode, however, is a reminder of his other, *auditory contact* with language, a key aspect of poetry which as the example shows can easily encompass the sounds and inflections of "other" languages. The memory of apparently meaningless sounds is a particularly rich trove for multilingual language games.

The metalanguage he uses to analyse his memories, speaking of "pure *jouissance*" and "*chora*" are evidence of his familiarity with language theories, such as those of Julia Kristeva to which he also refers in his more theoretical work. Thus, in "Nomad Century Ahead," he conceives of writing in terms of a "material flux of language matter":

To try and think, then, this matter as even pre-language, proto-semantic, as starting from what Julia Kristeva calls the *chora*, which she defines as "a temporary articulation, essentially mobile, constituted of movements and their ephemeral stases." And then to follow this flux of ruptures and articulations, of rhythm, moving in and out of semantic & non-semantic spaces. ("Nomad Century Ahead," *ANP*: 5-6)

Emphasis on movement points to what in his poetics, Joris will develop as essentially nomadic qualities of writing: His autobiographical texts show how difficult it is for him to describe memories without adding further dimensions of intellectual, academic, theoretical reflections. His early contacts with English also pass through that double channel of aural/oral experiences and encounters with written forms.

5.3.1.2 Joris's response to English – his "fourth" language⁶¹¹

Though Joris states, "for some reason unexplainable to me, I had an immediate kinship with English", he provides several plausible reasons for the attraction English holds on him during adolescence: The post-World War II context in which he grew up and the appeal of American films; an English girlfriend and the discovery of books in English. Moreover, in the presentations of his memories the fascination with English is mixed with the critical stance of adolescent rebellion.

He situates his first memories of English not in a school setting but in a broad historical and social context, which accounts for his fascination with many aspects of popular American culture:

[I]n the heart of Europe, a Europe that since '45 had become a "Quasi-Protectorat" [...] of the US, American was fast becoming the culturally hip space for a teenager: rock 'n roll on Radio Luxembourg, Playboy magazine from the Bitburg PX, jazz over AFN radio stations, blue-jeans or

⁶¹¹ For Joris, his languages are countable, though with blurred borders between them, like the colours in the rainbow (above). For the translator, this view is indispensable, for the poet it is more questionable.

“texas-pants”⁶¹² as our parents called them. And, of course there was the cinema, in the original language with French and Flemish subtitles: Yankee movies in my grandmother’s [...] theater [...] we now all ate Hollywood from Audie Murphy Oaters to James Dean’s *Rebel Without a Cause*, and read Mickey Spillane’s novels (“A Glottal Choice,” *ANP*: 60-61)

In an interview, he underlines – retrospectively – a concomitant revolt or at least a very critical position towards the prevailing stifling cultural environment in which he grew up :

Luxembourg didn’t have much serious cultural stuff, except for the trad bourgeois fare, a decent enough symphony orchestra for which classical music stopped in the 19C, a couple bookshops aping their run of the mill French or German equivalents in very safe ways — the bishop watched over what could be read or not — “no sex please, we’re catholic burghers.” (Interview with Fowler 2012)

His post-World War II admiration of anything American, culminates in the films he watched in his grandmother’s cinema:

The strongest influence on me was probably my grand-mother’s movie theater in which I saw American flicks in the original, i.e. not ruined by dubbing, which led me to read American authors from Mickey Spillane to William Faulkner. (Interview with Fowler 2012)

His home town Ettelbruck is famous for its annual Patton celebrations in memory of the liberation of Luxembourg by the American general after the Rundstedt offensive (Battle of the Bulge). In a later autobiographical piece he elaborates on these memories, first showing how the yearly festivities constitute a highlight in the boys’ lives: “During those days we’d try out our high school or movie -learned English on the American G.I.s to buy used copies of *Playboy*, a magazine our bishopric had banned from the country.” With hindsight, he comes to see the mythical rituals created around General Patton in a much more critical way. While taking part in an antiwar demonstration in New York in 1968 it occurs to him that this same much celebrated American army was then invading Vietnam. This insight makes him think about the role of myth and he realizes that the fascination with war events is no longer justified: “Is this my mythology or my father’s? I hear the marching boots of the German soldiers in a 100 war movies watched in grandmother’s «Cinéma de la Paix». Not one good German in all those movies, and not one less-than-heroic American GI.” The illusion is gone and he changes his views on Patton days in his home town:

What I saw that day in the Grand-rue in Ettelbrück felt like a complete disconnect, something out of an old black and white movie, a twisted rerun of World War II victory scenes watched in my grand-mother’s “Cinéma de la Paix” a few houses up from the butcher’s on the other side of the street: the same troops my fellow citizens were feasting in the streets of Ettelbrück for having liberated us, were raining down destruction and death on a people in the Far East. Someone’s

⁶¹² “Blue jeans” are also mentioned by Welch who recalls her father’s condemnation of such casual wear.

liberators will eventually turn into someone else's oppressors? ("Remembrance Day in Patton Town. Autobiography" 2016)

This passage is interesting in the context of Luxembourg literature where it fits in with critical views on national mythical heroic figures. Nico Helminger has written a piece called *Patton & co. Tryptichon* by (1992). Germaine Goetzinger (2004: 181) comments on this text in relation to Luxembourg writers' language choices, as Helminger's critical perspective on the war is underlined by an innovative switching between German and English.

English - the lover's tongue

I wrote my way through that confusion, from 15 years on, first in German, then in French, even though the very first poems I wrote were written [...] strangely enough, in English, on my first visit to England where I had fallen in love with an English girl. ("The Case of the Missing 'M'," ANP: 68)

He explains his choice of English as substitute for his mother tongue and hence as language of writing through a pun: the "M" (of mother) goes missing and the complicated "th" (unpronounceable for the learner—he calls it *hairy*) is replaced by a v – a sign of victory. (ANP: 69) In more straightforward language, this means his first girlfriend happened to be English. In his account he stresses an *embodied (and embedded)*⁶¹³ dimension of language, and an experience that is more powerful than the ties to a mother's tongue: "why not write in the language of one's sexuality, the language of the lover" as he puts it (ANP: 69). In "A Glottal Choice," Joris starts the account of this decisive encounter with a provocative inversion:

At fifteen I met English – no wrong: I met V, the first woman with whom I was madly in love and as chance had it, she was English. A summer and then that from which writing has its origin: separation, dispersal, distance. Distance through which to reach with writing. For her I wrote letters & poems in her language. ("A Glottal Choice," ANP: 60)

The physical aspect of language, its location in the body, already become apparent in the title of the essay: "A Glottal Choice." Deriving from the word *glottis*, that part of the larynx where the vocal cords are located, it also recalls a concept often found in phonetics, the glottal stop, which Joris changes into *glottal choice* to speak about his multilingualism and the language options it offered him. The phrase stresses the materiality of language which is particularly important for the learner trying to capture its specificities. In his memories, English is often mentioned next to his other languages. In writing, for instance, he notices French emerging in his style (ANP: 65) which later leads him to elaborate on the notion of *a middle voice* in his poetics. (See 6.3.3)

⁶¹³ Joris's description of the pronunciation of English as physical experience corresponds to views that stress the materiality of language; see 5. 1, and references to studies by Kramsch, Busch, Bleich. In several poems, Joris underlines the embodied nature of spoken languages, e.g. "Anguish. A Riddle" with its references to "*thinking, sinking, singing*" and "My mouth knows a language" (analysis in ch. 7).

He also starts **reading books in English** as an adolescent, several years before his encounters with literature at *Shakespeare & Company* in Paris. The first book he mentions is *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, which he comes across by chance but which fittingly anticipates his nomadic future. The autobiographical piece “D’Plëss” (2007) highlights the role of reading for the adolescent. D’Plëss refers to the Place d’Ames in Luxembourg and a short-lived English bookshop in the basement of a building on this central square of the city. Reading works in English is important for the language learner, but the books he finds in that almost clandestine bookshop (stocked with mostly gay or porno literature) signal above all an act of transgression.

Despite his growing interest in English, Joris does not emphasize an exclusive fascination with English. It remains one among several language dimensions that shape his life. He comes to associate his adolescence with a sense of linguistic “confusion”, or a wavering between languages, with which he tries to come to terms through writing – mostly in English.

5.3.1.3 From multiple voices to language confusion and the need to use “deep images”⁶¹⁴

In the terms used in studies of multilingualism, one might speak of Babel and Pentecost (3.1.3) and see how languages for him evolve from a cause of confusion to a source of confidence.

On the one hand, Joris grows up knowing about the distinction between national languages. On the other hand, early contact with a great variety of speech in his surroundings and in books shows him the fuzziness of language concepts. Two aspects seem to have struck him quite early: the difficulty of counting one’s languages and, linked to it, the difficulty of defining the space and limits of one named or natural language. The texts do not provide linguistic or philosophical investigations but uncover changing perspectives (which he mostly notices much later). In the essays, he focusses on encounters with so-called foreign languages, i.e. languages not spoken at home.⁶¹⁵

His experiences with German are a good example of contact with intralingual multiplicity. He encounters it through multiple voices attached to heterogeneous experiences, through spoken and written forms, varying from everyday communication to poetic language. German for him was first the *Platt* spoken by maids at home, which he probably had no problem understanding, especially as speakers of *Platt* tend to adapt their own speech to Luxembourgish (as just another variety). Then German became the language of reading and literacy as his first school language. Later, during adolescence he discovered the language

⁶¹⁴ See ch. 2 and reference to Rothenberg and Kelly.

⁶¹⁵ Joris’s dismissal of the mother tongue as writer’s language is best seen as part of his nomadic poetics and discussed in 6.3; in the more recent autobiographical pieces and in some interviews he offers reflections on Luxembourgish which until then seemed to have escaped him – see below.

of Celan's poetry, a most striking literary voice of an outsider in German. On many occasions, he has cited the life changing moment when at the age of 15 he listened to a reading of Celan's poetry at school:

I had known what poetry was since that day in high school when a teacher had brought in someone who read contemporary German poems to us, and among them Paul Celan's "Death Fugue". My reaction had been instant, epidermic, total: the hairs on my arms literally stood up, an electric shock never before experienced coursed through my body, my breath stopped and when it started again it came from and into someone radically different. From that moment on I knew that there was a use of language different from and more powerful than all others, and it was sometimes called poetry. ("A Glottal Choice," *ANP*: 62)

The passage highlights the transformative power of some forms of language – of language that is perceived as totally other and yet welcomed as a part of himself, language to which the later poet and translator will attempt to respond for decades to come. (See interview with Fowler 2012)

For French, one could identify a similar array of experiences (family, radio, books, travelling), which later is still much further enlarged through contact with Francophone Maghrebian writers and his interest in Provençal. The childhood experiences provided the foundation for these influences that came later.

In the autobiographical essays, he considers a few aspects of his languages, which I like to read as response to others' questions about his multilingualism, while they are also examples of the polyglot subject's self-inquiry, thoughts that occur after years of nomad travelling. In the essay with the intriguing title, "The Case of the Missing 'M'", Joris elaborates on many remembered linguistic issues from novel perspectives. begins with seemingly witty and bantering observations in which puns and allusions to critical texts mix with personal reflections. The text suggests that the investigation into the loss of the mother tongue – or rather of one letter (that goes missing when the writer's *mother* tongue is replaced by the *other* tongue) is like a criminal case, which requires a detective's approach.

The letter has disappeared, or as the text says: *it is on the lam*. The investigation into the missing 'M' sets off from thoughts about the phrase *to be on the lam*, (meaning to escape, to flee justice, or to be in hiding from law enforcement). This idiomatic expression with an unsure etymology leads the writer to a *dazzling language game*. Playful and sophisticated, it is based on complex, manifold allusions involving homophones across languages: from *on the lam*, to *lamb* to *lamda*, the Greek letter, and *lamdas* for British eLocution examinations, to the implicitly understood German *Lamm + da*, as hinted at by the next word *fort* (meaning *away* or *gone*), its opposite.

What the sophisticated, intellectual language games show is the contingency of a sound's meaning to which especially multilingual people are sensitive; oral and semantic divergences lead to strange and striking associations. Moving from mother tongue to other tongue may involve a speech *impediment* (a stammer or stutter). The etymology of impediment points to *pedes*, to feet and limbs, and thus to troubles

in walking (possibly referring to the swollen foot of Oedipus). For the speaker who uses the “other” tongue, who has trouble walking in the new language and gets his feet caught, a fitting comparison follows: “*it involves becoming/remaining the eternal toddler*”. In a second or later acquired language one always is like a young child trying to walk and move properly.

The body shop of language is another striking image, which provides many valuable elements for an understanding of language and multilingualism.

[T]his is another shop, the body shop of language maybe, where the letters get put together & as happens with watches and other machinery, you take one apart because you think it is not working the way it should and put it back together and it works but you're astounded that a little piece or screw is left over, and you don't know where it fits and that becomes more important than the rest of the coherent machinery. (“The Case of the Missing ‘M’,” *ANP*: 63)

It is “another” shop,⁶¹⁶ not a pharmacy where you get a remedy (or poison); he does not want to be cured from his special condition as poet and speaker who rejects the mother tongue. Mostly used in American English, the term *body shop* is a garage where repairs to the bodywork of vehicles are carried out.

What the image of the shop suggests is a place where languages or parts of languages are available, in case of problems. It is a workshop, where parts are assembled and repaired if not working properly. It suggests a place where work is done with letters and words which should work as smoothly as any machinery. The notion of putting together one's language seems an allusion at language constituted by elements from diverse linguistic origins: possibly by taking apart two or three watches, or languages, or separate linguistic unities, you succeed in making your own.

Joris's description also suggests that “good” language, which gives its user satisfaction, should have clockwork precision. Yet he mentions the possibility of a little piece being left over after the language has been taken apart; he is hinting at some deficiency or specific condition that is bothering the speaker of the newly assembled language (cf. above: an impediment).

The body shop of language also proves to be a place where the multilingual poet can find his language supplies. Some of the pieces are small – just words or sounds – others are bigger pieces, which turn into ready-made components for poems. These pieces may be used in different texts. Thus, appropriately, the lines from a poem quoted in the essay are also part of “Canto Diurno # 1” (*Poasis* 2001: 19). Multiple uses of body parts of language are not unusual in Joris's work: they are echoes or unobtrusive threads that connect many pieces but only become visible on close inspection.

⁶¹⁶ For whoever wants to notice it, the reference to Oedipus and pharmacy is an allusion to Kristeva and Derrida (“Plato's Pharmacy”).

Wandering, “nomadic” pieces often take their origin in others’ texts or in other languages. They may reappear in different contexts and confirm what Joris calls **his confusion of languages**. The body shop is a fitting illustration of how a multilingual speaker creates his nomadic speech.

Concluding on his early experiences of multiple languages (and the expression they have found in his poetry), Joris writes “There you have it, briefly, the summa of my own confusions re language, or the one you write in versus all the others.” (ANP: 71) He adds a few more observations: “All languages are foreign” or “language already is a second language,” restating the belief that world and language never fit anyway, that one always writes in a foreign language.

So all poetry is a foreign language, no matter what language one writes it in. However, as a translator working with separate named languages, he knows that pragmatic views on differences between languages may prevail and he simply proposes another angle to look at his own languages:

I am not writing in a foreign language at all. I am still stuck in one basic current version of Indo-European, i.e. I function inside a euro-centric universe in which – if looked at from the outside – the similarities & the samenesses are much more glaring than the differences that we or I am making so much of right now. (“The Case of the Missing ‘M’,” ANP: 71)

The nomadic wanderer watching from the outside ignores traditional links with linguistic territories; foregrounding similarities, Joris evokes a common space for all his (IndoEuropean) languages.

5.3.2 Reflections on a (Luxembourger’s) sense of between-ness in languages

Discarding the importance of a first language or mother tongue, Joris is aware that the situation of between-ness as different from common assumptions needs further reflections. In his essays and in interviews he frequently goes back to how the position developed quite naturally from early practices. Uses of Luxembourgish and what they have meant for his approach of language in general offer several additional insights.

5.3.2.1 Observations on Luxembourgish

What one notices is that Joris always tends to take an outsider perspective on Luxembourg. He is the nomad who observes from a certain distance and makes comments, which often situate Luxembourgish in relation to other languages. Only occasionally does he bring in his own experiences with the language. He acknowledges that Lëtzebuergesch is a part of his life and therefore also a part of his work, but it will only come in tangentially. (*Cartographies* 2011: 245) ⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁷ For possible echoes of other languages, including Luxembourgish, in his writing processes, see the text co-written with Jean Portante: “Whales, ghosts and nomads”, discussed in ch. 6.

The distance that Joris keeps to Luxembourgish also shines through in the words and comparisons he uses to describe it. He playfully refers to it as *mamaloshen*, drawing a parallel with Yiddish and including the typical humour of Jewish jokes, “the mamaloshen, so far removed now though far from removed that I sometimes fear it will come back in the last words it will be given me to speak and that no one will then be able to understand.” (*Cartographies* 2011: 245)⁶¹⁸ The aloofness of the English language poet transpires in the partly ironic description of the moment when in 1984 the law turned Lëtzebuergesch into a “codified standard form”:

[W]hose passage from spoken dialect to codified standard written form happened, unknown to me, during my passage through the scholastic institutions, to flower into an irredentist yet useful tool for a Local literature when I had already turned my back & gone West to write in my fourth. (“A Glottal Choice,” *ANP*: 59)

“Irredentist tool” is an allusion to the Italian 19th century political party that advocated the return to Italy of all Italian-speaking districts then ruled by other countries. I understand Joris’s allusion as a claim to recover Luxembourgish like a lost idiom replaced by foreign languages (French and German). It is a subtle rather cryptic side-blow at nationalist or ethnic policies. When he calls Lëtzebuergesch “a tool for Local literature”, the nomad poet describes a phenomenon that does not concern him.

Another text shows that his disinterest for Lëtzebuergesch as a literary language does not affect his memories of the spoken language. In “Moien”⁶¹⁹ he analyses the role of pronunciation and looks at it from the lens of the child, remembering his French uncle’s unmistakable foreign accent. The short piece ends on an episode where sitting at an outdoor table of a pub he watches two young boys, most obviously children of immigrant workers, chasing each other:

Like children do, they wrangled until one got angry and started to yell at the other. He didn’t say moien, but screamed long complicated sentences studded with superb insults that were answered likewise and with great gusto. What did amaze me was not that all this happened in Letzebuergesch, but that they used the dialect and all the intonations that mark a speaker as born right there, in the small town of Diekirch. That’s when I knew there was still hope for the country and that there would always be real Letzeburger. (“Moien” 2013: 16-17)

The sensitivity to the spoken language also gradually occurs in relation to Luxembourgish as a conceivable literary means of expression. This evolution in his approach to Luxembourgish becomes obvious when

⁶¹⁸ See a similar comment on the nomad’s languages: “The omitted first, or degree-zero language, really, of my languages: *Letzebuergesch*, a gentle ghosting appearing at times in certain sounds, in the impossible “tee-aitch” where “so” and “though” become homophonic, and the sh-sounds, schlupping about.” (“On the Nomadic Circulation,” *Justifying the Margins* 2009: 7-8)

⁶¹⁹ “Moien,” in Ciocârlie: En partage. Le Luxembourg d’ici et d’ailleurs, 2013.

one compares early statements and later writings. They reflect the exile's changing views but also the evolution in language policies and general attitudes in Luxembourg in the past decades.

If in the 1980s he observes with some bewilderment the linguistic divide between authors who use French and those who use German and sees no true benefit in promoting Luxembourgish as literary language, a dialect being anyway merely apt to deal with themes of folklore (Hausemer interview 1987), much later, in 2020, Joris publishes a collection of essays and poems (new texts and re-prints) in Luxembourg, all vaguely or directly linked to the national epic *Renert*. Appropriately it is called *Fox-trails, -tales & trots* and contains a poem about New York in Luxembourgish, followed by its English translation.⁶²⁰

His multilingualism, which is the outcome of growing up between languages, is a more salient feature of his memories than the mother tongue alone. From very young on it has given him **a sense of polysemy**, that wandering between languages, which characterizes the nomad. In a conversation with Cockelbergh⁶²¹ he explains:

I think that's where polysemy comes from, really. When you're multilingual to begin with, you will inevitably notice as a kid that when you say something, it very often actually means something else in another language – monolingual people don't really know this, can't know it. So for me polysemy's one of the great pleasures, because you can really hear all the languages in words & their paragrams,⁶²² or in the way people play with words. (*Cartographies* 2011: 247-248)

As a poet and theorist of his poetry, he further elaborates on the meaning of his situation between things. (See 6.3) "But the gap remains" and it remains the key feature of the poet's language. *Between* for the multilingual child (and later poet) is not a simple choice between two functions: one language *on*, the other language *off*. It is an experience of multiplicity: "[T]he *other's* tongue is not a simple alternative, may very well be the *others' tongues*, an abundance of languages or language elements, from which he can choose." (ANP: 65) The position of between-ness that Joris describes is not as easy as his playful language at first lets appear. He introduces subtle indications of moments of uncertainty and confusion⁶²³ but then he wonders if an ongoing frustration with language is not simply the result of an impossible correspondence between language and the world. Words can never fully articulate what the speaker or

⁶²⁰ The Luxembourg version has a couple of heterolingual insertions; one – den Häerz-/ beat vun New York – without quotation marks or *goosefeet* appears as an acceptable term in Luxembourgish; the other, "straight up," stands out with quotation marks, as a probably unfamiliar term with most Luxembourgers. See comments on the poem "Goosefeet" and the use of markers for heterolingual insertions in 7.3.3.

⁶²¹ Cockelbergh proposes a link with Celan's writing, as the title of Joris's dissertation is: "A Fearful Polysemy: Poetry of Paul Celan" (see Joris mss in the Archives at Indiana University); the title is an hint at William Blake's famous phrase "fearful symmetry".

⁶²² *Paragram* is another word for pun or play words made by changing the letters in a word.

⁶²³ See his poem: "Anguish. A Riddle," see analysis in ch. 7.

writer wishes to express: Language and the world never quite fit: it always leaves a certain sense of absence. (ANP 65)

5.3.2.2 The appeal of language mixing

A state of in-between-ness is marked by constant passages between languages. Growing up in the midst of several languages for Joris also involved particular speech habits, which at the time were totally unremarkable because commonplace and a normal procedure in many situations. In a fairly recent interview, he describes how such language switches, with insertions of words from another language, were such a common practice in Luxembourgish that for a long time he did not take note of them:

So, having co-habited since childhood with several languages has probably given me a different way of envisioning language work. As I think on this now, something comes to mind which I had never thought about: even in Letzeburgesch, my mother tongue, in fact especially in Letzeburgesch as it was a rather impoverished oral language, starved when it came to any thinking on a complex cultural level, or whenever you wanted to address a subject of some depth in a cultural or scientific domain, you quickly ran out of native vocabulary & would automatically bring in German or French words, i.e. translate, substitute, collage. Thus you learned very early on that there was no one-fits-all version of language, that language was a d.i.y. process, and that in order to make yourself understood or to convince someone else or even to get yourself to understand a complex idea better, you had to draw on several languages. This also taught you that the fit of language & world was very haphazard or even a purely arbitrary thing. Les mots et les choses did not fit together like the two sides of a coin, and that different languages constructed different worlds, that there was no mot juste. (Interview with S.J. Fowler 2012)⁶²⁴

The second part of the passage contains several formulations that elucidate multilingual speakers' practices, which retrospectively strike Joris as relevant underpinnings for nomadic writing processes: "[You] bring in German or French words, i.e. translate, substitute, collage." What exactly does he mean? Translating into Luxembourgish often means creating your own words; transforming the French or German original, changing the morphological and grammatical features of words (the inflection, usually the endings of words, but also the way you pronounce the words). In the autobiographical piece entitled "Foghorn", he comments on remembered multilingual translating practices. (See below). Substituting means you replace a word in Luxembourgish by a foreign word, which may add precision and bring in a note of difference: even a child listening to speech peppered with foreign words is likely to hear the break in the flow of the sentence or speech. Sometimes speech looks and sounds like collage: some parts are in Luxembourgish, while other parts in another language are similar to unidentified quotations.

⁶²⁴ Note that in line with language mixing, the French words that Joris uses are not set off from the rest of the text.

For a child exposed to such “techniques” it means that all these experiences are like listening to a text with gaps to fill in. Yet as they are normal practice, he gets used to them and he may imitate them as soon as his knowledge of other languages allows him to insert foreign words. Joris gives some reasons for these insertions and shows that multilingual speech is particularly appropriate for cultural, scientific or other academic or more specialized topics, for which Luxembourgish had not developed its own terminology. From the observation of such practices, Joris derives reflections on the nature of language in general, which contrast with standing beliefs about the nature of “big” or major cultural languages: “[T]here was no one-fits-all version of language”. This is a rejection of the belief that a standard, national language can cover any domain. “[L]anguage was a d.i.y. process”: Calling language a do-it-yourself product is a surprising statement if seen in an educational context of language learning, and shocking for those who believe in language as a consistent system and defer to language authorities such as the *Académie française*. It could come across as a declaration of language liberation (for spoken practices of Luxembourgish). This view has also broader implications on the cognitive dimension of language for multilingual people, when Joris writes: “to make yourself understood or to convince someone else or even to get yourself to understand a complex idea better, you had to draw on several languages.” Language thus appears to support cognitive processes, which is also a crucial aspect of Joris’s view on poetry.

Language as a d.i.y. process, rather than an attack on language learning processes, is reminiscent of the image of the language body shop. Lastly, he states the well-known belief that “different languages construct different worlds.” He seems to echo parts of the Sapir Whorf theory while such a view also shows parallels with intercultural approaches that ask for respect and recognition of differences.

In brief:

Borrowing – or choosing – elements from one’s different languages, and fitting them together as a meaningful text is for Joris a model for multilingual thinking processes and for poetry. He points to the link between his early experiences of multilingualism and his approach of language when he writes poetry:

So when I started to write poetry, this to me commonplace vision of things allowed me quickly to move beyond a sense of a purely numinous language and on to a, for lack of a better word, constructivist vision of the poem where anything can be used to get the work done, to let the poem do its work. (Interview with S.J. Fowler 2012)

Trying to recapture the details of what it means to *translate, substitute and collage*, Joris already provides **key element of his poetics** in straightforward language. As he shows, resorting to other languages is common practice in Luxembourg, yet it always presumes that the interlocutor has a knowledge of the languages from which the speaker borrows the words, for instance those missing in Luxembourgish (or

momentarily unavailable to the speaker). A speaker will not try to clarify his speech by inserting terms in French if his audience does not understand French.

As soon as they are familiar with other languages, children too resort to such borrowings, especially when like Joris they are avid readers. What he describes as a common feature of speech is also close to his response to Karl May novels, from which he copies, or borrows, interesting material. Stories offer a vocabulary and notions often missing from ordinary life. Sociocultural research on language practices has become very interested in such phenomena of language mixing. Terms such as code-switching, code-mixing, code-meshing but also trans-languageing cover aspects similar to those that Joris describes.

5.3.2.3 Translating as a natural way of approaching a palimpsestic world

In an autobiographical piece entitled “Foghorn,”⁶²⁵ observations made in today’s multilingual New York merge with memories of words in many languages that the poet learnt as a child. Joris is wary of autobiography, knowing how difficult it is to detect what has disappeared from the surface. In this fragment he uses intriguing images of sense impressions all in some way linked to his location in Brooklyn, at the moment of writing. They arise and are lost again, like the regular sound of the foghorn that becomes inaudible at dawn or the invisible vessel out in the Narrows that is nothing but a memory.⁶²⁶ The most striking comparison occurs to him while watching the waters in a pond:

“Autobiography is a goldfish,” someone* wrote and the line keeps coming back. Across the street there is a pond, murky to say the least, but if you stay and stare long enough, you will catch, out of the murk, from time to time an orange flash: the back of a goldfish breaking surface. Whose life? Disappears beneath the shabby lotus leaf. Whose autobiography? (“Foghorn” 2016)

In the text, the presence of multilingual signs in the *Narrows Botanical Gardens* in Brooklyn remind the writer of how learning the names of trees as a child was part of his gradual apprehension of the world of nature:

Trees on my mind. A good part of my youth spent following father into the woods of Luxembourg, hunting for deer and hare, boar and fox, rabbit and pheasant, being taught the name of the trees we stood behind waiting for the game, or leaned against tired from walking, by him or by my grandfather, mother’s father, the farmer, often alone, rifle over shoulder, pipe in mouth. I knew the names back then, and still do for the most part (though would be hard-pressed to remember them all), but the problem has always been one of translation: the orality of the *mamelashen* only vaguely and often inaccurately overlapped with the German of the early school - or *Naturkunde* - books I bought at the *Librairie Kessler*. (“Foghorn”)

⁶²⁵ “Foghorn” is a short four-page piece that can be accessed as pdf on the internet.

⁶²⁶ From other texts we know he refers to the vessel on which his grandfather had travelled round the world and stopped in New York. See for instance Ciocarlie, *Prendre le large* 2014: 90.

The words for plants and wildlife learnt at school did not always overlap with what you spoke at home and used in direct contact with nature. Despite the apparent proximity between the languages, terminology varied and attempts at translation often failed. Complications increased with additional languages and further differentiation and he became aware of the deceptive passage from one language into another. (Cf. *traddutoris sono traditori*):

Soon the trees became unrecognizable when their French names were added just a few years later. It was hard to hold on to a single tree with 3 or 4 names: 'eng Bich' was a Rotbuche or hêtre commun — but did it become a birch or a beech tree? I'm still uncertain, wavering like trees in a strong wind. But I do know that 'eng Summereech' was a 'Stieleiche' though 'summer' (summer, indeed) was in no way translatable by 'Stiel' which means 'stem' or peduncle and is thus, yes!, closer to French where the tree is known as 'chêne pédonculé' — which we were not taught in nature-class as the homophonic hilarity of 'pet d'enculé' would have had the class rolling in the aisles. So we were taught that 'eng Wantereech' was (weirdly enough) a Traubeneiche — as if winter (*Wanter*) and grapes (*Trauben*) were able to translate into each other! — becoming a Chêne rouvre south of Thionville, (a durmast or sessile oak tree in Anglophonia as I was to find out later). ("Foghorn")

The meandering thoughts across languages reflect his confusion but also his love of investigating associations of names, etymologies and finding unexpected connections that facilitate language games.⁶²⁷

A multilingual perception of surroundings turns the world into a complex multilayered reality, **comparable to a palimpsest**: behind or underneath each name others are hiding, which may take you into different directions. The fact that names change show that things cannot be taken for granted, that comparisons with other languages open different perspectives. The multilingual mind creates a palimpsestic world: Joris has spoken of the palimpsest to describe writing processes and intertextuality in literature. Implicitly, it also refers to super-imposed languages and voices.

The trees remain the same, but their names travel and change when they cross borders. The use of Latin could be a solution for the linguist and the scientist:

We accept nouns as self-possessed and numinous enough, but adjectives are to be distrusted and so I wanted to know what "rouvre" meant. The word seems to come from the Latin "robur," meaning strong, robust; the three consonants r.b.r. of the Latin word probably gave the French common noun "arbre," tree — by phonetic deformation, the specialists will say, for how could a northern word be seen to follow triconsonantal semitic grammatical rules and possibilities? ("Foghorn")

⁶²⁷ See Doris Sommer on language games (2003). Joris's writing offers many examples; beyond the purely humorous note that puns and paragrams add, his language games usually also have a more serious function and stimulate thoughts about cognitive processes.

But such a scholarly lingua franca is an illusion: it contradicts the natural responses of those whose language reflects the world into which they have been born. Dropping the rich connections that multilingual terminologies offer would also be an impoverishment for imagination: language and things never fit:

The scientific botanical Latin would of course have been easier, if we all still learned Latin & used it as lingua franca, but at that idea my grandfather would have laughed so loud the pipe would have fallen from his mouth. Still, there it is called *Quercus petraea* and the eternal boy in me hears that immediately as quirky petrification, which may describe the language but not the tree. ("Foghorn")

This last example shows what happens again and again to people who know several languages: hearing a word from another language, especially without knowing its context, may lead to confusions with sounds and words in other languages often leading to funny combinations and, as it does in Joris's case, to a pun about a dead language like Latin.

The memories of his early, natural translational practices confirm Joris's belief that "Human language is translation from the word go — of a somatic or physiological process or of a range of sensory ones, be their origins inside or outside, i.e. language translates something seen, heard, felt, smelled, thought." (Interview with Fowler 2012) A "monolingual" world or a world with one universal language is therefore impossible.

5.4 Welch and Joris: Similarities and differences in their views on language multiplicity

Welch and Joris have both recorded memories of early language experiences, still marked by language practices in Luxembourg. As nomads they seem to stop for a while on their route to recast aspects of the past, about which their readers and friends (in North America) must have enquired. But the texts also appear as the authors' reflections on their former selves and early explorations of language routes they travelled out of their native Luxembourg. Recording these memories in text forms for publication they confirm their belief in language and writing as *process of meaning making*. The texts focus on what Kristeva calls the subject-in-process, with *process* carrying the double sense of the subject advancing or moving on, and of the subject being "assessed" (*à qui on fait le procès*), from the distance of the adults' reflective perspectives on their younger selves.

In their memories of language experiences, understandings of multiplicity are central. For Welch it is heteroglossia as much as polyglossia. What counts is the specific characteristic of each experience, hence the emphasis is on intralingual diversity. The richer the sensory (and sensual) connotations, the more language appeals to her: from that first spontaneous love of English, she derives its intellectual appeal.

Experiences with other languages vanish. Joris recalls a similar spontaneous response to English describing it as “the lover’s tongue”. Nonetheless, he continues foregrounding his other languages, which are indispensable for a dynamic and multiple response to the world. In both writers’ accounts the emphasis on *voice* further enhances the perception of language – of tongue – as an embodied experience.

Language multiplicity from the start involves *memories of dialogue*. It is a dialogic heteroglossia, in which speakers interact, sometimes resulting for the young listener in a clash as it occurs between “good” and “bad” voices in Welch’s stories.

Nomadic features of their memories appear in the sense of space and movement that language experiences convey. They are physical and mental movements, ideally combined in contact with books. Reading is moving the eyes across the space of the page while it also means discovering travelling others and their words (cf. both poets’ references to Karl May). Especially Welch’s texts reflect on language as response to natural environments. Are their language experiences linked to the territories of nation states? This question does not seem to bother the young speakers. Languages like French and German emerge in a diversity of contexts and practices: school, books for reading, occasional contact with people, or the radio. Diversity is taken for granted until literacy practices uncover differences beyond voice. Welch, it seems, aims at absorbing all the diversity in her narrating English voice, whereas Joris very much dwells on the multiplicity and, one might say, a rhizomatic growth of his languages. He adds extensive reflections on the movement between languages, with which, as he later realizes, he already became familiar as a child.

Early language experiences are also embedded in cultural ideologies. Welch’s aversion to the Church seems to take its origin in the priest’s voice; it is linked to a patriarchal world view which triggers a similar loathing of her father’s voice. A controversial framing of the English language in the form of celebrated war heroes had an impact on the young Joris. Only with hindsight does he recognize the ideological dimension underlying the Patton rituals in his home town.

A key aspect of nomadic theory is the stress on *becoming* and transformation: in their memories both writers insist that transformation occurs through language, through experiences of difference, leading to a change of language, of interlocutors and environments. In very general terms they emphasize *the* empowering force of words on children.

The early experiences as they record them also contain hints at *transgression*, supported by *reading* and discovering exotic worlds through the means of foreign tongues. Language is a source of freedom, though eventually not the unlimited freedom of which they dream when empathizing with the heroes of their

books. Desire for language is also awareness of agency with regard to language choice and self-determination.

Books and reading constitute core encounters with language and multiple voices. They confirm the power of symbolic language on young readers whose first, vicarious, experiences of nomadism are mediated through adventure stories. Like the memories of early language experiences, the essays on reading disclose a largely idiosyncratic view on language multiplicity, which has little in common with conceptions of multi- or pluri-lingualism that underlie language policies, sociocultural theory on language acquisition or translation studies. Reading experiences are a central topic in Welch and Joris's accounts of contact with languages in various guises. These experiences are representative of a key form of heteroglossia in their lives as well as of evolving language repertoires. The aspect of reading is little discussed in sociolinguistic studies beyond a reference to cultural contexts (see e.g. Blommaert 2013) and rarely refers to educational contexts of foreign language learning.⁶²⁸ In literary studies the role of reading is mostly approached as a biographical feature or under the heading of "influences" (ideas, style), –with little attention to the *experience* of reading. The present study aims at showing (recalling) the role of reader–text interaction and its impact on creative language practices.

⁶²⁸ See 3.1.6. For some reflections on the role of (literary) reading in language education, see Hansen-Pauly 2009, 2013, 2018.

6. In search of a poetics for language/s in movement

or: How multilingual nomadic writers conceive poetic language as one and multiple.

6.1 Preliminary thoughts

Chapter 5 deals with the poets' accounts of experiences with multiplicity in language. Chapter 6 moves to a literary perspective and looks at their views on poetic writing that crosses linguistic and cultural borders (translingual writing processes). The source texts are critical and theoretical texts where the poets primarily write as scholars. A core point consists in probing their views on poetic language as one or multiple. It seems useful to recall certain key ideas that underpin my study of the poetics that Welch and Joris have developed.

6.1.1 Focus on the language features in nomadic writing

The study of the poets' views on literary texts and writing practices will be sensitive to passages that deal with:

- an awareness of difference between their ideas on literature and writing and those that prevail in their new cultural environment
- thoughts about mother tongue, multilingualism and languages on the move
- a desire to conform and /or to innovate by introducing new perspectives and practices
- a sense of changing literary and linguistic communities
- a sense of outsider or in-between position with particular attention to experiences of conflict
- the creation of poetic texts that reflect on the traveller's relations with the natural environment
- concepts of space that reject established views of bounded and separate territories
- reflections on time (on origin and heritage versus forward looking movements)

For an appreciation of texts about poetics it is important to recall what nomads do, i.e. the *acts* that nomadic theory foregrounds. Nomads move quickly across territories and question the legitimacy of stable centres, of clearly defined territories; they are likely to focus attention on growth, multiplicity, diversity and development. (Cf. Deleuze/Guattari) Nomads are often sensitive to natural phenomena not touched by human activity; from these observations they draw insights into interconnected movements that link humans to the earth; the sensitivity to movements in nature may involve uncovering traces of the past and traces of human or natural movements. (Cf. Kenneth White) The nomadic subject resists inertia, critically assesses prevailing models of thinking and acts in favour of transformation (Rosi Braidotti). Nomads approach the world with their many voices. (Julia Kristeva)

Here are a few more ideas that all thinkers seem to share:

- Nomads “*translate*” continuously and point out underlying links between what they observe. The nomads’ work gives insights into various dimensions of translation, understood literally or more figuratively.
- The nomad comes from outside, observes and keeps a certain distance, also to languages; conceives his stay in any place as temporary – s/he is a temporary insider; always *is* between → acts, observes from an in-between position, which also affects his language/s; this position involves a constant reinvention of language and translating processes.
- Language for nomads is a sign of and a tool for change, multiplicity and transformation
- The nomad develops a sense of natural and mental space that agrees with their views on movement, diversity and transformation.

In order to highlight links between nomadic thinking and language practices, a study of the writers’ poetics needs to keep all these features in mind. Thus differences between poets can be elucidated.

6.1.2 The relations between everyday languages and poetic language in nomads’ writing

Or what it means for a nomad to become a translingual poet

Several questions have motivated the inquiry into non-native poets’ views on writing: *How* do languages travel with their speakers and writers? How important are experiences of *spoken languages* for nomads versus an ongoing *reading practice*? How do interactions with *other voices* (both voices from the real world and voices encountered in books) become a characteristic of nomadic writing? What is it that attracts nomadic writers like Welch and Joris to *poetry*? It is answers to these questions that a study of their poetics aims at.

Imagining multilingual poets’ experiences with languages inevitably leads to questions about connections and complex interrelations between their everyday use of languages and their poetic language. Even if poetic language in the 20th c has been more and more seen as natural speech than as the mere expression of codified conventions, poetic *texts* have their specificities. Poetics may tell us about the passage – the nomads’ routes – from their former and present languages to the writing of poetry. A poetics, or texts with reflections on writing/creative processes, is likely to include indications about the *enactment* of this passage between languages, which in the case of writers with a multilingual repertoire, may be quite complex.

Travelling poets, who temporarily stay in places or settle for a while in new social, linguistic and cultural surroundings, need clarify their position in the hosting community and environment, for instance through

texts on their poetics. For Welch and Joris a poetics is not a scientific, structured and systematic account. Like their poetic texts, ideas are expressed through images, metaphors and associations all contributing to a picture, however fragmentary, of the poets' experiences, beliefs and practices.

A poetics is then an example of writing that combines factual and literary writing.

Scholars from many disciplines approach language as speech acts, as performances, as ways of doing things. This common view of both ordinary and poetic languages as acts of language facilitates an exploration of connections.⁶²⁹ For this reason, in the above recall of nomadic features the emphasis has also been put on what nomads are believed to do. A nomad's poetics must be a work in progress, a collection of thoughts gathered on the road, which reflect the process of becoming.

The nomads' passage from ordinary languages – in the plural as multiple national languages or variations – to poetic writing asks for attention to multidimensional relations. One may wonder if their poetics contain comments on the particular position of writers between languages. By choosing to write in English, Welch and Joris have adapted to the linguistic *regimes* of the new centres of their lives. Do their poetics contain signs of allegiance to American/ Canadian expectations or do they reveal traces of commitment to other frames and visions of language and literature? The nomad's in-between position is an opportunity for innovative practices, for which their handling of language multiplicity is for me of primary importance. These questions assume that their poetics involve issues of self-positioning (and reception).

As reflections on acts of language, a poetics deals with the relation between ordinary and poetic speech. These relations become more complicated in the case of multiple languages and involve questions of passages or translation from one to another. The emphasis is on writing as process. If *writing is a process*, poetic language may turn into a tool of knowledge, as the texts of Welch and Joris imply. What kind of knowledge? What impact does language multiplicity have on the process? As they do not necessarily occur in the same language, reading and writing appear to be two significant interacting practices on the road to knowledge.

As Derrida reminds us, regarding language as acts also points to the double meaning of *act* as 1. *doing things*, and as 2. *acting or pretending*, like actors on stage. The second meaning stresses distance and is particularly interesting for acts in a language one does not consider quite one's own. (See *Acts of Literature* 1992: 2.)

⁶²⁹ For many such insights into the nature of language (and language multiplicity) I am greatly indebted to entries on language and related concepts in *Le Vocabulaire européen des philosophies*; Sybille Krämer; Jürgen Trabant; Jacques Derrida/ Derek Attridge.

A poetics involves thinking about poetry as *poiesis*, about the poets as craftspeople. Are poets rather makers (aiming at finished products) or doers (involved in action)? It challenges views on writing as creation and writing as imitation (*mimesis*). Literary texts, in many cases, are acts of writing that call forth acts of reading. (See examples in ch. 7)

Welch and Joris have written about their understandings of poetic language as different or related to everyday language. In their early critical writing, Liliane and Cyril Welch address the issue of poetic language. They clearly set both philosophical and poetic language apart from ordinary discourse. Everyday language is important for all customary functions while language (proper) can only achieve a transcendence when ordinary movements are brought to halt, when language means breaking through established routines and makes readers (and writers) realize their human condition. The Welch's speak of *emergence*, the title of a first collection of essays. Referring to Merleau-Ponty, and also Butor they follow phenomenological thinking and highlight the reflective power of language in literary works. Literature can offer a reflection that is comparable to what theoretical phenomenological studies aim at. "To understand what reading means [...] we must not only appreciate the transcendent power of language, but also the relation of this power with the ordinary function, passing through this to the other." (The creativity of reading 1979: 104) Joris also sets his poetic writing apart from his other work; talks and essays frequently elucidate his conception of a writer's language which will appear as an essential part of his poetics.

6.1.3 Contextualizing a nomad poetics in relation to literary multilingualism

Terminology and tools⁶³⁰

The terminology that is used to speak about multiple languages is rich and varies according to disciplinary perspectives. Some of the more common terms are inappropriate or tend to be misleading when applied to literary texts. For instance, words like multi- or plurilingual suggest that a text, like a person, can "speak/interact" in several languages, or that it is like a territory organized according to different language rules. For many, these words also assume clear borders between separate, countable languages.

To consider languages in texts, Bakhtin's notion of the *dialogism of words*, which act like voices in texts, is a way to approach multiple languages within one work or a body of works (cf. *translingual intertextuality and palimpsests*). Another way to avoid confusions consists in choosing a specific term for

⁶³⁰ For an overview of terms and notions see the Glossary in the appendix.

multiple languages in texts. This is what Rainier Grutman does when he refers to **heterolingualism** to describe the nature of *texts*:

Bien que le context sociolinguistique laisse son empreinte en littérature, il gagne à être distingué de sa présentation textuelle (c'est-à-dire linguistique, puisque le texte est une œuvre langagière) L'hétérolinguisme permet précisément cela. (Grutman 1997:36-37)

This is how he understands the term:⁶³¹

Par hétérolinguisme ... j'entendrai la présence dans un texte d'idiomes étrangers, sous quelque forme que ce soit, aussi bien que de variétés (sociales, régionales ou chronologiques) de la langue principale. » (Grutman 1997: 37)

[J]e parlerai d'hétérolinguisme, en reconnaissant par là qu'un texte littéraire est un espace où peuvent se croiser plusieurs (niveaux de) langues : cela peut aller du simple emprunt lexical aux dialogues en parlers imaginaires, en passant par les citations d'auteurs étrangers. (Grutman 2002: 331)

The prefix *hetero-* standing for difference and otherness appears to be particularly suitable to highlight features of a nomadic poetics. Grutman also refers to Bakhtin's use of the term *heteroglossia* to describe aspects of language multiplicity in novels. As Grutman points out it is a term that itself represents what it expresses (*a mise en abyme*): the juxtaposition of Greek (*heteros-*) and Latin (*lingua*). Moreover, heteroglossia precludes discussions about distinctions between a language, a dialect or a register since it encompasses all of these notions.

As an expert in literary translation, Grutman assumes that a text has a dominant language – a feature that even the most “multilingual” of Joris's texts presents, too. In a study of aspects of otherness (2002), he has distinguished between motivations that may push a writer to introduce foreign languages in a text: Firstly, a concern for realism (including what used to be called an effect of *couleur locale*), secondly a concern for composition and thirdly aesthetic objectives. This distinction proves relevant for a first summary presentation of heterolingualism in the (poetic) works of Welch and Joris.

Heterolingualism also evokes the movement (nomadity) of languages: words perceived as foreign in a text have wandered away from a context, in which they belonged to native speech. Words become expatriates, (*ils sont dénaturisés*), which means they have moved to a territory that is not home (*ex patria*), and they have so to speak lost their nationality or citizenship. (Suchet 2014: 37 ff.) Heterolingualism thus stands for a blurring of borders between languages and questions the difference between *native* and *foreign*, between *ordinary* and *poetic* speech. The meaning of these notions is

⁶³¹ For references to the notion of heterolingualism, see ch. 3.1.3 and 3.3; more details about how poets implement heterolingualism in their texts follow in relation with the analysis of poems (see ch. 7, especially 7.1.3 for practical examples, and Appendix 2).

approached from different perspectives (*le sense en est relativisé*), and language is deterritorialized: for instance a French text, or parts of it, can travel from its (or a) home territory to another place where it becomes the stranger. This movement of texts however cannot take place without the poet's active contribution. Hence the importance of the *voice* that transmits the collected elements. The apparent complete distancing behind "je est un autre" (to which both Joris and Welch refer) requires further investigation into the nature of this "autre", which is not the same as a negation of self or author.

Heterolingual texts appear as constructions (see Lise Gauvin, *La Fabrique de la langue*, 2004). Poetic versions of construction or assemblage and transformation have been highlighted in the poet's memories of early language experiences: Welch refers to "berries turned into jam" to indicate the power of words while Joris speaks of a "body shop of language" that supplies writers with their linguistic tools. (See ch.5.) Anticipating some outcomes, one may note that translingual poets construct their language from diverse elements, deciding either to show the breaks and the assemblage strategies in (Joris) or to create a text in which elements of difference imperceptibly merge in the poet's voice (Welch).

Heterolingualism can also become a form of *self-translation*, i.e. an attempt at understanding the self through the creation of a new voice.⁶³² Hence, heterolingual texts also reveal a nomad subject in process. Especially for those works that have only weak features of linguistic otherness (in the form of inserted foreign elements in the English text), one needs to enlarge Grutman's concept of heterolingualism: I would propose invisible heterolingualism.⁶³³

Another tool for invisible traces is the palimpsest, which like heterolingualism is based on the perception of texts as spaces.

⁶³² Self-translation (see Grutman 2014; 2015) as expression of the nomad's experience of language and self-construction. See Besemeres (2002) for similar ideas related to migrant literature and Braidotti (2014) about the constitution of nomadic polyglot subject.

⁶³³ Cf. Myriam Suchet; in *L'Imaginaire hétérolingue* (2014) she has further explored this dimension of texts. In *Outils pour une Traduction Postcoloniale* (2009), she proposes the palimpsest as model for an approach of heterolingual literatures.

6.2 Liliane Welch: The nomad's translingual writing as creative response

I wonder why writing enduringly holds sway over my life. Why this act must be reinvigorated by arrowing in and out of places that bid me to walk with the slower pace one sets on a jagged mountain peak where each step is heightened, dangerous and accountable. [...] Marburg, its intermingling of the physical and spiritual, asks me to enter into the difference, turns me back to my whole past: the inherited personal and historical kaleidoscope – the landscape and art of my European childhood fused with the context of North America. I'm at yet another juncture of the voyage that courses backwards and forwards. ("On the way to Marburg," in *Frescoes* 1998: 72)⁶³⁴

Welch's paths to poetic writing are multiple. Among her publications, we find no text explicitly referring to a *poetics* in its title. This does not mean she had no coherent opinions about the nature and the goals of writing, however they are scattered as a multifaceted set of thoughts within her work as a whole. I propose to start from reflections inspired by a visit to Marburg as they contain many key ideas that characterize a nomad's poetic work as she understands it: Writing for her is part of her life of travelling; it is a demanding task that requires close attention to the route. Writing also relies on personal experiences, historical awareness and implies confronting differences; it involves forward movements as well as returns on the past.

All the texts that are being considered⁶³⁵ uncover various links between the nomad's writing and her physical as well as mental travelling. Welch gradually discloses **an aesthetics of response**, which allows us to gain insights into her approach of difference and sameness. Several dimensions are considered in the investigation of the poetic voice that Welch develops: Her response as literary critic to the texts of others; the search for a poetics grounded in contact with nature; her conception of dialogical writing as response to real voices, books and art. The aim is to foreground features of translingual and palimpsestic writing.

6.2.1 On the way to poetic writing: Investigating encounters on the nomad's path

Neither heterolingualism nor language multiplicity are conspicuous topics in Welch's writing. In several outlines of the poet's tasks she foregrounds a critique of consumerism and celebrates a return to essential values as found in nature.⁶³⁶

⁶³⁴ Welch was invited to Marburg to give two poetry readings for the celebration of Canada Day on June 27, 1997. The essay is one of the rare texts in which she alludes to the interaction of her different national languages and their cultural echoes in her writing. See 6.1.2 on nomads' passage from ordinary language to poetry.

⁶³⁵ The consulted texts are critical essays as well as more personal pieces from *Seismographs*, sections 2 and 3, as well as a few other texts and passages from poetry that can be read as poetic positioning.

⁶³⁶ See the essay "Mountain climbing – Reading – Writing" (*October Winds* 1980). Welch has also outlined views on the poet's task by the analysis of other poets' work, as for instance in *Address*, or more obliquely in critical assessments of society, for instance in "Change of Predators," in *Life in Another Language* (1992) and most importantly in those essays included in *Seismographs* (1987) that deal with writing processes (Sections 2 and 3,

The focus of the present study is on a different aspect of her work – on traces of multiple languages – yet the approach follows Welch’s principle: “Poetry elicits the heart of its age, often a troubled heart, and embodies a response to it.” (*Address* 1979: xii). On this premise, Liliane and Cyril Welch have studied the work of great 19th and 20th century French poets as responses to changing times. Rimbaud, Mallarmé and Butor follow in their writing what the critics call “different paths.”⁶³⁷

I propose to work along a similar line and investigate Welch’s work as dealing with a crucial dimension of her age, namely mobility and less ostensibly with translingualism. Mobility, in its many forms, has marked our times – her times – since the middle of the 20th century: for many, though not all, it stands for “the troubled heart” of our age, to use the terminology of *Address*. In the past decades, the connection between an overall mobility and people’s languages has become a central object of enquiry in many fields. Welch, from her own perspectives, produces a poet’s response to this aspect of her age, even if the link between nomadity and language multiplicity is not her explicit goal in writing.

The distinction they make between three fundamental paths could also be considered as frame for an enquiry into language as *experience*, as *spiritual withdrawal* and as *heritage* (inherited culture).⁶³⁸ The term *path*, in the sense that Welch has used it in her critical work, befits the description of a nomad’s progression. Besides its literal meaning as track or trail beaten by feet it has metaphoric meanings and philosophical connotations.⁶³⁹ In her work, Welch follows multiple paths of nomadity (or migration), as she wanders between the thoughts of other poets, responds to new landscapes and reflects on her position between cultures and languages. My focus in these processes is on travelling features of language as translingual responses.

Welch’s affinity with nomad poets

Welch has described herself as a nomad who spends her life between North America and Europe. The nomad for her is in the first place someone who migrates, every year from a “hibernating” home to places of vibrant life in the summer.

The motivations behind the restlessness of other nomad poets intrigue her and suggest comparisons with her own travelling. Thus looking at her Luxembourg poet friend Nic Weber, she wonders:

e.g. “A Sense of Wilderness”). In interviews with Lynes (1999) and Compton (2000), we also find strong indications of her positioning as critical outsider.

⁶³⁷ [T]he responses embodied in the works of these three poets exemplify three fundamental paths along which such response is possible: the path of immediacy (“life” in the concrete, the path of intellection (“ideation” involving the withdrawal from life), and the path of history (“heritage” as the ideation fashioning the forms of everyday life). (*Address* 1979: xiii)

⁶³⁸ Relevant for 6.2.2, 6.2.3 and 6.2.4.

⁶³⁹ The links to philosophy cannot be further pursued here. Cyril Welch has repeatedly pointed to them, most recently in *Laocius: On Paths & Powers* (2019).

What drives my friend onto the trail? Do specific goals or destinations mobilize him? What inspirations ignite his endless travels? Is he following Rimbaud's treks over two continents, or Nietzsche's peregrinations between north and south, or Beethoven's moves from one Viennese apartment to another? ("Angels and Roses," in *Frescoes* 1998: 63)

These famous figures stand for quite diverse forms of mobility while her comments read like explanations for her own restlessness:

Perhaps not just restlessness, but an inkling that Being⁶⁴⁰ withdraws from permanent habitations, whips these wanderers onto the move. Amateurs of adventure, and the unknown, they would rather be leaves driven by the wind over new roads than stand safely as trees in a forest of their homeland. The fear of being jailed in familiar laws, mores, and languages might push them to travel. Mere survival must be exchanged with the excitement of experience. Order must be discarded for chance, the quotidian for the extraordinary. ("Angels and Roses," in *Frescoes* 1998: 63-64).

The nomad rejects what is familiar and looks for adventure and new experiences. Languages to leave behind and others to look for provide but one rather unremarkable impulse among many others. In a passage about travelling in Rilke's work, Welch emphasizes the nomad's sense of wonder while she also recognizes the tension between his love of travelling and the search for the shelter of home:

Rilke too wanted to be surprised and imprinted by the strange. An Odysseus of poetry, he roved during most of his life through Europe as an exile, even though his Malte Laurids Brigge pities those who have neither house, dogs, books nor sedentary happiness. Highly susceptible to new latitudes of space and time, Rilke espoused travel with a master's touch. "So we live here, forever taking leave" was his vow. Only in homelessness could he grasp how he might have been related to a home. A voluptuary of movement, he satisfied his poetic gathering instinct on perpetual journeys of discovery. ("Angels and Roses," in *Frescoes* 1998: 64)

The conflict between the wish for a stable home and the lure of the road is also a central feature of Welch's work. There is no hint at Rilke's multiple languages, only a short, uncommented reference to Rilke's writings in French: "[I]n the Valais, at Muzot [...] he finished the Duino Elegies, wrote the Sonnets to Orpheus and composed French poems." (*Frescoes* 1998: 64). As Welch does not foreground the role of multiple language practices in poets' work, it is up to us to look further for traces.

Inconspicuous multilingualism⁶⁴¹

Despite Welch's knowledge of several languages and ongoing contact with their written and spoken forms, her work seems to have little to say about what writing "across" languages means—or so it seems at first. Though in her texts multilingualism remains a largely inconspicuous feature, a careful inspection

⁶⁴⁰ For this notion of Being and poetic language, derived from Heidegger, see below 6.2.1.3.

⁶⁴¹ One notices parallels with unnoticed or unremarkable experiences of multilingualism, commented on in chapters 4 and 5 in relation to her experiences of languages.

of her writing can expose numerous processes which significantly engage words heard or read in different languages and transformed through the poet's connecting voice.

Hence, we need to make a distinction between a writer's conscious contribution to the debate and researchers' (our own) inquiries.⁶⁴² On the one hand, Welch's thoughts about poetry (i.e. her poetics) differ greatly from the discourse on multilingualism often framed by socio-political, cultural or sociolinguistic discourse. On the other hand, all her reflections show a deep concern for language questions and frequently evoke multi-dimensional situations. Thus, for readers and researchers her texts can become meaningful resources for an analysis of poetic responses to multiple aspects of language. Writers, we may assume, have their own creative means of highlighting views and positions, of expressing the complexity of experiences. They add shades of meaning and perspectives, which language based studies will ignore.

One must also keep in mind the cultural and historical context of Welch's writing. When she published her critical work and her essays, language issues were not approached with the same urgency as they are today in the context of a much greater mobility of people. In an officially bilingual country like Canada, they are part of a long struggle between Francophone (including the Acadians) and Anglophone writers. It is a mostly political conflict, in which Welch does not wish to be involved. For instance, her interest in Acadians concerns their heritage and its impact on the landscape, not the particularities of their language. Concepts of multi- and plurilingualism, as they have emerged in the past decades are not directly apparent in Welch's writing – though awareness of issues is palpable in many texts. She finds her guides in poets like Mallarmé, Whitman or Rimbaud and in thinkers like Heidegger. Their ideas, language and images constitute her framework of reference.

6.2.1.1 Apprenticeship in literary criticism: The reviewer as responding writer

Welch was a literary critic before she became a poet. In the first years of her academic career in the U.S. and in Canada, she published numerous critical articles and reviews that covered a wide range of North American as well as European writers.⁶⁴³ Many of her texts reveal a strong personal stance with key elements that later characterize her own work and positions. Yet once she started writing poetry and creative, imaginative prose, she soon stopped writing literary criticism and reviews.

⁶⁴² For an inspection of these inconspicuous features, notions of latent multilingualism or of hidden heterolingual elements in the work of translingual writers prove helpful. See ch. 3 and studies by Suchet, Ausoni and De Bansi.

⁶⁴³ See documents deposited at the CNL (national archives); they include a long list of her published articles and reviews (CNL L-190; I.1.4).

Her critical approach is marked by ideas of a common European tradition⁶⁴⁴ and by French critics with whom she first became familiar during her graduate studies. Close cooperation with Cyril Welch led to the conception of a poetics based on both literary and philosophical ideas.⁶⁴⁵

The vast reading Welch accomplishes for her critical work is nomadic and translingual in the sense that she picks up books and ideas on her way, not distinguishing between national origins and languages (within the range of her linguistic competences). Thus, Heidegger, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Rilke, Dickinson and Thoreau appear side by side. Later, once she knows enough Italian, Dante joins her “community of writers,” together with many others selected from a wide range of Western languages and literatures also read in translation if need be. It is significant that the names of these poets also figure prominently in her poetry.

Translation procedures

Writing for North American academics, it was natural for Liliane Welch to write in English while at the same time she took advantage of her excellent knowledge of French and German to introduce her readers to poetic and critical work produced in Europe. Based on the original texts, her critical work (also as co-authored with Cyril Welch) contains many quotations, occasionally in French and German, but usually in the authors’ own English translation. The absence of comments and reflections on experiences of translating is surprising in regard of the debates on the (un)translatability of literary texts. It asks for explanations. One reason may well have been that in their eyes monolingual, North American readers would not have appreciated such reflections. Another explanation to be pursued further on is that they see translation as part of their response to the original text.⁶⁴⁶

However, the Welches’ great sensitivity to language and in particular to a dialogic relation between writers and readers involves many observations, which can be elaborated as trans-language relations. In that sense, key ideas developed in critical writing prove truly relevant for a study of language multiplicity.

“Writing summons Writing” (*Seismographs*: 86)

⁶⁴⁴ In particular, as propagated in the work of Robert Curtius, Erich Auerbach and Leon Spitzer, see “On the Way to Marburg.”

⁶⁴⁵ In the present study, the philosophical context moves into the background unless it provides conceptual details that elucidate writing processes. It is worth noting that Cyril Welch too acquired high levels of German, French and Italian and thus like Liliane could read works in the original; especially for the translation of quotations into English and native speaker correctness in her early texts his role must have been crucial.

⁶⁴⁶ See for example Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (2013). One motivation for the disregard of translation issues is Welch’s belief “that any reading of a text is a translation.” A bundle of photocopies from Willis Barnstone, *A Poetics of Translation* (1993) among the documents that Welch deposited at the CNL points to a certain interest on her part in aspects of translation.

Though there is a clear break between Welch's critical and poetic writing, some of her fundamental beliefs do not change. Her observations about the reviewer's task have much in common with her views on the poet's writing as a process that includes dialogue and mediation. Like the reviewer, the poet responds to others' voices and words. Because of these parallels, the following extract can also be read as sketching Welch's general approach of her poetics:

[T]he link between the reviewer and the book reviewed is an internal relationship, not an external one. Writing summons writing, hence our task of reviewers. We answer the call of the book, we satisfy the book's infinite need for dialogue. [...] For the reviewer is first of all a careful reader, a systematic reader. Someone who listens to the text, provokes echoes, grasps relations, ties together convergences and sometimes defines frontiers beyond the text. Someone who as a reader treks over the open roads of the book's landscape in an exercise of genesis or deconstruction. ("Reviewing: Mediation or Assassination," *Seismographs* 1988: 86)

She speaks of reviews as encounters and acts of mediation; they should be lively dialogues and "become an affirmative response of creation and invention":

[The reviewer] considers the book not as an object or fact of culture already done, but as a work in the making, completing itself in each subsequent reading. I believe the act of mediation follows upon an empathy which echoes the old circular hermeneutical principle: "One must understand in order to believe but one must also believe in order to understand." ("Reviewing: Mediation or Assassination," *Seismographs* 1988: 86)

Welch does not indicate whose words she quotes and seems to elaborate her own understanding of Gadamer's views and the centrality of conversation. It is as if in writing the responding poet's as much as the reviewer's words continue an ongoing dialogue. The text also evokes similarities with intertextuality as described by Kristeva.⁶⁴⁷

If her critical work is seen as stations of apprenticeship on the nomad's path, three figures stand out as anticipating her poetic writing: They are the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, the German philosopher Martin Heidegger and the French writer, traveller and essayist Michel Butor.

6.2.1.2 Poetry, an outsider's work: Liliane Welch on Mallarmé

Does one really know what writing is? An ancient and very vague but jealous practice, the meaning of which lies in the mystery of the heart. He who accomplishes it integrally cuts himself off ... takes on the task of recreating everything, with reminiscences, in order to verify that something does exist. (Stéphane Mallarmé, *Oeuvres complètes* 1945: 481.)⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁷ However, Welch foregrounds only an ongoing dialogue of writers who share similar concerns. She defends a poetics of praise: "rebellion" or rejection of the other's (literary) views has no place in a poet's writing. Her understanding of dialogue, also differs from the principles of Bakhtinian, socio-cultural dialogism (see below).

⁶⁴⁸ Passage quoted and translated by Welch, first in "Mountain Climbing- Reading-Writing" (*October Winds* 1980: 73), then in "The Writer as Outsider" (*Seismographs* 1988: 92).

Mallarmé's words address two central questions: the nature of the creative power of poetic writing and the poet's outsider position, which derives from the language he strives to invent. The fact that Welch quotes this passage in two of her essays confirms the ongoing impact that Mallarmé's poetics has had on her thoughts about writing.

In her critical work, Welch has extensively dealt with Mallarmé's poetry and his beliefs about poetic language.⁶⁴⁹ I will focus on an article that Liliane published as a young scholar, "Mallarmé: A New Concept of Poetry," which is enlightening for the development of her early beliefs on poetic language.⁶⁵⁰ She turns to Mallarmé for an elucidation of changes in poetry, which since the beginning of the 20th century have entailed radically new practices that question former understandings of poetic language.

From Welch's presentation of fundamental features of Mallarmé's poetics, a few ideas may bear on a reading of her own work. What follows should in no way be seen as a study of Mallarmé's work: the aim is simply to understand ideas that Welch draws from his poetics. Among the fundamental features that Welch underlines in Mallarmé's thoughts two ideas prove particularly productive for an approach of her views on language: *his belief in the duality of language and his conception of the creative power of poetic, essential, language*. It appears that for Welch Mallarmé's views are enticing, yet in her essay she does not hide some doubts about a strict and rigorous application.

Mallarmé's belief in the duality of language means there is a radical difference between ordinary and poetic language. On the one hand, language is crude and immediate; it serves ordinary human concerns; it is a medium of exchange comparable to money, worthless itself but acquiring value through its referents. This everyday language includes all forms of exchange, even narrating and describing, except the truly literary or poetic. On the other hand, the truly poetic, or essential language receives its ultimate meaning and justification from the poet who creates its *own* world. Essential language is producing rather than copying its subject matter. It is poetry or creation by definition. However, as Welch comments, "one wonders what is left for essential language if narrating and describing are forbidden." (1992: 211)

Another central idea in Mallarmé's poetics is that poetry does not point to things. The work of language is not founded upon any element of existing reality. It arises from a negation of this reality, from

⁶⁴⁹ See the two full-length book studies: (1) *Emergence. Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Rimbaud* (1973; co-authored with Cyril Welch), which contains extensive chapters on Mallarmé; it shows how Mallarmé moves beyond Baudelaire's call for a poetry based on images and comparisons while stressing the transformative power of poetic language (see the chapter entitled "Mallarmé's Poetic Transformation") and (2) *Address. Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Butor* (1979), which has extensive analyses of selected poems.

⁶⁵⁰ "Mallarmé: A New Concept of Poetry" (Dalhousie Review 1969). It was later reprinted (without the opening and concluding paragraphs and without notes) in *Poetry Criticism: Excerpts from Criticism of the Works of the Most Significant and Widely Studied Poets of World Literature*. Vol 4 Editor: Robyn V. Young Gale Research Inc. Detroit/London, 1992.

nothingness, from silence: “In poetic language – just show that the purpose of language is to become beautiful and not to express the Beautiful among other things.” “And yet”, as Welch concludes, “this beauty is not first found and then expressed; it comes into being first and foremost in language itself. As Mallarmé says, it is in and through verse that both language and things come into their true being.” (1992: 212)⁶⁵¹

Welch notes that such a view raises the issue of autonomy: for Mallarmé, poetic language is autonomous – and so is the poet who uses it. “Language creates its own world and its own standard. Mallarmé even suggests that it creates the real world in its mystery. Since language is the medium and the essence of poetry, its creation causes the peculiar problem of autonomy. How can it be understood since it can not be definitively related to anything outside itself?” (1992: 212) For Mallarmé, poetry becomes a way of saying, creating and understanding the world; it radically breaks with former views of representation or (subjective) expression. Welch sees a reason for the obscurity of Mallarmé’s poetry in these endeavours “to formulate a new understanding of language, the medium and stuff of poetry.”⁶⁵²

In her article, Welch also comes to question this view of poetry, which rejects any reference to things and experience. According to Mallarmé, it ends either in the evocation of pure beauty, or in saying nothingness, which as he admits often turns out to be a consciousness of sheer horror. (“The mirror reflecting Being toward me has most often been Horror.” Welch’s translation of a passage from a letter of 1867 to Villiers de l’Isle Adam).

In her conclusion (left out in the later re-print of her article), she reflects on understandings of language. She notes that the concept of poetry became problematic when (with Mallarmé) “we have lost all naïve confidence in the old belief that man is just naturally endowed with the capacity to speak truly, effectively, and sometimes even poetically.”⁶⁵³ She brings in her own stance and foregrounds *the poet’s autonomy*, a position that she will uphold for her own writing:

There is nothing natural about essential language any more. Rather than resulting from a reflection of something already in the world, poetry remains and comes into being as a challenge and a problem, a reflection of language within itself, a speaking and writing which evokes the absence of the world and what it is that is absent from the world. As fundamentally problematic, the new concept of poetry can only bear fruit on the condition that we accept the responsibility implied by this autonomy. (1969 n.p.)

⁶⁵¹ She refers to Mallarmé, *Oeuvres complètes* 524-28, Welch’s translation.

⁶⁵² Cf. Julia Kristeva, whom Welch never mentions: in fact Welch’s first essay on Mallarmé precedes Kristeva’s publication of *La révolution du langage poétique. L’avant-garde à la fin du XIX^e siècle: Lautréamont et Mallarmé* (1974).

⁶⁵³ This view of language, as Welch shows, is also found in the writings of Roland Barthes.

What can we deduce from Welch's presentation for a nomad writer's poetics? At first, Mallarmé's conception of poetry does not strike us as particularly pertinent for a discussion of nomadic and multilingual aspects. Yet from Welch's essay, I wish to take the emphasis on creative aspects, on the power of language to transform, and on the poet's unavoidably solitary outsider position.⁶⁵⁴

Mallarmé's emphasis on the duality of language may also explain why she moves away from thoughts about language difference in terms of national languages: as a poet she is no longer concerned by differences between French and English. What counts for the writer is poetic language. The fact that she encounters Mallarmé's poetics in French and considers it for her writing in English is ultimately irrelevant. As essential language, it seems, poetry knows no linguistic borders; the poet is the nomad who roams widely among other poets' work, untroubled by the crude aspects of ordinary language or languages. Like any commercial goods, these ordinary languages by nature are multiple, but not so poetic language. However, one may wonder, as Welch does, if essential, poetic, language can really come into being without resorting to ordinary language. Welch has continued investigating Mallarmé's legacy, for instance in a poem entitled "Words, Not Sentiments," in which she evokes developments in French poetry at the end of the 19th century.⁶⁵⁵ The quite casual tone of the poem is an example of how Welch comes to disregard Mallarmé's concept of essential language and how her poetic diction can come close to the syntax and rhythm of ordinary language:

"Poems are made with words,
not with sentiments,"
Mallarmé told Manet. He was probably thinking
of Baudelaire, and not of Rimbaud.
[...]
Mallarmé and Manet continued to stroll
through Paris and talk of poetry – while from his outpost
in East Africa Rimbaud
was able to travel in a highland air
where frontiers ceased to exist ...
(*Crossings* 2010: 40)

Mallarmé's stroll through Paris is but one stage on Welch's own route. The true nomad that she wants to follow is Rimbaud and his "path of experience."⁶⁵⁶

Postscript on Welch's appreciation of Mallarmé in translation

⁶⁵⁴ See later also Joris's numerous references to Mallarmé (for instance in *The Gulf*) and their role for nomadic thought.

⁶⁵⁵ "Words, Not Sentiments," appears Welch's last collection, *Crossings* (2010: 40-41). See, also a poem entitled "Mallarmé," in *This Numinous Bond* (2003: 29).

⁶⁵⁶ See also ch. 9.1.2: Rewriting Rimbaud: Analysis of a palimpsestuous relation.

Welch's essay is destined for a North American Anglophone, mostly academic, readership and the fact that it was reprinted 23 years after its first publication shows how relatively unknown Mallarmé still was in 1992.⁶⁵⁷ The bibliography in *Address* confirms that she read Mallarmé (and other poets) in the original French; a preliminary note says that all the translations in the text are her own. (*Address* 1979: ix) What we can infer from this is that in Welch's eyes the work of great poets is translatable, that though there is a fundamental difference between ordinary and poetic language, great poetry written in different languages all belongs to the same realm of art. According to this view the principles of a poetics are not defined by national, linguistic features but by a general underlying understanding of what poetry is or is doing (as an act of imitation, of sublimation or of creation).

We may conclude that Welch believes that for the translation of great poetry (for scholarly purposes), two conditions need to be fulfilled. The first is that the translator knows the target language (and paradoxically this is likely to refer to knowledge of the ordinary language in the first place). The second consists in recognizing the poetic nature of a text and in rendering this poetic nature in the translated text.⁶⁵⁸ Ultimately, translation is a form of creative response. This is a very concise, foreshortened interpretation of Welch's views on translation, based on her presentation of Mallarmé. It is confirmed by texts on Heidegger and Butor and elaborated further in 6.2.3 and the analysis of texts in Part III.

6.2.1.3 The poet's response to Heidegger's work and thought: a few key notions

In Welch's poetic writing some phrases and images have struck me as echoes from Heidegger's work: for instance the title *word-house*, numerous references to *Being*, the notion of cheirography and of the poet as craftsman. For this reason, it seems important to include not a summary of Heidegger's philosophy, which I could never do, but a presentation of ideas and reflections on Heidegger that Welch has presented in her early critical writing.⁶⁵⁹ These texts are co-authored and though we may assume that Cyril Welch is

⁶⁵⁷ See Joris's note on Mallarmé in *The Gulf* and his reference to the translation by Daisy Aldan of 1999. (*Barzakh* 299)

⁶⁵⁸ See also the Welches' review of Heidegger's work in translation, the last part of which deals with their views on the challenges of translation. More below.

⁶⁵⁹ In the opening paragraph of a review of translations of Heidegger's key essays on language and poetry ("Martin Heidegger: *Poetry, Language, Thought* and *On the Way to Language*" 1972), the authors take position against the turn taken in the linguistic studies of the day or in what they call fashionable endeavours in philosophy of language. Right from the start, they announce Heidegger's work (the essays in question) as an outstanding contribution: the essays contain his *thoughts* on language, they are not a philosophy of language. In North America, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Cyril and Liliane as co-authors appear to be in a good position to present Martin Heidegger's ideas to the Anglophone academia. Both have excellent knowledge of English and German and combine the views of literary scholarship and philosophy. In 1964-65, they spend a sabbatical year at Freiburg University. For details about encounters with Martin Heidegger, see Cyril Welch, "Conversations with Heidegger" (*Reading, Talking, Writing* 2004: 176-191). A handwritten letter (dated 16 May 1969) that Heidegger sent to Liliane testifies a second visit in 1968. He writes to decline her offer to translate one of his speeches ("ungünstig die Übersetzung der Rektoratsrede zu

responsible for the more philosophical clarifications, it is clear that Liliane has appropriated the key ideas for her poetic writing. As they point out: “Heidegger is the first thinker who accords to art a sustaining precedence over philosophy.” (1972: 119)

Response always involves transformations, yet it also hints at sources that deserve some inquiry. This is particularly the case for Welch’s response to the philosopher’s work:

[T]he thinker of princely rank to whom I keep returning and to whose music my poems keep opening is Heidegger, the highest peak of contemporary philosophy. He made my life bearable when I sought academic sanctuary. Like any good teacher he persuaded me by his example that writers are servants of language, that we are always on the way to it as we move through history and place. (“On the Way to Marburg,” *Frescoes* 1998: 71)

Some phrases used in this short passage about Heidegger are worth analysing in detail.

“[T]he thinker of princely rank”

Welch’s tone of admiration and her sense of indebtedness to the mentor are unmistakable. The lines belong to an essay, which she wrote on the occasion of a visit to Marburg where she was invited to give two readings of her poetry in 1997 (see introduction of 6.2). However, references to “the teacher who persuades by his example” and his views on language and poetry appear in many of Welch’s earlier writings, notably in the critical work, co-authored with Cyril Welch. On a closer reading, Liliane’s hints at Heidegger’s thoughts about language stand out especially in her earlier essays and poems. Rather than investigate Heidegger’s ideas, I will attempt to gauge their stimulating power for Welch by looking at key phrases, starting with those used in the essay about Marburg, notably: “on the way to” “opening to the music”; “servants of language”. A few more will be added (“being”, “dwelling”, “craftsman”, “origin”, “peak.” A short exploration of these mostly ordinary words aims to clarify Welch’s underlying stance on language and poetry, as well as her position on matters of multiplicity and nomadity.

“On the way to” is a succinct description of the nomad and reflects the idea of path. As part of the title (“On the Way to Marburg”) it alludes to a core inspiration of the text, Heidegger’s work *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (1959), in which one of the included lectures is entitled “Der Weg zur Sprache”, while the notion of ways and paths was already included in the title of another publication, *Holzwege* (1950).⁶⁶⁰ In a previous text, Welch uses the same words, “On the Way to English,” for the memories of her path to her new mother tongue. (See in ch. 5.2) In “On the Way to Marburg”, she adds the dimension of time and space that Heidegger underlines: “as we move through history and place.” In the context of her visit to Marburg, it

veröffentlichen”; it would require extensive commentary. (See letter deposited at CNL, L-190; II.1.H2). It seems to be the controversial speech of 1933 that Heidegger refers to.

⁶⁶⁰ See also 6.3 and references to Heidegger in Joris’s poetics. On the subject of Heidegger their views go in radically opposite directions.

is primarily a backward movement though in the same essay she also says: “I’m at yet another juncture of the voyage that courses *backwards and forwards*.” (Frescoes 1998: 72)

“To whose music my poems keep opening”

Opening may look like an ordinary, commonplace word but in Welch’s writing, together with the related notion of *enter*, it takes a central place. It can refer to texts, ideas, voices, landscapes or any work of art. To open (up) to means giving access, letting in and inviting others to come in. *Opening*, as referring to the tension between a past text and a present reader, is a notion that she mainly owes to Heidegger himself,⁶⁶¹ to whose words she tells us, her poems respond. In a poem written on the occasion of Heidegger’s death, we have a similar evocation of the master’s work:

your prismatic song/
traversed by no answer/
“Enter” it calls/
“Enter” “Enter”

(In Memoriam “Martin Heidegger,” in *Syntax of Ferment* 1979:77)⁶⁶²

Opening is connected to the notions of *address* and *response* in her theoretical work. Through the simple word of *opening* the poet renders the gist of critical concepts as found in aesthetics of reception, reader response theory and hermeneutics.⁶⁶³ *Opening* and *entering* sum up the relation that ties readers to books and works of art. A response also characterizes a work of poetry: it is the response of the poet who proposes his reading of human experiences and his views on contemporary issues. A first detailed account of these ideas is the basis of *Address*:

First of all, a work of art takes us into itself: a poem, a painting, or a concerto is itself insofar as we participate in it. Even though there are evident enticements to enter a work, we do not always join in with ease. Once inside, however, a whole world, a space and a time, unfolds itself, surrounds us, changes the countenances of things, and transforms even ourselves. The whole “point” of a poem [...] lies in the entry. (*Address: Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Butor* 1979: xvi)

The concise description of the process reveals further key features of the process: the foregrounding of participation and a notion of hospitality; the role of dimensions of space and time, as well as the transformative effects, which may include the active reading subject as much as the text. Reading appears

⁶⁶¹ See *Address*, Introduction, ix ff. where Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is presented together with the work of other critical thinkers, such as Gadamer, Jauss and Starobinski.

⁶⁶² “[P]rismatic song” suggests a wealth of responses to Heidegger’s work which like a prismatic glass object distributes multiple reflections ...; “traversed by no answer” i.e. remaining undisturbed or not contradicted, staying without an answer, is a more enigmatic line.

⁶⁶³ The bibliography in *Address* has numerous references to critics connected to these theories; moreover, the blurb has an appreciative comment of the book by Hans Robert Jauss, a major representative of reception theory. In one of her essays, Welch explicitly refers to the principles of the hermeneutic circle (“Reviewing”, in *Seismographs* 1988: 86).

as movement; without any reference to nomadic theory, the Welches' fundamental approach thus nonetheless bears a significant resemblance with some of its principles. These parallels or convergences call for further investigation in particular in relation to encountered differences between languages, words and voices.⁶⁶⁴

Heidegger's language as music

Calling Heidegger's writings "music" may surprise.⁶⁶⁵ When Welch speaks of his "music" (or "prismatic song" in the poem), she refers to Heidegger's notion of *melos*. "The structure of human speech can only be the manner (*melos*) in which the speaking of language, the peal of the stillness of the difference, appropriates mortals by the command of difference." (in Hofstadter translation, "Language" 1971: 206) She may also allude to the philosopher's sense of *dichtende Rede* (*Sein und Zeit* paragraph 34). In the context of an analysis of poems by Hölderlin, Heidegger investigates the etymology of *dichten* and shows how before *dichten* acquired the specific sense of writing verse, it had a vast range of meanings (for instance, *eine verstärkte Form von sagen, [...] , etwas schriftlich aufsetzen ...*); it could apply to any text, report, essay or song. Heidegger also signals the meaning of *dichten* as *zeigen, sichtbar machen*.⁶⁶⁶

The overlapping of poetic writing and thinking is evident in Hofstadter's translation of Heidegger's title, "Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens" which is rendered as "The Thinker as Poet." Welch highly regards the ensuing close connection between thought and poetic writing and responds to it in her own work. Welch's phrase "to whose music my poems keep opening" thus states that Heidegger's merging of thought and words not only greatly appeals to her but also declares it to be a crucial element of her own poetics. Her response to Heidegger's "music" ("opening to it") thus is twofold: it appears in thought and in language. As she never aims at writing philosophical texts, her poetic response to his words is particularly relevant for the present study. Even the short extract from "On the Way to Marburg" shows how she integrates words and images that echo his writing. She likes to borrow seemingly commonplace words, like *home*,

⁶⁶⁴ Cyril Welch's philosophical writings, too, give evidence of an ongoing interest in notions of opening: *Opening*, is the title of an essay written in 1997, i.e. a year previous to the publication of "On the way to Marburg," a fact that points to a probable exchange between the poet and the philosopher. Cyril Welch writes: "[O]penness, as a human disposition retains its possibility and its integrity only as a reflection of an anterior event. (*Reading, Talking, Writing* 2004: 100) The attention to anteriority may constitute a key difference with nomadic theory that gives precedence to forward moving drives.

⁶⁶⁵ In their review of Heidegger's work, Cyril and Liliane Welch pointed out the linguistic challenge of Heidegger's style, for instance in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, and quoted an example of "Heidegger at his linguistic worst: *Das Wesende der Sprache ist die Sage als die Zeige*." (254)

⁶⁶⁶ See the entry "*Dichtung*" in *Vocabulaire européen*, in particular the note on Heidegger (2004 : 315).

Being, ground, earth or *dwelling*, which through their sheer repetition and an understanding of their association with Heidegger, take on additional dimensions.

One more phrase in the extract from “On the Way to Marburg” is clearly reminiscent of Heidegger:

“Writers are servants of language”

It expresses a fundamental though challenging core notion in Heidegger’s thinking: Human beings are not the owners of their language or speaking, or as Heidegger says: “Language is the master.” Cyril and Liliane Welch begin their comments on Heidegger’s thoughts on language with a quotation of these words: “Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man”.⁶⁶⁷ It is an illusion to assume that in our speech we effect things, that we can learn “how to do things with words.” As Heidegger says, to speak is to answer, to give in return, not to make words or to manipulate them. (Liliane Welch and Cyril Welch 1972: 120)⁶⁶⁸

Other passages in Heidegger’s essay “Die Sprache” are interesting to note, as they help situate intriguing passages in Welch’s poems (where she does not propose a study of the philosopher’s views but in a poetic response uses them to evoke various experiences of language). Interestingly, Welch seems to disagree with Hofstadter’s translation of *Die Sprache* as *Language*. She prefers to render Heidegger’s title with “*Words*” (“Marburg” in Frescoes 1998: 71), which may account for her reticence to use the term language in the essays about her memories of “language” experiences. Consequently, we may also argue that what appeals to the poet is not Heidegger’s language (as syntax or national idiom) but his words (as music), in which she feels the evocative power of the texts. The use of the plural form “*words*” rather than the singular form “*language*” as uncountable is an acknowledgment of plurality (in Heidegger’s essay), to which Welch is very sensitive.

Words are ways to *name* things and their diversity – for her an important function of poetry. Words belong to manifold voices, and much better than the term *language* evoke different sounds or aural (oral) plurality. Cyril and Liliane Welch say that they read Heidegger in English and German, for a better understanding (“Review 1972”). This may be a crucial point to approach the transformation that the philosopher’s words undergo in Welch’s poetry.

“Die Sprache spricht” – Language speaks : this is the phrase, often repeated , that governs Heidegger’s essay “Die Sprache.”⁶⁶⁹ Naming is how man speaks in pure language, that is in poetry: “What is this

⁶⁶⁷ Quoted from Hofstadter’s translation of *Poetry, Language, Thought* 1971: 215 (213, in my edition)

⁶⁶⁸ The passage is from “...Poetically Man Dwells ...” (Hofstadter translation: 213).

⁶⁶⁹ The following reference are from this essay in Hofstadter’s translation (“Language,” 1971: 185-208).

naming? [...] This naming does not hand out titles, it does not apply terms, but it calls into the world. The naming calls. Calling brings closer what it calls.” (1971: 196)

Heidegger’s essay on language has a long passage on the process of language (poetry) as response. Here are a few key statements quoted from the English translation:

“The way in which mortals [...] speak on their own part, is: by responding. Mortal speech must first of all have listened to the command” (206)

“Mortals speak in so far as they listen. They heed the bidding call of the stillness [...] This speaking that listens and accepts is responding.” (206)

“Response, as receptive listening, is at the same time a recognition that makes due acknowledgment. Mortals speak by responding in a twofold way, receiving and replying. The mortal word speaks by cor-responding in a multiple sense. / Every authentic hearing holds back with its own saying. [...] But the reserve must take care not just to hear the peal of stillness afterward, but to hear it even beforehand, and thus as it were to anticipate its command.” (206-207)

Heidegger is undoubtedly an essential voice in Welch’s poetics. From him she takes her position that poetry should neither be reduced to its informative content nor to its power of arousing sentimental response. As Heidegger sees it, poetry is language that renders being-in-the-world in its three dimensions: understanding, feeling, articulating. Not its “truth” is significant but the power of its language to form the world.⁶⁷⁰ Like Heidegger, she takes language as manifested response in the effort to configure the multiplicity of phenomena.

Welch’s *poetic* response to his work, to the words he uses, is particularly relevant for a study of translingual writing processes. Even the short extract from the essay on Marburg shows how she integrates words and images that echo his writing. She likes to borrow seemingly commonplace words, which, through the association with Heidegger, take on additional dimensions either through their sheer repetition in her texts or through allusions to Heidegger’s work (for those readers able to identify the link). Once attentive to possible echoes of Heidegger’s formulations in Welch’s work, the reader will notice more instances. In my eyes, they stand for a form of translingual writing or translanguaging moving from German to English and from philosophy to poetry. They all reflect core elements of Welch’s poetics.

- The use of *Being* in its capitalized form is startling before it calls to mind the translation of Heidegger’s work (*Sein und Zeit*).⁶⁷¹

⁶⁷⁰ L. & C. Welch write “According to Heidegger’s view of the historicity of human experience, a traditional interpretation may be inadequate and unacceptable [as found in poetic writing] but it nevertheless is powerfully formative of the world in which we live and think.” (Review of Heidegger translation, 1972: 118)

⁶⁷¹ See for instance, “Perhaps not just restlessness, but an inkling that Being withdraws from permanent habitations, whips these wanderers onto the move.” (*Frescoes*: 63; quoted in intro 6.2.1 to point to the tension between the hermit and the nomad)

- *Peak*, a term that also appears in the extract from the Marburg essay is interesting because it combines Heidegger's thoughts with Welch's love of mountain climbing.
- *Participation* or participants is linked to Heidegger's idea of man as participant rather than master.
- *Origin* is another word that often appears in her writings, in some instances readers are likely to be confused until they notice the link to Heidegger's essay *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerks* ("The Origin of the Work of Art" in Hofstadter 1971: 15-86).
- In Welch's work, other significant hints at Heidegger appear in an emphasis on *craftsmanship* in the poets' (or artists') work. (cf. *From the Songs of the Artisans* 1983)

Similarly, her praise of nature and of *solitude* is reminiscent Heideggerian thought "*But language is monologue [...] language speaks lonesomely*".⁶⁷² However, for the notion of solitude Welch's writings reveal many other sources, in particular in American literature. Thoreau's words that she puts as epigraph for a section on "companion" poets is a concise formulation of the poet as solitary walker and (crusading) thinker: "For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us." (H.D. Thoreau, *Walking*, in *Frescoes* 61) The paradox or implied tension may well lie in the contrast between the crusader, the preacher and the hermit.

The frequent use of the word *dwell* and *dwelling* points beyond the meaning of to live (inhabit) and a house: *dwelling* is the translation of Heidegger's *wohnen* (in "*Bauen Wohnen Denken*"). In a context of nomadic features, it is a notion that questions the overall sense of movement, of "being on the way." One may link *dwelling* to the overall belief that man's and language are **rooted in the earth**; it is an aspect that Welch stresses in all her work.⁶⁷³ Moreover, *dwelling*, for Heidegger, also means "being at home with things", thus making "building" possible. (Cf. the Welches' review 1972.) The importance that *building* has for Welch appears in the title *The Word-House of a Grandchild*.⁶⁷⁴; this understanding is confirmed by the final words in the interview with Anne Compton:

All reading and writing is a conversing with art works, present and past. With other artists (poets, musicians, painters, and so forth), my work is part of the house of art. That house is grounded on the earth. And, changing the wording of Heidegger's phrase, I would add: "*Art is the house of being.*" (2000: 141; *emphasis added*)

⁶⁷² In Hofstadter, also quoted by Welch in the review of Hofstadter's translation (1972: 120).

⁶⁷³ May be compared to Joris's insistence on *mawqif*, as moments of stillness in the nomad's wanderings, and indispensable for writing.

⁶⁷⁴ In this collection, one finds many examples of words and notions drawn from Heidegger.

However much Welch has transformed the master's voice, his ideas remain an essential part of her poetics. For Welch writing is a balancing act, reconciling being-in-the-world with *nomadic* movements (in the guise of travelling, walking, mountain climbing). In her poetic transformations, attachment to place, in constant tension with the urge to move, become representative instances of the human condition. In Welch's description of the writer's task one may recognize her reformulation of Heidegger's idiosyncratic evocation of what language is: "*Das Wesende der Sprache ist die Sage als die Zeige.*" Here is what Welch says, in her simpler words:

[W]riting means above all re-creating and thus re-opening the question as to whether things exist or not. Through this act, the writer opens familiar meanings onto an alien content [...] through his work we realize that things are, that we are affected by them. ("Mountain Climbing, Reading, Writing," in *October Winds* 1980. 74)

One may note the triple noun in her title, a feature she may also borrow from Heidegger's formulations of headings for his texts. Especially in "Cheiropgraphy" (1987), Welch's indebtedness to Heidegger for her views on writing becomes very explicit. (See 6.2.2 and 7.2.3)

Welch and Heidegger: Afterthoughts

His influence on Welch is unquestionable. I would argue that attracted by key notions of his thought, she has turned – *translanguaged* – his philosophical reflections into a framework for her poetic thinking. Some familiarity with the philosopher's thoughts facilitates our understanding of her positions on language, life (*being*) and natural surroundings. The result is a seducing world of oneness with nature and the earth (*gaia*), which Welch describes with skill and usually with writerly conviction. However, her seemingly uncritical compliance with these ideas is at times disturbing, for instance, when in their outspoken criticism of modern life, the poems appear to resort to lofty distancing and individualism. When her enthusiasm turns into a devotee's uncritical veneration of the great master's ideas and language, her writing loses authenticity, especially as in her poems she does not indicate her "source." But a close reading of Welch's texts shows that her poetics is a constant effort to reconcile the appeal of the "master's" ideas and a restless nomad's desire to search for ever new "voices and spaces."⁶⁷⁵

Through views on language inspired by Mallarmé and Heidegger, Welch seems to foreground encounters with transcendence and a radically different Otherness. This Otherness is desirable but an unreachable participation in Being. The poet is the nomad or pilgrim who is always "on the way", in search of an absolute. It is a quest for Oneness (in being and language) rather than an encounter with rhizomatic

⁶⁷⁵ It is significant that she has deposited the correspondence with a poet and friend who radically disagrees with her views on Heidegger. Liliane's answer is an outburst of rage. In the letters that follow both continue to stand by their position. Fonds Liliane Welch / CNL L-190; II.

multiplicity. Writing like climbing rocks involves long itineraries towards meaning making: “Poems and mountains are paths toward knowledge and fulfilment. [...] The words become seismographs; like the hands they want to catch the smallest noise.” (“Tapping Reality,” *Seismographs*: 76)

6.2.1.4 Creative participation in texts: Reading as an experience of nomadic travelling

In her accounts of reading, Welch often foregrounds the pilgrim’s path yet this search of transcendence is not the only dimension of Welch’s reading-writing processes. Reading is also part of the nomadic writer’s desire of encounters with multiple realities and multifaceted experiences. In an extensive review of Michel Butor’s *Mobile*⁶⁷⁶ Liliane and Cyril Welch, in co-authorship, investigate why writing cannot be dissociated from reading. For this reason, the essay entitled “The Creativity of Reading: Michel Butor and his Mobile” (1979) must be seen as a foundational text of Liliane’s poetics. Moreover, the text relies on two images, the *mirror* and the *mobile*, remarkably exploited to shed light on experiences of nomadic spaces and multiplicity. The Welches’ analysis of reading processes bears some similarity with sociolinguists’ approaches of discourse. Like real-life situations, the text that they focus on is marked by a variety of voices, for which a (minimal) context is given; the reader takes the role of the scholar who listens, observes and attempts to make sense of what he sees. With phenomenological principles in mind, such as Merleau-Ponty’s precept on the importance of “re-learning to see the world”, the Welches analyse key features of the reading process and highlight the dialogic relations that the reader establishes with the text:

What does it mean to read a book? Concretely, we think of being alone, yet we also enter into dialogue; and we look at words on a page, yet we also turn to the matter itself. Thus a twofold paradox marks the event of reading: we seem to be all by ourselves, while the whole thrust of the experience directs us to what another has to say; and we appear to be reading the book while the book itself sends us toward what it says. (“The Creativity of Reading: Michel Butor and his Mobile” 1979: 103)

The authors stress the importance for readers not to look simply for the world they know, but to be ready to discover an entirely different world:

The paradox becomes most pronounced, perhaps, in the experience of learning to read: children, even university students, strain to look through, to listen through, the book – step through it toward the world it reveals, as Alice stepped through the looking glass. Some never make it through, and some refuse to make even the first step unless on the other side they immediately perceive the same old world, as they would in reading a newspaper. A genuine book, like a looking

⁶⁷⁶ Michel Butor, *Mobile. Étude pour une représentation des États-Unis*. (1962) Butor, a very prolific writer, is also the author of *Le génie du lieu* (1956), a book of some importance for a study of nomads and cultural spaces.

glass, somehow turns everything around. ("The Creativity of Reading: Michel Butor and his *Mobile*" 1979: 103)

The image of stepping through a looking glass describes the insights that books can provide to readers for an understanding of self and their condition in the world. When they speak of breaking through customary habits the process of reading appears comparable to descriptions of intercultural experiences.⁶⁷⁷

The image of the passage through the looking glass can also be analysed as expression of a nomadic experience. Movement is underlined by the step it takes to enter the world of the book: it is a threshold to pass. What follows is a transformation: The reader is described as a progressing or nomadic subject: books change the readers and they change their perception of the world in which they move: "Whatever the novelist or the philosopher intended to reveal, the works themselves call into question our own being (selfhood) and the being of what we encounter (thinghood). The basic exigency of reading is to enter into the experience of this question, to accept its challenge" (103).

Entering the world behind the looking glass hints at the creation of a new space. The authors call the process of successful, transformative reading *a creative participation*.⁶⁷⁸ The work they chose to clarify processes of reader response is particularly interesting for its nomadic qualities of mobility, multiplicity and transformation: *Mobile* by the French writer, Michel Butor (1962)⁶⁷⁹ which represents a very innovative piece of writing. Without attempting to give an overview of this experimental and outstanding work, classified as example of the *nouveau roman*, I wish to point out some features which reveal dimensions of a nomadic approach of writing. The subtitle, *Étude pour une représentation des États-Unis* (Study for a representation of the United States) at first might be misleading for this thoroughly literary and poetic piece of writing.

Mobile is a travelogue, a poetic and innovative evocation of the United States, the result of the six months the author spent travelling across America. One could call the text a collage of multiplicities, composed from a wide range of materials, including city names, road signs, advertising slogans, catalogue listings, newspaper accounts, Native American writings, and above numerous voices encountered at different moments of the trip. Dedicated to Jackson Pollock, it resembles an abstract painting or a patchwork quilt, which tries to catch the vigour as well as the contradictions of American life and heritage.

⁶⁷⁷ See for instance a German formulation for intercultural experiences: "Bruch im Denken-wie-üblich" (Heimböckel 2014).

⁶⁷⁸ See ch. 3 for a discussion of poetic space; also Davidson 2007; White 2007; Yeung 2015, and more generally Massey 2005.

⁶⁷⁹ A translation into English appeared in the U.S. in 1963, shortly after the French publication. An extensive study of a chapter in *Mobile* is part of *Address: Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Butor* (1979) where L. and C. Welch largely rely on their own translation of texts (introductory note in *Address*).

In their essay (and in *Address*), the Welches are sensitive to subtle underlying linguistic associations. The title, *Mobile*, is a rich example of polysemy, inside English and even more so for multilingual ears. *Mobile* has the same spelling in French and English, but its pronunciation differs, as do some of its references or connotations. *Mobile*, the name of a city in Alabama, evokes mobility, automobiles and travelling, not least through its allusion to an American brand of gasoline (Mobil). In French one has the additional meaning of motif or reason, for instance speaking about “le mobile du voyage.”

A mobile is also the term used to describe the fragile piece of decoration⁶⁸⁰, which with its finials, and the finials of the finials, always in movement with the slightest wind, becomes a metaphor for constantly changing sights and voices. It has a certain similarity to dreamcatchers; above all, it stands for multiple perspectives and this is how L. and C. Welch draw the link to reader participation. Like a mobile in the wind, a text invites readers to create their own texts through changing responses.

The Welches also show how among this heterogeneity of different voices, characters and places, *unity* is achieved by readers who transform what they see through “creative participation”.

A mobile shapes space by means of movement [...] it forms a totality: it creates space not at all by any one or finite number of positions, but by infinite accumulation. It is an essentially open-ended event. Thus we experience the work primarily in time – time not as a sequence but as accumulation, and accumulation not of new elements but of the same elements in their varying perspectival combinations ... it recalls the possibility of responding meaningfully to the context of our lives.” (Address 1979 : 189)

In the longer study of *Mobile* (in *Address*), reflections on dimensions of time stress temporal transformation as well as the awareness of returns, and hence issues of heritage:

Although new finials come into view as the work progresses, their newness immediately contributes to the formation of a whole. Spatially viewed, this transformation may be described as either a circle or a spiral of time. In any case, history comes back hauntingly. [...] Thus is preserved the possibility that history can be converted into heritage, the making of a place. (Address 1979:192)

For our understanding of Welch’s poetics and later writing practices I wish to keep the following points: Travelling and nomadic movements imply not only a forward movement but also an emphasis on the past, on returns, which marks much of her poetry. It is surprising that, as we have already seen in Welch’s memories of language experiences, the additional *step*, which reading in another national language with its own words, syntax, cultural connotations requires, is not mentioned. We may assume that in the critics’ eyes, the reading (and writing) process, is fundamentally the same. Yet, the analysis of Butor’s *Mobile* has

⁶⁸⁰ In the sense of an object of decoration, the word is also used in other languages, like German, where with a slight change in spelling through the additional final “e” it becomes *das Mobile*, a three-syllable word.

many points that invite us to think about the additional dimension of crossing over into another linguistic and cultural territory. On close inspection, the description of the reader-writer response to Butor's text reveals significant parallels with translanguaging as a meaning making process.⁶⁸¹

6.2.1.5 Wrapping up on Welch's formative experiences with literature

This section has mostly dealt with the critics' response to multiple voices encountered in books. Much of the focus has been on language viewed as experience (reading) and as writers' response to the world.

A key nomadic feature of her poetics concerns the impact of reading. Though language multiplicity is not thematised, Welch as critical reader appears to cross language barriers continuously: she reads texts in one language – French or German – and subsequently writes her own reviews and comments in another language (English).

An important aspect of this early stage of her poetics is thus the multilingual scholar's responsibility as mediator between languages - responsibility being here understood as ability to respond, to react (in another language).⁶⁸² Her knowledge of languages facilitates the contact with thinkers and writers in Europe.⁶⁸³

A short return to the essay, "On the way to Marburg," presented at the beginning, confirms physical and mental nomadic features. The text is triggered by walks around the city of Marburg and its venerable university which hosted many famous scholars (Heidegger, Auerbach, Curtius, Gadamer ...) It is largely a reflection on how a community of thinkers emerges, on how the ideas of these scholars, who either like herself moved to North America or whose work crossed the Atlantic, inspired her as a student in the U.S. Because of the tremendous influence they had on her thoughts and writing she calls them (her) predecessors and is awed by the place where they once started their remarkable work.

With its spatial and temporal dimensions, the essay outlines connections between past and present, between Europe and North America, and stresses the role of travelling (nomadizing) scholars and thoughts. As Welch started late writing her own poetry, the ideas gathered in books have turned into the foundation for her own writing. Key aspects of Welch's **nomadic poetics** appear in the following lines in which she recalls her early encounters with European literature:

⁶⁸¹ See ch. 3.1.

⁶⁸² See also Joris on translator's responsibility and what he says in connection with his translations of Celan's work.

⁶⁸³ On their visit to Heidegger's house, the Welches asked him to come for a visit to North America. He declined on health grounds (Cyril Welch, *Reading Talking, Writing*: 190-191). In Liliane Welch's correspondence kept at the CNL there are several written invitations to (e.g. to Butor and Starobinsky) who also politely turned down the invitation: travelling to New Brunswick was too cumbersome and complicated. (L-190-I)

There my critical path was set I still have the paperback of *Mimesis* with its red and blue underlinings. In those readings, my desire to write found its impetus. The itinerant Marburg scholars set in motion a course of literary inquiry, seedbed for the poetic travels to come. ("On the Way to Marburg," *Frescoes* 1998: 70)

6.2.2 The search for her own voice: a poetics of response to nature

Writing poetry, in my case, has become the natural response to the wild's address, for making poems means preserving the archaic presence and otherness, that radical freedom, simplicity, solitude and peace, our wilderness ground. (*Seismographs*, "A Sense of Wilderness" 1988: 74)

This section mainly leans on reflective essays that Welch wrote in the 1980s once she has published several collections of poetry. "Praising the Earth with our Feet"; "Poetry as Cheirography"; "A Sense of Wilderness"; "Tapping Realities" are included in *Seismographs* (1988). Two prefaces in poetry collections also provide valuable thoughts on writing processes: *October Winds* (1980) and *Manstorna* (1985). (The preface of *Word-House* is considered in the next section.)

All these essays reveal her approach of poetic writing from a Canadian perspective, contrasted with experiences of mountain climbing in Europe. Thus she writes in a text entitled "Writing in and for New Brunswick": "Poetry elicits the heart of its age and place, it embodies a response to its epoch and to the region where it is rooted. Thus it can create a place to stand and a way to participate in prevailing as well as often threatening forces."⁶⁸⁴

6.2.2.1 Contextualizing Welch's poetics in nomadic thinking

Welch's essays are elaborations of avowed aims and poetic strategies. The celebration of natural surroundings, references to the poet as walker and outdoor observer, the importance of rootedness and solitude, as well as the search for transcendence and meaning making are recurring themes.

She is explicit about the poet's mission:

Precisely now the writer has a real function, he can create what modern society denies man. Against the violent and dispersed industrial society he pits the essential and meaningful world of the books. He holds up to modern man's loss of identity within an estranged world the compact identity of the text and reader within the work of literature. (*October Winds* 1980: 74)

Her position is clear: She rages against the meaninglessness of life and labour in contemporary industrial society against which the poet must rise. It is the poet's duty to uncover the evils of consumer society while proposing an alternative.

⁶⁸⁴ "Writing in New Brunswick" is an unpublished typescript; it is not dated but references to her publications point to early 1983. (Fonds Liliane Welch CNL L-190; I.1.3-10)

Yet, the acts of the poet, both physical (walking, mountain climbing) and mental (reading, writing), justify a reading of Welch's texts as expression of a nomadic poetics with its own specificities.

Her opposition to capitalism and consumer society is an essential aspect of her as the recluse, the representative of a simple life. This aspect of her work, with its spiritual dimension and rejection of most material aspects of life reveals features of the anti-nomad, as well as the neverending conflict between being on the move and the search of home – wherever and whatever that is. However, a focus on the nature of language and the role of multiple languages in her work, let her appear as a figuration of nomadism who reflects multifaceted though sometimes contradictory features of nomadic thought.

Welch has called herself a nomad because of her yearly migrations to Europe. However, the survey of nomadic studies shows that nomadism is a much wider concept, echoes of which one also finds in her work. Her response to her new environment by writing poetry is reminiscent of Kenneth White's thoughts on nomadism and his initiation of ecopoetic writing which combines the language of the wanderer and the intellectual traveller.

Welch's ideas also reflect a focus on the nomad's *becoming* as fostered through writing processes. Braidotti argues that the polyglot subject in an ongoing process of becoming cannot be separated from her languages. Writing involves integrating the past into new positions, always connected to experiences mediated through language. We can also look at Welch through the lens that Kristeva provides in her detailed analysis of meaning making through juxtaposing words in two or more languages. The nomad is the wanderer who responds to novelty, notices differences; who is the outsider-insider in a position of between-ness, always looking ahead for new 'adventures' and recalling the past.

Ultimately, Welch's poetics is a nomad's thinking about experiences linked to various surroundings or stations on her travelling routes. Some texts can be read as fragments of *nomadic life-writing* and show parallels with studies that stress the link between *migration and translation*. (See Karpinski, *Borrowed Tongues* 2012.) Her poetics (her thoughts about *writing* practices) is at the same time a reflection about her nomadity (her in-between position and experiences). Translation is not primarily linked to different named languages; it is about the poet finding words for experiences, sensations and reflections.

6.2.2.2. Positioning as a poet in New Brunswick: the difficult balance between immigrant and nomad

In an unpublished document, "Writing in and for New Brunswick"⁶⁸⁵, Welch describes the role of the nomad as newcomer and elucidates "what a writer, born and raised on another continent, can do for her

⁶⁸⁵ It is a one-page tape-script, probably an introduction for a reading session of her poetry (ca 1983), which gives a succinct overview of her work and the vision she has of her position as a poet in her new country. (CNL L-190 ; I.1.3-10)

adopted country, Canada.” Her words convey the perspective of the nomad and outsider; they also translate the confidence of an immigrant poet, who on the one hand is thankful to have been welcomed and who on the other hand is convinced she has important messages to deliver to Local readers.

As a poet, who is not native of the land where she writes, she has a triple mission. Firstly her role is that of the perspicacious observer who can reveal what goes unnoticed in society:

Writing poetry in New Brunswick has meant for me 1) opening up a complexly stratified history to the present day oblivion of the consumer society. Our age structures and encourages a formation of life with express lack of any in-built signal for or path towards origins. Poetry can alleviate this. (CNL L-190; I.1.3-10)

The focus on origins seems a deviation from the disregard of origins that Deleuze and Guattari, as well as Joris emphasize; nomadic theory however does not altogether reject an interest in the past, for Welch, it plays a primary role, (see also ch 5) a point we have seen as marking a difference between migration theories and nomadism. But contrary to the link with the mother tongue that many migrants appear to associate with origins, this is a step she does not take for herself nor for her presentation of the Acadians for example.

Secondly, as a nomad and traveller with an extensive knowledge of other places, she can point out similarities and differences in order to ensure new approaches of what Local people tend to take for granted:

Writing in New Brunswick has also meant 2) placing my public at the threshold of the immediate, the simple. The most pressing and terrifying presence is for this region the savage, unbounded presence of nature. [...] I place the New Brunswick landscape into a cross-cultural, universal context by contrasting it to the Alps and the Dolomites, a nature as defiant as our own regional setting.⁶⁸⁶ (CNL L-190; I.1.3-10)

The wandering poet, the one who knows other places, can offer a new outlook on a region which is usually experienced as a source of unending hardships. Her poetry should express empathy with the Local people and the harsh conditions in which they live while her descriptions of the land are also to awaken awareness of its beauty that may be best appreciated through comparison with highly acclaimed natural sites in Europe. Thanks to her experience of mountain climbing, she can claim an authoritative voice: the poet is an expert that readers can trust. Poetry becomes a call for action for those who are close to despair: “Fifteen years of mountain climbing have taught me that such harsh landscapes issue a challenge for

⁶⁸⁶ « [A]s our own regional setting”: through the use of the possessive pronoun, Welch clearly positions herself in New Brunswick.

action. I have hoped that my Canadian public might find a paradigm in my mountain poems for dealing with their own challenge here and now.”

Lastly, as a poet she feels close to other craftspeople or artisans who like her respond by their craft to the exigencies of their natural environment: “Finally, writing in New Brunswick has incited me 3) to alert my readers to the labours of the craftspeople in our live surroundings.” She positions herself among a broad community of creators who aim at making meaning of their lives and surroundings through work. The arrangement of texts and photos in *Songs of the Artisans* (1983) underlines the translational process of crafts into words that the poems aim to render.⁶⁸⁷

Intermediary wrapping up:

Translingualism, or the nomad’s movements between different languages, is the least visible aspect of Welch’s poetry and absent from her reflexions on writing. Yet, once we keep in mind the importance of hidden forms of multilingualism (implicit heterolingual elements and palimpsestic processes) and the implications of a nomadic approach, her ideas and her poetry uncover many relevant features. Her particular way of working with experiences of difference and movement, together with a special awareness of space and time, point to an underlying heterogeneity of voices – and languages – which prompt her to write poetry.

Already her memories of early language experiences (ch. 5) show that for Welch diversity is to be looked for inside one language; a similar approach characterizes her poetics too. Poetic writing is translational *per se*– it conveys thoughts and experiences in language ; whether that language is French, German or English is her choice; she opts for the language that best suits her way of being. (See essays in *Seismographs*, notably *On the Way to English*.) To convey her discoveries, the poet relies on an astute handling of language; consequently Welch’s texts can be approached as rich material for an investigation of relations between language and a nomad’s experiences. **Poetry must be** response to experiences as they strike the nomad progressing on her way, while her reflections on writing – her poetics – reflect an ongoing search for a voice that fits response to encounters with difference.

6.2.2.3 “A language had to be invented”

For Welch, poetic writing is intimately linked to response to landscape. The phrase, “A language had to be invented” stands out in a passage, in which Welch recalls her first impressions of Eastern, Atlantic Canada,

⁶⁸⁷ Also see the view expressed on poetic creation in the poem called “Forging,” (“Cheirography,” *Seismographs*, discussed in 6.2.2.6).

a land that was totally new to her when she first arrived in New Brunswick. In the text, the focus is on the overwhelming impact that its climate and natural settings left on her.

For me Sackville is a hamlet intercepted between the highest tides of the world. When I saw it first in a wild February storm, a desire arose to pierce the secret withhold from me. A language had to be invented to make the ground sing. Since then, this tiny town has become my secret, my life-giver; it has grown with me, submerges me, threatens to withdraw, to dissolve into future writing and discoveries. I can best grasp this, my home, when as a text it sustains my days. ("Sackville, New Brunswick Locus of Migrations", *Seismographs* 1988: 53)

In this extract, we read about the poet's memories of what proved a crucial event in her life. She remembers her first arrival in Sackville, "a hamlet", "a tiny town", on the shores of the Atlantic. The experience was so overwhelming that she felt her ordinary language, or any language used so far, would not do to convey her response or to do justice to this land: "A language had to be invented to make the ground sing."

Two words stand out in this sentence: "invent" and "sing". Invention is a term used in literary critical theory to refer to literary writing as response to something so far ignored (by poets and readers): "the act-event of invention succeeds in introducing into the familiar landscape of a culture a way of thinking, seeing, feeling, or handling language that is new to that culture." (Attridge, *The Work of Literature* 2015: 38). He adds a little later that the writer must "make space for otherness to enter." (39). This view of literature as event and invention is quite close to the experience described in Welch's essay, where "Otherness" appears above all as physical experience of extremes. It is through eyes, touch and hearing that "the highest tides of the world" and "a wild February storm" are perceived before they are transformed into language.⁶⁸⁸

It is worth recalling Jacques Derrida's words: "an event implies surprise, exposure, the unanticipatable."⁶⁸⁹ Indeed, for Welch, the discovery of the environment was a surprise; "exposure" is what she suggests through the twice-used word "secret": the language she must invent has to disclose what so far has stayed hidden. Her new location is like a gift which she welcomes ("a life-giver") though she cannot foresee what it leads her to. She had not anticipated what would await her in Sackville; neither could she foresee what the indissoluble tie with the place would make her discover through her writing. However, she is

⁶⁸⁸ Derek Attridge also points out etymological links which could be further explored in relation to Welch's writing processes: "the grasping of otherness by means of an invention is an event (and, from the point of view of the creator, an experience). [...] ['i]nvention', with its previous meaning of 'finding' and its links with words like 'advent' and 'event' – from the Latin *venire*, 'to come' – is true[r] to the phenomenon." (*The Work of Literature* 2015: 40-41)

⁶⁸⁹ Jacques Derrida: "A certain impossible possibility of saying the event" (2007: 441). Welch would rather make a link with Heidegger's notion of *Ereignis*, whose etymology would account for what he calls "*Eräugnis*."

determined that the new language must “make the ground sing”, a terminology through which the poetry is situated in a tradition of nature poetry.

As readers, we are aware that this extract reveals key features of an ecological experience, it implies the recognition of “otherness”, not fully grasped, the crucial role of a dynamic interaction between poet and landscape, as well as the acknowledgment of the transformative powers of the environment, which can only be further explored through innovative poetic language. The poet’s words can also be read as the discovery of her ecological self, which, as Claire Kramsch writes, cannot be dissociated from a reflection on her position and her relationship to her surroundings: “the way we know ourselves is related to the way we know, that is, perceive, construct, and make sense of others in our environment.” (*The Multilingual Subject* 2009: 70)

The last part of the extract attempts to render the enormity of the task she has accepted. Words like “grow,” “submerge,” “withdraw,” “dissolve” seem to refer to Sackville, to the writing process and to the poet herself, thus suggesting an organic union from which she cannot escape. A metaphor of writing sums up her response: “I can best grasp this, my home, when as a text it sustains my days.”⁶⁹⁰ The town is both a text to read and a text to write. She will “explore and review” her environment like a poem while the environment itself is turned into a work of poetry; it is transformed in the actual texts that she writes.

The metaphorical connotations of this extract stress the magic, fairytale-like fascination, which this land of extreme natural phenomena holds for the newly arrived speaker. It hides a secret and makes a promise of revitalization or healing. Only through the invention of a new language – through her poetry – could it be soothed and coaxed into releasing its mysteries. Her poetic voice becomes promise of metamorphosis for a forgotten and unknown land. Conversely, turning the land into text allows the poet to make sense of it and to find her place there. The threat of losing it is just as haunting as its promises. It is difficult to imagine a more intimate relationship between the newcomer-poet and her environment. Their unity is felt to be truly organic. Writing, it seems, can “save” them both: it gives a stand to the erring nomad and visibility to a largely unknown area. The words echo features of autobiographical migrant literature, in which appears as a means for authors to discover their new immigrant selves. (See ch. 3)

The land is said to have its language, an observation which for the poet is in no way connected to a national language. Thus Welch writes in another text from the same period, “Things speak loud in New Brunswick. Within the silence of the lonely ‘mute fragment, with which Canada bends into Fundy Bay’ the voices of

⁶⁹⁰ “Grasp” has the double meaning of intellectually understanding and of physically taking hold of, while the notion of home underlines the importance of a firm stand.

the earth call out most insistently.” (*October Winds*: 5) These words are somewhat paradoxical.⁶⁹¹ The land is mute so what “things” that speak does she have in mind? The poems make it clear that it is a reference to the sounds of natural phenomena, like the wind, rain and the sea. Only the solitary walker in this empty land can hear them and make out what they mean.

Many texts involve reflections on the search for a language that suits the poet’s intense experiences. For Welch this language can only be found through direct contact with the land. Walking and mountain climbing she will find the words that make the ground “sing”. The physical experience is doubly important: The poet’s spontaneous response occurs through the body, which directly registers the movement and features of the land and which simultaneously also lets the poet find the sound, the rhythm and the visual images that constitute her poetic language.

Welch likes to explore the **physical movement of hands and feet** as a condition for poetic expression as several texts show.

6.2.2.4 A poetics of response through the body

Why did there arise an urgency to recreate and transform with words the claims of all those roads walked? Were my feet all along forearm my pen with a repertoire of images and beats? Did their ground-hunting, their ground-cherishing, generate the drive to live fully our reality in words? Why walk? Why write? To celebrate our immediate ground in a common foot and pen movement. To counter the centrifugal tendencies of our age by an alert coming and going. To stave off loss of world and disintegration by taking a stand. To be put at the edge of conversing with the great poem of our earth. (“Praising the Earth with Our Feet,” *Seismographs* 1988:51)

In close contact with the ground the poet has been looking for the words to use. The central short questions, “Why walk? Why write?” underline the close connection between body, earth and poetry. By its emphasis on the role of walking, the text reminds us of the origin of poetic rhythm and meter in the beat of the walker’s foot striking the ground: it may well be her feet that provide the poet with “a repertoire of images and beats”, which make up her later poetry. The reference to “a common foot and pen movement” suggests that walking and writing are part of the same (creative) drive.

The why-questions pointing to an inquiry into the poet’s motivation, the passage reveals an essential aspect of her understanding of poetic production. Writing is a transformative process (“an urgency to recreate and transform with words”): in other words, writing constructs a world based on experience and perceptions.

⁶⁹¹ The inserted line is a quote from one of her poems called “Hunting Trip”: “Spilling / brown./ Ochre fragment,/ mute New Brunswick, with which/ Canada bends into Fundy,/ over marshes, over dykes,/ in autumn, before/ America’s stare.” (*Syntax of Ferment* 1980: 27) The change from “Fundy” to “Fundy Bay” seems immaterial.

Reconsidering the relation with the environment is to provide a fuller life (“generate the drive to live fully our reality in words”); writing becomes a way to uncover meaning and counter a threatening sense of loss, absence or dissolution (“to stave off loss of world and disintegration”). In fact, as a reader one can only guess at the exact meaning of words like “reality”, “earth” and “world”.

The extract takes up again the notion of a poetic language that “sings” or praises the earth. The words here used are “to celebrate our immediate ground”, while the last sentence evokes the promise of a dialogue with the earth (“to be put at the edge of conversing with the great poem of our earth”).

In this passage, the need to move (“an alert coming and going”) and the urge to take a stand “to counter the centrifugal tendencies” are put side by side. Could we interpret this momentary uncertainty in terminology and positioning as a sign of the poet’s ongoing search for the still hidden secret or “otherness”, for a reality or world beyond immediate perceptions and understandings? ⁶⁹²

Feeling at one with nature happens for Welch through physical closeness. She perceives the world around her first of all through her feet finding the right beat that marks walking. Her poetry, which does not follow a regular rhyme scheme, is marked by a strong sense of rhythm acquired through her love of walking. She has an acute awareness of the link between her feet rhythmically, steadily, touching the ground and writing. Through her experience of walking, the concept of foot as the metric measure of poetry recovers its original meaning.

“Were my feet all along forearming my pen with a repertoire of images and beats?”

Via her feet, the walker collects numerous “images and beats” which the writing process will later turn into words. This question makes use of a deep image to evoke how the whole body is involved in a process that includes walking, contact with nature and writing as physical activity. *Repertoire*, the notion applied linguists use to describe the diversity of an individual’s languages (see for instance Busch 2012; 2015) acquires new dimensions as an assemblage of poetic responses.

6.2.2.5 Welch’s ecopoetic translingual writing

Writing poetry for Welch is a solitary act that cannot be done without the body feeling in close contact with the environment. In the essay entitled “Praising the earth with our feet”, Welch conveys a rich interacting relation between the poet and the ground her feet have explored. Walking is a preliminary stage to writing; it is a way of probing the ground, which in a mysterious way delivers the material for later poems. It is a process she has not fully understood herself. “I have never stopped wondering what

⁶⁹² See Attridge: “The writer cannot know in advance what that otherness will look like: hence the repeated descriptions by artists of the created work as coming from somewhere else, appearing of its own accord.” (*The Work of Literature* 2015: 40)

exactly my feet tried to capture as they wandered incessantly for thirty-seven years before my poetic voice suddenly spoke and began to salvage their inventories.” (*Seismographs* 1987: 50-51)

Writing is a solitary act of communion which intricately links her to her Canadian surroundings, which have always remained her most favoured location for poetry composition: “When I pick up my pen I feel transmuted into a natural phenomenon, the human being as voyaging wind. Within me I often feel an eternal breeze. To face this alone I’m compelled to go on writing, to go on celebrating the Maritime Locale which imbibes my words, carries them, tells me who I am. When I stop writing there I’ll die.” (52) For the poet, walking is a way of taking the pulse of the earth, of listening to the language of the earth. Writing is recording; it is transforming the claims of the roads that have been travelled; the poetic voice, in the form of images and beats, renders what the feet have felt.

According to this view, language, in particular poetic language, comes from the ground; it belongs to the earth. And the poet, thankful for the words her feet have captured will praise the earth as origin, also as life giver. To the erring wanderer, earth and its language give a stand and become a source for meaning making.

It is worth dwelling a little longer on what may strike us as an almost mystic experience and the underlying view of EARTH and language. The texts describe walking as listening and capturing the language of the earth. However “real” the experience is for the poet the description for readers has features of a metaphoric shift. Normally, hearing is associated with ears; it is an auditory, not a tactile perception. We are induced to interpret this description of walking as an instance of intense sense impression, which also encompasses seeing: “What had my feet heard and seen?” (51) What the poet communicates is a synthesis of multiple sense perceptions, an experience of synaesthesia, which is a constitutive part of poetry, notably in the work of Welch’s favourite author, Arthur Rimbaud. In the present context of cultural ecology, I see this form of synaesthesia as a powerful tool to express, on the one hand, the complex interaction between a human agent and the natural environment and, on the other hand, the multifaceted sense impressions that underlie processes of language production. Welch’s sensory perspective on language as a phenomenological experience is also reminiscent of Martin Heidegger’s views on the origin of language.

The essay “*Praising the Earth with Our Feet*” ends on what can be read as the poet’s manifesto:

Why walk? Why write? To celebrate our immediate ground in a common foot and pen movement. To counter the centrifugal tendencies of our age by an alert coming and going. To stave off loss of world and disintegration by taking a stand. To be put at the edge of conversing with the great poem of our earth. (“*Praising the Earth with Our Feet*,” *Seismographs* 1988: 51)

This fundamental position has hardly changed in her subsequent work.⁶⁹³ In reflections and poems included in another essay, “A Sense of Wilderness” (*Seismographs*: 70-75) she further explicates her position and the notion of a poetic voice.

Reconciling the language of *oikos* and *gaia*

“Earth” and “ground” are key words in Welch’s early writing and the close connection between concepts of earth and of language raise further questions. For Welch, the earth is both *oikos* and *gaia*, a distinction which ecological perspectives appear to be unaware of. A short inquiry into the meaning and connotation of both words may elucidate the paradox of Welch’s conception of language and her choice of a particular idiom. According to its etymology, the term ecology derives from ancient Greek. It stands for the discourse related to *oikos*, a word that means the house or home where the family lives; *oikos* refers to a construction but also to the home as natural environment. *Gaia*, on the other hand, is the mother goddess of the earth; she is earth and the origin of all life.⁶⁹⁴

When Welch speaks of the language of the earth, the contexts often suggest that she means *gaia*, the ground, for instance, when she writes “Things speak loud in New Brunswick”.⁶⁹⁵ The poet’s feet record the language of the ground on which they walk, whether in Canada or in Europe. We may assume that the language of *gaia* is universal, or that it comes across to the poet as identical wherever her feet have collected their impressions.

These views on a poetics embedded in the poet’s natural environment remained unchanged in the years to come. The gradually more frequent references to painting mostly added another dimension, which she attempted to convey – or translanguage – through poetry.

6.2.2.6 Cheirography or poetry a “handcraft which elicits a time and a place”

Cheirography or craft of the hand is a central notion in Welch’s poetics, able to convey her specific vision of translational and transformative processes. The essay entitled “Poetry as Cheirography”

⁶⁹³ See also “My feet had recreated an order in the chaotic openness of the world. To satisfy the body’s and the mind’s hunger for magical recurrences, they had searched out the invisible, the ineffable; they gradually became alert to the recurrent rhythms of the earth, to the echoes of other worlds.” (In: *Seismographs*, “Praising”: 51). On a similar note, she explains her views in an interview: “Intensity comes from facing the elements. For me, mountain climbing, or hiking at the Bay of Fundy, is an exposure to the elements. That has always been a source of inspiration to me. My source of inspiration would be exposure to the winds and the sun in rough circumstances.” (Welch/Compton 2000: 131)

⁶⁹⁴ In their introduction to “Butor and the American Heritage”, the authors write: “The heroes and henchmen of the *Iliad* hearken to an origin named “the land of our fathers. This land (*gaia*) is, more properly translated the *earth*. While a human construction called a house or a home (*oikos*) might locate, spatially, the goal of homecoming, the *meaning* of this location lies in the role of the earth in human life.” (Liliane and Cyril Welch: *Address. Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Butor*. 1979: 173)

⁶⁹⁵ In: *October Winds* 1980: 5 (see above).

(*Seismographs*: 61-69) explores in great detail the role of hands for a poet who is well aware of the physical aspects of writing and the constitutive role of words in constructing a meaningful environment for her.

These are the opening lines of the essay:

In nearly all my poems the thought is implicit that poetry is a handcraft, that through poems we create our place. Starting from a backward glance at my own work, I am tempted to generalize (always a risky business): poetry celebrates that contact with our circumstances which we achieve, can achieve, or begin to achieve with our hand, the “organ of organs” or “the tool of tools” (as Aristotle calls it), the most central location of the sense of touch. (“Poetry as Cheirography,” *Seismographs* 1988: 61)

These few lines contain two central ideas of importance for a study of Welch’s relationship with her environment: poetry must be seen as *handcraft* and poetry for her is a means to “create [her] place.”

The origin of the term *cheirography*, also chirography, gives us further clues on Welch’s views on writing. The Greek etymology refers to the hand and the part played by touch, thus reinforcing the role of sense perceptions for poetic language. The rarely used word *cheirography* is a synonym of calligraphy (beautiful handwriting) or penmanship (the art or skill of writing). Welch has borrowed the term from Martin Heidegger⁶⁹⁶ and in the essay she investigates his ideas in relation to her own situation.

Hands are connected with writing and with mountain climbing. For Welch, hands, like the walker’s feet, play a crucial and double role: as an expert and passionate mountain climber, she uses her hands to touch the rock and the ropes, to proceed up the steep cliffs, while with the pen in her hand, she produces texts. Do hands and fingers suggest another link with poetic meter? There may be a hint at “dactyl,” the Greek word for finger, which like “foot” is a basic technical term to describe features of metre in poetry: a dactyl is a foot consisting of a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables.

Seeing herself as a craftsperson or artisan, she rejects the intellectual primacy for writing. Like the many traditional New Brunswick craftspeople, whose work she has celebrated in a collection entitled *From the Songs of the Artisans* (1983), she relies on “material” that the environment offers: its nature, people and history. Referring to her poem “Forging,” she compares the forger⁶⁹⁷ or goldsmith to the poet:

“For the forger resembles the cheirographic poet in her function and ability of forging a material and bringing out something which is hidden. In the practice of poetry, there is a corresponding

⁶⁹⁶ “The hand is, together with the word, the essential distinction of man...Man does not ‘have’ hands, but the hand holds the essence of man, because the word as the essential realm of the hand is the ground of the essence of man...The typewriter tears writing from the essential realm of the hand, i.e. the realm of the word. The word itself turns into something “typed”’. [Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992: 80-81).] See <http://www.stevenconnor.com/modhand.htm>

⁶⁹⁷ The forger in Welch’s poem is a creator, not a counterfeiter, a meaning which in no way fits her understanding of craft.

handling of materials which culminates in a transfigured creation." ("Cheirography," *Seismographs* 1988: 67)

The words of the poet as maker and artisan are also, as she tells us, capable to create a place, and in particular the place where the poet positions herself to look at her environment.

Welch also mentions a doctor's healing hands, a use which the word cheirography and its common root with chiropractic clarifies. It leads her to analyse a further metaphor for poetry and to give a succinct description of poets:

Poets name and love reality. If their hands and pens keep in touch with our present and past they will recreate the place where we stand, helping us to dwell poetically there.⁶⁹⁸ ("Poetry as Cheirography," *Seismographs* 1988: 69)

Words like *stand* and *dwell* evoke the position of a poet, who at least for a while, forsakes the nomad's travelling. Translingualism or the language of others appears as a reaching in depth rather than moving far and to reflect on foreign elements. Better than the discourse of essays, poetic language allows exploring complex relations and processes. (For an analysis of related poems see chapter 7.)

6.2.2.7 Words as seismographs for the ineffable

Writing and mountain climbing

Mountain climbing, reading, writing, are three gestures of rebellion against the mediocrity into which human existence can always fall, three adventurous quests in answer to the call of transcendence, three incarnations of vibrating human effort, three culminations remaining open to the gifts of the earth.⁶⁹⁹ ("Mountain Climbing – Reading – Writing," *October Winds* 1980: 75)

Poetry as handcraft acquires a further dimension because, through their hands and a newly discovered "language", poets discern another world or obtain glimpses of "otherness". Welch has explored the intricate connection between the natural environment, the quest for transcendence and her groping for words mostly in texts related to mountain climbing.

The following extract from an essay entitled "Tapping Reality" helps us better understand her view of the transcendental dimension of the poet's craft:

I come to myself in writing poems and in climbing mountains. These two activities hold out the promise for a new world, of a life still fresh and innocent, of an adventurous and solitary plenitude. In both, I am grabbed by the quiver one can experience when approaching for a fleeting moment the face of the sacred unveiled. In both, dream and action become reconciled and join on a spiritual

⁶⁹⁸ Note the echoes from Heidegger: *name, stand, dwell poetically*.

⁶⁹⁹ Welch acknowledges her borrowing of language from Heidegger: "Absorbed in their vision, the mountain climber, the reader, and the writer, are, in Heidegger's phrase, 'the shepherds of being'" [*Brief über den Humanismus*: "Der Mensch ist der Hirt des Seins"]. *October Winds* 1980: 75. See also in "Poetry as Cheirography," in *Seismographs* 1988: 63)

summit. Poems and mountains are paths toward knowledge and fulfillment. [...] The words become seismographs; like the hands they want to catch the smallest noise. ("Tapping Reality," *Seismographs* 1988: 76.)

The first sentence, which repeats the important parallels between writing and climbing of the previous extracts, also underlines the search for self-discovery, another key feature, often linked to solitude in Welch's work.

The extract also emphasizes the combination of "dream and action": they become "reconciled" which points to prior tension. Two central, complex metaphors of the poet's search elucidate her search for a resolution of the tension: "poems (and mountains) are paths" and "words (and hands) are seismographs." Both words "paths" and "seismographs" underline a processual character: knowledge and fulfillment through poetry (and mountain climbing) are not instantly acquired, at once and for ever; they also stress the tentative nature of the process. The title of the essay "Tapping Reality" may be read in two ways. If "tap" is taken to mean to strike lightly, the poet is understood to "tap" reality to listen and perceive the almost imperceptible world under the surface, like the mountaineer who taps the rocks with his hands to find a safe place to proceed further up. This meaning is closely linked to what seismographs as very sensitive instruments can do to describe and foretell.⁷⁰⁰ Yet, to tap may also mean "to cause to flow" or "to let out a liquid": Tapping the rocks is like tapping a barrel for the wine to flow. Tapping then means finding inspiration, a source for words, or access to hidden voices.

6.2.3 A poetics of dialogue as response to voices

6.2.3.1 Dialogue and authorial positioning

Welch has not directly commented on a poet's dialogical and translingual writing processes. One has to deduce her views from a larger context to reconstruct the poetics that underlies her practice. The crucial question is how she presents her position on otherness and language differences, and what devices she uses to express invisible forms of heterolingualism hidden behind the monolingual text (cf. Suchet 2014). Key words for the enquiry are *voices*, *dialogue* (cf. Bakhtin in 3.1.2) and *translational writing*.

We know that her life was marked by contact with different languages and language variations, while her poetic writing – on the surface – remains uniformly English, with very few insertions of foreign words. ((See ch. 7.1.) Occasional references to the poet's creative responses to people however reveal an important feature of her approach. Thus she says that in her writing, she enjoys inventing characters whose voices and stories are resonant with their place and time (cf. "The Poet as Frustrated Rhapsode",

⁷⁰⁰A detailed analysis of the term *Seismographs* – the title of a collection essays is given in ch. 5.2.

Seismographs 87-89). She loves to slip into the role of others, put on a mask or assume the persona's voice and thus convey their response to their surroundings. "What is magical about writing is that you can live the lives of many other people." (Interview with Lynes 1999: 115)

As an insider – outsider, in Canada, and in Luxembourg, Welch is sensitive to otherness, to different voices as well as to different ways of thinking and being in the world. In line with her belief in a "path towards origins" as an important tool to fight the inanity of the contemporary consumer society, she likes to identify traces of the past in her new Canadian surroundings or (re)discover her European ancestry.

Her early collections abound with examples of Canadian voices, while later she attempts to capture the multiple voices of Luxembourg, for instance in *Life in Another Language* (1992) or *Dream Museum* (1995). Consequently, her work can be read as the nomad's collection of multiple voices with an underlying conception of how voices meet in texts. Her 'invention' of characters reminds us of a novelist's approach, yet as a poet she does not aim at imitating social language practices; what counts is the poetic transformation.

Striking examples of imaginary poetic response to heterolingual voices concern Acadian Francophone people in New Brunswick and the story of her grandfather, an Italian immigrant in Luxembourg. These characters are historically and geographically situated and recreated through dialogue and pseudo-translation. Welch's poetic responses to literary heterolingual voices involve further dimensions of translation and palimpsestic writing, which are analysed in Part III.

6.2.3.2 The poet's understanding of dialogue

To understand what dialogical writing means in the context of Welch's work a few explanations are necessary to avoid misunderstandings. Her approach has nothing in common with the dialogical structure of drama or exchanges between characters in novels. One had better recall the dialogue as genre of writing with a long tradition, going back to Plato, whose dialogues aim at elucidating positions and at making readers think. Bakhtin, for his part, has underlined the social dimension of dialogue as a feature of the novel, while also pointing at the dialogism of the word, some words echoing other words in the same or another text. Sociocultural realism next to aesthetic considerations are at the heart of his views on dialogue and heteroglossia in literature.⁷⁰¹

⁷⁰¹ For other dimensions of dialogue, for instance as literary genre in the Renaissance, see comments on Joris's writing in 8.2.3.

As the characters that Welch creates live between two or more languages, one could expect dialogue to be an exchange with heterolingual elements. But this is not the case in her writing although dialogue proves to be a constitutive *part of her poetics of response to otherness*.

Brush and Trunks (1981), a slim book that entirely consists of alternating voices, holds many clues about her response to diversity. I will present it in some detail with attention to notions of *dialogue and an underlying concept of translingual writing*. Some contextualization of *Brush and Trunks* may be helpful. I propose reading it as the work of a nomad or immigrant, who has arrived from elsewhere, feels fascinated by a land that she discovers with fresh eyes and where she listens to people's often frustrated accounts of hardships. Writing this book means living vicariously the lives of others, through imagining their experiences in this remote area.

The text of *Brush and Trunks* is split between three voices, standing for three paths of life in New Brunswick and each telling about a different struggle against the wilderness. They are the voices of a present-day Hunter, a Lumberman who represents the British past of the country and a French Acadian recalling the early French settlers' dyke-building that still shape the land. The aim is to call awareness of a collective New Brunswick past despite differences in heritage. The text consists of alternating voices identified in print through different font styles, yet the poet shapes the speech of her figures with no attempt at rendering authentic spoken discourse. It is not a conversation, but a sequence of separate (inner) monologues, which stress harsh conditions and the solitude of people involved in different activities linked to the land to which they have come. The dialogue that the text presents is not a direct exchange, it is about a *tertium quid*, the land – the brush and trunks – to which the poet responds via the imagined words of the three speakers.

The poet is the observer who meets them, who is able to empathize and unite them in a poetic assemblage through a language, a voice, which the writer superimposes or lends to all however separated they live in time and however different their direct concerns appear. The Hunter and the Lumberman's parts mostly come as first person accounts while the Acadian's part is the most striking example of transposition. The French language is obliterated in the imagined reminiscences of a modern-day Acadian whose words are metamorphosed into a poetic form of English:

I can see them now/ they possess only/ the clothes on their backs,/ small bags of linen, saws and planers./ I hear them alone/ without path/ setting into a new world/ with fever of soul and land./ I hear them still ... / Part of the land ... (*Brush and Trunks* 1981:16)

The lines evoke the lives of ancient Acadians but the poet's response seems to exclude all reference to their language, which today is often perceived as their most distinctive mark.⁷⁰² It is a surprising omission, especially as the lines seem to make a direct reference to their voices: "I hear them" is then reduced to an evocation of the noise of their tools.

Brush and Trunks gives many clues on Welch's understanding of voices and dialogue. The juxtaposition of voices does not mean dialogue as interaction between characters. It is an example of the poet's response as *dialogue* with each of the alternating voices. She has given some information about the creation of this book:

When I was writing *Brush and Trunks*, I had to play three roles: a hunter, a British lumberman and an Acadian dyke-builder. All those are things that I've never really done myself. I interviewed hunters here in Sackville in order to get the technique correct. [...] It took everything I had to get myself into these other personae. (Interview with Lynes 1999: 115-116)

Brush and Trunks can also be read as a piece about the missing dialogue or communication between three quite distinct groups. It is up to readers to perceive each group's perspective. What Welch offers is her response, the way she borrows the speakers' stories and imagines their voices that underlie her poetic language. We see that Welch is unwilling to highlight heterolingual aspects or features of linguistic difference - however striking, symbolic and significant they are - by attempts at sociolinguistic verisimilitude. A quest of realism is not what motivates her to write. Aesthetic devices, like the choice of words or rhythm, rather than an imitation of speakers' discourse render the poet's dialogue with her characters. The three imagined responses to life in New Brunswick ultimately show that writing this work is for Welch also a means to find her own place and her own poetic voice.⁷⁰³

Wrapping up on *Brush and Trunks*, I wish to point to several dimensions of translingual writing that it reveals. For Welch it means inventing characters to transmit historical information through poetic language. It also consists in the translation of diversity into one poetic text, where her own voice blurs the differences. Translingual writing is a transformative, creative act, which also reveals the poet-as-speaker's own in-between position. But it does not involve a passage between different named languages.

⁷⁰² Shortly before the publication of *Brush and Trunks*, the tragic history of the Acadians and their rich language with its powerful poetic imagery received international recognition through the work of Antonine Maillet (Prix Goncourt for her novel *Pélagie-la-Charette* 1979). For a conference paper, I investigated the place of literature by Acadian writers and about Acadians: "The Acadians in Recent French and English Works" (1994 unpublished). It was an occasion to refer to various forms of code-switching and language mixing, reflected in contemporary Acadian writing, for instance in the novel *Bloupe* by Jean Babineau (1993).

⁷⁰³ With the words of Eva Karpinski (2012), one could say that borrowing the tongues of others, the immigrant or nomad poet attempts to translate her life into the Canadian environment.

Welch's understanding of dialogue as a core dimension of her poetics deserves a few more comments. In her essays or theoretical writing, we find references to two types of dialogue: one that occurs in solitary reading, while another takes place in public readings, between the writer, the audience and the poet's texts.

The *private* form of dialogue is closely linked to the notion of response and address (see 6.2.1) In *Address* the authors explain that dialogue for them does not rely on direct interaction but is most rewarding when it centres on a *tertium quid*:

[A] true dialogue among human beings is a rare and beautiful thing. It presupposes that we concentrate neither on the listener nor on the speaker, neither on ourselves nor on our interlocutor, but on a tertium quid. Art work, such as the poems we have selected for critique, are especially notable in that they provide "a third factor" allowing us to talk to one another. (*Address* 1979: xvii)

The passage describes the critics' response yet it also applies to Welch's understanding of the poet's response (and to the response expected from readers of poems). Consequently, the aim of a juxtaposition of voices in *Brush and Trunks* is not a focus on the speakers but on the *land* and the diversity of responses to their environment. Moreover, for the authors of *Address*, dialogue understood as one person's response tends to exclude the interaction of many voices. The insertion of further voices or responses disrupts the "true" dialogue with a text. It may be a controversial position but helps understand Welch's view of dialogue as a solitary action. Each reader sets up his or her own dialogue with a text or work of art: "[I]solated voices of other dialogues [...] risk distracting us from the primary dialogue in progress." (*Address* 1979: xviii) This position may account for the poet's views on multilingualism in writing. Mixing or juxtaposing languages could be felt as such a distraction; it has no place in a poetics of response as Welch understands it. She will not consider breaking up her dialogue with a place or a text by inserting other voices, in other languages.

The *public* form of dialogue, as Welch sees it, occurs in the poet's public readings from her work and is thus related to readers' response. (*Seismographs*, "On Reading Poetry to Others.": 81- 82)⁷⁰⁴ Otherness however also refers to the **otherness of poetic language**, which can reveal what ordinary language cannot.

6.2.3.3 A poetics of dialogue with painters

Dialogue with visual arts has played an important role in Welch's work since the 1990s and reveals further understandings of translingual or translational processes. Writing as response to works of art⁷⁰⁵ is a form

⁷⁰⁴ See ch. 4 on the reception of her work.

⁷⁰⁵ Formally, a literary commentary on works of art, usually paintings, is called *ekphrasis*, a term that Welch however does not use.

of translingualism that uncovers the interchange in several languages: dialogue in this case goes beyond the reader's solitary response. It involves a true exchange between two creators who reflect on the genesis of their work.

In *Untethered in Paradise* (2002)⁷⁰⁶, she writes about her discovery of paintings by Gust Graas in terms that recall the nomad's encounters with otherness.⁷⁰⁷ This time it is not the words of another language, but the shapes and colours of abstract painting that fascinate her:

The non-figurative images sustained me in my longing. They pressed me to leave the world within and open to the world outside in new ways. They spoke to the pilgrim in me, who sets forth playfully to be renewed. It was as though I had paused in open air, as in Mallarmé's poem "Sea Breeze":

To be amidst unknown foam and skies! . . .
 Raise anchor for exotic lands! . . .
 But, o my heart, listen to the sailors' song!

The thematic texture of Graas' canvasses also triggered the return of Mallarmé's sonnet "To the mere concern of journeying, "the invocation to venture beyond time and space to a distant horizon. [...]"

Colours were the first primitive pleasures that made things happen. They came alive in my eyes creating an incantatory rhythm, enacting what they pictured. This painter was above all a shaper of colours. [...] Rimbaud's poem "Vowels" seemed recreated here:

A black, E white, I read, U green, O blue, vowels,
 One day I'll say your latent births.

Colours conjoined in the universal language that poets had dreamed about. In their innocence, they brought out a world in elemental becoming.

("Painting: Not a Profession but a Religion," *Untethered in Paradise* 2002: 106-108)

We find in these lines numerous echoes of nomad thinking combined with the poet's fascination with words: a painting is working with the elements of another language. This is multi-dimensional translingualism: French poetry and painting turned into poetic writing in English.

From this first contact followed a "poem-painting correspondence with Gust Graas." What his paintings mean for her is summed up in the last lines of the essay: "Now framed on our walls, some are messages in the bottle, vehicles for cooperating in a playful quest." (109) The essay is followed by a few poems which are her creative response.

⁷⁰⁶ Its cover features a painting by Gust Graas.

⁷⁰⁷ Welch also refers to *Notes d'atelier et de peintures* (1993), a book by Gust Graas whom she visited in his atelier in Mallorca (see her correspondence with the painter, Fonds Liliane Welch CNL L-190; II.1.G2).

6.2.3.4 Poetry as response to the work of craftspeople

Among her early works, another collection, *From the Songs of the Artisans* (1983), stands out as poetic response to the multiplicity of “languages”⁷⁰⁸ that Welch encountered in her adopted country. In this book the poems about Local, traditional craftsmen and craftswomen are presented next to photographs by the author and evoke, as she writes, “the creative responses to their environment of potters, weavers, goldsmiths, glassmakers, engravers, whittlers, woodturners, diviners, surgeons.” (“Writing for and in New Brunswick”)

Language practices for the nomad in this book mainly consist in *naming*, that essential function of poetry as only through being named and described people and things and their specific features can rise to awareness. Welch sees naming as a creative act and a poetic response to otherness. She borrows this view of creation from Heidegger whose words “Das Wesende der Sprache ist die Sage als die Zeige” she has reformulated as a key feature of the writer’s task: “[W]riting means above all re-creating and thus re-opening the question as to whether things exist or not. Through this act, the writer opens familiar meanings onto an alien content [...] through his work we realize that things are, that we are affected by them” (“Mountain Climbing, Reading, Writing,” *October Winds* 1980: 74.) For Welch, *naming is a condition for dialogue*: to write poems about artisans in New Brunswick, she needs to know the words with which they describe their acts and craft; only then can she enter into dialogue with them in her writing). *Naming is part of a learning process for the immigrant and the poet*: to participate in the community she must learn their words. Her poetry transforms the language and reflects on what the local people may not be aware of.

The poems also reveal the writer’s sheer pleasure at revealing a whole new world of usually hidden human activities through words and the evocation of dreams and contexts:

Wood Dreams

Whittling, dreaming:
the knife probes deep
into the wood’s core.
Chisels, gouges
marrow and grain
from the sinews
of his block (From the Songs of the Artisans 1983:38)

Re-discovering the world through new words is an experience which the poet shares with language learners and nomadic multilingual subjects, as described by Braidotti who says that the best gift for a

⁷⁰⁸ For comments on Welch’s use of the term language, see 5.2. Seeing the creations of artisans as language confirms the broad sense that she gives the word.

polyglot (nomad) is the discovery of a new word. Most of the craftspeople that Welch describes are rooted in their natural and cultural environment, yet at least one concentrates all his attention to travelling and little visible movements: she calls him “Diviner”, the scientist who studies the movement of migratory birds “His numbers/ ellipses of migrations/ divined at last” (1983: 60).

The flight of migratory birds as is a returning feature in her poetry, supporting or enlarge treflections about the nomad’s position. Describing the diviner’s work, she writes:

Charts grow on his mind’s walls
over dark sea-mud an aged stir
Zugunruh, a grey flash
through the night
Dreams of southward flights
eighty-nine hours.

(*From the Songs of the Artisans* 1983: 59)

Like the birds in Fundy Bay, the poet becomes restless every year and travels “south”, to Europe. Is she as a nomad poet a diviner too? Making sense of movements and interactions? *Zugunruhe* is one of the very few foreign words that Welch has inserted in her poetry. In fact English language dictionaries and internet entries show that ornithologists use the term, which has no equivalent in English.

The meanings of *Zugunruhe* also show how the poet turns the migratory birds, a typical metaphor for migration, into a powerful image, which stresses the experience of restlessness (*-unruhe*); it also evokes the gathering and agitation of birds on the eve before leaving and presents migration as a natural drive.⁷⁰⁹

6.2.4 Wrapping up on Welch’s poetics: Response as praise and “translanguaging”

“...our mission as poets is to bear witness to where we are and what we are doing. And, of course, bearing witness is, in the end, to praise, to give an affirmative response. A poet can do that.” (Welch in Compton interview, 2000: 128)

The review of Welch’s theoretical writings has shown that her beliefs on what poetry is and does primarily depend on her position as wanderer between mostly European traditions and her discovery of the Canadian environment. She develops her own ideas of a poetics of response, whose foremost object is an expression of praise. This emphasis on an affirmative poetic stance puts her apart from critically and politically engaged voices.⁷¹⁰ Her work is closer to ecological developments in literature though she does

⁷⁰⁹ In various poems Welch explores – *thinks through* (Joris’s term) – what these associations tell us about the nomad (See in particular the final poem “Migration” in *Word-House*).

⁷¹⁰ Richard Lemm, in his Introduction to *Seismographs*, acknowledges Welch’s work as poetry of praise and notes how unrepresentative it is for post-World War II poetry. “Her writing sometimes seems lacking in – or more correctly, less burdened by – the knowing irony dominating our modern literature. How can she be so cheerful and

not seek any affiliation with poetic movements. Through its attachment to natural surroundings, her literary nomadism shows some parallels with Kenneth White. She remains a solitary writer who invites readers to follow her routes and insights.⁷¹¹

Her poetics is grounded in physical experiences that transpire in recurring connections between the act of writing and rock climbing or walking. Response for her means “translating” or “translanguaging” a great diversity of ordinary as well as literary voices. She understands language in a broad sense: it can encompass all artistic forms as well as the language of nature (the sound of waves and wind, birds’ cries). Multiplicity is important not as indicator of different national languages but as manifestation of different forms of expression. Translingualism in her case consists in a creative response and in the poet’s dialogue across languages with other writers; it includes dialogue with artists or craftspeople, who all work with their own specific means of expression and communication.

For Welch, the nomad, traveller or migrant, writing is a way to find roots in Canada, yet her poetic persona vacillates between insider and outsider positions. In search of multiple perspectives, she puts on a great variety of masks and slips into different roles to investigate experiences of life in New Brunswick or Europe. Welch also conceives the poet as pilgrim and in her writing seeks to transcribe experiences that reach beyond ordinary linguistic expression.

In her poetry a multiplicity does not mean a mixing of her languages but writing as response to multiple voices and stimulations.

affirmative?” (1988: 15) The opposition to the work of Ingeborg Bachmann that follows is interesting, as the Austrian poet has deeply marked the work of Joris. (See ch. 9, *The Agony of I.B.*)

⁷¹¹ In her preface to *Untethered in Paradise* (2002), M. Travis Lane writes, “Welch’s work is at once a tribute and an excursion. We travel with her, we read with her, we look with her. In her various responses Welch refers to many of the themes that recur when we contemplate the lives and works of artists: the problem of solitude, and unpopularity, the sense of isolation, the necessity of endurance.” (2002: x).

6.3 Pierre Joris: A nomadic poetics of transformative processes

This chapter explores Joris's rich theoretical reflections on the poet's role. They reflect his appropriation of nomadic concepts, which he elaborates for writers who across languages and literatures. The aim is to show how a nomadic poetics can enlarge understandings of translingual writing.

Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don't sow grow offshoots!
 Don't be one or multiple, but multiplicities!
 Run lines, never plot a point! Speed turns the point into a line.
 (from Deleuze /Guattari, as quoted in *A Nomad Poetics* 2003: x)⁷¹²

Joris's life of travelling and manifold contacts account for an approach of languages and poetry as multiple experiences and practices, which change with the nomad's movements. Over decades, Joris has extensively written about nomadity as a theoretical concept and as practice. In line with the very notion of a nomad's wandering, his reflections never constitute a finished, completed whole; he always wants to keep them open for new developments. He presents his key ideas in a few central essays contained in *A Nomad Poetics* (2003) ⁷¹³ and in *Justifying the Margins* (2009). ⁷¹⁴ Further discussions and clarifications come in other writings: published interviews, a keynote speech and blogs, some already mentioned in ch. 4 and 5. ⁷¹⁵ In Part III, the analysis of poems will bring additional perspectives.

6.3.1 A nomadic poetics: From Deleuze and Guattari to an open space of multiple relations

For Joris, *nomad* or *nomadic* – as concept and as practice – is a comprehensive term that can be approached with “a variable key”.⁷¹⁶ Nomadism is more than a poetic metaphor, though it relies on a visual component of the itinerant nomad in the desert and the image of the rhizome used by Deleuze and Guattari, in opposition to plants with (separate) roots.⁷¹⁷ “A rhizome as subterranean stem is absolutely

⁷¹² To clarify Joris's ideas, this section briefly takes up notions of nomadism already presented in ch. 3.2.

⁷¹³ Notably, the essays entitled “Nomad Century Ahead” (3-8); “Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics” [version 4.00] (25-55); an earlier version of the “Notes” are available on-line [version 1.02b] <http://pierrejoris.com/nomad.html>. All the pieces in *A Nomad Poetics*, covering various genres such as interviews, letters and essays, are in some way related to the development of his poetics and have been taken into account.

For the titles of the two main collections of essays, abbreviations are used: ANP (*A Nomad Poetics* 2003); JM (*Justifying the Margins* 2009); idem for “Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics” (“Notes”).

⁷¹⁴ See in particular "On the Nomadic Circulation of Contemporary Poetics" (7-23); "The Seamlessly Nomadic Future of Collage" (24-36) and "ReadySteadyBlog Interview" (37-49).

⁷¹⁵ See for example “An Interview with Barzakh” (2013); “A Nomad Poetics Revisited: Poetry and Translation in a Global Age” (2017).

⁷¹⁶ “With a variable key” is a phrase I borrow from Joris who quotes Celan’s poem, “Mit wechselndem Schlüssel” in his essay “A Nomad Poetics Revisited.” He also uses the term *counterkey*, which is a key with segments on each side, to describe translation processes (“The work of Al-Isht,” in *Janus* 1988: 4 and *Poasis* 2001: 27). See ch. 7.

⁷¹⁷ The following passage confirms Joris's indebtedness to Deleuze and Guattari (see ch. 3.2.4). His poetics echoes in particular key notions of ch. 1 ("Rhizome"), 4 ("November 20, 1923: Postulates of Linguistics") and 12 (1227:

different from roots and radicles. [...] A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (ANP: ix-x). Nomadic thinking expresses an ongoing process, in-between-ness and the desire for the multiple connected through various forms of movement. For Joris it expresses the refusal of immobility and singularity; for the details of his elaborations to become meaningful, one needs a look at his underlying ideas on the role of a poetics and on the poet's work.

His nomadism is a view of a desirable and unescapable future, with underlying political and ethical implications, as the nomad feels free not to submit to rules imposed by a State or public bodies. For Joris, nomadism is above all a way to convey what poetry is and does, to *think through* its power of multiple meaning making. It helps him conceive a poetics that envisages radical changes for a future in movement, as summarized in a paradigmatic statement about the nomadic millennium.⁷¹⁸

Joris's poetics leaves little space for feelings or subjectivity: knowledge and thought (mental activities) are its core driving forces. It is based on the theories of Deleuze and Guattari though with innumerable references to other writers and thinkers. The influence of *A Thousand Plateaus* is undeniable: with the two-page quotation figuring as general epigraph of *A Nomad Poetics* and many other conceptual borrowings, Joris clearly acknowledges his indebtedness. Yet, starting from their philosophical concepts (of multiplicity, movement, rhizomatic growth, space, and transformation and minor literature) he has developed his own ideas about the nature and role of languages and poetic writing.

Yet, Joris's nomadic poetics is not only the outcome of an abstract intellectual development. His life and experiences have played a significant part as he confirms in an interview:

My nomadic poetics come out of my own personal & cultural givens — the various languages I was brought up with in a tiny country I left as soon as I could, the traveling through a range of cultures that was my basic experience for many years, my paradoxical sense of total at-homeness in complete displaced-ness, my involvement with translation at a range of levels, my "natural" comparatist approach to things, etc etc. — & link up quite logically with the concerns of ethnopoetics and ecopoetics. (An Interview with Barzakh 2013)

Into the fundamental ideas derived from Deleuze and Guattari, he has integrated the poetics of other thinkers and poets, notably Édouard Glissant, Paul Celan and Jacques Derrida. He does not mention Rosi Braidotti nor is there any indication of the work of Kenneth White. References to a nomadic subject and the tenets of ecopoetics with its links to natural phenomena and geographical places take other forms

Treatise on Nomadology – The War Machine") of *A Thousand Plateaux*, which he combines to construct his views on a nomad's writing processes.

⁷¹⁸ As quoted in the introduction to chapter 3 on nomadism: "The millennium will be nomadic or it will not be: this is/ paradigmatic, unless we learn the art of moving & connecting all/ contents, all languages, all machines we will be the tail of the 20C/ tail wagged by the 19C dog." ("Notes": 55)

in Joris's writings. For the present study, White and Braidotti constitute important complementary references, in particular in relation to poets' multilingualism and poetic writing as involving movement, and transformation.

Core features of nomadic movement for the poet

Considering nomadic writing not as finished texts but as multi-layered *processes* Joris provides clues for alternative perspectives on multilingualism. A nomad's writing is marked by the route that generates it: diverse encounters and attending spaces leave significant traces.

Movement means process:

Movement is the overall principle in theories of nomadism. Joris makes it the foundation of his poetics, approaching it as concept, theme and aesthetic device for innovative writing. The Latin origin of the two components of the word *pro-cess* indicates the link to movement: *cedere* meaning going or walking, while *pro* reinforces the idea of forward. Joris reiterates in many places what movement means for a poetics and writes at the very beginning of "Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics": "A nomadic poetics is a war machine, always on the move, always changing, morphing, moving through languages, cultures, terrains, times without stopping. [...] [F]or language to be accurate to the condition of nomadity, it too has to be drifting⁷¹⁹, to be 'on the way' as Celan puts it." (ANP: 26)

Joris presents the expression "on the way"⁷²⁰ as a central points of his poetics in his idiosyncratic style with its dazzling accumulation of hints and connections:

poetry is always, then, "on the way" – yes, on the road, as Kerouac has it here in these States where, as Sun Ra has it, "space is the place." It is also unterwegs (underway) as Celan writes, where I hear the unter also as under the *Weg*, the way. (& pace, the Schwarzwälder's !),

underway

+

under the way

a between-ness as essential nomadic condition, thus always a moving forward, a reaching, a tending. (I hear the need for both tension and tenderness). & an absence of rest, always a becoming, a line of flight [as against Being, which is always a being-toward-death, stillness]." ("Notes," ANP: 29)

Thinking through what the phrase "on the way" stands for, Joris brings in his associations with poets as diverse as Kerouac, Sun Ra and Celan. "Moving forward" is his way of expressing nomadic "becoming," which entails moving between and responding to other possible interpretations.

⁷¹⁹ "Drifting" points to the concept of already discussed in ch.3 (etymologically it is related to overflowing waterways, to vessels or things floating on without direction; it is close to the French *dérive* ; in literary contexts, derivative poets show influences from other work).

⁷²⁰ See also Welch: "on the way" is a central notion for both poets.

Though this is a theoretical text, Joris introduces a personal response to language, to the sounds of words and connotations, which they evoke for him (associating the semantically unrelated words *tending*, *tension*, *tenderness*). He makes use of some of his preferred devices -- language games -- across languages: The direct citation, in German, of Celan's words, and the implication of the lexical components of the German word *unterwegs*, provide one example of the effects of multilingual writing processes.

The reference to Heidegger evokes his rejection of the philosopher's key idea of Being.⁷²¹ Through "othering" the other's language, he uncovers conflictual or paradoxical multiple meanings (*unterwegs*, on the way /under the way; playing with the meaning of *Holzweg* ...) also revealing uses of the expression that he does not share. Only those familiar with the German expression "auf dem Holzweg sein"⁷²² and with Heidegger's work (*Holzwege*, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*) and the philosopher's conflictual relation with Celan will understand the additional allusion as sideblow to Heidegger when Joris writes: "(& pace, the Schwarzwälder's *Holzwege*!)."

Being on the way means having left behind a place while not having reached a destination. For Joris it is a permanent state of **in-between-ness**, including a position between languages; in this context, one should perhaps not say between, which suggests two polarities, and rather speak of "among-ness" as it implies being in the middle of many. In his writings the notion of between-ness plays a crucial role, which he explores in connection with the Arabic word *barzakh*.⁷²³ Joris also hints at a conceptual link of nomadism with **diaspora** in the epigraph by Anselm Hollo: "Permanent diaspora – the ideal state". (ANP "Notes": 25) Yet, despite this constant drive to move forward, the nomadic poet needs moments of restoration for writing, which in allusion to nomads' stops in the desert, he calls *poasis* (cf. the title of his collection) or refers to as *mawqif*, a term and a concept borrowed from sufi thinkers, as explained in 4.3.2.

Movement means meeting multiple others:

It leads to a poetics of encounters with otherness. Movement in thinking, it also stands for thinking *through* others. The process of writing occurs in stages and is triggered by the experiences that mark the nomad's travelling. For Joris's poetics, mostly encounters with poets and thinkers are crucial moments of

⁷²¹ Joris repeatedly expounds his disagreement with Heidegger, who for him represents the antithesis of nomadism. The difference between Welch and Joris in their response to Heidegger and interpretations of *unterwegs* is striking and accounts for divergent views on nomadism/migration. See ch. 4.4.

⁷²² Literally, *Holzweg* means a wrong track or a dead end. Heidegger refers to the etymological origin and explains the title of his work: "Holz lautet ein alter Name für Wald. Im Holz sind Wege, die meist verwachsen jäh im Unbegangenen aufhören [...] Holzmacher und Waldhüter kennen die Wege. Sie wissen, was es heißt, auf einem Holzweg zu sein" <https://www.philognosie.net/wissen-technik/einfuehrung-in-die-philosophie-von-martin-heidegger?page=2>

⁷²³ See ch. 4.3.3 and ch. 7.3.2: Exploring a middle in movement.

interaction and dialogue ⁷²⁴ with otherness. The visible sign of meetings with otherness is the impressive number of quotations and references in the texts that deal with poetics. ⁷²⁵ They assemble past and present voices in several languages (usually given in translation) thus providing a vast frame for Joris's text.

Movement is linked to **intertextuality**, discussions about which Joris wishes to enlarge and put in a context of languages interacting in the writing process: "writing in other languages, writing into and through other languages." He adds a little story about an American chief's conception of what accommodating diversity means:

Like that nineteenth century native American chief from one of the Plains tribes, who – when taken to Washington and shown the White House and told that that's where the "Great White Father" lived – shook his head dismissively and said that if he was a chief in this town he'd live in all the houses, i.e., move from one to another as he wished or was moved to do. The nomad's prerogative. The way I want to inhabit the houses of different languages, move between them or from this one to that one, as need or desire pushes me, knock on the door or shake the tent-flap, be invited in by the laws of hospitality, find out what's happening and move on, bringing the "news that stays news" as Pound called poetry, from one teepee to the other, or onto the marketplace or agora of another assemblage of houses – with the propulsive movement being *an errance, a dérive*, a process of discovery and sharing. ("ReadySteadyBlog Interview" JM: 45)

With this rare example of a narrative passage, Joris not only includes a powerful image constructed around "houses of different languages", he also manages to expose the relation between interlingual and intertextual writing with key nomadic notions such as hospitality or mediation as well as *errance* and *dérive*, which are dear to Glissant. Joris's position is close to what Glissant explains in *L'imaginaire des langues*: « L'errance et la dérive, disons que c'est l'appétit du monde. Ce qui nous fait tracer des chemins un peu partout dans le monde. La dérive, c'est aussi une disponibilité de l'étant pour toutes sortes de migrations possibles. » (Conversations with the poet and thinker collected by Lise Gauvin, 2010: 37)

A poetics of routes: Writing from the margins

The specificity of a nomadic poetics comes from the poet's position: he is the outsider, who observes from the margins and draws mental routes and lines between unconnected places. Writing becomes a process which integrates thinking about multiplicity or difference; it is a process that transforms, in particular a poet's views on language and the role of writing. It also transforms language – or rather language transforms experiences: language others them. Joris's poetics allows him to think through characteristics

⁷²⁴ Joris seems to prefer the word *conversation* (See for instance Joris & Adonis: *Conversations in the Pyrenees* 2018)

⁷²⁵ In "Nomad Century Ahead," a piece of six pages, I have counted 14 inserted citations (by 13 different) authors, in addition to innumerable references to further writers and works. For "Notes", a more extensive text, the list would be considerably longer.

of movement and exile, of margins and becoming, but also of languages and spaces within which they move.

A nomad's writing happens in parallel with listening and travelling. Joris quotes Michel Deguy when he says that poetry is "the place we (hope to) come to after a long day of moving, of doing the work of becoming like, *comme*, human."⁷²⁶ Therefore, poetry is grounded "based on the principle of hospitality." ("Notes," ANP: 35) What I read into these words is a view of poetry or writing as a temporary place of rest for the wanderer (cf. *mawqif*, below). The nomad is (like) a *pilgrim* who is glad to receive hospitality and ready to dispense it to others through poems and stories.⁷²⁷ Writing becomes a **process of mediation**.⁷²⁸ The innumerable references to other writers are evidence of the poet's wish to see himself related to multiple others, yet also to inform his readers about works they may not otherwise meet. A nomadic poetics moves from British to American voices, includes Arab writers while also echoing French and German elements. Mediation reveals an aspect of multilingualism that questions processes of translation when more than two languages are involved. It then asks for other approaches of cross language communication and writing.

6.3.2 The purpose of a poetics: Positioning the nomad poet as thinker

A preliminary note: In line with his understanding of anything nomadic, Joris's writings about his poetics usually come in note form or as fragmentary texts. This rhizomatic form or style accounts for repetitions, which in fact turn out to be accretions around key notions. For a presentation of his poetics, similar reiterations seem inevitable to develop the range of relations that it develops.

Though Joris borrows many concepts from philosophers, he repeatedly insists that he is not a philosopher. In an insert, he evokes the difference in unmistakable terms:

the tent, the text
philosophy is the enemy of the nomad because, as Novalis knew, philosophy is only a sort of home sickness, a need to feel everywhere at home. Poetry is the opposite: a desire to feel everywhere estranged, in touch with or at least reaching for the other, out of house & home. Poetry is to be

⁷²⁶ Or as Joris's suggests in the passage quoted below, "becoming animal." In the humanities the concept of human/humanism is being questioned. Though Joris never refers to Braidotti's work, some similarity in their thinking is undeniable, and Joris's recent work (*The Gulf; The Book of U*) introduces notions that for Braidotti belong to posthumanism.

⁷²⁷ For this view of the poet as pilgrim and writer, see Judith Still, "Language as Hospitality: Revisiting Intertextuality via Monolingualism of the Other" (2004); and numerous texts by Derrida, who provides many reflections on the concept of hospitality from various perspectives: the hospitality of language, *in* language, *for* language. See in particular his conversations with Anne Dufourmantelle, *On Hospitality* (2000) and references in Joris ("On the Nomadic Circulation of Contemporary Poetics," JM: 8)

⁷²⁸ See Joris's work as an anthologist in ch. 4.3; for his poetics of mediation, see Hansen-Pauly, "Pierre Joris. A Mediator of Cultures and Languages" (2017).

out of house & home. In a tent, maybe, in the text, maybe, intent on the texture underhand, underfoot. The basic desire of poetry is therefore nomadic. ("Notes," ANP: 46)

Through poetry, he wishes to gain insights into complex fluctuating and unpredictable relations. On several occasions, he has attempted to position himself and his writing. Thus, he enquires:

Wozu Dichter in dürftiger Zeit? [...] we need the poets to think in these arid, or at best semi-arid times, because they may be the last of the least-affiliates, the "least" specialized," thus those with the free-est hands to think through the episteme of this moment. They are, in the best sense of that term,

"General Practitioners" of an art that has given itself [...] the variegated space and non-Euclidean geometries of mind & imagination needed to come to terms without (dis)solving the complexities of our multiverse. & this from the only ground that gives accurate permission to do so: the nomadic margins of the polis. ("Re 'The Politics of Poetic Form'," ANP: 12-13)

With the quotation from Hölderlin's poem, he establishes the poet as thinker of his own time.⁷²⁹ Calling him a general practitioner, he evokes the vast field of action that poets face. Through the rejection of Euclidean geometry, the nomad poet also dismisses a Cartesian structure of thought and establishes a different kind of relations to ensure coherent thinking. Two declarations in "Nomad Century Ahead" succinctly express the vision of a nomadic future:

OPENING SPACE: What is needed now is a nomadic poetics. Its method will be rhizomatic [...] A nomadic poetics will cross languages, not just translate, but write in all or any of them. (ANP "Century": 5)

STATE OF: The days of anything static, form, content, state are over. The past century has shown that anything not involved in continuous transformation hardens and dies.

("Nomad Century Ahead," ANP: 6; also used as epigraph of "Notes," ANP: 25)⁷³⁰

These quotations point to fundamental directions in his thoughts about the writer's responsibility: The poetics he conceives is linked to the needs of the polis, which poets are well situated to address. The best insights come from poets on the move, away from the centre: the nomads at the margin of the polis. A nomadic poetics encompasses an open language space; to stay a live force it must undergo constant transformation. It can never be a finished, completed theory. Only the broad range of thinking about poetry and multiplicity that underlies his work can unravel some of the links he perceives between a poet's multiple languages and his commitment to the world in which he lives and moves.

⁷²⁹ Welch also refers to this famous line by Hölderlin; the two poets however do not reach quite the same conclusions as to what poets should do in needy times. See ch. 6.2.1: She enjoyed the discussions at the International Poetry Days in Luxembourg, but is glad to return to her solitary retreat in the Maritimes: as a poet she has no interest in the affairs of the polis (see "What are Poets for?" *Frescoes* 1988: 78-84).

⁷³⁰ It is a quotation from Deleuze and Guattari.

Joris's interest in poetics is widely diversified across languages and gives an idea of the open horizon in his reading.⁷³¹ He has always been as much drawn to "meta"-poetry as to poems (as autonomous literary objects); writing and reflecting on what poetry does, or should do, is an integral part of his life as a poet. When as a student in Paris, he decided to drop out of medicine and become a poet, he took this vocation as seriously as a scientific career. With great eagerness, he set about acquainting himself with all aspects of the "trade", including knowledge about historical developments and the role of poetry in the polis.⁷³² When Joris started circulating first versions of "Toward a nomad poetics", which was published in a British literary magazine, *Spanner* (1993), he was well aware of movements for a renewal of poetry in the UK and the US. Having lived in both countries, he had contacts with representatives of the movement known as "British Poetry Revival" (for instance, Allen Fisher and Eric Mottram), while in America he was influenced by The New American Poetry (for instance, Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley, Charles Olson). He also had connections with the so-called Language Poets (for instance Charles Bernstein) while various projects have linked his work to that of Robert Kelly and Jerome Rothenberg. At the end of the century, several *poetics* related to these innovative poets appeared; probably Charles Bernstein's work (*A Poetics* 1992) with its motto "Poetry is aversion of conformity" has had the greatest influence on Joris's approach. It encompasses a vast view on the role of poetics in contemporary culture: dissent concerns not only argument but also the form of poetry: Bernstein asks for a poetic language that resists being easily absorbed into the conventions of culture.

⁷³¹ In an interview (Barzakh 2013), Joris is asked what the trajectory of his poetics has been. He offers a long list of names, reaching "from Homer (in German prose translations) via Gottfried Benn, Paul Celan, Rimbaud, Rimbaud, Rimbaud — Lautréamont — some Breton & the Surrealists — Bob Kaufman, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg & the Beats — Mohammed Khair-Eddine (first published poet I shared a room with) & the francophone Maghrebi & Caribbean poets — Ezra Pound & T.S. Eliot (already fighting in the captain's tower — EP won easily) — Shelley (& small doses of the other English Romantics, especially Keats for Neg. Cap.) — Rilke (a little, at arm's length) Whitman (all of it) — H.D. & W.C.W. — Basho (Oku no Hosomichi more than any single haikus) — William Blake (the great Prophetic Books before all) — Charles Olson & Robert Duncan & Robert Creeley, again & again — Gertrude Stein is Gertrude Stein — Jack Spicer — Robert Kelly & Jerome Rothenberg & Clayton Eshleman — Dada & Kurt Schwitters — Ken Irby & Gerrit Lansing — Osip Mandelstam & Marina Tsvetaeva (I had read & liked the Futurists before, but these two stayed closest, certainly O.M. did) — Frank O'Hara & Ted Berrigan — Joyce Mansour & Claude Pélieu — to my contemporaries, more difficult to judge or name all, — Allen Fisher (core) — Eric Mottram (core teacher) — Alice Notley, Anne Waldman, Lyn Hejinian, Charles Bernstein, Charles Stein, Habib Tengour, Nicole Brossard, Nathaniel Mackey, Leslie Scalapino — the list is endless, nomadically so, of course, & this morning typing this in the Pyrenees at 5:35 a.m. I worry that I'll leave out important ones for me & hurt friends —."

⁷³² See "US —Géographèmes. Conversations with Peter Cockelbergh," *Cartographies* (2011: 125-135) for most references in this section.

6.3.2.1 Poetics – not a theory but a tool “to think concepts through”

In line with Bernstein’s vision, Joris’s poetics is marked by disagreement with the traditional approaches in U.S. academia and rejects conventions of aesthetics as well as an emphasis on feelings. Poetry is seen as a source of knowledge about all kinds of affairs, which are either too complex or too disturbing for public interest. As the mouthpiece of discontent, “all poetry carries a social and political burden.” (“Re ‘The Politics of Poetic Form’,” ANP: 13) and should be as relevant as possible to the complexities of our world.

But is his poetics a theory? ⁷³³

In several texts and interviews, Joris has clarified his views on the difference, possibly the tension, between theory and poetry. ⁷³⁴ As a teacher and as a poet, he dismisses the understanding of theory seen as a mixture of philosophy, literary critical tools and applications of cultural studies. This is how he describes his view (as a poet) of the relation between theory and poetry:

I always read the books of theorists for a poetics, i.e. for the use they can be for the practice of writing, rather than as “theory” [...] D/G for me as a poet are interesting in thinking through notions such as the rhizome as a useful schema for the organization of a poem, their concept of a minor literature is useful in terms of ways of thinking through questions of hierarchies of language and the uses of idiolects. Derrida, to mention just one other “theorist”, is useful to think in new and enlightening ways through that most classical of poetic figures, the metaphor, or say, his sense of the “monolinguis[m] of the other.” (“ReadySteadyBlog,” JM: 43)

The key word is the phrasal verb “to think through,” which better than its near equivalent “consider” evokes a physical activity, of moving laboriously across a mental space or rather through layers of thought with an aim to get a fuller insight, not least through associations or connotations that the reader discovers in the theoretical text. “To think through” is an expression that Joris has used on many occasions to describe the thinking that goes into his poetic practice and includes thinking *through* others. It is a phrase - and an intellectual practice – that characterizes his writing. ⁷³⁵

⁷³³ Joris’s poetics has led to misunderstandings (cf. more under Reception 6.3.6). The title *nomadic poetics* does not at once clarify the approach: it does not say “my” poetics and through the qualifying word *nomad/ic* it could refer to the programme for a wider movement.

⁷³⁴ See for instance in “ReadySteadyBlog,” his answer to the question: “Can theory read poetry without doing it undue violence?” (2009:42).

⁷³⁵ Here are a few contexts in which Joris uses the phrase *think through*: (1) “*Think through* Heidegger’s Abgeschiedenheit, apartness as the free ...” “From Notes Towards a Nomadics Manifesto (Part One); (2) “Deleuzian and other critical concepts give me a way to think through what ...” <http://www.ny-web.be/transitzone/interview-poet-pierre-joris.html>; (3) “fascinating too, how Deguy begins usefully to think through *other* ...” <https://www.boundary2.org/2017/09/pierre-joris-a-nomad-poetics-revisited-poetry-and-translation-in-a-global-age/>; (4) “it is useful to think through what the future of collage will be.” <https://jivinladybug.wordpress.com/2011/04/22/pierre-joris-interview/>; (5) In a conversation with Pierre Joris and Jerome Rothenberg on technology and literature... “Joris: It’s a truly useful term to think through these matters.”

For Joris, poetics thus is not theory; it is about writing practices and processes. It becomes a tool to theorize his practice. Process showing is also part of his poetics. He aims at leaving traces of his readings and thoughts – hence the innumerable references – and revealing his strategies through comments on writing. Examples of his poetry in Part III will confirm this recurrent feature.

The primacy given to thought rather than feelings also accounts for a reticence towards conventional devices of poetry, such as common, easily recognized, bland metaphors or similes. Thinking through requires what he calls deep images, which question reality and experiences by proposing new perspectives through innovative uses of language.⁷³⁶

6.3.2.2 In a nomad poetics the poet is multiple: “I is many others”

Thinking through what the poet *is* and *does* is part of a poetics. As Joris’s multifaceted work has already been presented in ch 4, I wish to insist only on those aspects that enhance our understanding of his poetics. The vision that underlies Joris’s poetics encompasses many facets and multiple activities: always in movement, he is a non-unitary, heterogeneous subject, in contact with otherness: other languages, other texts, other writers.

In relation with the statement by Roland Barthes that “the author is not dead”, Joris argues:

No, what has happened is that the author has multiplied, has lost its his her identity as singular object. Rimbaud accurately said, way back toward another fin-de-siècle, “I is another.” We now have to say: “I is many others.” A nomadic poetics will thus explore ways in which to make – & think about – a poetry that takes into account not only the manifold of languages & locations but also of selves each one of us is constantly becoming. (“Notes,” ANP: 43-44)

“Being the other/many others” corroborates the impact that contact with heterogeneity has on the poet. It is a view that rejects the notion of one stable identity. Joris insists on *becoming*, the key notion of nomadic theory, which inevitably is linked to a poet’s languages and the multiple Locations of his travelling. Without giving in to the subjective, to purely emotional outbreaks, he acknowledges a process of becoming, which the writing cannot but reflect. The polyglot subject-in-process, as central idea of Braidotti’s nomadism, underpins much of Joris’s thinking though it rarely surfaces in his work. He prefers to emphasize thinking *through others*, especially through those who write from the margins.

In the essay “On the Nomadic Circulation of Contemporary Poetics”, underlining the complexity of the multiple linguistic “self,” Joris refers to Derrida to substantiate his rejection of identity – if understood as

https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/poetrythe_millennium-a-conversation-with-jerome-rothenberg-and-pierre-joris/

⁷³⁶ He likes to use scientific and medical language. See for instance, “each time I come for the first time/ to America or Europe/ and have to repeat the long/ entries to my heartlands:// systole of Europe/ diastole of America (*Janus* 18)” – also quoted in PART III; or the example of the variable key and the counterkey mentioned above.

being always the same. However, he emphasizes the importance of *identifying with* others or thinking through others. Evoking language hospitality, with its tensions that an etymological closeness to *hostis* /hostility implies, Joris addresses the difficult issues that transcultural positions and translingual writing involve:

We may then again discuss what Derrida thought so often about, identity, ipseity, and the “pse” of “ipse” more than the initial “I” and its dissemination [...] which puts hospitality and hostility under the same tent. [...] you have to show it, hospitality, ziyafah, to everyone, to the stranger as well, to the one on the road, and will of course link up with Derrida’s wanderings around the *hostis* / *hospes* theme. It is exactly when Derrida begins to think his diasporic self, his Franco-maghrebian nonidentity, his worried, threatened, recent, precarious citizenship, that he proposes the monolingualism of the Other with its double, contradictory postulation:
We only ever speak one language ... / (yes but)/ We never speak only one language. (“On the Nomadic Circulation of Contemporary Poetics,” JM: 8)

The multiple nomad poet is above all translator. For Joris translation means being between and in movement; Joris calls it “that most diasporic act of crossing.”⁷³⁷

6.3.2.3 The poet as noet, or the poem as noem and poetics as noetics

noet: No stands for play, for no-saying & guerilla war techniques, for gNOSis & NOetics. ET stands for et cetera, the always ongoing process, the no closure: it stands for ExtraTerritorial, for the continuous state of being outside (not a margin that would always be definable as the margin of something called the real (territory)). ET stands for Electronic terrain, where the poem composes, recomposes, decomposes before your eyes, de- & re-territorializing at will or chance – without there being the ability to tell you which of those two determinants it is. (“Notes,” ANP: 31)

Choosing the unusual word *noet*, Joris attracts attention to his idea of poetry and the poet. The dazzling list of explanations shows that he would not like his poetry to be confused with popular views of rhymes and beautiful images. Noet is a term that has highly complex connotations in Joris’s work. To understand what it stands for, one should remember Joris’s love of word-play, etymologies (real and invented), and occasional references to little known fields of knowledge. His aim is always to achieve a break with usual thinking, with commonly accepted, un-reflected meanings. An investigation of possible meanings of several related words – the poet as noet, the poem as noem and poetry / poetics as noetic (science) – also gives insights into the nomadic poet’s thinking processes. It reveals the tortuous routes that he follows and that, like constantly growing rhizomatic bulbs, underlie the writing.

In the context of a nomadic poetics, the *noet* is immediately understood as a contraction of “nomad poet.” Another association is based on a phonic similarity with the word *know*. The poet is somebody who deals

⁷³⁷ In connection with *crossing*, his reference to the poet as “border-worker” and *xenos* figure, borrowed from Lynn Hejinian, also comes to mind. (“Notes,” ANP: 35) Also see 6.3.4.

with knowledge. This connection goes beyond a resemblance of sounds. Joris has derived the term *noet* from “noetic”, an adjective expressing a relation to mental activity or the intellect. *Noetic* derives from the Greek adjective *noētikos*, meaning “intellectual,” from the verb *noein* (“to think”) and ultimately from the noun *nous*, meaning “mind.”⁷³⁸ Joris may also allude to research that explores the interplay between scientific knowledge and inner knowing.

Joris emphasizes the importance that scientific knowledge holds for the poet yet also insists that imagination is required to make out the meaning of science for future developments. He quotes Muriel Rukeyser: The relations of poetry are, for our period, very close to the relations of science. It is not a matter of using the results of science, but of seeing that there is a meeting place between all the kinds of imagination. Poetry can provide that meeting place.” (“Notes,” ANP: 36; also quoted in “A Nomad Poetics Revisited”) ⁷³⁹

In the passage quoted from “Notes toward a Nomad Poetics”, the route to knowledge through “play,” “no-saying & guerrilla war techniques” is expressed in a Deleuzian terminology. The noet resists and fights existing conditions; a guerrilla poet will be a member of a minority of independent combatants who invent strategies to change prevailing practices. We may deduce that in the case of the multilingual poet, not attached to one State, it means fighting language hierarchies or national monolingual forms of cultural monopolies. The reference to minority draws a relation to Braidotti’s claim for “becoming minoritarian” while it also echoes discussions on the status of outsiders in literary systems, initiated by Deleuze and Guattari in *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure* (1975).

The World Wide Web is a natural tool for the multiple poet to use. Joris introduces this dimension of noetic work with a reference to Indra, the Hindu deity, “**The nomad poet**, the NOET gives allegiance to INDRA the warrior god.” (“Notes,” ANP: 42).⁷⁴⁰ Speaking of the warrior god as pure multiplicity and source of endless metamorphosis, Joris sees Indra’s net as an image of technological developments, notably for poetry turned into cyberpoetics. One important point for Joris is the noet’s involvement with many, with an immeasurable multiplicity, rather than with a singular other. The noet, with the help of the computer

⁷³⁸ See Merriam Webster Dictionary: *Noetic* is related to *noesis*, a rare noun that turns up in the field of philosophy and refers to the action of perceiving or thinking. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/noetic>

⁷³⁹ See the analysis of *The Gulf* in ch 9 which explores connections between poetry, science and thinking across languages.

⁷⁴⁰ The association with a Vedic deity in Hinduism cannot be fully understood without the reference to Deleuze/Guattari who underline the double role played by Indra. The warrior god on the one hand works against anything static yet also is a necessary force for the consolidation of the power of king and priest. “[H]e is like a pure and immeasurable multiplicity, a pack, and irruption of the ephemeral and the power of metamorphosis”. (“Notes Toward” 42)

and the internet, should overcome the binary logic of classical Cartesian thinking. The confusing term “war machine” (and thus also the link of poetry with war activities) is somewhat clarified:

One of the new machines of a nomadic poetry – and we are not afraid of technology, all poetry has been techno-bounded from the beginning – one of the new machines is the computer. Interestingly enough, one of those investigating cyberpoetics – one incarnation of nomadic poetics – is John Cayley whose ongoing work is called Indra’s net. (“Notes,” ANP: 42-43)

The connection with Indra is due to a metaphor in Buddhist philosophy called “Indra’s net”, which the poet, John Cayley, has used for a vast project. Not Cayley’s project but the metaphor of Indra’s net appears as a valuable way for the representation of the multilingual noet’s approach of reading and writing, in which texts all appear linked to each other.⁷⁴¹

There are still more routes to follow in an investigation of the word *noet*. The initial sound / letters “no” suggests not only resistance but also negation: a noet writes about absence (of truth), about uncertainty, about what is not or cannot be put into words. This meaning shows a link with the poetry of Paul Celan. A noem is then a no-poem; a poem that expresses “negativity,” which Celan has called “das Genicht”.⁷⁴² Anne Carson’s explanation of *noem* is illuminating and seems to come close to Joris’s understanding: “*noem*,” a *poem* that both is and is not, a verse nothingness, a poeticized negativity. It is a word that makes use of the void to think the full. Like the man who is not Kroisos, it glows with the wealth of a refused truth.”⁷⁴³

Further readings of the term *noem* interestingly appear through comparisons of languages. As Joris points out in all his writings on translation, the movement from one language to another invites thinking about the meanings of words in each language and often forces reconsidering their multiple possible connections to other words. Interestingly, I have come across a comment concerning Heidegger’s *Ziel der “dichtenden” Rede* and the use of *noème* in the French translation. According to Pascal David, Heidegger’s use of the quotation marks for “dichtende” in this phrase expresses his view of poetry as *Dichtung* (and *verdichten*), poetry is no longer subordinate to thought: it is thought – *noème*. (*Vocabulaire européen des philosophies* 2004: 315) Joris recalls the etymology of “dichten = to condensate” and attributes the

⁷⁴¹ See under Critical reception (6.3.6) the harsh criticism that the idea of cyberpoetics has provoked and Joris’s reaction.

⁷⁴² Joris has commented on his understanding of negative capability, a notion associated with the poet John Keats. See interview with Fowler (2012). He repeatedly speaks of negativity in Celan’s poetry; in one context, the translation of the poem called “Weggebeizt”, he comments on Celan’s coinage of the term “das Genicht”. Joris is aware of Michael Hamburger’s use of the word *noem* in his English translation of Celan’s lines while he (Joris) translates Celan’s line as “Eroded by the beamwind of your speech the gaudy chatter of the pseudo-experienced—the hundred-tongued perjury (*Breathturn* 1995: 94-95 + endnote)

⁷⁴³ Anne Carson, “Economy of the Unlost” (2009) <https://books.google.lu/books?isbn=1400823153>

association to Ezra Pound. (See interview with Almeida 2016) One may wonder what further rhizomatic readings of *noet* and *noem* Joris could have had in mind: in an interview with Bernstein, an allusion to NO-MAD points to a pun uncovering another possible dimension. An association with Japanese Noh drama (*le théâtre nô*) might open further routes.

For the present context, I would sum up *noet* as referring to Joris the thinker, who wanders across multiple routes of meanings thus hoping to increase knowledge while always aware that truth cannot be reached. In a world of (almost) infinite communication and access to information, the web or net of nomadic thinking expands ever further.

6.3.2.4 The nomad as ecopoetic thinker and multilingual observer

Nature does not stand out in Joris's central essays on a nomad poetics. Nor does his poetry dwell on detailed descriptions of landscapes, unless they represent the space for his wandering thoughts as, for example the desert or the Ardennes forests frequently do. Nature is present in his poetry, as Location and tool for thought, for instance in "Antlers" or "Nimrod in Hell."⁷⁴⁴ The latter is a puzzling and deeply speculative text, situated between theory of translation and poetry, where the speaker draws parallels between the hunter and healer (his father, a physician) and himself the poet and translator against a setting of forests (the Ardennes, also the site of Rimbaud's early roaming, as well as Dante's *selva*) and a babble of enigmatic words.

More recently, as response to pressing environmental issues and the increasing attention they meet in the humanities, Joris has addressed questions of ecopoetics and emphasized the important role that poetry can play. In no way does he think in terms of a return to the Romantics' approach. Poems for Joris are not the place to describe outdoor life or to reflect on nature as source or mirror of emotions. He looks at nature as an objective observer familiar with scientific issues; as "noet" he dwells on elements he uses for thinking and imagining relations in the world. In talks and essays he foregrounds the role of ecology for the poet's understanding of nature and the writing of what he calls "open field" poetry, a ground on which those two discourses can enrich each other. The nomad or wanderer, collects images – e.g. antlers, foxes, the desert – whose rich connotations become routes for thoughts about urgent environmental matters, often placed in the context of other literary texts or art forms.

In "A Nomad Poetics Revisited: Poetry and Translation in a Global Age" (2017)⁷⁴⁵ he has commented on his vision and shown that nomadic poetry in fact is well placed to address the complexity of environmental

⁷⁴⁴ "Nimrod in Hell" appears as introductory text in a collection of essays (*Justifying the Margins* 2009), while it also figures in a collection of poems, *Barzakh* (2014: 121-123). See also ch. 4.3.3 and footnote in 9.2.2.

⁷⁴⁵ See also the Barzakh Interview (2016).

problems though it must never become a new ideology. In line with his notion of poets as “general practitioners” he underlines their responsibility in the polis: they must participate in a wide movement of conscience raising and action based on the concept of *oikos* or “earth household.”⁷⁴⁶

Joris shows that like for any “thinking through”, translingual work on ecopoetics provides a rich source for comparisons, paradoxes and contradictions.⁷⁴⁷ As the title of his essay indicates, revisiting a nomadic poetics involves foregrounding translation. To illustrate what a *translingual process* means for him, he refers to the work of Michel Deguy (*Écologiques*) which he read in French and then talks and writes about in English with a constant awareness of how difficult – and productive – translation into another language can be. The translating process, as he shows, is always illuminating for an understanding of concepts (like *mondialisation* vs globalization; or rendering *rebroussement* in English) as it requires thinking about specific connections in each language. A writing between languages characterizes all his nature and environment conscious work.

Better than theoretical essays poetic writing demonstrates how he explores ecological dimensions across languages and cultures and media. *The Gulf* (2014) is discussed in detail in chapter 9. Other relevant work has followed. *The Book of U. Le livre des cormorans* (2017), produced in cooperation with Nicole Peyrafitte, gives a glimpse into how this bilingual poetic text foregrounds the relation between poetry, multiple languages, the environment and painting and the performative arts. It is a book that can be studied for its multiple forms of translingualism or innovative perspectives on nomadic rhizomatic movement. It demonstrates the passage from observation and knowledge of birds to poetry (Pierre Joris) and painting plus performance (Nicole Peyrafitte); from various literary sources including Japanese Haiku and Milton into a new poetic piece (see Notes at the end); from English into French: it is a bilingual edition, yet reflects difference (see the two distinct titles); both versions include the insertion of words in further languages.

Translingual writing also involves numerous puns – across languages and reflections on words and their meanings. It is a book, which like *The Gulf*, can be studied in terms of **heterolingual ethos**, (see chapter 3). On the one hand, the poet has languages cross in his lines with words too foreign for most readers to grasp all. Yet on the other hand, the poet remains aware of readers’ difficulties and provides props to help the understanding. Support takes various forms; it happens through the French translation, (sometimes

⁷⁴⁶ As he recalls, *oikos* as earth household is a “translation” borrowed from Gary Snyder. See also the comments on *oikos* (and *gaia*) in Welch, *Address*, mentioned in 6.2.

⁷⁴⁷ See in ch. 5 the link Joris points out between his familiarity with nature and the acquisition of a multilingual vocabulary to name plants, trees, animals.

with a comment or response to the sounds that have different semantic connotations in each language⁷⁴⁸), but also through in-text paraphrases and explanations, while notes at the end of the book give additional literary background information concerning the creation of the poem and intertextual allusions.⁷⁴⁹

Wrapping up, with reference to the range of nomadic theory reflected in his poetics:

In recent reflections on his poetics, Joris foregrounds ecology as the domain of poetry – or poetry as a privileged place to contribute to the debates. In the survey of nomadism in ch. 3, we saw that Kenneth White's work underlines a similar link between a philosophically inspired *esprit nomade* and the poet's investigation of the physical environment.

Despite differences in their approaches – White stands for geopoetics while Joris foregrounds links with ecopoetics – their efforts show interesting parallels. Both think in two or more languages; between-ness involves translingual wring with numerous links to literature and philosophy. Poetics for them is a theory of relations and one important link for the two nomads comes through Michel Deguy.⁷⁵⁰

Joris's special contribution is the focus on terminology, which entails reflections on concepts in different languages. Ecopoetics for him means TRANSlingual writing or writing between languages to investigate the complexity of multiple levels of relations in nature, language and the arts.

6.3.3 Thinking through a nomad's languages

In the present section, the emphasis is on understandings of decentered poetic language, of multiplicity and otherness or heterolingualism. I will largely follow Joris's practice in theoretical texts and proceed through a focus on key concepts. He often explores them in different contexts, which uncover always new relations between the main aspects of writing, thinking, reading and translating.

6.3.3.1 "Writing in all one's languages": The nature of multiplicity in nomadic writing

A nomadic poetics will cross languages, not just translate, but write in all or any of them.
("Notes," ANP: 38)⁷⁵¹

Joris's motto echoes definitions of translingual writing, while speaking of "crossing languages" in his poetics, he goes a step further suggesting the freedom to mix his languages. Yet, paradoxically his own texts, including most of his poems, are in English only, with few insertions of foreign words. How should

⁷⁴⁸ Here's one example: "the *heart* of the *cormorant*/ le *coeur* du *cormorant*/ le *corps* du *cormorant* (18; emphasis added)

⁷⁴⁹ See also a recent book, *Fox-trails, -tales & -trots* - : the poet's perspective on environmental stance incorporates Luxemburgish language poetry, and its epic hero, contextualized in European literature (2020: 48-51).

⁷⁵⁰ See for instance Joris referring to Deguy in "A Nomad Poetics Revisited"; for White, see « Espace et littérature » : "Née en France dès les années 1960, la *géopoétique*, initiée par Michel Deguy puis par Kenneth White, <https://www.fabula.org/atelier.php?Espace>

⁷⁵¹ See similar statements in A Nomad Poetics "Nomadic Century Ahead": 5.

one understand this apparent contradiction? Is the much-praised multilingualism evoked in theory impossible to implement, is it a project for a (utopian) future or, alternatively, **do his texts offer clues for another understanding of multilingual writing?**

Language multiplicity can refer to juxtaposed national languages or to intra-language differences, yet what Joris has in mind is not a collection of separate units but a multiplicity in movement and without borders. The long passage from “Rhizome” by Deleuze and Guattari, which opens *A Nomad Poetics* anticipates Joris’s views:

[T]here is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages Language is, in Weinreich’s words, ‘an essentially heterogeneous reality.’ There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity. (ANP: X) ⁷⁵²

Deleuze and Guattari dismiss language as a concept or distinct entity with recognizable, essential features and stress the importance of the particular rather than the universal in language. They also reject the concept of mother tongue as politically unacceptable and warn against the power dimension of linguistic policies (see ch. 3.2). Their words figure as a rallying cry for language multiplicity but it is up to Joris to think through what rhizomatic multiplicity actually means for the poet.

To “cross languages” and “write in all or any”, as he chooses, the nomad poet has to invent new practices, or what he calls “the rhizomatic method.” ⁷⁵³ A mere collage of fragments or citations from works in different languages would reinforce the idea of multilingualism as juxtaposition of separate languages. Joris aims at a different rendering of the nomad’s experience of multiplicity: writing and poetry must work “as a material flux of language matter” (“Nomad Century Ahead” ANP: 5) ⁷⁵⁴ and moreover integrate, as he suggests, non-semantic spaces. ⁷⁵⁵

He elucidates his views further, well aware that multiplicity must also go beyond intra-language multiplicity or a dichotomy between poetic and ordinary language. It means recognizing a personal, creative dimension rather than stressing the reference to cultural traditions or standardized forms. Charles Bernstein’s recognition of idiolects helps Joris develop his idea of a *particular poetics for nomad writers*:

⁷⁵² The reference is to Harald Weinrich (otherwise known as Harald Weinreich) and his broad and open approach of written and spoken language (see for instance *Sprache in Texten* 1976).

⁷⁵³ See “[A] nomadic poetics’ method will be rhizomatic; which is different from that core 20C technique, collage [...] more recently retooled in the neo-classical form of the citation – ironic &/ or decorative – throughout what is called ‘post-modernism.’” (“Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics”: 38) See below, 6.3.4: collage and post collage are discussed in more details as heterolingual spaces in texts with a dominant language.

⁷⁵⁴ See same text in “Notes,” ANP: 38.

⁷⁵⁵ He refers to André Breton and surrealist poetry.

Useful in this context too is Charles Bernstein's thinking about idiolects: "English languages, set adrift from the sight/sound sensorium of the concrete experiences of the English people, are at their hearts uprooted and translated: nomadic in origin, absolutely particular in practice. Invention in this context is not a matter of choice: it is as necessary as the ground we walk on." Replace "English" here with "all" or "any" & you have a nomadic idiolectal stance. ("Notes," ANP: 38)

Bernstein's approach of English, conceived as plural, is enlightening for an understanding of language multiplicity *within* the English language. He mainly addresses the issues that face authors in other Anglophone parts of the world, whose version of English has drifted away from the original cultural centre.⁷⁵⁶ Bernstein's (and Joris's) emphasis on language as experience and on sense perceptions in particular, mobile contexts is not unlike sociocultural scholars' focus on language as embodied and culturally situated experiences.⁷⁵⁷ What all these approaches share is a rejection of beliefs in unified, homogeneous and standardized national languages of culture, which rest on a concept of identity ensured by a shared territory and a common language. Challenging the notion of English as always being a singular category is a key feature of postcolonial thinking and part of a response to mobility and globalization. Bernstein's attempt at redefining the English language as heterogeneous and translated is echoed in Fiona Doloughan's approach of literature in English as always being in translation, by which she means a literary work cannot but express a particular writer's linguistic and sociocultural experiences, which today are becoming more and more hybrid.⁷⁵⁸

"[N]omadic in origin, absolutely particular in practice": These words quoted from Bernstein seem most adequate to express Joris's views of the language used by a nomad poet writing in English. Neither cultural centre nor origin count; the nomad always writes from the middle, from particular circumstances. If the poet's English were not particular, the works would not be literature. What counts is not the imitation of a remote paradigm, but the writer's own **voice**. Wherever it comes from, a voice for writing must be inventive. Yet, awareness of intra-language multiplicity is not enough to describe the more complex situation of nomads like Joris. In their multilingualism, several named languages cohabit and interact in their multiplicity (dialects, vernacular forms, literary versus ordinary forms ...). Joris thus takes the scope of nomad poets' language mobility a step further by replacing their "English" with "all" or "any" of their languages. He calls it "a nomadic idiolectal stance." It is also a *multilingual* nomadic idiolectal stance: nomads, like Joris, "translate" their many tongues and voices into their own *particular and heterogeneous*

⁷⁵⁶ Joris has experienced the diversity inside English and expressed the conflicts that choosing between British and American English involved for him (e.g. a matter of breathing, political and cultural connotations. See conversation with Cockelbergh in "US-Géographèmes," *Cartographies*: 125-135).

⁷⁵⁷ See for instance Pennycook 2008; 2010 and Busch 2015.

⁷⁵⁸ Fiona Doloughan, *English as a Literature in Translation* 2015.

linguistic form. Each poet's position is particular (idiolectal) but their language is an open space in movement, without borders.

Here is one example of the poet's nomadic multilingual writing, presenting a combination of languages, which reflects Joris's experiences and may represent a considerable challenge for readers with a different repertoire. One also notes the carefully chosen spatial arrangement as part of the poetic construction.

WINNETOU OLD

Vier Takte vor K time then before
 starting a poesis that keeps that other that
 began in bone arete return to turbulence break
 the slippery line to work thanatos tetanos Verkrampfung

(*Poasis* 2001: 71)

The notions of mobility and multiple "translation" need more *thinking through* with: Examples from his poetic practice will show how it works in writing.⁷⁵⁹ A view of the nomad's languages as moving across an open space without borders and without inner divisions does not seem to tolerate a distinction between different languages. Yet, as a translator of other poets' work, Joris argues somewhat differently. For this reason, perspectives on translation as part of his poetics are analysed in a separate section (6.3.5).

6.3.3.2 The myth of the mother tongue: the poet's discovery of between-ness⁷⁶⁰

The concept of mother tongue does not make sense in a nomadic poetics: Joris forwards various arguments, especially to defend his own situation. He has repeatedly stressed his rejection of the mother tongue, sometimes, in quite striking terms: "Do away with the prison-house of the mother tongue" ("Notes," ANP: 45); the declaration in another passage is more explicit:

[W]hy should one have to write in the mummy/daddy language, why should that oedipal choice be the only possible or legitimate one, why should it not be my own choice, that moment of the discovery of the other, that moment when it is our body/mind that speaks and not that of our progenitors. The mother tongue will become the lover's tongue, the other's tongue. ("Nomad Century Ahead," ANP: 7)

The very notion of mother tongue is a denial of freedom for the writer (whatever the languages they first spoke in the family). He claims agency and refuses to be confined for ever to the "prison-house" where

⁷⁵⁹ See Ch. 7 with comments on "Reading/ Writing" processes and on dialogic pieces that involve mental exchanges with Kerouac, Beltrametti or Steichen.

⁷⁶⁰ See ch. 5.3: The present section shows some parallels with Joris's memories of experiences with his multiple languages. Here however the perspective changes with a focus on poetic writing though the connections between experience and poetics are manifest.

he grew up. The image of the tongue's transformations shows that for Joris language has both a mental and a bodily dimension, which both account for the choice of a poetic language.

What is approached as memories of his early languages in chapter 5 is also a significant aspect of his poetics. The radical questioning of the importance of a first or native language echoes the notion of a multiple, disaggregated mother tongue that Yildiz proposes in *Beyond the Mother Tongue* (2012) to analyse multilingual writer's complex relations to their languages.

Joris argues that the letter "M" in "mother tongue", which goes missing, is what drives him to write, it allows him to become one again – first as lover – then as other. Joris insists it was not a conscious rejection of the mother tongue but part of a process, which one might qualify as a sign of the nomad's development as subject in process or as part self-construction:

But the letter I was thinking of was that first letter of the word missing, which is also the first letter of the word mother. This is what happened to the language: it went from mother tongue to other tongue. At times [...] I have the hubris to claim that it was I who lopped it off, though when I sit down & face my job, writing, it becomes clear that this letter fell off on its own accord somehow & it is in the gap between mother tongue/ other tongue that I am written. (ANP "Missing M": 65)

The gap will not disappear and it remains the key feature of the poet's language; being in language or being in-between, in the emptiness of the gap: "In-between. I was indeed born between languages, and it is more & more this sense of between-ness that interests me, & that I want to inhabit." ("The Case of the Missing 'M'," ANP: 69) It is not a dual "on/ off" position or function. He wants something richer – with more languages and more sounds and words and meanings interacting. (See "A Glottal Choice," ANP: 59) Joris links the rejection of the mother tongue because for the poet/ noet **all languages are foreign**: "The noet learns & then writes in foreign languages (real or made-up ones) in order to come to the realization that all languages are foreign" (ANP "Notes": 45). This is a view he has also stated in another essay linking it to the notion of **language as (not) home** and his general conception of the nomad poet.⁷⁶¹

Being always on the way, the nomad cannot have a home, not even in language. In opposition to many prevalent views on migrants' relations to their language of origin, Joris claims that language is not home. In his poetry, Joris alludes to his mother tongue, Lëtzebuergesch, whose mainly oral use may, to some

⁷⁶¹ See extract commented in ch.1.2.2: "[O]ne always writes in a foreign language. Be it mother tongue or foreign language, language is always foreign, other, second – and only therefore can one find a home therein. All writing, all poetry is a trek toward language, our other, the station, the staying on the passage through time, I am a space traveller trying to write myself into an oasis corner, an amen corner as I circumambulate the polis of my life span, stopping here and there. ("A Glottal Choice," ANP: 60)

extent, account for his diffidence towards a mother tongue as poet's tongue.⁷⁶² Language for him is always translation, a point he has repeatedly made in talks and interviews.

Language is not home; likewise, poetry is not home either: "Poetry is [...] a desire to feel everywhere estranged, in touch with or at least reaching for the other, out of house & home. [...] The basic desire of poetry is therefore nomadic. "(ANP "Notes": 38). If movement is the all-governing principle of a nomad's life, standing still or finding a home, even in language, is inconceivable. Nonetheless, the nomad poet needs a moment of quiet to write his poems: for this purpose, Joris proposes the notion of *mawqif*, drawn from sufi thinkers, a moment of stillness indispensable for the process of writing (ANP "Notes": 47; see 6.3.1).

Joris underlines his position by referring to other poets who do not use their mother tongue. He mentions the project of an anthology, which he never carried out, and which aimed at giving more visibility to a certain community of writers who do not use their mother tongue for their creative work:

[B]ring up an unfinished project – I'm offering it here to anyone who wants to pick it up – I had concocted in the late seventies with my sadly departed old friend, the Swiss-Italian poet Franco Beltrametti (another true nomad poet): an anthology to be called BLOWS AGAINST THE MOTHER-TONGUE & which would gather the work of poets who had written nomadically in a language that was not their mother-tongue: from Ovid, say, to Anselm Hollo. ("Notes," ANP: 45-46)

When Joris conceived the project more than forty years back, the interest in literature by poets not writing in their mother tongue was only about to start. Even if he has not completed this particular project, much of his work confirms his ongoing concern with the topic. It also echoes the view of community that translanguaging creates (see Kellman 2000).

6.3.3.3 The middle voice, or a refutation of origin

When Joris reflects on the specificity of a nomad's language, he sometimes uses the intriguing notion of a middle voice, which appears particularly interesting for a conceptualization of a plurilingual speaker's voice. The middle voice refers to the nomad's rhizomatic way of speaking: It "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*." (ANP: X)

Originally, he may have derived the notion from a comparison between grammatical active and passive voices in his languages:⁷⁶³ the reflexive French, *la porte s'ouvre*, in English becomes *the door opens*: grammatically speaking it is active, yet we assume that the door is opened by some invisible, unnamed

⁷⁶² See ch. 5.3 and an extensive comment on the poem "My mouth knows a language/ my hand and eye cannot imitate" in ch. 7.

⁷⁶³ See "It was way back, over twenty years ago, that the decision was taken by me, or that the decision took and made me, (to keep playing on the passive / active opposition in the absence of an actual "middle voice" in American prose), not to write or think in French in order to try to escape that binarism." ("Notes," ANP: 65)

agent. For the learner of English as a second language, these differences between voice-use are a source of confusion. The term *middle voice*, as he explains, is neither an active nor a passive voice and consequently it suits the nomad well to describe how he feels about standing, moving and writing between languages:

One question for my poetics would thus be how to re-inscribe that older, now lost mode, the 'middle voice' into the poem. Besides syntactical disruption one of the ways I have found to achieve this is exactly via this multi-language stutter. Because it keeps questioning itself and what it says, it keeps telling me that language is not a home (...), that it is another form of exile, multiple exiles in fact. It is that realization that keeps me off-balance and alert as to the shifting sands underfoot. (Interview with Cockelbergh 2010)

It is for Joris "one of the core ways in which world, self and language have to come together" ("Samizdat," ANP: 126). Voice (in middle voice) points to its oral dimension. Calling it "a multi-language stutter" is Joris's way to describe the language of somebody who is not at home in any language. Yet, it is the constant tension between languages, the absence of a (too) comforting balance that motivates the writing. The nomad is always in exile; with relations to – but not an identification with – two or more languages: exile too, is multiple. "Middle" evokes an in-between space – the gap between mother tongue/other tongue that he refers to in another essay. It marks the difference that makes it difficult to locate a voice or a writer whose texts may show that he thinks in one language though he writes in another. The gap between mother and other tongue – the middle voice – as Joris indicates, also refers to the fundamental incompatibility between the world and language. Language is always translation. It leads him to speak of the gap between mother tongue and his other tongues, "the gap in which he is written" ("The Case of the Missing 'M'," 65), while all nomadic writing also is a movement towards "otherness."

The concept of middle voice as Joris explains it reveals important aspects of translingual writing. It covers linguistic and stylistic elements that the newcomer in English faces while also standing for the poet's positioning; he insists on remaining an outsider, whose languages differ from mainstream practices. The middle voice is **articulation**⁷⁶⁴ between differences. It is the mark of an individual who does not strive for complete merging with the voices of the new language, or of any language. One may argue that the middle voice is a sign of originality and creativity, a point to be enlarged under space in a nomad poetics and in Part III. While the middle voice stands for homelessness in language and literature it also signals the way to "otherness", a further aspect of translingual writing, on which Joris has extensively commented.

⁷⁶⁴ See ch. 1, for the sense given to "articulation."

6.3.3.4 “Otherness” in language and “othering” the language: the nomad’s response to multiplicity and difference

In reflections on otherness, complex perspectives on the nomad’s search for a language that responds to otherness appear. The comment on a short extract in chapter 1 already hints at a reciprocal process which characterizes nomadic writing. In his poetics, Joris elaborates on the process, showing that the challenges for the translingual writer (i.e. not writing in a first language or in one language only) are in fact challenges that any poet faces.

For a discovery of otherness in relation to movement and space, the nomad is a privileged figure. For the poet, otherness or “the other” is in the first place an aspect of language and a core principle of writing. Joris insists on the presence of an unbridgeable gap between the writer and what he says or writes. Writer and language are not the same. Either language or the writer is the other. Because of this difference or gap⁷⁶⁵, writing can only be conceived as movement to the other, or as between-ness, that other key notion of Joris’s nomadism. In his poetics, he sets up five points (“& now these five points”) that underpin his views; “other,” together with “language,” figures at the top of the list:

1. that language always has to do with the other, in fact, for the writer is the other.
2. that there is no single other, there are only a multitude of them – plurality; even multitudes of different multitudes – hetero-pluralities. (“Notes,” ANP: 29)

Point 1 introduces the relation: language (writing) is always about the other, and vice versa the nomad is always the other (who passes), whose language is other (other than other people’s language and other than the writer himself). The (nomadic) poet brings otherness, the other language, while he also discovers otherness.

Point 2 stresses the multiplicity of others, of other languages, inside of which new multitudes emerge. Joris speaks of “*hetero-pluralities*” thus stressing the openness of the concept itself. The hyphenated term suggests a connection with both heterolingualism and plurilingualism.

Point 3 states what this means for nomadic writing, and the poet’s position:

3. language others itself always again → nomadic writing is always “the practice of outside”; writing as nomadic practice – on the move from one other to another other. (“Notes,” ANP: 29)

Several ideas underlie this concise declaration:

“[L]anguage others itself always again”: The unexpected reflexive pronoun indicates that language is simultaneously subject and object of the action. The change does not require an external agent. The

⁷⁶⁵ This sense of difference could be further explored through Derrida’s concept of *différance*. See Joris, “Derrida-Celan Talk” 2016.

unusual expression foregrounds an ongoing process that happens naturally, it seems, while the nomad pursues his route. The poet's language changes constantly through contact with other texts or voices (in the multiple others' languages). I also see the phrase as an example of middle voice: the speaker refrains from a personal form such as "his, or my, language becomes other." Nonetheless, it is a hint at the poet as subject trying to assess a language that goes on changing.

"[T]he practice of outside" means that the nomadic poet remains an observer, not (personally) involved in what happens. It can also be read as a claim for objectivity and a general reticence towards poetry as the expression of subjective viewpoints. We have seen that like Deleuze and Guattari Joris is wary of subjectivity. The formulation also recalls the expression of another nomadic poet, Kenneth White who speaks of *la figure du dehors* and *l'homme du dehors*⁷⁶⁶ alluding to the metaphorical dimension of the concept as much as to a literal outdoor figure, the latter much less prominent in Joris.

"The practice of outside" is an idea that Joris takes up in many other texts, through images of discovery and sharing, and through notions of *errance* and *dérive* ("ReadySteadyBlog," JM: 45; see above). It is a process which is closely linked to his conception of language:

A nomad poetics needs mindfulness. In & of the drift (*dérive*) there is no at-home-ness here but only an ever more displaced drifting. The fallacy would be to think of language as at-home-ness while "all else" drifts, because for language to be accurate to the condition of nomadity, it too has to be drifting, to be "on the way" as Celan puts it. ("Notes," ANP: 26)

"[O]n the move from one other to another other": While the words recall the unbridgeable gap and irreducible difference between the writer and his language, the reference to movement also evokes a dialogical practice while it reinforces the idea of multiplicity and of complex transformation processes. It also suggests the multifaceted process of moving from one language to another, which can never be a one to one procedure of translation.

Not only language "others itself": Joris also thinks about what the nomadic writer does or how the process of writing others or alters the language.

Exposing the strangeness of language/s, as a way of othering

All poetry is a transformation of ordinary language while the nomad poet adds further dimensions through language multiplicity. How othering the language can be understood as an aspect of writing in all one's languages gradually emerges in the poet's theoretical texts.

⁷⁶⁶ See ch. 3: Kenneth White, *La figure du dehors*, is the title of an early essay published in 1982; *Henry Thoreau, l'homme du dehors* is the title of the original essay included in *L'esprit nomade*; see note page 6.

Making language look or sound different from ordinary or standardized forms involves using a great heterogeneity of words and texts, an approach on which Joris provides numerous reflections in his theoretical and poetic work: it is up to readers to gather the notes and comments for an insight into the process. In his writings, we find a rich spectrum of explicit and integrated heterolingual elements, all traces of encounters with others, while the use of a dominant language (English in his case) ensures the respect of his audience's mostly monolingual expectations.⁷⁶⁷

Othering the language is Joris's understanding of heterolingual texts and translingual writing processes. For him, it consists in creating surprise or confusion in readers. A nomad's texts question the fragile balance between two or more worlds and cultures while they also challenge whatever settled people may take for granted by offering unexpected perspectives triggered through novel views on language.

Othering corresponds at least partly to what the poet means when he speaks of "writing as in all one's languages." He does not provide a ready-made list of devices for nomad multilingual poets to use, though from his texts and reflections we can gather the most important devices, like insertions of foreign words. His theoretical texts rather aim at uncovering *the motivation behind the attempts* at othering the language. The use of multilingual elements is not just "showing off" his knowledge or a non-native speaker's easy and careless compliance with language-switching. *Othering the language* – or translingual writing – is part of an overall process of questioning or constructing reality. He quotes Paul Celan: "Reality is not simply there, it must be searched for and won." (ANP "Century": 4). This statement is also the last of his five points on the poet's language:

That is the fin mot, last words, toward the fin-de-siècle, or a poetics thereof. (Celan's phrase is the quest, as it includes the critique of the "society of the spectacle" – & of the whole specular natures of our mis-takes on the real.) ("Notes," ANP: 30)

Joris's aim is not to create entertainment or spectacle, nor mimesis or a mirroring of reality: His use of the term "specular" together with spectacle is a language game, which becomes an example of linguistic investigation, aiming to show neglected relations between words or ideas.

The nomad poet, wandering between languages can juxtapose, compare, question the meaning of words to gain insights that the monolingual writer cannot obtain. For the nomad, being confused by the **strangeness of languages** is a privileged position for his investigations. The wider his range of enquiry and the greater the uncertainty, the better the poet can pursue his study of a multidimensional reality. An essay, or rather an assemblage of reflections, entitled "St/range: An uncertain range," (ANP: 17- 22)

⁷⁶⁷ See ch. 3 and compare to views on multilingual writers' approach of otherness, in particular the notion of heterolingual ethos as developed by Suchet (2014).

provides many examples of experiences of this strangeness, which are particularly productive for the multilingual poet. Here are two examples of experiences with linguistic strangeness. The first derives from a problem of translation of his poetry into French:

Though French certainly isn't home either, as no language is, despite our desire to make it so. Language, even after the long trek through the dictionaries, remains the stranger, the other, we want to engage – and which always and irremediably so remains the outside. ("St/range: an uncertain range," ANP: 20)

The second example (number 2; no pun intended!), linked to the German word "Sekunde," is approached from various literary and linguistic perspectives:

We are our home, this infinitesimal second – die Sekunde, diese Kunde (Werner Hamacher thus reads a line from Celan) – of presence to ourselves we imagine in retrospect to have been us present to ourselves [...] a here [...] that has become a there. [...] A there that does not exist, is always already an ex- (eghs? eks? As above, but also here now heard as ek-stasy, to stand outside, always outside & in the strange) if it "is" at all, but really, neither back there nor ahead, as René Daumal says: "I'm going towards a future that does not exist: leaving every minute a new corpse behind me." His was a slower time: this giddy fin-de-siècle makes that every second. "Sirrt die Sekunde." Atom of time. One by one. Second to none. Uncuttable from Latin *secare*, to cut to split (ANP "St/range: 20)

Strangeness of language echoes the strangeness of time and cannot be dissociated from certain positions and concepts of space. Such preliminary thoughts about multilingual interactions also involve examples of *othering* the meaning and the syntax: "in the strange," based on the French expression "à l'étranger" is strange in English but evokes the German phrase "in der Fremde," while when othered again it becomes the impossible "dans l'étrange."⁷⁶⁸

The examples show that reflections on words in different languages are based on sounds as much as on visual features of spelling. For the nomad poet it is important to **get an ear and an eye for differences**, which is the basis for othering the language: a multilingual practice involves thinking about differences and finding a middle voice.

I read Joris's collection of notes also as echoes of his own experiences with language learning. Before it becomes a way of writing, *othering* the language is part of listening and reading processes; this is especially the case with translingual writers. They "transform" the words on the page, often by imagining what they could be like in another language. It is a kind of spontaneous translation, often similar to language games, such as those that Doris Sommer has collected in *Bilingual games. Some Literary Investigations* (2003).

⁷⁶⁸ These links could be pursued with Jean Portante's rich explorations of the word "étrange" (*L'Étrange Langue* 2002).

Summing up:

Othering the language corresponds to the key feature of a nomadic activity: it is transformation either willed by the nomad who looks and listens with multiple ears and eyes and questions the realities they meet, or, it is, as Joris puts it, the language that others itself: changes and transformations are a natural process that result from contact with others.

Techniques for othering the language

A few techniques stand out and reflect translingual writing strategies present in the theoretical texts:

Insertions of foreign words: they were first a way for the multilingual poet to “weave his languages together” (ANP: 112). The words of others are indications of the inevitable *intertextuality* of texts (JM: 45). They also signal the poet’s wish to belong to *a community of writers*:

“Corps étrangers” the French say for what we call “foreign bodies”: outside medicine, outside the text, citations, grafts, prosthetic devices. What makes the strangeness of my own texts more familiar and at times simply bearable for me is to encounter in them familiar quotes, sentences I love and have repeated to myself for a long time after finding and “removing” them from the texts of other writers. (“St/range: an uncertain range,” ANP: 20-21)

A study of etymologies. For the nomad the origin of words uncovers often neglected dimensions, unexpected relations, especially across languages. They are an important tool for poetic writing. As Joris says, false etymologies are equally productive. “My mouth knows a language” (poem discussed in 7.3.1) provides an excellent example of his use of authentic and imagined etymologies in the search of meaning (in that case, the meaning of mother tongue)

Puns and word games. Their use is often similar to that of (fake) etymologies. Above all, they help to question the surface meaning of words; often his examples also uncover the workings of plurilingual minds, for whom a word may mean different things according to the language in which the reader/listener locates it.⁷⁶⁹

It is an incomplete inventory. More examples will follow in Part III: With the focus on poems, the wide spectrum of heterolingual elements in texts will be discussed, notably features such as *polysemy*, *ghosting* and *palimpsestuous processes*.

6.3.3.5 Speaking and writing “BAROCCO”

BAROCCO is a puzzling headword for a section of “Nomad Century Ahead” (ANP: 7). It turns out to be *a deep image*, as Joris understands it, and the meaning and origin of Barocco are well worth exploring.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁹ There is some similarity with processes observed in language learners; cf. Doris Sommer 2003; 2004.

⁷⁷⁰ There is another reference to *lingo-barocco* in section 3 of “Nomad Century Ahead” (ANP: 6).

On the one hand, the word establishes a connection between the nomad poet's language and *baroque*, the irregular, flamboyant style of architecture, characterized by its fanciful ornamentation, occasionally perceived as ugly or monstrous excrescences. On the other hand, we may wonder why Joris uses the foreign variety *Barocco*. Dictionaries show possible motivations: *Barocco* is the Portuguese word for an imperfect, irregularly shaped pearl and possibly derives from the Latin *verruca* for wart. It may also be a reference to "Concerto Barocco," the ballet whose choreography George Balanchine wrote to a Bach concerto⁷⁷¹ for students in New York. The ballet is then an example of how Joris, following Glissant's sense of a poetics of relation, conceives nomadic movement in poetry and the arts and their ability to establish connections between periods and cultures: "Concerto Barocco" associates a 20th century Russian choreographer, 18th century music by a German composer and an American production travelling all over the world to become part of the repertory of the *Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo* – the famous itinerant company based in Paris.⁷⁷²

What Joris's allusion seems to hint at is a certain idea of *baroque* as mobile, multiple, irregular, heterogeneous, thus suggesting that the nomad poet's texts with echoes from multiple languages are like baroque artworks. However controversial their aesthetic qualities have been in the eyes of some critics, no one would deny their relevance.⁷⁷³ Accordingly, in a clandestine way, the reference to BAROCCO is a recognition of the outsider's language and writing.

6.3.4 *Thinking through dimensions of space*

An innovative, non-Euclidean, rhizomatic concept of space, involving constant movement, accretion and change, but no centre and no separating/ dividing borders, dominates nomads' thinking and writing. How then approach space in nomadic poetry? (Interview with Cockelbergh 2010)

Notions of space are fundamental in **an open-field poetics of citation and post-collage**.

In Joris's poetics, space is where difference appears. The distinction between *poetry OF space* and *poetry AS space* is crucial for a first approach of his notions of space.⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁷¹ Concerto in D minor for 2 violins (BWV 1043), see <http://balanchine.com/concerto-barocco/>

⁷⁷² This is what I could gather from various sources; the important point is not an exhaustive account of the history of the Ballet Russe but Joris's evocation of interaction or collage in texts that resonate in different languages and cultural contexts.

⁷⁷³ A more elaborate comparison with baroque art would have to include further connotations of baroque, such as rebellion but also transience and death.

⁷⁷⁴ Two studies have proved helpful: Ian Davidson, *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry* (2009), which includes references to Joris's poetics; Heather H. Yeung, *Spatial Engagement with Poetry. Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies* (2015).

If the aim is to write a poetry OF space, the thematic dimension is preponderant. This is not Joris's understanding; his main concern is not for visible marks of cultural diversity or natural settings.

His goal is renewal through form and space pertains to the very nature of the poetic text. New ways of writing can address issues of linguistic, literary and political change as effectively as new ideas. To map Joris's unconventional writing forms, one needs first of all to forget traditional genres. (See ch. 4) Joris's views on this matter are close to those of Charles Bernstein⁷⁷⁵ who writes in the introduction of his *Poetics* (1992):

Within the emerging cultural space of diversity [...] [d]ifference is confined to subject matter and thematic material, a.k.a. Local color, excluding the formal innovations that challenge those dominant paradigms of representations. Indeed, the social and political meaning of sound, vernacular, non-traditional rhythms – that is those things that make a text a poem – are often discounted as negligible in the fetishizing of narrative and theme; formal values being left for a misconceived avant-garde. (Charles Bernstein, *A Poetics* 1992: 6-7)

Poetry AS space is how Joris too conceives his writing: formal innovations signal difference, also those differences that mark new perspectives on translingual processes. The spatial dimension of language movements is often linked to narratives of migration, whereas Joris discloses further dimensions, which characterize poetic writing and the articulation of a poetics. I will concentrate on **two spatial features of his poetics** that complement each other through a foregrounding of texts as writing process, space and movement. One is his use of *the page as space* to underline his conception of a nomadic poetics (more examples of space and languages interrelated on the page in Part III); the other concerns his *approach of collage and post-collage*, as it promises insights into complex practices of text and language mixing.

⁷⁷⁵ Bernstein is a prominent member of the so called L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets, a group to which Joris was also close for a while.

6.3.4.1 The page as space: framing and citational practices

Better than long explanations, examples of Joris's writing show how he implements his ideas on nomadic writing. Thus, a striking feature of "Notes Toward a Nomadic Poetics" and of a few other pieces in *A Nomad Poetics*⁷⁷⁶ is their form, itself a representation of multiplicity and a **dismissal of texts as unitary, closed spaces**.

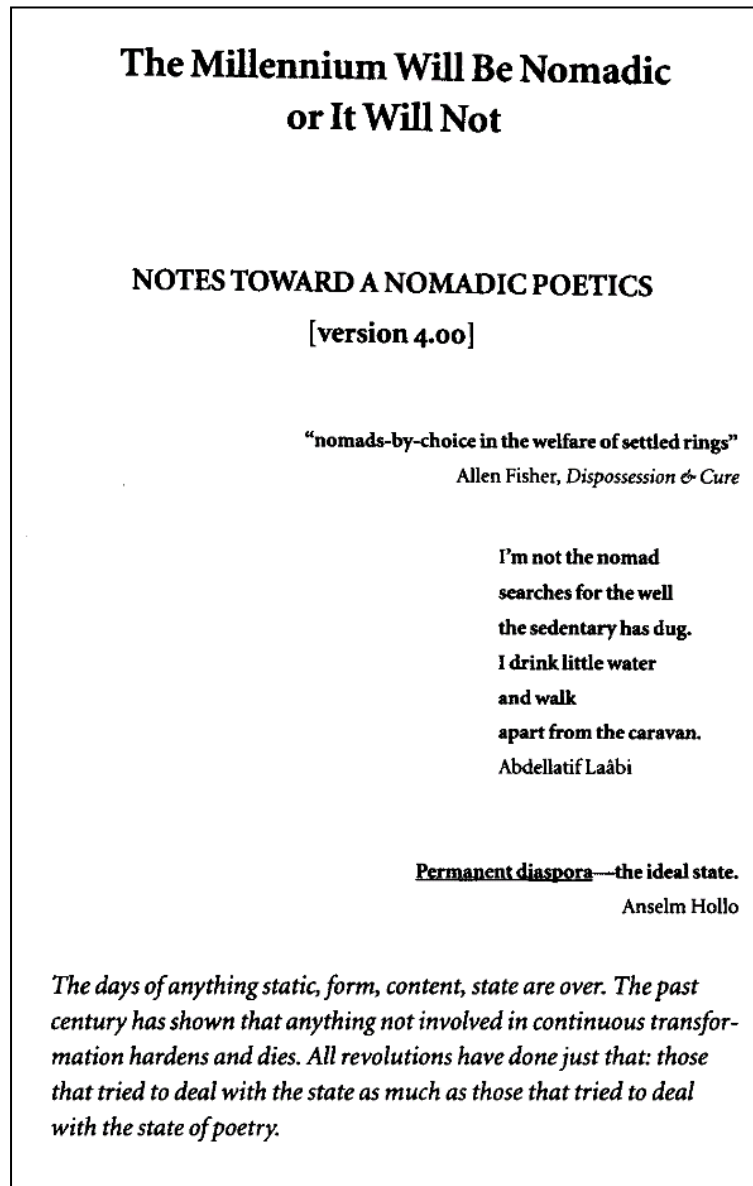


Figure 9. Pierre Joris: Opening page of "Notes Toward a Nomadic Poetics"

⁷⁷⁶ Notably the pieces entitled "Nomad Century Ahead" (the title presented in an idiosyncratic typographical form); and a text entitled "Re 'The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy,'" (Joris's presentation of a publication edited by Charles Bernstein).

The overall motto, “The Millenium Will be Nomadic or It Will Not,” in the form of a logical proposition, anticipates the final lines of the text⁷⁷⁷ It may be read as declaration encapsulating all the ideas that follow. “*Notes Toward ...*” The words evoke the provisional or transitory nature of the proposed text, an indication which is reinforced by the subtitle [version 4.00].

The three epigraphs situate this nomadic text, written from an American location, in a polyphonic and multilingual context, juxtaposing the voices of a British, a Moroccan and a Finnish (-American) poet. They are immediately followed by yet other voices: The italics used in the opening paragraph, “The days of anything static ...” seem to indicate the passage as a citation; it is an unacknowledged but recognizable quotation from the work of Deleuze/Guattari.⁷⁷⁸ Poetry and critical writing thus from the start appear side by side.

The first page of “Notes toward a nomadic poetics” is a good example of Joris’s citational practice, which in many of his publications characterizes the front matter or first pages. Epigraphs as frames, often from different linguistic and cultural sources, open and situate the space(s) of the subsequent text.

In the rest of the 30-page long text, the writing does not follow the usual linear outline of a well-structured essay but rather presents multiple lines or routes of thought. They are so-called “lines of flight”, one of the key expressions borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari,⁷⁷⁹ which Joris repeatedly uses to describe movement. “Notes Toward a Nomadic Poetics” is a strikingly hybrid piece. As collection of sometimes very short passages only tenuously linked, it leaves the impression of fragmentary writing.⁷⁸⁰ Partly structured as *dialogue* with Brian Massumi⁷⁸¹ who figures as respondent offering his perspective, the writing consists of short paragraphs, bulleted passages, numerous references and extensive quoting from a wide range of sources. It is a series of loosely related declarations and general statements about writing, often reminiscent of a manifesto.⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁷The paradigmatic statement: “The millennium will be nomadic or it will not be: this is/ paradigmatic, unless we learn the art of moving & connecting all/ contents, all languages, all machines we will be the tail of the 20C/ tail wagged by the 19C dog.” (“Notes,” ANP: 55)

⁷⁷⁸ An attentive reader will remember that the same passage figures a few pages ahead as one of the constitutive parts of “Nomad Century Ahead.” (ANP: 6)

⁷⁷⁹ « Lignes de fuite: pour un autre monde des possibles ; ni rapport de deux mais entre-deux, frontière ou *ligne de fuite*. » (*Mille Plateaux*). See similar statements in Joris: “A nomadic language of affects, of free lines of erotic flight (ANP: 7) ; “A truly open field, visualizable as a rhizomatic space with lines of flight shooting off in all directions [...] in cyberspace” (ANP 91); “the lines of flight of a Picasso poem” (ANP 115); On lines of flight in poetry and baseball: “no circumscribed ‘end-zone,’ no net-bound goal, no standard-sized & -sized rectangle” (ANP: 122).

⁷⁸⁰ More on fragmentary writing in relation to *The Gulf* and Maurice Blanchot in ch. 9.2.

⁷⁸¹ Brian Massumi is the English translator of *Mille Plateaux*, to which he contributed an extensive introduction.

⁷⁸² As in particular critics have pointed out - see below under Reception.

A caravan advancing in the desert is a striking image for the link between movement and space; Joris uses it to evoke the movement of language in texts: “The caravan of syntax discovers it, the new word, as it, the sentence, pushes into the not-yet-written, the word comes, or is given – become so itself, as may be, however it happens.” (“Notes,” ANP: 50).

Typographically, the fragmentation, or *morcellement* of the text is underlined by the use of different fonts (words in bold, italics, or underlined). Interestingly, the final part, a narrative account of pre-Islamic poetry, marks another break by introducing a quite different voice, topic and perspective.

Thinking through what writing space suits the nomadic poet, one idea predominates: it must be an **open form**, with broken lines, or “windows” opening to further writing movements. Words that would best qualify such nomadic writing are *fragments, shards, collage, mosaic, run-on notes*. They describe Joris’s texts on poetics but also his imaginative (poetic) work: his poetry follows a similar predilection for open forms and a diversity of voices, structures or rhythms.⁷⁸³ In his poetics, Joris abolishes the borders between inside and outside the poem and breaks the warp of the text: Words on the page merge with other voices and languages. This is in line with views on the poet as border worker or *xenos* figure (“Notes,” ANP: 35) and on forms of implicit heterolingualism: the voice in the text moves beyond the space of the page and others itself through merging with voices from outside.

6.3.4.2 From collage to post-collage as space for translingual writing

His elaborate comments on collage – and above all post-collage – appear to be revelatory for the present enquiry, as they provide insights that can easily be connected with features of heterolingualism.

One may start from a view of collage as an assemblage of words and texts in different languages or uttered by different voices. Indeed, the collection of short passages in “Nomad Century Ahead” can already suggest the link between collage (“SNIP-SNAP,” ANP: 4), space (“OPENING SPACE,” ANP: 5) and the poet’s languages (“BAROCCO,” ANP: 7). Citational practices as shown above and basic forms of collage are closely linked features of a nomad poetics which is associated with the concept of *dérive*⁷⁸⁴ – meaning poetic work derives from other writers and most importantly gets its *drift* from their texts.

Joris’s survey of collage practices in the first decades of the twentieth century reveals its many variations, which have undoubtedly influenced his own writing. He does not specifically refer to interlingual

⁷⁸³ A *Nomad Poetics* however also includes well argued essays which in form correspond to general academic practices.

⁷⁸⁴ See ch 3.2 for *dérive*.

collages⁷⁸⁵; in general, he argues in favour of new ways of approaching collage, especially to rid the term from its association with a method that signals a lack of originality.

Collage, in his eyes, indicates a far-reaching epistemic change in writing, signaling the break with the search for “an overall signifying idea” (Bernstein):

What collage does is to register both in a ludic surface play and in depth – though that very difference (between surface & depth) is one the new episteme would tend to abolish –the immense range of changes the 20C proposed: questions of original vs. reproduction, questions brought about by the new relativism in matters of time and space, in matters of subject and object (Heisenberg), questions of representation and mimesis that had been at the core of European aesthetics for 2500 years, questions also of new technologies. (“Collage & Post-Collage,” ANP: 87)

This passage, implicitly, also states the importance of various levels of translation or translanguaging writing, which a nomad’s work must strive to achieve. The abolition of difference between surface and depth can be read as a variation of an overall view on implicit and explicit heterolingualism or voices crossing in texts – which Suchet, with a hint at Glissant’s poetics, refers to as *l’imaginaire des langues*.

Joris turns post-collage practices into a conceptual tool that rejects former understandings of a playful cutting-up and pasting together. They are inadequate for a poetics that relies on rhizomatic growth, the abolition of boundaries and mobility: collage stands for clear-cut borders and countable items that make up the whole picture or text: it foregrounds juxtaposition not the creation of new texts or voices. Collage, as Joris shows, is but one stage in an artist’s development.⁷⁸⁶

Many of the points he makes in support of “post-collage” in a later essay entitled “The Seamlessly Nomadic Future of Collage” are in significant ways linked to understandings of multiple languages in writing. He extensively refers to Derrida: one short quotation from *Marges de la philosophie* (1972), describing the effect of a citation cut-off for insertion into a verbal collage, gives insight into how it works:

“Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written [...], in a small or a large unit, can be cited, put between quotation marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engineering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable.” [1972: 381] (quoted from “The Seamlessly Nomadic Future of Collage,” *Justifying the Margins*: 25)

What this means when the citational grafting involves a new language is what Joris attempts to implement in his writings – even through this very quotation from Derrida’s French text, which he inserts in an English

⁷⁸⁵ This aspect was not relevant for the context of his talk, which he gave in London in memory of the poet Eric Mottram (“Collage & Post-Collage,” ANP: 83).

⁷⁸⁶ See his references to Picasso who was also a translanguaging poet (“The Nomadism of Pablo Picasso,” ANP: 115–118) and the foreword to his translation of *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz and Other Writings*, produced in cooperation with Jerome Rothenberg.

translation. Similarly he refers to Gregory Ulmer's description of Derrida's idea of the cited passage as "morsel" or "bite," a word which in French as "morceau" evokes even more contexts than "bite."⁷⁸⁷

In search of variants of **collage without visible joints**, junctures, lines of separation or seams that stitch the parts together, he proposes "seamless" collages for the future, that is writing where texts, words and voices from different sources flow together. With the word *seam*/lessly, recalling the homophone "*seem*," the title of the essay suggests an illusory or deceptive jointure. The citation is there and yet hidden, much like the examples of latent and imaginary heterolingualism.

Joris refers to other concepts used in critical thought (by Deleuze as well as Derrida)⁷⁸⁸ to clarify his notion of post-collage or writing and citing without seams: *the fold (le pli)* is a productive image to evoke the words and voices that become masked or abscond in nomadic writing processes, where all texts are understood to echo other texts. In consecutive, multiple translation processes folds become plural, an image of invisible space hidden from the surface of the page, referring to a community of writers. (ANP "Community of Translation," ANP: 109)

In the context of collage, he explains his fascination with the poem as **palimpsest** discovered through the work of Ezra Pound ("Lignes de Fugues/ Lettres de fuites. Interview with Cockelbergh 2010; more on palimpsestic features in Part III).

For a focus on the potential that new forms of collage offer for translingual perspectives, **the hypertext** as electronic imitation of collages on paper plays a primary role, as it opens nomadic verbal space to interrelations with images and sounds – a challenge that Joris takes up in works like *The Gulf* and *The Agony of IB*, discussed in Part III.

This is how he describes the open space of nomadic writing today:

A truly open field, visualizable as rhizomatic space with lines of flight shooting off in all directions, with no up/down, front/back or left/right spatial hierarchization, able to incorporate quasi -instant links to any other text or objects in cyberspace [...] but also able to incorporate – or simply consist of – simultaneous image and sound nodes or virtual objects in three dimensions [...] ("Collage & Post-Collage" ANP: 91)

⁷⁸⁷ Notions of collage and citation anticipate ch. 7.3: A citation without quotation marks is the *poet's* version of collage: In an essay dedicated to the work of Celan, Joris examines the rich effect of an unidentified anonymous citation. It becomes as he shows through selected examples "Polysemy without mask," the phrase which he has chosen to entitle the introduction of his translation of Paul Celan: *Selections* (2005).

⁷⁸⁸ For a detailed explanation of the Deleuzian concept of the fold, see "Collage & Post-Collage," ANP: 89-90.

At the end of the 20th century, the vision of Deleuzian war machines as cyberpoetics, (cf Braidotti's explanations in ch. 3.2.5), was revolutionary and offered totally new ways of mapping literature and reconceptualizing poetic relations.⁷⁸⁹

Wrapping up, one can say that the relation between space and language as words and voices that travel appear as a significant aspect of Joris's conceptualization of *writing across languages*. Reading his reflections on collage with particular attention to languages, one imagines what a nomad's multilingual collage could look like.

The in-depth investigations of collage, post-collage and translingual nomadic writing give an idea of what the phrase "writing in all my/ his/ one's" languages implies for a nomadic poetics. They foreshadow his attempts at finding new ways of creating heterolingual texts in which diverse language bits – or bites – are immersed in texts that reject clear boundaries. Collage raises questions about the appearance of texts but also about voices behind the surface, voices that are *ghosting* the writing process.

6.3.5 *Thinking through translation as a fundamental feature of a nomadic poetics*

Always between and always in movement, the nomad is primarily a translator who gathers reflections on the ways in which languages circulate. Joris's poetics relies on a broad sense of translation, as any process of carrying across, involving a personal dimension before it becomes a condition for writing. He starts from what Julia Kristeva calls the *chora*, defined as "a temporary articulation" ("Nomadic Century Ahead," ANP: 5), to which Joris refers when he explains the multilingual process from which his poems emerge:

I often see my poems as multilayered homophonic translations of themselves from some unknown *Ur-language* or *chora*, playing on the discrepancies that arise when different sound- or sign-structures emerge to describe the same (or is it the same?) thing or experience or emotion or idea. ("Lignes de fugues/ Lettres de fuites," interview with Cockelbergh 2010)

A similar perspective on translation describing also the rise and development of self appears in a quotation⁷⁹⁰ that Joris inserts at the end of a poem: "We are initially translators then; and in coming into our native speech learn that language as we translate our selves into language." ("Getting There" in *Poasis*: 189) The notion of translating the self, which is prominent in studies of translingual writers, thus

⁷⁸⁹ For more references to cyberpoetics in Joris's work, see "Notes," ANP: 42-43; and "Open Letter," ANP: 137. Ideas on cyberpoetics are in line with present-day debates on digital humanities and allow revisiting practices of literary mapping, such as the work of Franco Moretti (2005). Joris's vision moreover asks for an inclusion of trans-language relations.

⁷⁹⁰ The words are attributed to R.D., the initials standing for Robert Duncan, an American poet, who has played an important part in his development as poet.

also underpins Joris's views on writing as always translation. As we have seen, he prefers to speak of a middle voice, which articulates different movements.

*A nomadic poetics of translation is not a theory of translation.*⁷⁹¹ It raises questions about transformation, challenges views on the nature of language multiplicity and is intimately linked to experiences of writing practice. The sources for this section therefore include essays, interviews as well as introductions he wrote for work of other poets that he translated.

6.3.5.1 "Writing is translation"

Joris has often repeated this statement and elucidated how he understands the process. Writing is translation and at the same time it is more, and different. This is what needs further thinking through. His introduction to *4X1*, a collection of his translations of works in French and German by Tristan Tzara, Rainer Maria Rilke, Jean-Pierre Duprey and Habib Tengour, opens with an essential declaration:

I read to write. The closest reading I have yet discovered is translation. Which is writing. And thus a circle or, hopefully, a spiral is set in motion. The pleasure of reading combines with the desire to write to engender a third, the work of translation. (*4X1*:5)

Unlike the largely impersonal declarations of "Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics," the comments on writing as linked to translation are those of a poet who reflects on his practice. These few lines on *reading, translating and writing* represent a concise summary of his nomadic poetics. They are not consecutive stages but rather parallel activities continuously interacting with each other. The description of the process stresses an ongoing interrelationship, while the spiralling movement points to the creation of a new space: translating, with the language swirls it involves, goes beyond rendering an equivalent of the text that has been read.

Reading, writing, translating are complex multilingual processes of language reception and active language work. In everyday communication, one could replace *reading* by listening, and *writing* by speaking. From there would follow "the closest *listening* (understood as *listening* for meaning making, for signs of difference or authenticity) is translating or putting into one's own words. Joris relies on the memory of his early experiences (of written languages) and recalls how as a young boy he responded to

⁷⁹¹ I will not deal with translation issues that require a close reading of his translation work and familiarity with translation studies and its methodologies. My focus is on aspects of translation as Joris describes them in relation with his poetics, i.e. his views on creating his own literary texts. Joris's views on translation show parallels with the developments that translation studies have witnessed in the past decades, often in association with research in Comparative literature or World Literature (for example the work of Edwin Gentzler, Susan Bassnett, Barbara Cassin, Emily Apter, David Damrosch, Rainier Grutman, Myriam Suchet).

books and foreign languages by copying selected elements. These experiences later become a central part of his poetics:

[A]s a young boy playing/ writing/ enacting the epic of heroic adventure, I was already caught in reading/ writing in/ from different languages & translating: I spent much time scouring Karl May's travel and adventure novels, copying out the Mescalero Apache, Sioux, Comanche, Arab, Persian, Russian, Spanish, American language microliths ⁷⁹² embedded in its many volumes and using them to shape my first writings, which were hero-lists, kinship-lines, tribal schemata, ready-made sentences for explorers and nomadic wanderers, expletives, secret codes, etcetera. I had names: Ni-kun-ta, Chingachgooch, Hadji Halef Omar Ben Hadji Abul Abbas Ibn Hadji Dawudh al Gossarah, Kara Ben Nemsi, Tatanka Yotanka, Winnetou, Gall, Uncas. (4X1:5-6) ⁷⁹³

He also describes later encounters with multilingualism in literature, such as the modernists' insertions of literary quotations. In particular, Ezra Pound's work struck him with its innumerable language shifts. This is how he describes his fascination with *Cathay* (1915), the collection of classical Chinese poetry that Pound translated into English:

These were poems by Pound, yet obviously also (or foremost?) translations from the Chinese. "Exile's letter"⁷⁹⁴ was a shock of recognition and premonition – my favorite for reasons I could only partially explain to myself, though immediately fascinated by the discovery that even personal names are not immune to translation: the poet's name, "Rihaku," was a Japanese translation / transcription of the Chinese name "Li Po." Then came the Cantos, which open with a poem that is also simultaneously a translation (forward into English but also backward into a form derived from Anglo-Saxon poetics) of a translation (forward from Greek to Latin) and an homage to that medieval translator. (4X1:6)

In this passage, Joris highlights several aspects of nomadism and multilingualism, which have marked his view of literature from the start:

- the link between exile and writing, as well as the association of linguistic and physical displacement;
- the role of translation for movements of texts across several languages;
- temporal and spatial elements and multidirectional movements of translations;
- the fact that translation allows access to remote voices and yet familiar, recognizable situations.

⁷⁹² Literally microliths are little precious stones; Joris probably borrowed the term from Celan who called his short prose texts "Mikrolithen." They have been published posthumously *Mikrolithen sinds, Steinchen*, the collected posthumous prose as edited by Barbara Wiedemann and Bertrand Badiou & published by Suhrkamp Verlag in 2005. [Joris using the term in the Introduction to *4X1*, first published in 2002, must have been aware of Celan's words before the texts were published; he has subsequently translated Celan's prose writings (aphorisms, narrative fragments, dialogues, notes, theoretical-critical fragments, unsent letters & other texts) published in 2020.

⁷⁹³ A similar text is commented in ch. 5.

⁷⁹⁴ From the Chinese text by Li Po, the great Chinese poet; written by him while in exile about 760 A. D., to the Hereditary War-Councillor of Shu, "recollecting former companionship." <https://www.bartleby.com/265/299.html>

He discovers what nomadic writing/ translation is, or rather what it is not: a one to one rendering or the transfer from one homogeneous standardized language into another homogeneous standardized language. Reading the poems in *Cathay* has made him aware of multiple interferences in all texts: like the “original” text, the translated text is multiple. Pound as poet, reader, translator has had a lasting influence on Joris’s views, not as a model, but **as work to start from**. His own practice of multilingual poetic writing is never that of the modernist Pound, which made him think about how as a nomad poet he could move further.

Learning to write (poetry) in another language then appears to have many parallels with learning to become an independent user of a new language. The processes that Joris describes show striking similarities with studies of languaging and translanguaging: what distinguishes his thinking is the foregrounding of written words rather than oral interaction.⁷⁹⁵

The reading – writing – translating process has developed as a natural process, later to become theorized as **intertextuality across languages**. He rejects any notion of pure inspiration and originality: “any text is intertextual to begin with, and consists of shards and fragments, grafts and shoots from wherever (knowingly or unknowingly) the poet gets them.” (4X1: 6-7). He recalls Barthes’ image of text as a constant weaving process: “Text, from *textum*, is linked to matters of weaving, of strands woven together, of different materials, different colours, different looms.” (4X1: 7). Joris’s contribution consists in looking at the weaving as including strands from different languages, an aspect that theories of intertextuality for a long time tended to overlook.⁷⁹⁶ Through the image of weaving, Joris hints at a broad understanding of *language*, which in his view should include a great diversity of threads, like various national languages, dialects, and idiolects.

A text woven with strands from different linguistic sources is not the same as collage: the image of weaving blurs or eliminates clear-cut borderlines and allows a representation of the multidimensional complexity that all nomadic writing – works of translation or the poet’s own work – should render. In critical theory (Deleuze, Derrida) more images of texts are used to refer to aspects of cloth (e.g. the fold)

⁷⁹⁵ What Joris describes shows parallels with mediation processes as proposed by Lev Vygotsky and further developed by J.P. Lantolf and Claire Kramsch or Merrill Swain’s input- output concepts recently reconceived as *languaging* processes.

⁷⁹⁶ See: In *Palimpsestes*, Genette locates all examples of foreign language issues in texts within the field studies of translation, as different from literary studies 1982:293 ff.) In her study *Intertextuality. Debates and Contexts* (2003), Mary Orr includes theories from many cultural traditions and shows the importance of a multilingual *critical* approach. What multiple languages do to texts, writers and readers is less evident, though other papers show her interest in relations between intertextuality and translation in novels. Allen Graham, in the second edition of *Intertextuality* (2011) adds a chapter on adaptation studies and proposes the notion of remediation (referring to new media) but the book does not mention the presence of different *languages* in texts.

and to sewing (e.g. seams), which Joris explores for an analysis of complexity, movement, borders and the passing of borders (*débordement*), for instance in the essay “Community of Translation” included in *A Nomad Poetics*.

6.3.5.2 “Ghosting” and other nomadic aspects of translational writing

Nomadic translation is always in movement and therefore multiple. It is conceived as translation not from one language into another, but from a text always already in many languages, with multiple underlying voices, into another text in a language that is multiple.

Literary texts often have a nomadic history and are the outcomes of **long routes of transmission**. For Joris, the focus must not be on a single point of origin. The last pages of “Notes Toward a Nomadic Poetics” are Joris’s reflections on a pre-Islamic ode and his translation of the poem. They sum up the complexities or the many folds of nomadic *writing – reading – translating*.

To close with, let’s open an older book to look at how such a nomadic poetics is profoundly at work in the great Bedouin poetries – the pre-Islamic *mu’allaqat* or odes – that are so often described as stilted, over determined, static poems because of their presumably predetermined closed structures and monorhymes. In fact, these poems can be seen exactly as nomadic *dérives*, or as rhizomatic structures. (“Notes,” ANP: 50)

He then describes his favourite ode by Ibn Tarafah before commenting on the transformative nature of translation. The form, the rhyme scheme and the high rhetoric are totally “alien to American poetry & voice” and impossible to render in English today:

In fact translations that try to reproduce it sound like bad late Victorian or Tennysonian orientalism. My nomadic translation then comes via a nearly Japanese, haiku-esque decision to lop off the rhetoric, leave the image clusters & organize them [...] into short stanzas. (“Notes,” ANP: 53)

The translation of the ode is a nomadic process: this means not only it is in movement and multiple: a nomadic translation must also be located in the translator’s (and reader’s) cultural environment. Yet it can integrate other, culturally remote poetic forms (like haiku in this case) if they help render what the translator believes to be important in the original text. Joris holds a decentralized view of language and literature. The focus is not on the great, established cultural centres (like Paris or London) and routes between them but on all actual practices of language, often found far away from centres, with their own specificities resulting from yet other connections.

Joris's extensive translation work (into English) comprises mostly texts of so-called marginal literature that often go unnoticed in the translation business.⁷⁹⁷ He likes to refer to Deleuze and Guattari's views on "minor" literature: "minor" not meaning inferior but made up of texts created away from linguistic and cultural centres. The languages in which they are written are decentralized languages – away from the centre – or deterritorialized languages, because written outside those territories or nation states, whose authorities claim a prerogative in the field of language and culture. In a paper entitled "Toward a Nomadic Concept of Translation" (1998), Joris emphasizes the link between "minor" and mobility. He quotes the questions asked by Deleuze and Guattari, which sum up the special challenge that the study of minor literature faces ("How to tear a minor literature away from its own language, allowing it to challenge the language and making it follow a sober revolutionary path?"), while also pointing to the situation of the writers ("How to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one's own language?") Minor writers are nomads and their language is a form of translation and revolutionary writing. For Joris it is a between-ness that seems difficult to reconcile with any concept of national literature, major or minor. Nomadic writers and their texts can only be conceived in movement and seem to require a view of space that fits their ongoing *trans-lation*, a characteristic of their work. In other texts, notably in his second collection of essays, with an emphasis on a poetics derived among others from Glissant's poetics of relation, Joris refers to nomad postcolonial writers as *diasporic* to analyse their ongoing wandering between languages (between "impossible" languages of origin and the colonizer's language which they have made their language of writing). ("On the Nomadic Circulation of Contemporary Poetics," JM: 10-11)⁷⁹⁸

The nomadic translator believes in the transformative power of texts by decentralized and deterritorialized writers. Joris likes referring to them as **diasporic** writers/translators, thus putting them into the broad context of exile. His practice as poet and translator is from "outside" and the works he translates similarly represent such decentralized/ deterritorialized uses of languages.

Nomadic translation is **translation from the margin and of the margin**. The outsider position confirms his denial of the mother tongue principle: Not only does Joris write poetry in the language of others, against the common belief that poetry can only be written in the mother tongue. He also translates into a

⁷⁹⁷ The situation is changing thanks to a growing interest in World literature, but often with still little attention to variations of language within language, and usually according to the belief that translation means rendering from one homogeneous language into another homogeneous language. Discussions however seem to deal above all with the translatability of novels, whereas Joris concentrates on the multiple languages of poetry.

⁷⁹⁸ Nomadic or diasporic writers seem to represent an example of "minor" literature that cannot be easily reconciled with the variety of categories that literary studies attempt to define (See Glesener 2019). Perhaps their specificity resides in a will to remain outsiders – or rather in Braidotti's terms, a will to choose "becoming minoritarian."

language, English, which is not his mother tongue, while it is generally believed that “good” translation, especially of poetry, can only be done by someone who translates into his first language. Moreover, he translates the work of poets whose language is “mixed” (because they live in more than one language) or different in vocabulary and cultural nuances from a standard, centralized language. The nomadic translator thus partakes in multiple, though subtle transformations of language.

The “ghosts” of diasporic writing and translating : Language in circulation

The notion of ghosting is worth looking at in some detail; as the studies by Grutman and Suchet show (ch 3), translators are well placed to reflect on the nature of heterolingual elements in texts. The particular issue they face is to evaluate their role as well as the expected response of readers whose linguistic and cultural perspective is not the same as their own while also differing from the original writers’ position.

Ghosts in texts are a powerful image in particular for the latent forms of heterolingualism in texts. He also describes the complex circulation of elements in Tengour’s work as ghosting; he refers to classical Arab civilization and writes that Tengour is “emigrating [their] *ghosts* into the fictional bodies of present-day Maghrebians in western exile” (“On the Circulation,” ANP: 14). The nomadic circulation continues in Joris’s translation of the French text into English and he asks in relation to his translation of a poem by Tengour (“Empedocles’ Sandal”): “Is this ghost of Arabic I have shown to haunt the French text, translatable, or better, is it necessary for the translator to try and foreground it?” (*Exile is my trade*: 19) Tengour’s poem in his eyes is already a diasporic construct. He pleads for a translation that should be as literal as possible, adhering to “the same presence/ absence structure the poem uses.” (*Exile is my Trade*: 20)

What he says about *translating* is also relevant for *reading* and an approach of “ghosts” – linguistic or cultural and thematic – in Joris’s own work.⁷⁹⁹ Continuing his comment on Tengour’s work, he writes:

The poem’s “ghost” is as invisible to the reader of the original French version as it is to the reader of the English version – unless the reader already has knowledge of those old Arabic forms. Otherwise the reader, French or English, will have to an in-depth reading of the poem, which for any such diasporic writing means familiarizing oneself with the other’s other culture. A translation should not, cannot make clearer what the original poem has purposefully hidden. (*Exile is my Trade* 2012: 20)

In a bilingual French/ English (e-mail) exchange with Jean Portante, entitled “Whales, ghosts and nomads” Joris reflects on effect of language multiplicity in his writings and underlines the role of

⁷⁹⁹ See Part III, in particular ch. 9.2 on The Agony of I.B. and The Gulf, where as readers we face similar “translation” problems, though with translation further complexified by the poet’s creative rewriting of texts in French (e.g. Mallarmé; Blanchot) and in German (Ingeborg Bachmann and Paul Celan). The notion of ghosting is also a fitting image for Welch’s transformation of Heidegger’s language in her poems.

process-showing :

[I]n my writing the multiplicity of languages is more visible, often playfully — and I hope wittily — used on the surface of the poem, and that has at least two reasons. First off, the pleasure I get from the “chatoiement,” the colorfulness of the language palette, the verbo-visual and auditory fireworks such use of several languages provides. Secondly, there is what I think of as a political decision at the level of poetics — what I call “process-showing,” i.e. the felt desire to give the reader a handle on the poem by offering hints and more as to the process of composition (which can vary much from poem to poem, but often entails multilingual wordplays and puns), so as to avoid the murky area of the so-called the modern (or post-modern) “hermetic” poem — a lack of transparency in the m “identity” — & I have studiously avoided dealing with it! (“Whales, ghosts and nomads” 2013)⁸⁰⁰

This description of the translating/writing process as ghosting appears particularly relevant for an analysis of Joris’s poetics in terms of translingual writing. From ghosting it takes only one step to intricate palimpsestic or palimpsestuous relations. The analysis of selected texts by Welch and Joris in Part III will elucidate the passage from a poetics to text production.

This “ghost” of largely hidden heterolingual elements corresponds to Kellman’s broad definition of translingual writers. Hence, for an understanding of writing processes in general, his descriptions of the interactions and tensions between languages is highly relevant. The recurrent reference to “ghosting” suggests a barely audible voice, a nearly unnoticeable whispering, which turns into a central driving force for the writing process. (cf. the palimpsestic voice). Analysing the influence of Arabic on the Francophone writer Abdelwahab Meddeb, Joris explores the range of complex relations he reads into the text (a novel entitled *Talismano*), and gives us a very differentiated picture of what ghosting is and is not. I read it in terms of translingual writing as example of “latent heterolingualism”, as instance of at least two languages in an apparently monolingual French text:

Arabic ghosts the text [...] it is there neither as *Verfremdungseffekt* nor as Orientalizing ornament or realistic anchoring of the place, as is often the case in the more naively representational novel. It is there – or rather, its absence-presence works as a consciously thought through and acknowledged relationship to the other language, as witness, worker, energizer, transformer of the diasporic language in which the text presents itself. (“On the Circulation,” ANP: 14)

Ghosting, one may argue, is a weaving of visible and invisible threads and the nomad’s multilingual practice of intertextuality.

⁸⁰⁰ See other references to the exchange between Pierre Joris and Jean Portante in earlier chapters (2.2; 4.3.2 and 5.3.2).

Responding to possible contradictions or paradoxes

On the one hand, the practice of translation is based on the notion of languages as distinct entities. On the other hand, a nomadic poetics questions borders between languages. Joris asks for a reconsideration of what a language is. Inverting the well-known adage about national languages that says, “a language is a dialect with an army” (or with guns),⁸⁰¹ Joris stresses the crucial role of possible relations between languages when he proposes, “a language is a dialect with translators” (“Community of Translation,” ANP: 102-103).

Moreover, he argues that if one does not know what a language is, it is also impossible to find out what translation is. Following his nomadic view of language always in movement, he defends a belief in the relativity of translation and the necessity of multiple translations. As in his eyes all texts are always translations of other texts, there is no such thing as a proper original and (im)proper translations. What he wishes to stress is the necessity and inevitability of multiple translation:

Translation is necessary because all our languages are improper, opaque, Local [...] gypsy dialects, nomadic machines [...] that are always in need of translation – but not toward some ideal of total clarity, i.e. toward some improbable proper in another language, but simply toward any number of other improper singular language-enactments. (“Community of Translation,” ANP: 105)

Why does he commend a multiplicity of translations? Texts are in need of being always renewed: this is the translator’s duty, just as the nomadic poet must respond to movement by *othering* the language. Despite the thorough processes to which he submits his own translation, he is aware that another translator’s perspective may bring in further views, all of which will enrich the text, even through the tensions that apparent disagreement may bring. Every text is situated in space and time; and a translation is situated too. Moreover, he rejects the concept of universal language, “of total clarity”, because it is impossible to imagine that everything is immediately fully intelligible. (105) A universal language would make all translation redundant, because it would mean everything was immediately intelligible. No translation would then be necessary, while the existing multiplicity of languages – in its broadest acceptation – is always “in need of translation” (105)⁸⁰²

Multiple translations ensure the transformative process that is essential in a nomadic poetics. But is the belief in the relativity of translation not a **paradox** for a writer like Joris, who is also known as prolific translator of other poets’ work? Does it mean that his translation of their work is a rewriting in the sense

⁸⁰¹ Joris refers here to the writings of Giorgio Agamben on language and literature; see A NOMAD POETICS: 103.

⁸⁰² Compare to Welch’s – different – view of language: her recurring evocations of a metalanguage are linked to a spiritual, mystical dimension, which Joris seems to ignore. Is this possibly the crucial point to account for their different views on (poetic) multilingualism?

of a creative reworking or adaptation? How does Joris reconcile his view on nomadic, rhizomatic writing, as always a translation, with his professional views on translating the texts of others? In fact, though insisting on an open language space for the poet to explore, he acknowledges the existence of separate languages, whose work is in need of translation. Consequently, he makes a clear distinction between his work as a poet and his work as a translator while he also expounds his ideas of a *community* of writers and translators, which is not the same as the body of writers that constitute national literary institutions. A provisional conclusion could be that Joris's declaration about "writing in all [his] languages" is a way of describing latent heterolingualism.

Translations like all texts are language constructs.⁸⁰³ The translator, Joris argues, must start from a recognition of separate, (national) languages, "the necessary fiction of fixed languages & self-contained, individual authors." ("Community of translation," ANP: 104) He distrusts all ideology that equates "language" and the nation or "the people" (*le peuple, il popolo, das Volk*). At the same time he questions the notion of an unconnected, singular author and stresses the constructedness of all language and all text:

A translation is in all likelihood the most improper possible being because in its very being it is always derived, it always comes after something else, its being is imitation, re-creation, re-enactment of some given-as-"proper" original. In that it is, however, only a limit-case, or a test-case, of any and all language constructs. ("Community of Translation," ANP: 104)

Construction points to derivation and in the case of translation the phenomenon is amplified. So how does he proceed in practice? As translator of another poet's words, he insists on staying as close as possible to the text. This however requires reflecting on all possible meanings and related references – on "thinking through" what the other poet may wish to say. He insists on the importance of "a second reading"⁸⁰⁴ to find out what may be meant. Only then will he try to find the best way to render the text through words (and rhythms) in English, which fit the other poets' text best.

A translation of a poem in German, French, Arabic into English (or another language) is not an adaptation. It does not tolerate interference with the other poet's thoughts; the translator tries to solve as well as he can all problems of apparently untranslatable aspects by whatever means the language of translation affords. **What is nomadic about this process is the attempt to consider all the routes contained in the**

⁸⁰³ For Joris, the constructedness of language is a fundamental premise, which he mostly explores in his poetic writing, as literary, historical, cultural construction. It underlines the effect of nomadic movements which are responsible for ongoing constructive (and deconstructive) processes. In his later work, notably *The Gulf*, a mingling of literary and social language construction occurs. See ch. 9.

⁸⁰⁴ This is a phrase borrowed from Celan (cf. "A Nomad Poetics Revisited" 2017)

other text. It is the translator's responsibility to respect the complexity of thinking contained in the translated text.

This is where notions of fold (*pli*), *dérive* and *débordement* become indispensable to explore all hidden elements. Joris's descriptions correspond to the phenomena of explicit and latent heterolingual elements, as described in studies of translingual literature (see ch. 3) They also imply reflections on the writer's or translator's attitudes and responsibility to languages.

Translating involves an ethical stance

For Joris, translating is foremost a responsibility of communication and mediation and he has explained how his motivations for translation have evolved. Initially translating was for him a way to learn about the (poetic) language, as English was still much of a foreign language for him when he started writing. He admits that it also allowed him to earn some money because as a young poet he could not expect to live on his writing alone. With what he later sees as perhaps exaggerated self-confidence, he declared translating his ethical responsibility:

[I]f I could translate, I had to do so because it was important that the mono-linguaged (or as today's parlance would put it: the language-challenged) find out what people wrote and thought in other languages, in other places, in this or that times. [...] A dead language is a language we no longer translate from or into. ("ReadySteadyBlog," JM: 38)

In his nomadic conception of translation and poetry the wish to mediate between languages and cultures has remained a central concern. Translation appears as an act of what is called intercultural communication in other parts of the humanities (social sciences, notably in sociocultural studies of multilingual communication). It requires a deep understanding of the other and a readiness to question one's own positions and attitudes. In this concern for uncovering routes to "others" and their approach or construction of reality, Joris includes translated passages of selected texts from other times, like medieval French literature or early Arabic Sufi poetry.⁸⁰⁵ Through this historical dimension of his poetics, he extending his responsibility beyond the scope of social studies.

It is in relation to his work on Celan that he has expounded the ethical responsibility of the poet and translator, who has to "witness for the witness" ("An 'E' for an 'A'," 2010).⁸⁰⁶ He wishes to offer a

⁸⁰⁵ He has not himself translated Arabic poetry but worked with comments and French translations to produce his poems (not translations) in English.

⁸⁰⁶ "Poetry, & thinking through poetry, can help us. Paul Celan does it, he who has left us an immense testimony. He has also left us an essay, a poetics, relatively short, about ten pages: *The Meridian*. We must, poets of today, read and reread that essential document. It is precisely a founding text on the responsibilities of the poet: in it, poetry is named as a question of truth — and not a question of "Artistik," of "Kunst," of aestheticism, therefore of the automaton and of the Medusa. It is in that "radical questioning of art" as a project of truth and of witnessing, that

testimony for Celan, the witness of atrocities, whose work of recording may otherwise be forgotten. Taking up Celan's words, "*Niemand zeugt für den Zeugen*," he provides a thorough semantic analysis, he shows how **responsibility** must be primarily understood as an ability to respond, while the etymology of *zeugen* reveals the double meaning of witnessing and procreating, hence the poet's (and the translator's) creative acts. ("Polysemy without mask" 2005: 32-33)

One may see links between Joris's stance as translator and recent studies of translingual literature. Focussing on the authors' position, they analyse ethical principles that govern the writing (Ausoni 2018; De Balsi 2019), while the *heterolingual* ethos of writers, a notion derived from rhetorics, is at the centre of Suchet's investigation. These approaches can elucidate Joris's views on the responsibility of the translator and the poet who writes about linguistic and cultural margins.

A similar motivation for disseminating otherwise unknown literary works has pushed Joris (and his co-editors) to produce the *Millennium Anthologies*, in which poems written in English stand side by side with texts in translation. (See ch. 4.2.)

A poetics of transformation through community and circulation

What then is the link, and difference, between translation and writing? Joris wants to move beyond the usual dichotomy of original and translation:

A translation is in all likelihood the most improper possible being because in its very being it is always derived, it always comes after something else, its being is imitation, re-creation, re-enactment of some given-as-“proper” original. In that it is, however, only a limit-case, or a test-case, of any and all language constructs. (“Community of Translation,” ANP: 104)

This short passage contains several crucial points for a study of (multilingual) poets' view of **language as process: the derivation of translation**, and of all language (concept of *dérive* and its interpretations). It raises core questions about impossible originality, the “ownership” of language - the poet's use of what he “finds” or is given as material to start from.

Translation is not merely a matter of accurately rendering a text, it is also a writing (of poetry). The translation is a new text, whose “peculiar singularity” (“Community”: 106) can only be conceived through a consideration of the “common ground” between texts. *Community of writers and circulation of texts* are two key notions of a nomadic poetics. Joris's practice as poet and translator involves constant movements between writers and their cultural and linguistic contexts. Not wishing to belong to one community in

Paul Celan responded to Hölderlin's well-known question: “Wozu Dichter in dürftiger Zeit?” — by making clear that poetry, when it bears witness, when it tells the truth, helps to live.” (“An ‘E’ for an ‘A’,” 2010)

particular, the nomad can imagine his own communities, which will include other outsiders like himself, and constantly evolve into further rhizomatic movements of growth.

Similarly, through processes of unending translation/ transformation, texts too become rhizomatic, no longer bound by one cultural or linguistic context or canonical position. This may not be a new phenomenon, but the nomadic reader's/ poet's focus on the *circulation*⁸⁰⁷ of texts and the processes of their creation highlights aspects of *travelling thoughts and words*, which studies of relations between distinct, standardized languages might tend to overlook. (See "Reading/ Writing – Giordano Bruno," *Breccia*, discussed in ch.8.)

Not one language or territory but processes of "translation" (in a broad sense) bind, at least momentarily, communities and their texts. Poetic writing, better than any other texts, can point to complex movements, to the necessity of uncovering hidden folds – unfolding what lies between or behind words (for example, words like *dérive* and *débordement*).

How is community created? Through the close reading of one poem by Blaser, Joris shows how, once the dichotomy of original and translation has been left behind, the focus can switch to the new poem, revealed as common ground or the work resulting from a community of poets and translators – probably all in the plural, in particular cases, where their words and connections gather. **Translation creates community.** This view of community of translation and translation of community is corroborated through the notions of fold, unfolding (in French, *le pli, déplier, ex-pli-quer, compliquer*): in the poem, previous texts can be unfolded, *pli selon pli*, with translation, or the translation of many others, adding a further fold. Not every reader / additional writer unfolds the same interstices, there is *loss*, a common notion in evaluations of translation work. Joris explores it in a positive sense, as gain through an image (drawn from Blaser's poem):

Whenever translation happens, ash happens. Remains, leftovers, spills, supplements, accumulate. Not small, symbolic, non-quantifiable bits standing for or representing the "real" activity or "loss" of translation, but heaps, waves & mounts of ashes, even volcanic eruptions [...] Energy has been consumed and transformed. ("Community of Translation," ANP: 108)

This "transformed energy" resulting from translation work may very well be seen as summing up Joris's poetics of multiple transformation. Joris has also approached these theoretical considerations in the practice oriented contexts of masterclasses entitled "Writing translation / translating writing." Here is how he presents the work: "This masterclass work- & talk-shop — "Writing translation / Translating writing" — probes our approach to "creative" (qua "original") writing by inverting the traditional

⁸⁰⁷ Cf. "On the Nomadic Circulation of Contemporary Poetics," in *Justifying the Margins* 2009: 7-23.

relationship of original text & translated copy, thus re-inscribing the activity of translation as core process of the act of writing. While starting as a public conversation, students will soon be simultaneously involved with writing & with translation from a language of their choice into English in a range of forms proposed by their own practice & cultural background.”⁸⁰⁸

6.3.6 Reception of a nomadic poetics, critical exchanges and clarifications

6.3.6.1 The international reception of Joris’s nomadic poetics and multilingualism

Ch. 4 includes a section on “routes of reception,” which highlights the international “community” of scholars and poets who analyse Joris’s contribution to poetry. Many essays in *Cartographies of the in-between* mention Joris’s multilingualism, yet only few discuss the controversial positions or innovative dimensions of language crossing in writing, which according to his poetics is more than evidence of a solid knowledge of languages and translational skills.

The present objective is to look more specifically at a few selected *responses to a poetics* that rejects language boundaries and the perspectives they offer on translingual poetry. References to interviews in the previous sections have demonstrated that reception is frequently linked to exchanges. Joris likes to use these occasions to expand theoretical views and positions in his texts, which for readers may remain obscure or problematic. Dialogue thus becomes a powerful motor for a nomadic poetics.

Peter Cockelbergh appears as central figure, an important reviewer (e.g. on *Justifying the Margins* 2010), a frequent interlocutor who questions the poet about crucial aspects (“Lignes de fugues” 2010; “Géographèmes” in *Cartographies* 2011), while in his editing work he proves a discerning exegete of Joris’s poetics (2011). His analysis of key concepts elucidates the intricate network of ideas that underlies Joris’s writing; it also highlights the poet’s meta-sensitivity to language, his great ability to work with puns and his judicious reflections on etymologies and translingual polysemy (2011: 337-375).

In relation to views on translingual writing, a few other voices deserve attention as they add perspectives that have not yet been sufficiently emphasized. The primary concern of literary essays and reviews is with the written word. As the preceding presentation of a nomad poetics has somewhat neglected the *oral dimension* I will briefly consider two essays in *Cartographies* focusing on language as recollected experiences (Jean Portante) and on multilingual poetry as performance (Christine Hume).

⁸⁰⁸ Writing translation / translating writing: online class with Pierre Joris, April 26th. Posted on March 23, 2014 by Francesco Levato.

Jean **Portante** brings in the Luxembourg perspective as well as his own experiences of migration and languages to situate Joris's poetry. In friendly, playful terms, he also expresses some skepticism as to his friend's positions. His images suggestively enlarge the view of translingualism, in particular through evoking the surreptitious interference of various languages in Joris's poetry.

Well aware that nowhere in his work there is nostalgia for his early years in Luxembourg, he compares its impact on the writing to "a Trojan horse," which for a long time efficiently though unobtrusively undermines the process ("Justification of the Margin: Luxembourg in the Poetic Work of Pierre Joris," *Cartographies* 2011: 234-244). He insists on the importance of early immersion in three languages: "In the beginning there was the plural. Linguistic dispersion. A sort of collage" (236). The reference to a nomadic diasporic poetics is unmistakable. Joris may reject the notion of origin, yet as Portante reminds him, it is always there. Writing from the margin includes his links to Luxembourg. Portante through a pun with his own name revisits Joris's poetics. I take the liberty to present it like the millennium motto to which its syntax alludes:

Everywhere where Joris has been, goes and will go,
the origin has been, goes and will go with him.
Is portable. Nomad artis portable. (244)

We find Joris's response to Portante's assessment in their bilingual exchange "Whales, ghosts and nomads" (2013). (See above on "ghosting").

The essay by **Christine Hume**, "'No True Voices:' Listening to Pierre Joris" (2011) shows great sensitivity to dimensions of performance and orality as linked to echoes of multiple languages in readings of poems. What distinguishes her contribution in *Cartographies* is her choice of sources: poetic pieces available as texts and as recorded readings. Thus, her title "No True Voices," is a quotation from a passage of "Aegean Shortwave," which is included in book publications (*Poasis* and h.j.r.), but also among the texts read on the cd *Routes not Roots*.⁸⁰⁹

Voice is the central phenomenon through which Hume approaches multiplicity and nomadism in these pieces. Her analysis of the relation between text and voice uncovers **the performative dimension of translingual creation**, which in one case includes spatial dimensions of radio voices, in the others the juxtaposition with music and song and performance, which involves moving between languages, a French cooking recipe as well as reflections on food and language.

⁸⁰⁹ The other texts she examines are also available as audio pieces or as video recordings. "Altars of light" in *Poasis* (195) and on youtube : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkfTF_Y2Bk8; "Tête de Veau" is part of *Sax Soup Poetry & Voice*. The Free Jazz Series 2009 and on youtube

Performance calls out the multilayered dimensions of his work, the freewheeling articulations that access a chora between languages, and auditive palimpsests that bring about specialized kinds of meaning and experience only deliverable through the body. (Hume, “‘No True Voices:’ Listening to Pierre Joris,” *Cartographies*: 260)

The focus on sound and performance is a break with the usual approach in literary studies, which primarily draw on the written word. Hume’s analysis presents a meaningful merging of poetry analysis with a social, cultural and linguistic interpretation. The reflections on the impressions that his voice has left on her suggest the inadequacies of purely book or paper based appreciations. The notion of “auditive palimpsests” – connects well with “ghosting voices” and will be further investigated in Part III.

Scrutinizing the voice as it affects her in the recordings, she recalls the physical, bodily experience of multiple languages, all united in the movements of the body. “Polyphony in his voice” underlines the singularity of multilingualism: it is not a social phenomenon but the way of one individual to use language. Her analysis reflects the nomad’s rejection of the mother tongue, the absorption of otherness and the transformative power of translational languaging:

Joris breaks down the limits of the native tongue [...] making a new language of polyglot sensibilities and vocal transmutations. In synthesized accents, dialects, inflections, multilingualism, and an improvised diction and syntax, Joris delivers a kind of un-English that dismantles the perceived hegemony of American English. (Hume, “‘No True Voices:’ Listening to Pierre Joris,” *Cartographies*: 264)

To her “**his voice seems utterly unLocatable**” (265) – a key statement, in apparent contradiction with the stress of Location in many studies⁸¹⁰ and a corroboration that all markers of national and linguistic or social identity become inaudible. Moreover, Hume recognizes in the voice a political act of resistance when she writes, “Joris delivers a kind of un-English that dismantles the perceived hegemony of American English” (264). This unLocatable quality sums up the nomad’s voice. It signals the refutation of notions of authentic native speech and echoes Joris’s outcry against the prison-house of the mother tongue.

Hume’s essay has many elements that complement applied linguists’ approaches of translingualism. These studies, usually focusing on migrants’ experiences tend to stress traces of loss versus the desire to become fully immersed in the new language, while Hume underlines the nomad’s confidence in an in-between position. Joris exemplifies what some critics have come to claim for Francophone writers: “Singulariser l’écriture translingue” (Ausoni 2018): which I would render as recognizing the specificity of translingual *writing and speaking*.

⁸¹⁰ See for instance, Pennycook, *Language as Local Practice* (2010).

6.3.6.2 Negative critical voices and what we learn from them

A poetics, once it has been published, also becomes a public declaration, with the implicit understanding that it presents novelty or revolution. Innovative views on writing and translating are thus perceived as response to prevailing practices. This entitles us to see a nomadic poetics as **an act of resistance**,⁸¹¹ or of nomadic (intellectual) rebellion, in the context of policies of cultural monolingualism. A nomadic poetics of language multiplicity and translation will appear as a rejection of prevailing linguistic frames of thinking. The nomad brings **the look from outside** on the linguistic and literary situation.⁸¹²

A Nomad Poetics contains controversial views on language and literature. It received extensive attention but not all critics have been as appreciative of Joris's work, like those who contributed to *Cartographies*. The core texts of the poetics first circulated in electronic form, which accounts for the perhaps confusing subtitle [version 4.00] for its publication in book form (as part of *A Nomad Poetics*). Was it not rather a manifesto, similar in style and tone to other manifestos? Later, Joris refers to it as "manifessay" – a new nomadic genre, we might say. He also added a kind of super heading in the book, not indicated in the table of Contents, and so perhaps better understood as general motto: The Millennium will be Nomadic or It Will not be.⁸¹³

Adrian Clarke versus Pierre Joris: an exchange of "public" letters

Negative criticism can be interesting because of the discussions that follow. This happened through a devastating text by a British poet and scholar, which provoked a debate and a response from Joris which can greatly contribute to an understanding of his nomadic poetics. Adrian Clarke published an exceptionally critical, derogatory review of Joris's poetics, in an article entitled, "Nomads and the demon." This text no longer seems accessible, which means our information on the controversy must be drawn from Joris's defense of those points that his antagonist had forwarded against him.⁸¹⁴ As it is included in *A Nomad Poetics*, "Open Letter in response to Adrian Clarke's" may be read as an "essay", that versatile and transmutable "genre" of which we find many variations in Joris's work. More evidence of the debate can be gathered from the article by Robert Sheppard, "Poetics and the Manifesto. On Pierre Joris and Adrian Clarke" (2014), in which the author attempts to clarify the contexts and distinguish divergent

⁸¹¹ Cf. Rosi Braidotti, and what she calls style of resistance.

⁸¹² What this means in the U.S. is also critically described by American scholars like Brian Lennon, *In Babel's Shadow: Multilingual Literatures, Monolingual States* (2010); David Gramling, *The Invention of Monolingualism* (2016).⁸¹²

⁸¹³ See above. The phrase echoes a passage in *Amour Fou* by André Breton: « La beauté convulsive sera érotique voilée, explosante - fixe, magique – circonstancielle, OU NE SERA PAS. »

⁸¹⁴ For more background information on the controversy, see Robert Sheppard, "Poetics and the manifesto. On Pierre Joris and Adrian Clarke" 2014 <https://jacket2.org/article/poetics-and-manifesto>

visions of poetry from personal arguments. In his eyes a poetics should be about writing and reflect a poet's views on his own practice, and not a politics that one wishes to impose, like manifestos do. Sheppard confirms the virulence of the dispute; he also notes that Clarke's text is not (no longer) available in print.⁸¹⁵

The tone in Joris's answer is scathing. The three points of discordance which one can gather from his text are particularly significant for an understanding of nomadic thinking as *élément perturbateur*, as revolutionary innovation, which will necessarily be fought by those who do not believe in mobility and the necessity of change.

The first "tessera of Clarke's critical mosaic" – to follow Joris's language – is the notion of home and the role of the mother tongue for writers. The answer is worth quoting in extenso as it further clarifies the nomad's arguments against the mother tongue:

[T]he question of "home," domus, et cetera. You are worried, it seems, that my refusal to feel "at home" in language means that I "submit uncritically to those larger forces that require our mobility ..." and that my "flight through language risks a refusal of any engagement with the coercions inscribed," et cetera. Well, I'll maintain the opposite: it is only when constantly aware that the writer is not "at home" in language (or anywhere else, for that matter) that any real and critical engagement with the enemy forces is possible. Our language(s) of daily (& not so daily) use are indeed pluralized and unstable - & that condition has to be not only acknowledged but actively used. You can't go home again – especially as there never was a home in language. ("Open Letter in Response to Robert Clarke's," ANP: 135)

Joris in this passage goes as far as declaring that only those who travel, who nomadize, who are not **"at home" in language**, are able to write: distance or alienation from their language is a condition for engagement with writing. A writer's languages are always multiple: describing them as "daily & not so daily languages", Joris conveys a very broad view on a poet's language, which should reach across all ranges of language; the instability or tension between languages, which this situation of multiplicity and difference brings, is a driving force he must use. "[R]eal or critical engagement with the enemy forces" recalls Deleuze and Guattari's war machines and nomadic resistance to anything stable. All nomadic writing is part of a conflictual process; it means resistance to any refusal of change and forward moving. The second point of disagreement between Joris and Clarke is connected to the first. Joris denounces any concept of "being" and "dwelling" and pleads for an unconditional "becoming." Nomadic thought cannot be separated from a philosophical stance and the ensuing political positioning. With the attack of any form of "being" taking precedence over "becoming", Joris targets Heidegger whose views he associates with all forms of nationalism:

⁸¹⁵ Nor is it in the internet; I found a possible trace to a magazine but it does seem accessible through library services.

This insane mechanism [of nationalisms and war] will go on until we give up those notions of true being and dwelling. Until we become nomadic, until “becoming” is what we want. Becoming-nomadic, becoming-man, becoming-woman, becoming-animal, becoming-neighbor. Be done with being, become! (“Open Letter in Response to Robert Clarke’s,” ANP: 136)

The last bone of contention is the role of the internet and technology for writers and readers. Joris discards Clarke’s censure of the net and his apparent alarms at the effects of cyberpoetics. “We know [...] the dangers inherent in this and any technology, but we also have to think through the new poetics such a medium will/should give rise to, in order to use it rather than being used by it.” (137) In Joris’s eyes, the internet is an ideal means for nomadic writing and exchange (see his blog):

What interests me in term of poetics in the new media is that we now have a medium multiple enough to allow the creation of works making simultaneous use of the old alphabetical (& non alphabetical) writing systems [...], visuals and sound. So, what you have is a multiplication of possibilities and potentialities, and that, to me, is exciting, to say the least. We are at the very beginning of this “cyber-age” - & though it is necessary to step gingerly, we certainly do have to take those steps. (“Open Letter in Response to Robert Clarke’s,” ANP: 137)

What Joris has in mind is literature as a vast network, a comprehensive space of art in which language comes to include visual and auditory signs. A nomadic poetics is open for change; on its unstoppable way forward it creates new relationships. The enthusiasm that such transformations and new potentialities inspire will admittedly ask for some caution.

“Open letter” is his poetics put in a nutshell. It confirms his strength in making his positions clear through discourse but no space is left for the views of the opponent.

Summer Qabazard: a woman’s criticism of Western understandings of a nomadic poetics

A differently critical approach of nomad poetics is the theme of a doctoral dissertation by Summer Qabazard, entitled *All Hands Bury the Dead*.⁸¹⁶ The academic context of the dissertation is creative writing pedagogy; the thesis consists of a theoretical introduction, “Against a nomadic poetics,” which states the core position of the author. This critical position is later linked to pedagogical considerations about creative writing and her own poetic work (presented as alternative to Joris’s writing).

From the start, Qabazard clearly states her position as a Kuweiti female poet, for whom Deleuze and Guattari’s western idealizations of nomads, and Joris’s later poetic translation of the concept, are intolerable. “Deleuze and Guattari’s nomad figure [...] is built from faulty colonialist, white supremacist, and masculinist logic” and the “nomadic poetics” that Joris proposes “reproduces this faulty,

⁸¹⁶ A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of English, Illinois State University, 2016; it is available online. *All Hands Bury the Dead*, an allusion to the ceremony of burial at sea, is also the title of her poem that opens the selection of work included in the thesis.

discriminatory logic.” (Abstract) She objects to Joris’s use of a language of violence to describe nomadic processes (likened to war machines) and proceeds to propose a different approach.

Qabazard’s arguments deserve attention as they put his work in a completely different light from that of the authors of *Cartographies*, for instance. She makes bold claims and her response may lie in a totally different conception of poetry. It also shows two problems. One concerns the difficult distinction between a nomadic reality and poetic or philosophical figurations of non-Localized mobile lives.

The other problem seems to lie in huge differences between cultural contexts and it highlights the intercultural challenge that Joris’s poetics could present for readers. There is idealization of nomads in his work, if one takes his initial enthusiasm for Karl May heroes as a lasting model. Yet, the memories of an adolescent reader must not be confused with a later complex poetic thinking that needs figurations (in the sense that Braidotti gives the term) to evoke multifaceted wanderings in search of change.

The overall object of Qabazard’s dissertation is poetry writing, more specifically the teaching of creative writing. She includes almost 100 pages of her own poetry – all related to her experience of the first Iraq war (1990-1991). It is therefore surprising that she does not refer to Joris’s own poetry to see what he does with the figure of the nomad (e.g. in *Poasis*). Clearly, her focus is on the theme of nomadism as social and cultural reality, not on writing as a nomadic process.

The understandable objection to an overemphasis of violence is not further examined as standing for resistance to change, an aspect of nomadic theory that is particularly welcomed by women theorists (Braidotti). It is also striking that Qabazard does not address issues of language difference. The fact that she does not consider multiple languages as an aspect of nomadic writing may however be explained by the American context in which she writes her poetry and submits her dissertation. Nonetheless, it is surprising that she does not exploit her own in-between situation, between Arabic and English. She also seems unaware of Joris’s work as translator and mediator of Arabic literature.

6.3.6.3 Interviews and Conversations: Positioning his poetics and translingual writing in exchange with others

Nomadism, as we have seen, is for Joris preeminently a process of interrelationships. Therefore, critics’ attempts at positioning the writer cannot be dissociated from his self-presentations. Through interviews, he also participates in the dissemination process of his work.⁸¹⁷

⁸¹⁷ My selection (see also ch. 4.3.4) covers interviews included in Joris’s essay collections (Don Byrd, “Samizdat Interview,” 2000, in *A Nomad Poetics*; “ReadySteadyBlog Interview, 28/06/2006” in *Justifying the Margins*); in critical work (for instance talks with Cockelbergh and Bernstein in *Cartographies*) as well as interviews published in various English language magazines (Doug Valentine: “Paul Celan and the meaning of language: An Interview with Pierre Joris,” 2005; Peter Cockelbergh, “Lignes de Fugues/ Lettres de fuites.” 2010; “The Jivin’ Ladybug, Regenerative

The range of interviewers, who look at his work from American as well as European perspectives, reflects Joris's peregrinations and in-between position. Many of the conversations take place with other poets, notably Charles Bernstein, Jean Portante and Adonis.⁸¹⁸

In the previous chapters, quotations from interviews bring biographical information (e.g. the conversations with Cockelbergh in *Cartographies*), yet literary interviews (Masschelein et al. 2014; Yanoshevsky 2018), are primarily moments of exchange and opportunities for the poet to enlarge on crucial points of his poetics and to position himself as active agent in the reception process. They are evidence of a continuous dialogue between the poet and critical interlocutors. As examples of nomadic writing they deserve particular attention since they elucidate the thoughts in movement that underlie the poet's writing. Joris turns some of these interviews into nomadic forms of writing, almost creating a new genre. (See ch. 4) Interviews often move beyond the published record of a conversation and appear to be collages of text has written in different locations. He tells readers that he often writes his answers while travelling, for example on one occasion he is on a train from Paris to Bordeaux (in Fowle interview); on another he notes that he is sitting in a plane crossing the Atlantic.

Most of the published interviews are in English. The introductory note to an interview with Peter Cockelbergh confirms an intensely nomadic or translingual writing process based on diverse forms of interaction.

This interview titled 'Lignes de fugues / Lettres de fuites' was conducted for the Flemish literary journal yang – now nY. It was published in a Dutch translation in issue 2008.2. The interview mixes mail traffic, a live recording in Albany, NY, Skype sessions and MacSpeech dictations.
<http://www.ny-web.be/transitzone/?page=3>

This note also reflects a movement between languages – English text, French title, Dutch translation – which appears normal for academic interaction in Europe but less so in North American settings. His e-mail exchange with Jean Portante for instance comes in two languages, French and English.

Talks and interviews bring complementary perspectives on the theoretical issues as discussed in his poetics. My focus here is on parts of the exchange where interlocutors call into question central aspects or inquire about approaches in the poets' writings which may disturb readers.

Views on nomadism

Diaspora: An Interview with Pierre Joris," 2011; S.J. Fowler, « Maintenant # 94 Pierre », 2012; "Barzakh: interview with Pierre Joris," 2013; Alexis Almeida, "Interview with Pierre Joris," 2016) and in Luxembourg (see for instance article by Georges Hausemer « Entre les langues, entre les mondes » 1987).

⁸¹⁸ See for Bernstein, "Close Listening," 2011; for Portante, "Whales, ghosts and nomads. Pierre Joris - Jean Portante Exchange," 2013; for Adonis, *Conversations in the Pyrenees*, 2018.

When asked if nomadism is not just a “faddish” intellectual stance (Samizdat interview with Don Byrd, included in ANP), Joris elaborates on the important difference between nomadism as a way of life and nomadism as a process of writing. Aware of anti-nomadic thinking (see 3.2.7), he insists that his nomadism has nothing to do with fake nomads such as tourists and sunseekers (a romantic vision of nomadism) while it must not either be compared to third World forced labour exiles. He prefers comparison with early historical human population movements, “hegiras, hajras,⁸¹⁹ exiles, real movements outward, away.”

No, I don't harbor any such desire for a return to a perfect or *original* past way of life. What I am concerned with is a poetics for today and open on tomorrow. That openness is and has to be nomadic, by definition, in that it has to be instable enough to allow for change. My “nomadics” opposes a dynamics of “becoming” to an onto-theology of “Being.” (*Samizdat Interview*,” ANP: 128 emphasis added on *original*)

In studies of exile and migration, *origin* is a key issue, also in relation to writer's languages. Joris adds explanations that clarify his position as a nomad; he quotes Blanchot and the example of Abraham:

“The origin for the nomad is a decision; this is the decision of Abraham, separating himself from what is, and affirming himself as a foreigner, in order to answer to a foreign truth.” It is that relation to alterity or otherness that interests me. (129)⁸²⁰

The key ideas expressed in this statement – origin as decision; the foreigner's affirmed separation – permit a view on the translingual writer that foregrounds self-affirmation and not loss or deficiency. Origin thus is, we may say, a construction for the nomad, a positioning. Origin is a way or condition for the nomad or exile to discover foreignness: he affirms his separation from the origin, which has become strange. The return is impossible. This position aims at explaining *the writer's work*, not situations of forced exile, and underpins his poetics:

This hajra is an exile, but not an exodus, that is to say it is not a flight in search of a goal, a promised land, a telos that would reinscribe all the more forcefully all the lost identities, the unities of the individual, group or state. It is a wandering in uncertainty, in need of *negative capability* [...] The condition to be in, then, is always an in-between-ness, a neither here nor there. (129, emphasis added on *negative capability*)

The difference with the migrant, torn between two affiliations and the hope to recover a lost home is clear. Joris however also refers to the nature of texts and writing that such nomadic wandering entails.

⁸¹⁹ hegira as exodus or migration; hajra – emigration (also annual pilgrimage)

⁸²⁰ The key words in this statement – origin as decision; the foreigner's affirmed separation – permit a view on the translingual writer that foregrounds self-affirmation and not loss or deficiency

A poetics of negative capability and fragmentation

Many texts by Joris are perceived as difficult and possibly as “unpoetic.” The talk with S.J. Fowler dwells on this *negative capability*, which for the poet means a preference of intellectual confusion and uncertainty over truth.⁸²¹ Joris refers to this notion to explain his avoidance of affirmatory writing. He also dwells on the role of his multiple languages in the writing process: “[W]e now know that the universe is not fixed, total, one-directional etc, but variable undetermined, relativistic, an “open universe.” (Fowler interview, 2012: 2/8) The multiple truths that the poet wishes to convey find no better vehicle than the fragment, which is always incomplete, partial and multiple. He makes an important addition: “[This] does not mean there is no truth, no, not at all: there are many truths, & it is our exhilarating job to chase them down & rejoice in their clarities.” (3/ 8) Asked about a translator’s multiple languages in the writing process, Joris stresses an important aspect for translanguaging when he says, “I believe I am simply both a part & a, hopefully *attentive, listener to the world around me*. The nomadic comes in here not just as nomadism between languages as it expresses itself in & in the work of translation & enters the poem, but also as the lived experience of nomadism.” (5/ 8; emphasis added) For him there is no certainty, never one truth, the poet is always in search of new insights, always on the way and will often bifurcate to follow another idea. These encounters and interferences account for the fragmentary, broken style, further enhanced by foreign words and reference to other poets and thinkers.

A frequent objection to his texts is their **opacity**, often associated with his multilingualism. As one interviewer puts it: “You advocate a mishmash of languages, the creation of new ones, [...] While these techniques are all exciting, do they carry the danger of making poems incomprehensible?” (“Regenerative Diaspora,” 2011) Joris does not at once address the problem of language mixing but gives an extensive answer on his view of poetry: “I read and write poems in order to explore the unknown, to discover something I don’t know, and not in order to find what I already, or always, knew. And everything new is in some way incomprehensible — or, maybe better, uncomprehended as yet. And some, if not most, may, nay, will remain so forever.”

The insertion of unknown words or unfamiliar names then appears as part of a general dimension of his poetry, open for the reader to discover. He repeats the well-known statement, “Poems are a foreign language” and adds “readers have to learn that language [...] Why should a language-work be easier in that sense than a musical composition or a work of art? [...] it is exactly because of that that the poet has

⁸²¹ “Negative capability” is a reference to the 19th poet John Keats who used the phrase to refer to his doubts.

the duty to make language strange again [...] But a good poet writes works that also have *handles*, i.e. ways in for those who may not be familiar as yet with such work.”

Not an elitist poetry but a search for companions of thought

Other critics have questioned the validity of the innumerable foreign insertions and hints to a European (high) culture that especially American readers may not grasp or feel to be pretentious. (See Bernstein interview). For Joris it is a “writing through , a moving through” others’ texts to clarify his own ideas. References are not so much a continuation *as a critique of the system* of references and allusions associated with so-called high Modernism. They are not references that confirm a tradition but, as he says, companions of thought. Similarly, the insertion of foreign words is part of his thinking process – a key dimension of his writing and of what in the current study is approached as translingual writing processes.

6.3.7 Wrapping up with a few notes on how to *read* nomadic writing

or : **The need to transform sedentary readers into active and nomadic participants**

The investigation of this one term NOET has shown the challenges that await readers of Joris’s work.⁸²² They have to find and construct their own rhizomatic routes and approach his work as reinvented space on the page (see under Space). In his poetics, Joris includes some clues to help readers in search of an entry into the space of nomadic poetry, for instance through a comparison with some forms of visual art and by recalling the tremendous possibilities of work in cyberspace.

The visual thus a special case only & to be revisited as such. The nomad eye of cubism (& dada/ surrealism) as against the sedentary perception of perspective. As James J. Gibson (The Ecological Approach to Vision Perception) suggests, motion is the natural mode of human and animal vision: “We must perceive in order to move, but we must also move in order to perceive.” Thus the usefulness of writing in painting, Cy Twombly⁸²³, etc ... (“Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics,” ANP: 40)

A little later, he continues

... Or for me right now, the work of painter/ singer/ performance artist Nicole Peyrafitte, her ink drawings, those shapes and figures crossing & recrossing animal & vegetal, human and non-human, combining in a wild metonymic grammar of desire, & through that pictorial space, these

⁸²² Here’s a recall of the passage quoted in 6.3.2: NOET: NO stands for play, for no-saying & guerilla war techniques, for gNOSis & NOetics. ET stands for et cetera, the always ongoing process, the no closure: it stands for ExtraTerritorial, for the continuous state of being outside (not a margin that would always be definable as the margin of something called the real (territory)). ET stands for Electronic terrain, where the poem composes, recomposes, decomposes before your eyes, de- & re-territorializing at will or chance – without there being the ability to tell you which of those two determinants it is. (A NOMAD POETICS: 31)

⁸²³ Edwin Parker “Cy” Twombly Jr. was an American painter, sculptor and photographer.

thin lines of near-microscopic writing, in red or black ink, traversing, circumventing, circumscribing, separating, piercing, splicing, connecting the figural volumes & the smooth space of the paper. The attraction of language, the desire to read the lines, pushes the onlooker to move in, to close in on the drawing in order to decipher the text. The lines move freely and the reader cranes her neck, twist SIC herself around in order to follow the contour of the lines of writing, then steps back to grasp a figure, moves in again to read – & while reading can no longer “see” the organized, striated space of the figural volumes which themselves now dissolve into lines-of-flight. This constant destabilization of viewpoint, this continuous eye-&-body-act of de- & re-territorializing the spaces of the drawing keep the viewer from ever being able to find that fictional static point, that center outside the painting/ drawing that would organize a fixed, rectilinear, thus hierarchical world & gaze, as was the aim of Renaissance perspective. (“Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics,” ANP: 41-42)⁸²⁴

The internet also proves indispensable to uncover the net behind Joris’s poetics and the ever growing number of threads and strands that his essays weave together: awareness of connections slowly reveals how a coherent, though still always open text is woven. Joris gives clues but never aims at straightforward texts or ideas, as he explains in relation to post-collage:

[W]ith growing familiarity [...] it is becoming ever more possible to see the electronic space opened up by the computer not as the page of a bound or even loose-leaf notebook, but as the “open field” [...] A truly open field, visualizable as a rhizomatic space with lines of flight shooting off in all directions, with no up/down, front/back or left/right spatial hierarchization, able to incorporate quasi instant links to any other text or objects in cyberspace [...] also able to incorporate – or simply consist of – simultaneous image and sound nodes or virtual objects in three dimensions, as well as incorporating randomizing programs able to generate texts according to specific algorithms, &/ or translate given texts into sound and image structures [...] At the same time the reader, excluded from the traditional book, can now not only read a fixed text, but alter it by adding her own lines & links – bringing to mind again that near utopian if solidly democratic vision of a “poetry made by all”. (“Collage & Post-Collage,” ANP: 91)

On other occasions, he describes a more intuitive way of reading, which is mainly response to the text. In a review of *Rough Trades* by Charles Bernstein, he writes:

The suggestion is that Bernstein may (& does) have a “learned intuition” of what meanings he is folding into the sequencing of both the poem & the book. The reader will of necessity have another or several other such intuitions, more or less learned as the case may be, as s/he moves along the fracture lines of these mappings (“Bernstein’s *Rough Trades*,” ANP: 97)

Reflections on cyberpoetics for readers: a model of endless multiplicity and metamorphosis

One could add another passage (ANP: 42-43) to underline

Joris’s view of the *noet* as multiple whose natural tool is the world wide web also reflects what he expects from readers.

⁸²⁴ Joris adds the url for more information. “Go to url: [http:// www.nicolepeyrafitte.com/](http://www.nicolepeyrafitte.com/) for more”

Cyberpoetry for him is not just mindless creation by a computer.

In his poetics Joris introduces cyberpoetics with a reference to Indra, the Hindu deity, “The nomad poet, the NOET gives allegiance to INDRA the warrior god” (ANP: 42).⁸²⁵ Speaking of the warrior god as pure multiplicity and source of endless metamorphosis, Joris sees Indra’s net as an image of technological developments, notably for poetry turned into cyberpoetics. One important point for Joris is the noet’s involvement with many, with an immeasurable multiplicity, rather than with a singular other. The noet, with the help of the computer and the internet, should overcome the binary logic of classical Cartesian thinking. The confusing term “war machine” (and thus also the link of poetry with war activities) is somewhat clarified:

One of the new machines of a nomadic poetry – and we are not afraid of technology, all poetry has been techno-bounded from the beginning – one of the new machines is the computer. Interestingly enough, one of those investigating cyberpoetics – one incarnation of nomadic poetics – is John Cayley whose ongoing work is called Indra’s net. (ANP, 42-43)

The connection with Indra is due to a metaphor in Buddhist philosophy called “Indra’s net”, which the poet, John Cayley, has used for a vast project. Not Cayley’s project but the metaphor of Indra’s net appears as a valuable tool for the multilingual *noet*’s approach of reading, writing and of texts as all linked to each other. *Poems for the Millennium, Volume 2*, edited by Joris and Rothenberg, contains a section entitled “Toward a Cyberpoetics” (1998: 817-844), where the reader finds examples, sometimes with visual support, and commentaries by the editors which clarify the passage from collage to post-collage and include instances of translingual writing.

6.4 Comparing translingual poetics

Chapter 6 has shown that for Welch poetry is primarily *response* and praise for Joris it is a means to *think through* difficult concepts. This does not mean that Joris’s poetry cannot be response or that Welch excludes thinking from her poetic writing. For Welch and Joris, Hölderlin’s question “What are poets for?” (“Wozu Dichter ...?”) is fundamental. Their answers lie in their work. In different ways, they show how their poetry reflects numerous elements borrowed from others, which are transformed as part of a responding process or a practice of thinking through.

⁸²⁵ The association with a Vedic deity in Hinduism cannot be fully understood without the reference to Deleuze/Guattari who underline the double role played by Indra. The warrior god on the one hand works against anything static yet also is a necessary force for the consolidation of the power of king and priest. “[H]e is like a pure and immeasurable multiplicity, a pack, and irruption of the ephemeral and the power of metamorphosis”. (*A Nomad Poetics*: 42)

Remembering the cornerstones outlined for the approach of translingualism (in ch.3.3.3), it is possible to make a few more observations about similarities and differences between their poetics. Despite major differences, they agree on a few points: A poet does not need a mother tongue to write. All writing is translation. They both acknowledge the importance of reading in different languages despite the divergent deductions they draw.

Welch is in search of *one* language for her poetry and avoids “interferences” or contaminations from others. Joris attempts to accommodate all his languages or find ways for innovative writing that moves away from the principle of one language. This is what he means when he says nomads must “write in all (their) languages.” From there one can deduce Welch’s search *for a home* in language, and for Joris the appeal of homelessness as condition to be/come a poet.

A striking point of discordance concerns their response to Heidegger. It involves views on what it means to be a nomad (on the way, *unterwegs*,). It also reflects different visions of poetic writing (as response to natural world and praise, as *noet*’s inquiry and responsibility for networking)

For both poets translingualism it means not only movement from one into another language, it also stands for transferring knowledge acquired in one language into another language. The poetics show a major difference in the presentation of heterolingual elements: Joris insists on giving visibility to foreign elements and on emphasizing the process of transformation, while Welch aims at a monolingual text with next to no traces of linguistic otherness. These differences will become better visible through the attentive reading of selected poems in Part III and can be further analysed in the conclusion.

PART THREE: Examples of a translingual poetics in practice:

Writing as palimpsestic acts of language and acts of literature

*That's why I was much more interested in poetry than in prose –
exactly because the poet is the one who creates the language,
while the writer of prose, in the main, uses language (Aimé Césaire)*⁸²⁶

The analysis of poems in the next chapters is based on the framework set up in ch. 3.3 and key ideas of the poets' views, while it also remains open for emerging aspects that bring new insights into translingual writing. The focus on encounters (ch. 7), on crosslanguage dialogues (ch. 8) and on the creation of imaginary spaces (ch.9) will entail different perspectives. To an attentive reader, the poems show how multiple voices and nomadic movements become constitutive elements of writing. As the overall goal is an understanding of translingual processes in poetic texts, an introductory presentation of heterolingual techniques in ch. 7.1 aims to provide essential elements of reference for all the texts.

The underlying view is a performative approach of language and the belief that writing, as an act of language (Austin; Derrida; Kramer; Cassin) and **can do** something. Hence more precise formulations of the research questions now are: *How* does translingual writing work? *What* does the poetry of Welch and Joris do, in particular through references to otherness? What "results" can we expect in terms of its impact on readers?

If all poetry is **a foreign language**, translingual poetry is doubly foreign or other.

As Kramsch says, there is no easy way to understand otherness and multiplicity in language, which "realigns our conceptions of time, space, and reality." Multilingualism has many facets that can mutually elucidate each other and she concludes:

And this is where poetry and narrative come in. Whether these forms of verbal art match the monolingual literary productions of yesteryear is an open question. The multilingual imagination is sure to be different. After the dream of a common, transparent language, that has been ours since the Enlightenment, multilingualism once again foregrounds the *materiality of language and the opacity of meaning, the historical density of words and their symbolic power*. (Kramsch 2015: 355; emphasis added)

"The multilingual imagination is sure to be different," Kramsch's closing words turn into a fitting introduction for the analysis of translingual processes in poetry. The reading of the poems often starts from words that stand out, words that surprise because they are other or hint at some kind of a broken story line.

⁸²⁶ Quote taken from Pierre Joris, *A Nomad Poetics* : 7. See also 4.3.2.6 The routes of the nomad as reader and translator.

7. Encounters with multiple voices and practices of heterolingualism

7.1 The wide spectrum of heterolingual features⁸²⁷

In literary studies, classifications of multilingualism include distinctions between writers, their origin, areas where they live and links to literary traditions. The focus of the present chapter targets mostly the appearance (outward characteristics) of multilingual *texts*. The selection of examples reflects a very broad view of multilingualism; at this stage, the crucial underlying question is:

What do the texts of Welch and Joris, which I qualify as multilingual, *look- and sound-* like?⁸²⁸

To describe the range of varieties⁸²⁹ I start from Suchet's distinction between visible and invisible or hidden heterolingual elements or devices (*dispositifs*) (2014).⁸³⁰ As she uses these categories to analyse and compare translated texts, an adaptation to the source texts considered here, i.e. the poetic pieces by Welch and Joris, is necessary. By choosing the term heterolingual I stress difference and otherness rather than multiplicity and start from the following observations:

- a. The texts always have a **dominant language**, a backdrop against which heterolingual elements are examined. Otherness in texts can only emerge in comparison; it implies difference from the main language, and in some cases also difference between heterolingual elements.
- b. **The degree of heterolingualism varies**, inside what one may call **visible as well as hidden heterolingualism**: Describing the range of heterolingual insertions aims at an awareness of voices in a text.
- c. **The nature of heterolingual elements** depends on their origin. In poetic work the distinction between quotations from works by other writers (**literary heterolingualism**) and words echoing ordinary language experiences in different languages (**everyday heterolingualism**) is a good starting point for the analysis of texts.

A heterolingual device makes the language strange, it is a form of linguistic alienation aiming at defamiliarization. Such devices or textual features can vary greatly and the continuum that I consider is based on a reader's approach: heterolingual elements are those that either very subtly, or radically,

⁸²⁷ For a description of translingual writing, see review of Kellman's work in ch. 3.1. . This section on the nature of heterolingual features is a frame of reference that is valid for poems analysed in Part III. See also The spectrum of otherness in translingual poetic writing (Table with overview of poets' techniques in the Appendix)

⁸²⁸ A quick reminder of how I understand the terminology (see ch. 1; ch. 3): multilingual is the general term and includes heterolingual. Hetero – meaning *different* is thus a synonym of foreign and other in relation to a dominant language. It is used to describe texts, while translingual refers to writing processes.

⁸²⁹ For a description of forms of difference, several studies have provided inspiration, such as Kapitel 3 "Basisverfahren literarischer Mehrsprachigkeit" in *Handbuch der Mehrsprachigkeit*, published by Dembeck /Parr (2017), and part 2 "Dispositifs textuels d'étrangement des langues" in *L'imaginaire hétérologue. Ce que nous apprennent les textes à la croisée des langues* by Suchet (2014).

⁸³⁰ Suchet in extenso describes such devices as "dispositifs textuels d'étrangement des langues" (2014: 75-123).

interrupt a smooth reading; they are places or moments where, in Suchet's terms, the movement of reading requires some gear-shifting (*travail d'embrayage*) or adjustment. Speaking of *embrayage hétérolingue* (2014: 39-42), Suchet introduces the notion of "shifters",⁸³¹ such as words or names in another language that take the text to another level of reality, to a different world.

These interruptions depend of course on the reader's familiarity with the foreign language elements that erupt in the text. The types of heterolingualism can be defined more or less objectively, but the interpretation reflects the readers' and researchers' acquaintance with languages and texts, as well their general knowledge, experiences and beliefs – in this case my own. Interpretations of foreignness are always contingent on a linguistic and cultural context.⁸³² On a continuum of devices, Suchet distinguishes not only **thresholds** of visibility but also of readability (2014: 79), the latter also depending on the degree of communication that the text provides for readers, for instance by the insertion of clues.

This threshold of communicability reflects a writer's ethos, or positioning in relation to imagined readers. It accounts for the way in which the writer gives props to readers for an understanding of foreign elements, for instance, paraphrases or translations integrated in the text. Other means of reader supports include contextualization or a staging of the heterolingual element (scenographic techniques). The notion of heterolingual refers to the way the speaker or persona in the poem presents otherness and what devices, or dialogical forms, are chosen to address linguistic defamiliarization.

From visible to invisible forms: a wide spectrum of heterolingual devices. A semi-circular diagram would be a good tool to map the diversity of heterolingual devices, ranging from near invisibility to a clearly visible integration of various languages.⁸³³ The range of devices can be imagined to reach from a left side extreme of mere allusion of otherness to the right side extreme standing for a total mixture of languages and voices. Between these invisible and visible forms of heterolingualism, we must imagine not a dividing line but a dynamic threshold, mostly depending on a reader's perspective.

It is important to remember that a poem cannot be reduced to (or equated with) one heterolingual feature. It is inside the complex entity that a poem represents that examples of otherness arise. Obviously, poetic texts never quite fit one model and often display several, overlapping aspects.

⁸³¹ She draws on Jakobson's notion of "shifter": "Term adopted by Jakobson from the Danish linguist Otto Jespersen (1860–1943) for indexical symbols in language—grammatical units with a deictic character (such as personal pronouns), which can be decoded only by reference to the specific situational context of particular messages: time, place, addresser and addressee." Buchanan, *Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory* (2018; 445)

⁸³² Suchet's study refers to various translators' response to foreign elements in a text, enabling her to juxtapose the contexts from which they arise. The following presentation is inevitably situated in my own experience and to some extent reflects the thresholds of readability as I perceive them.

⁸³³ See document in the appendix with my attempt at a representation: The spectrum of otherness in translingual poetic writing: Table with overview of poets' techniques.

7.1.1 Visible forms of heterolingualism

In print, the visibility of foreign elements is ensured by such formatting aspects as quotation marks, italics, a different alphabet or a foreign spelling. Once the text is read aloud, **otherness becomes audible**. On some occasions, the break with the main language is underlined by an arrangement of the text on the page – text becomes space which further highlights otherness.

Varieties of visible forms found in the work of Welch and Joris

Quotations from texts in another language than English. They come either as epigraphs or are longer passages taken from published texts (literary, critical or philosophical work).

For instance, in Welch, “Rimbaud in Luxembourg,” (*Dream Museum* 1995: 61), an epigraph in Luxembourgish: „Et war esou em d’Paischten/t’stung alles an der Bléi“ (Michel Rodange, *Rénert*). Inside the poem follows a quote from Rimbaud, « j’irai loin,/ bien loin, comme un bohémien » (line from *Sensation, Poésies complètes* 1998: 108).

Joris often juxtaposes epigraphs in two or three languages. In *Breccia* (1975), for example, two quotations in English are followed by an excerpt from Michel Serres: « Nous n’existons, ne parlons et ne travaillons, de raison, de science et de bras, que dans et par l’écart à l’équilibre. Tout est écart à l’équilibre, hormis le rien. C’est-à-dire l’identité. » *The Book of Luap Nalec* has four epigraphs, one in Spanish, one in English, and two in German.

Insertion of single words or a cluster of words in another language. They either echo another writer’s language or are borrowed from everyday speech. Examples in Welch are swear words in “A Public Man,” in *Crossings* 2010: 20.

In Joris’s work, we find many examples especially in *Poasis* (quoting what Celan wrote in Heidegger’s visitors’ book in Todtnauberg: “von einer Hoffnung heute,/ auf eines Denkenden/ kommenden/ Wort/ im Herzen” (*Poasis*: 17); also see 112, “Getting there,” insertions in Latin, Arabic, German (186-189).

A specific type of visible otherness is achieved through **the insertion of words in a different alphabet**. Joris occasionally introduces words in Arabic script. In *The Meditations on the Stations of Mansur Al-Hallaj*, he makes systematic use of the Arabic script, presented with a phonetic transcription and an English translation. Occasionally a word in Arabic script also appears in other poems, e.g. “Getting there.”

The most striking multilingual poems display **a mixing of several languages** with the juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated words and sounds. They may involve dialogue or reflect code-switching (see ch. 8). They are examples of what one may call in Joris’s own word “turbulence of language.” Why *turbulence*? Joris frequently refers to this image associated with meteorological conditions as well as a tumultuous

state of mind. He seems to have been inspired by Édouard Glissant, whose description of “tourbillon”⁸³⁴ (whirlwind) fits the way that words and languages are intertwined in some of Joris’s poems. What counts is a vertiginous rhythm, some repetition or echo of words that return in various forms, an absence of straightforward moving lines and an explosion of words that resembles a volcanic eruption. Examples of such multilingual explosions can be found in *Winnetou Old*, poems from *Turbulence*, *The Gulf*. An extract from *Turbulence* is added below.

Between visible and invisible heterolingualism

Names of places and titles in original or translated form introduce a sense of linguistic difference and awareness of another language and context. They may be titles of books or of single poems in a foreign language. Many of Joris’s collections have titles in a foreign language or suggesting foreignness (*Barzakh*, *Breccia*, *h.j.r.*). Welch occasionally uses other languages in titles of poems: *Léif Mam*; “Pauvre Belgique,”⁸³⁵ *Quest’anno la partenza delle rondini* (no italics).⁸³⁶

Place names in a foreign language ask for some mental shift and introduce a particular context, often in opposition with the speaker’s main Location. They remind us of the **spatial dimension** of heterolingualism. Foreign elements take us momentarily to another reality; they signal comparisons, other perspectives. Their presence is an invitation for readers to join the poetic persona in their mental travelling to other surroundings, often situated in the past. Names of places and people play an important role as “gear shifters” reminding readers of a context that is frequently juxtaposed to the poet’s context at the moment of writing.

When these poems are read aloud, the words in other languages could work as a kind of **shibboleth**.⁸³⁷ *Lëtzebuerg* is a good example but both poets offer numerous other instances of words and names that according to readers’ familiarity with languages may be read differently. Welch’s poems on rock climbing

⁸³⁴ See Glissant who evokes his fascination with turbulence in a conversation with François Noudelmann (*Les Vendredis de la philosophie*, France Culture, 2003) « Je ne sais pas à quel âge, dans mon très jeune temps, j’ai rêvé d’avoir développé un texte qui s’enroulerait innocemment mais dans une drue manière de triomphe sur lui-même, jusqu’à engendrer au fur et à mesure ses propres sens. La répétition en était le fil, avec cette imperceptible déviance qui fait avancer. Dans ce que j’écris, toujours j’ai poursuivi ce texte. Je m’ennuie encore de ne pas retrouver l’enhallement tant tourbillonnant qu’il créait, qui semblait fouiller dans une brousse et dévaler des volcans. Mais j’en rapporte comme une ombre parfois, qui relie entre elles les quelques roches de mots que j’entasse au large d’un tel paysage, oui, une brousse, sommée d’un volcan. » <http://www.edouardglissant.fr/tourbillon.html>

⁸³⁵ “Pauvre Belgique,” is a reference to Baudelaire said to have spoken of Belgium in these terms.

⁸³⁶ See in *This Numinous Bond* (2003: 62) where the integration of an Italian popular song used becomes the title line of a poem.

⁸³⁷ See the poem “Shibboleth” by Paul Celan (in collection entitled *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle*, Gesamtausgabe 2012: 83); comments by Jacques Derrida (“Shibboleth: For Paul Celan,” (2005) and essay by Till Dembeck “No pasaran” (2013). See also the poem by Caroline Bergvall (“Say: Parsley”) that Marjorie Perloff analyses (2012: 129-136).

in the Dolomites are a good example (*Manstorna*, e.g. “South Wall of the Coro,” “Sasso d’Ortiga,” or “Zoccolo Pala Canali”).

Less perceptible forms are **quotations in translation, which** introduce another voice and language **only** indirectly. They are not audibly different from the dominant language and pose no immediate obstacle to readers. Therefore I include them under “Invisible” forms of heterolingualism.

7.1.2 “Invisible” forms of heterolingualism

Literally, this means no other language appears on the surface of the text. Suchet speaks of “hétérolinguisme escamoté” (2014: 251). It is worth looking at the French term whose diverse meanings bring interesting insights into the nature of foreign insertions. “Escamoté” suggests more than “invisible” or “hidden.”⁸³⁸ In many cases agency is implied: somebody – the author or narrator – lets these heterolingual elements disappear from the surface of the text, at least partly. *On les passe sous silence* - they are not mentioned; they are glossed over, evaded. “Escamoté” also provides good images to analyse hidden foreign elements in texts. The word is for example used to describe the device by which the landing gear of a plane is retracted; similarly one speaks of retracting stairs: the stairs have become invisible but are still there: There was however a good reason to retract them.

Hidden heterolingualism also depends on the recognition of intralingual multiplicity and on notions of translational writing as highlighted in chapter 3. They point to forms of otherness in language which do not rely on explicit language changes and disregard conventional borders between languages.

Varieties of invisible forms of heterolingualism found in the work of Welch and Joris

As mentioned above, literary **quotations in translation** fit in here. They let us imagine a text in another language; the language sensitive reader may hear different words, a voice in another language behind the words on the page. *Welch* quotes Rilke in translation as epigraph for a section of *Frescoes* ““For the sake of a single poem, you must see many cities, many people and things. ... You must think back to roads in unknown regions, to unexpected encounters and partings.” R.M. Rilke, *The Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge*. The title of her opening poem in *Word-House of a Grandchild* is the translation of a line from the *Aeneid* “I sail to Italy not of my own free will”. *Welch* adds in a note at the end of the book that “the title

⁸³⁸ From various dictionaries : Faire disparaître un objet par un tour de main qui échappe à l'attention des spectateurs : Escamoter une carte. Dissimuler quelque chose quelque part par un procédé approprié : D'un seul geste, on escamote la table dans le placard. Dérober subtilement quelque chose à quelqu'un ; subtiliser, faucher : On lui avait escamoté son portefeuille. Supprimer un mot, un son, une note, les éviter ou les sauter. Éluder habilement, mais de façon peu sérieuse ou peu honnête ; esquiver : Vous escamotez la difficulté. Replier un élément d'avion dans la voilure, le fuselage ou les fuseaux moteurs.

hearkens back to the line Aeneas says to Dido in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Such notes are props that authors offer their readers, who might not recognize the origin of the line.

In "The work of Al-Ishk" Joris inserts a translation of another poet's words (we recognize it by the quotation marks) and through the context we understand that the original by Guillaume IV of Aquitaine is in Provençal. Joris often omits the use of typographical markers, such as italics or quotation marks, for heterolingual elements. This is particularly true when the foreign insertion is not a quotation but rather a sign of a speaker's natural mixing of languages (cf. "Goosefeet," discussed in 7.3.3.2)

Paraphrases of other writers' words (transposed into English) move farther away from an assumed original, which becomes nearly invisible. Welch and Joris often write about other poets, imagine encounters and integrate echoes of others' work in their poems, thus introducing parallel worlds.⁸³⁹ Mingling their voices with those of other poets creates, metaphorically speaking, a palimpsestuous relationship. As it allows highlighting the translingual nature of intertextuality, the palimpsest appears as an appropriate tool to analyse the relation between the poets' words and underlying voices.

Sometimes allusions are just hints of otherness for readers to notice, to reflect on – and possibly to reconstruct within their own webs of significance (see below, the comments on *Turbulence*).

The poems contain not only literary echoes: **voices of real persons' speech** underlie many texts. Succinct evocations of the environment in which they are situated point to their heterolingual nature. In the poems, they are **translated voices**. The question is how the poets succeed in keeping the specificity of each voice.⁸⁴⁰

Instances in Welch's work are poems on the Acadians' voices as well as remembered and imagined exchanges with Italian mountain guides. Her grandparents' fictitious dialogues in the poet's English voice (*Word-House of a Grandchild*) are discussed as pseudo-translation or translation without an original.

In Joris's poetry "The Dream of the Desert in the Book," *Poasis* (2001: 183) or "Fin-de-diècle Identikit" in *Breccia* (1987: 201-205) contain telling examples.

7.1.3 Heterolingual elements as moments and places of articulation between languages

For readers all heterolingual devices are moments of gear shifting that take them to another time or place – other than their own and or other than the context or reality which the speaker or narrator creates in

⁸³⁹ Examples are found in Welch's poems about Dante and Rimbaud or in Joris's references to Celan, Jabès, Mallarmé and many more.

⁸⁴⁰ See also Bakhtin's views on quasi-direct speech (Glossary in *The Dialogic Imagination* 1981: 433) and on orchestration (ibidem 430-431). Bakhtin's analysis of the novel is to a large extent applicable to poetic writing that involves different voices.

the text. They work as instruments of **articulation**, which regulate changes of direction as well as the interaction of voices. The moment when an element of foreignness is introduced shares some of the features of Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope. (See Bakhtin 1981: 84 ff.)

A short note on the translation of multilingual texts (texts with heterolingual features)

As foreign elements in texts become problematic for translators, studies of translation yield important insights into their role. (Grutman and Delabastita 2005; Suchet 2014) Therefore it is interesting to see briefly if and how some texts by Welch and Joris have been translated.

Welch: The prose poems in *Life in Another Language*,⁸⁴¹ contain very few visible forms of heterolingualism. For the targeted, mostly North American audience, the evoked context in each piece stresses different forms of life not linguistic variation. The German title of a selection of translated texts (by the Luxembourg poet Nic Weber) is *Von Menschen und Orten* (1992). It is an interpretation rather than a literal translation; omitting the reference to language, it conveys Welch's emphasis on the human element, on context and diversity. As for the texts themselves, the translator also needs to adapt views on foreignness for the targeted European, Luxembourgish audience. A good example to study is the piece that Welch has entitled "Pâtisserie." It raises a few questions as to how references to the real world that the English text suggests are rendered in German. Interestingly in the German translation this piece has no title.

Joris: The fact that the most multilingual of Joris's poems have not appeared in translation means that little source material is available to study the transformation of heterolingual features. It also confirms that the additional shifts of positions and interactions deter translators. Separate, well defined standard languages are better suited for translation than mixed speech which lacks a clear central position. Multilingualism in poetry without clearly identifiable speakers may further complicate issues. For research, Suchet's analysis of *Die Niemandrose* by Celan in various translations could provide a valuable model. (2014)

Multilingual texts and writers' posture (ethos)

The way heterolingual elements are presented - with props for readers (like notes, contextual hints, paraphrases, translations offered in the text) or without any clues is a question of **ethos or authors' positioning** towards their readers. Do they try to imagine the difficulties readers may have? Do they leave them complete freedom to interpret foreign elements and contexts on their own? Do they develop strategies for a meaningful integration of information in the text?

⁸⁴¹ See in 7.2. The reference to "another language" in the title is puzzling: the texts have no insertions of passages in another language nor any direct reference to a foreign language or language learning.

7.1.4 Examples of heterolingualism in poetry

The aim of the two following examples is to show different *techniques in their contexts*, without an analysis of related subjects of translingual processes as will be done in the next chapters.

Pierre Joris

A piece taken from *Turbulence* (1991),⁸⁴² is **an example of visible and not so visible heterolingual devices** caught in a whirlwind of words and voices:

where Wiener was at the time I don't know
 published 1947 Paris a work written in English
 prefaced by himself in Mexico
 begins with the weather conditions in Boston announced
 for January 17, 1950
 it is since the time of the nomads
 when it was necessary to remember
 the location of the pasturing grounds
 that the importance of the place where one is
 has been exaggerated
 a little German song
 weisst du wieviel Sternlein stehen
 introduces cybernetics
 a nurse from Berlin teaches the song
 a town translates as
 Attila's bridge early fifties
 where Wiener was at the time I don't know
 do you know how many stars
 in Vienna pedestrians from nebulous cordons
 his only weather in the mail today
 back in Vienna temperature relations a cold front August 1913
 pedestrians from nebulous curtains Vienna as cloud
 particles that move no fixed center a man without qualities
 walking to school a big black dog a whispered name
 a city with Buddha and plague particles that move
 a little German song clouds parade by you insert
 yourself or are inserted walking to school clouds parade by
 nur Gott der Herr could count them
 (from *Turbulence*, in Poasis 2001: 60)

The poem at first overwhelms the reader as a cascade of words. I will attempt a reading of this flow of words – though it will soon turn out to be several readings. I take the poem to be the example of a heterolingual text in which visible and invisible or hidden aspects of otherness constantly intertwine in a

⁸⁴² See Joris's comments on the creation of *Turbulence*, in "Samizdat" (Interview in A NOMAD POETICS 124-126).

turbulence of words that we watch or hear parading in front of us. The aim is not an exhaustive explanation rather **the search for a tool for readers** to deal with the complexity of multiplicity in movement across languages, but also across time and space.

First reading: The heterolingual elements or “gear shifters” that emerge from the text are a few words in German and a passage in italics. “[W]eisst du wieviel Sternlein stehen,” with the song’s answer in the last line (“nur Gott der Herr could count them”), is a well-known German nursery song. (For those who do not know German, the poem offers hints a little further down: a nurse from Berlin teaches the song, as well as a line with the translation: do you know how many stars.) The passage in italics is possibly a quotation in translation, though no author of the original text is mentioned. The topic of nomadism and an emphasis on the irrelevance of specific places chimes in with Joris’s interest in nomadic theory.

Several spatial and temporal elements offer factual references (Paris, Mexico, Boston, Berlin, Vienna) but no immediate link is visible: a text published in 1947 is not likely to provide weather conditions for 1950. How this should relate to weather conditions in Vienna in 1913 is just as puzzling.

Second reading: Another approach consists in approaching the text itself as **language in turbulence**, as an example of what Glissant calls *tourbillon*. As he says, for the understanding of such a text, one needs to be aware of two principles that account for the movement of words: « La répétition en était le fil, avec cette imperceptible déviance qui fait avancer ». If **repetition** constitutes the first clue to follow in a whirlwind of words, the text offers a few possibilities. The enigmatic line “where Wiener was at the time I don’t know” is repeated later in the poem. So are a couple of phrases and clauses: “a little German song”; “particles that move”; “walking to school” while weather conditions and references to clouds reappear with slight modifications. Similarly, “nebulous cordons,” become “nebulous curtains” thus corresponding to what Glissant calls an imperceptible **deviance** that causes movement and progress.⁸⁴³ Suddenly the crucial term “cybernetics” in the middle of the poem stands out, and Wiener - not related to Vienna, as Viennese person or thing - appears as Norbert Wiener, the author of cybernetics. At this stage, the internet helped elucidate the dates and an apparent inconsistency.⁸⁴⁴

⁸⁴³ Synonyms of “deviance” help explain the movement of thoughts: “deviation, deviate behavior; also deflection, divergence, aberrancy, digression, divagation, , diversion, deviation, departure, difference.”

⁸⁴⁴ *Norbert Wiener* (November 26, 1894 – March 18, 1964) was an American mathematician and philosopher, who taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. *Cybernetics* was published in 1948 (the poem states 1947!) but then reading on I found: “Wiley had the first edition of Wiener’s book typeset and printed by letterpress in France by the French publishers Hermann et Cie, probably because the French firm was a specialist in mathematical publications. The first edition was thus issued in Paris. The first American edition was printed offset from the French sheets and issued by John Wiley in New York in 1948.”

For an understanding of the poem, one dimension is still missing: that of the almost imperceptible **speaking subject**. It is inserted towards the end, stressed by the repeated phrase “walking to school” and the active – passive variation “you insert/ yourself or are inserted”, as well as the reference to “Attila’s bridge” – a translation of Ettelbruck, the town where Joris lived and went to school in the “early fifties.” Gradually connections in the poem appear: they seem to be reflections on the time when he was a schoolboy and show how his mind works – across languages and places and memories.

More bits and pieces that belong together slowly emerge. Above all, it is possible to set up a few general strategies for an approach of Joris’s poems and the tumultuous combination of languages, spaces, times and ideas.

- Look for heterolingual or foreign elements, including names of people or places.
- Make out repetitions, which like threads or ribbons flow through the text and reappear at certain intervals.
- Be attentive to what Glissant calls deviance: variations or modifications (clouds that become nebulous cordons; Wiener and Vienna)
- Observe links emerging between the intertwining strips of text, which move like clouds and suggest a relation between Wiener’s cybernetics and the stars in the German nursery song.
- Look out for a speaking subject, which gives clues about his positioning and the way the text can be contextualized (cf. heterolingual ethos, in Suchet).
- For an understanding of translingual processes, focus on the role of translation, not just the translation of foreign words into the main language of the text, but also on how words and phrases translate back into another (original) language: “man without qualities” must be read as the title of Musil’s novel; Attila’s bridge is Ettelbruck. Heterolingual elements can also cover up a repetition: “*weisst du wieviel Sternlein stehen*” echoes “where Wiener was at the time *I don’t know*”: the poem, which has no title, turns out to be an enquiry into complex movements of thought.
- Reading Joris’s poems, it is always important to remain aware of language games: “a city with Buddha and plague” (Budapest) reads like the phrasing of riddles (as in charades and similar to the use of pictures in a rebus).

Last, not least, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and the internet may provide help, if one reads Joris’s props in the text correctly. However, a poetics for the reader is based on the belief that everyone constructs his or her own web of significance. One must accept the fact that personal readings may not correspond to those that the poet had in mind.

After a careful reading, the poem yielded to me meaningful views on connections of languages and voices, though a few points remained a bit hazy. Thus, I suspected the reference to Mexico to refer to Kerouac, (according to my internet research he actually stayed there in 1950); the passage in italics I thought might

be a text that Joris translated which could account for his omitting the quotation marks.⁸⁴⁵ Somehow it made sense to me as confirmation of ideas interacting with different places, times, and languages. Later, *by complete chance*, I came across a text by the French philosopher, Michel Serres, in translation. The opening paragraph shows that Joris's poem is in fact his reflection on that text:

Exact and Human For Wladimir Kryszinski ⁸⁴⁶

Boston, January 17th, 1950, sky 38% cloudy, cirro cumulus. A depression was announced over the Atlantic; it was moving from West to East toward an anticyclone situated over Russia, and so far showed no signs of avoiding it by swerving to the north. The isotherms and isotheres fulfilled their obligations.

Robert Musil publishes in 1931 the first volume of *The Man Without Qualities*. From the first chapter, remarkably enough, nothing follows. As a consequence that was foreseen therefore, but largely aleatory, the novel remains unfinished. Norbert Wiener, publishes in France in 1947, a work written in English, the famous *Cybernetics*, which he prefaced himself, and dated or Localized in Mexico. From the beginning he announces weather conditions in Boston for January 17th, 1950. Musil measures the temperature relations and describes the cold front for an August day in 1913. It is since the time of the nomads, when it was necessary to remember the location of the pasturing grounds, that the importance of the place where one is has been exaggerated. Robert Musil soon leaves Vienna for Berlin, then Austria for Switzerland, where he dies, in Geneva, in 1942. Where Wiener was at the time, I don't know. Where he was at the time that Hermann was editing his work, who knows. What the importance of Vienna is, in the conjecture, I don't know either, although it is possible and easy to inform oneself on this point. Vienna where pedestrians form nebulous cordons, Vienna as cloud. Clouds of the depression that glides over the Atlantic, clouds that parade by, and that God would count, from the little German song, in the first lines of *Cybernetics*. Spatio-temporal clouds. Where are they? What are they doing? What will they soon be doing?

There then, are two beginnings from similar initial conditions.

Michel Serres, Winnie Woodhull and John Mowitt Source: *SubStance*, Winter, 1978-1979, Vol. 6/7, No. 21, Literature and Its Others (Winter, 1978-1979), pp. 9-19.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3684460?seq=1>

What to conclude: The aim here is the presentation of translingual processes and a heterolingual text, not a juxtaposition of texts by Serres, Musil and Wiener.

Some ideas in the text by Michel Serres are reminiscent of Deleuze/ Guattari's nomadic theory and may also be linked to Kenneth White's studies of cybernetic movements and ecopoetics. The text also elucidates a few missing elements of my previous reading. But it has not changed my view of the text as a piece about language in movement, in turbulence, which changes like clouds and cannot be dissociated

⁸⁴⁵ I also found an event recorded for Boston, on 17 Jan 1950: *On January 17, 1950*, 11 men steal more than \$2 million (\$29 million today) from the Brink's Armored Car depot in Boston, Massachusetts. It was the perfect crime—almost—as the culprits weren't caught until January 1956, just days before the statute of limitations for the theft expired." (Boston Thieves Pull Off Brink's Robbery). Yet, this event does not seem to have a link to Joris's text.

⁸⁴⁶ Wladimir Kryszinski is the author of the study "Poétique de la bouche invisible," presented in ch.3.1.

from particular contexts. My guess about Kerouac is refuted (though it helped me in my meaning making process).

The observer, or speaker, too, is a particle in movement. The poem suggests that language is a phenomenon as complex as wandering clouds; cybernetics (and literature through a great writer like Musil) may provide insights into these relations of space, time and movement. In its form, it appears like a collage but not as a static product, rather a combination of flying and rotating banners or streamers, which move down the page, collide and change like clouds. Words in one language turn with changing winds into another language, they have memories that take them across vast ranges of space and time. In Joris's work, many pieces correspond to a turbulence of language or are comments about such a turbulence of languages, as in *Aegean Shortwave*:

news in french from Jerusalem parse the value of
the gold napoleon in relation to the shekel radio
Mediterranean emits in english a flying hospital
soon to be put into service in Italy carried by regu-
lar plane the voice of America tamil insurrections
in sri lanka a concert of baroque music held in as-
pen colorado tent sip çay & codis (*Poasis* 2001: 177).

I imagine somebody in the Aegean or Eastern Mediterranean *en train de zapper* or flicking across channels and while I am reading I try to supplement different languages behind the news, with a world map as background.

Liliane Welch

Welch, too, in her work occasionally combines visible and invisible forms of heterolingualism. They are usually linked to reading experiences and to travelling. A good example that speaks for itself is

"Bookscapes"

Madame Bovary and its lust; Les Fleurs du Mal
with its staccato rains; Embers and Dr Zhivago,
where the drawn-out whistle of trains
in the night give longing a voice. I'm captivated
by my memories of all those stories:
wishes and enticements; requiems and invocations –
trees become austere in fall, fuzzy with new leaves in April;
goodbyes without lyrics, like final meals barely touched.
The immensity of libraries! The perfect
pace of strolls through books! Those pages
potent with the song of departures for other lives!
The Iliad and The Aeneid keep me in their strongholds,
And A la recherche du temps perdu and Illuminations.

« Read The Leopard, » my friend says. "Read The Name of the Rose."

At her coaxing, skies and oceans navigate me,
armies of readers flee into books and the brilliant
concerts of wakefulness. While I read each morning—
one canto from The Divine Comedy —
the descent from the dark wood into Hell
is so vertiginous and one wrong step lands you in Lucifer's claws,
where even in Paradise, resplendent with light,
all we can do is long for the distant earth: so puny and sweet.
The Flowers of Evil 2008:25

In Welch's poems the books arranged on a shelf suggest order and control, while in Joris's poem the emphasis is on an apparent lack of order and on the complexity of movements that the text attempts to unravel. In "Bookscapes," the meaning making is the work of the reader who creates her web of significance. The voices remembered from books sing departure, wandering and experiences that transform the reader.

7.2 Liliane Welch: In search of a voice and place

7.2.1 Positioning in a new world

A distinction between Welch's essays and her poetry seems crucial yet not always easy as in all her texts we recognize similar contextual references. The poems often mention real places, which can be located on the map, yet the poetic voice must not be confused with the person, Liliane Welch. However important her overall organizing pen(man)ship and signature remain, "je est un autre" as Rimbaud writes.⁸⁴⁷ The poet puts on masks to investigate a variety of perspectives and responses. One easily forgets that the poems are often dreams of alternative worlds, of imagined dialogues and juxtapositions. The essays, for their part, are the expression of their author's voice. But essays are a mixed genre. In Welch's case, they often begin with facts and biographical details. The narrating voice then flows into comments, reflections and personal interpretations given in a language which is sometimes quite similar to that of her poetry. "The Eyeball of Time" and "Canadian Returnee" are poems about a migrant's effort to find her place and the role that writing and a new language play in the process of self-construction. Memories of the old world provide confirmation of a break with her former life while they also hint at an in-between position.

⁸⁴⁷ See interview with Anne Compton: "Ascension. Liliane Welch talks about poetry," Canadian Literature, 166. 2000: 127-141.

These poems show parallels with memoirs by migrants who analyse their relations to former and new languages. (See chapter 3.)

“The Eyeball of Time”

is an unpublished poem, which figures as opening piece for a series of handwritten poems neatly recorded in grey linen-bound notebooks as they were typically used in Luxembourg schools in the 1950s and 60s.⁸⁴⁸ In her archives, it figures as her first recorded poem.

The Eyeball of Time
Your thought, a seed on marble
In America it grows no roots.
The parched lips stutter the wrong words
of a strange language

A driftwood drifting uselessly into the day
These words, unwanted children, they tremble

Slip into the labyrinth of exile
At the edge of the world
Swim through the glass door of sunken Europe

Wrap yourself into your words
Throw your thoughts up into the air
Let the wind brush through them

Your thought arched like a fireball
On the way to things, touching them, grazing them.
Your thoughts a river god, a stream of words,
rock and water.
They smell of world
They come from far, messengers,
From beyond the sea,
barefoot
With a departing word, they vanish.

(CNL L-0190; I) [unpublished, handwritten dated 1975]]

The highly symbolic title, “Eyeball of Time,” immediately catches the reader’s attention: the poet creates an image of time moving or rolling like a ball and hinting at a personification of time. It becomes a metonymy for the poet putting into words what she observes. Time, we understand, is a key element of her writing. The eyeball is like a fireball (line 13) in the sky, which from some distance can have insights into what happens across vast spaces, in the past, the present and an outlook on the future.

⁸⁴⁸ The notebook is part of Welch’s archives at the Centre national de littérature in Luxembourg. The expression “The Eyeball of Time” figures as heading for the first poem but it may also be the title for the collection of handwritten poems gathered in the notebook. (CNL L-190; I)

The poem is not a smoothly constructed sequence of ideas but rather an accumulation of images. It reads like the outcry of a speaker who attempts to convey the fluctuations of her state of mind. Formally, she addresses herself through the repeated use of second-person pronouns. A few references to time and space (America – Europe) allow us to follow her thoughts.

The twenty-one lines appear to be the self-portrait of an immigrant who from desperate aphasic and disoriented newcomer recovers her energy and selfhood through words that suddenly acquire significance because they link her to natural surroundings while also ringing with memories of the world she left. The direct presentation and urgency of the situation in the opening lines are striking: They evoke the moment when the inarticulate immigrant (in America) discovers her new voice and power as a poet. This sudden insight is an epiphany that fills her with energy, confidence and vision.

Welch uses striking images to express the disarray of the person first stuttering in a foreign language and finding no home for her thoughts: “Your thought, a seed on marble/ In America it grows no roots./ The parched lips stutter the wrong words/ of a strange language.” For the immigrant, the words in the new language are at first “unwanted children” of no help in “the labyrinth of exile” until her thought erupts into a powerful, new language and she can say, “Wrap yourself into your words/ Throw your thoughts up into the air/ Let the wind brush through them” (ll. 10-12). The eyeball as a symbol of God, standing for divine wisdom, in Welch’s poem becomes “a river god, a stream of words” which flow from the poet’s thoughts. Some lines evoking the migrant’s position between two worlds are more confusing, for instance, “Swim through the glass door of sunken Europe” (l. 9) and a certain ambiguity in attitudes towards the words “from beyond the sea” remain until the end.

“The Eyeball of Time” is the poetic figuration of an immigrant’s situation with no explicit links to a real person. Is it a poem about Welch’s own experiences, about an imagined immigrant or about a fictional self? Ultimately, this is irrelevant. Yet, we notice parallels with language memoirs studied by applied linguists interested in accounts by migrants, in their experiences of initial loss, disorientation and of gains that the new language offers. Despite some fuzziness, the poem suggests as much about the mental suffering of a speechless immigrant as recorded conversations or extracts from memoirs do.

This piece is also a reminder of the complexity of time dimensions in stories: Welch writes this piece some twenty years after arriving in North America, when she is a fully articulate speaker of English and a recognized academic. If it has an autobiographical dimension, it is a retrospective account. Only poetry is still to some extent a foreign language, which as this poem shows, she is about to acquire. This view of poetry as a distinct language that a writer must learn like any other tongue is an idea that we find in several other texts. (See the next section on Language and Otherness) The main message may well be

about the role of creative, poetic writing as a means of meaning making for the subject, still torn between her European past and her new home country. In poetic writing, the speaker in the poem attempts to come to terms with difficult issues, such as dealing with a double allegiance to Europe and the New World, a complex dilemma which she could not adequately express in ordinary language.

“The Eyeball of Time” also fits the **Canadian literary context** in which it was created. (See also ch. 4) Attention to time dimensions also requires a distinction between views on migration in Canada at the time when Welch wrote the poem and new perspectives as they were developed in the following decades. I can only give a few indications of the important role that life-writing played in Canadian literature in the 1970s and 80s, and which subsequently led to a vast and diversified field of research (for overviews of different perspectives, see Waldemar Zacharasiewicz 2014; Eva-Marie Kröller 2017; Julie Rak 2017). A poem by Margaret Atwood, entitled “Disembarking at Quebec,” shows startling thematic parallels with Welch’s unpublished piece. It is the opening text of *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970), a book of poetry that Atwood published in 1970. In it, she rewrites the autobiographical story of Moodie, a 19th century English-born writer who arrived in Canada and describes her life as an early settler.⁸⁴⁹ She adopts the early immigrant’s voice and attempts to convey her experiences, in particular her distress when on arriving she feels utterly out of tune with the voices she hears but also, like Welch’s immigrant persona, with the land itself. The last two lines,

I am a word
in a foreign language.

sum up a state where lack of language equals the loss of self-recognition.

Studies of autobiographical writing in Canada have foregrounded various aspects of interest for a reading of Welch’s poems: transcultural perspectives in life writing (Hornung 2009); gender issues and the power that writing affords (Karpinski 2012; 2013; see ch. 3); the role of ethnic communities;⁸⁵⁰ Recently, indigenous female poets have come to question the dominant position of English as the colonial master’s

⁸⁴⁹ *Roughing it in the Bush* was originally published in 1852. In *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970) Atwood adopts the early immigrant’s voice.

⁸⁵⁰ In the 1990s, the interest in life writing became associated with an emphasis on ethnic writers, recognized as members of constitutive, but also separate, communities in Canadian society. The danger of discriminatory attitudes led to a severe critique of the celebrated Canadian form of multiculturalism (see for instance, Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions*, 1994). I became aware of the ambiguity of research into these aspects of Canadian literature in the 1990s when I submitted a paper on Liliane Welch and the editor asked for additional comments on her ethnic positioning, i.e. her attachment to a national or cultural community. As ethnic affiliation of non-Canadian born writers was the overall topic of the planned publication, I withdrew my paper: classifying writers in relation with one community of origin seemed impossible and a betrayal of the multiple cultural connections in her work.

language (Dowling , *Translingual Poetics: Writing Personhood Under Settler Colonialism* 2018) - uncovering a position that stands in contrast with those who like Welch gladly adopt the English language and for whom it is a symbol of freedom.

In Welch's writing the lives of women are a constant backdrop although she tends to avoid an active participation in debates about feminism. (See in particular her collection *Fire to the Looms Below* 1990; cf ch . 4.)

What her work, starting with "Eyeball of Time," shows is the importance of writing for meta-reflection on language and on one's place in the world. Making sense of one's life, including thoughts about what it means to be Canadian, is a theme that her poetry shares with life-writing.

Published thirteen years after "Eyeball of Time", "Canadian Returnee" is a first-person evocation of the Canadian emigrant who returns to Luxembourg for a visit, possibly the same visit as the one mentioned in several essays in *Seismographs*, which was published the same year.

"Canadian Returnee"

Sunday curls noiseless over Luxembourg,
 Sunday without work, fleeing into bells,
 candles waning skyward. And I, Canadian
 returnee, conquer engraved stone, until
 the riven citadel spews fireballs again,
 their comet-tails scanning the ramparts.
 And touching broken frescoes, my hands
 stumble no more blind through speechlessness,
 I find words warm like a goose-down shirt,
 a comfort seductive against the vetoes
 from a past reborn slowly as foreign tongue.
 My fingers walk willing through my childhood,
 long Sunday afternoons infatuated
 by an atlas with Indian campfires
 and pencilled somewhere a way toward them.
 (Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme, Rabonitsa, April 1988)

By now Welch is a published poet, and a certain celebratory mood transpires in the central lines: "And I, Canadian/ returnee, conquer engraved stone, until/the riven citadel spews fireballs again." (II.3-5) Next to memories of her youth in Luxembourg, the poem contains highly symbolic evocations of how she now experiences language:

And touching broken frescoes, my hands
 stumble no more blind through speechlessness,
 I find words warm like a goose-down shirt,
 a comfort seductive against the vetoes

from a past reborn slowly as foreign tongue. (ll. 7-11)

The images may look overloaded with meaning (“My hands stumble no more blind with speechlessness”), but two points are unmistakable: Acts of language appear as sensory experiences, made through the body, a recurrent feature in language memoirs. The lines also highlight the transformation of the past and the mother tongue into a foreign language: “a past reborn slowly as foreign tongue” points to an understanding of language that goes beyond mere linguistic communication. She enjoys the comfort and barrier that the new words set up against the old and now unfamiliar world.

The return to origins is a common topic of migrant literature. In Welch’s poem, languages are not named, a feature that may signal the poet’s wish to keep away from purely linguistic or political debates and to locate her writing within another area of discourse. Nonetheless we have explicit references to Canada in the title and to Luxembourg in the first line but for readers it is also important to notice the subtle “shifters” that denote the two worlds which the returning migrant opposes in this poem. Welch does not use foreign words but images that conjure key features of the meanings that the two places hold for her; “engraved stone,” “riven citadel,” and “ramparts” for Luxembourg, while the pleasantly warm, soft and protective “goose-down” is to evoke Canadian life.⁸⁵¹

Impersonating voices of migration in Luxembourg: insights into the poet’s heterolingual ethos

Welch’s poems occasionally present other figurations of immigrants/ emigrants. Two pieces rely on a complete change of perspective, when she imagines the lives of those who unlike her do not leave Luxembourg but choose it as their destination. “Immigrant” (*Fidelities* 1997: 21) is about an Italian worker in a steel mill. Although the poem expresses an overall sympathy with his lot, its heterolingual shifters – *piazza*, *palazzi* and *bambini* – sound like an outsider’s comment in which the Italian words are clichés of a universal multilingualism.

“Luxembourg is where I belong” (*Rock’s Stillness* 1999: 23) is a first-person poem that could mislead a reader fully trusting in an autobiographical pact. Here the poetic speaker adopts – or mimics – the voice of a young Portuguese immigrant woman, whose identity appears through the place names of her “other” world: Lisbon, Santiago de Compostela and Setubal. The last line is “I love belonging to Luxembourg.” confirms the complete reversal of roles that she has imagined. Like the Canadian immigrant poet, the Portuguese woman feels completely at home in her new country. No language barriers are mentioned.

⁸⁵¹ In Welch’s poetry, Canada geese and goose-down as warming material for cold weather are recurring tropes in which the figurative and literal sense become blurred. See e.g. “Migrations” in *Word-House* 1987: 62.

7.2.2 Language and Otherness

Welch's poems show that her understanding of *otherness* involves quite diverse areas of experience including poetic writing, ways of life, the natural world, the mother tongue and marginally also a foreign language. They may be best approached as elaboration of ideas expressed in essays about remembered voices and language (see chapter 5).

Her use of the same title or almost the same title for quite different works is somewhat confusing, though it stresses her ongoing interest in the nature of otherness in language. Two poems are entitled "Another Language" (1995: 20; 2008: 33) while *Life in Another Language* (1992) is a book with prose poems. Additionally I will consider a piece she calls " 'This is my language' " (1995: 32) in which she refers to somebody else's words. Finally, these texts are juxtaposed to poems that explicitly refer to Luxembourgish. The following analysis investigates the speaker's positioning towards language and the discovery of otherness. Through discreetly inserted deictic personal pronouns (my, me, us, our), an autobiographical context is occasionally suggested; however, as poetic constructions the poems constantly blur the borders between a real and an imagined world.

Life in Another Language (1992)

The book, which is Welch's only collection of prose poems, consists of 52 short pieces or vignettes that stage miscellaneous characters located in various relations and places. What holds these diverse texts together is the narrator's eye and voice so that I propose reading them as a nomad's observations of otherness. On recording the scenes, the narrator often positions as an outsider who watches the lives of others from a certain distance; in some cases, first-person perspectives or interferences suggest imagined encounters. The observations are not limited to what is actually seen: they also encompass events of the past as well as mental encounters with authors, books and ideas.

The reference to "another language" in the title is puzzling: the texts have no notable insertions in other languages nor any direct reference to a foreign language or to language learning.⁸⁵² It is interesting to note that the German title of a selection of translated texts is *Von Menschen und Orten* (1992). It omits the reference to language, thus conveying the difficulty of rendering "language" and its polysemy in Welch's vocabulary.⁸⁵³ *Life in Another Language* obviously stands for more than the use of a different national language: the numerous episodes show different ways of life, characters with diverse principles and values. The meaning of "another language" may be best summed up as encounters with different

⁸⁵² The dedication: "For the Luxembourg friends/ Nic and Miep/ Ben and Mia/ Erny and Ginette" seems intended as an oblique clue."

⁸⁵³ See comments on the near absence of the term "language" in her autobiographical essays, in ch.4.

outlooks on life. The book is a collage of pieces on life in Europe observed by an outsider, who sometimes is an insider, too. The experiences that are described require a language or words that reflect the relations between people, their sense of history, their response to nature and to art.

It is a book with very few obvious or visible heterolingual elements: yet again and again a term (like *pâtisserie*) or names of places, thinkers and great artists ask especially North American readers to operate a shift that takes them to that other reality in the text. On a spectrum of otherness, it clearly figures in the realm of latent heterolingualism or defamiliarization. (See 7.1 and Spectrum of otherness in the Appendix.)

The book however displays instances of intralingual multiplicity, when the register changes according to topics (for example, the change from objective outsider accounts to pieces in which the narrator takes on a character's voice). Many texts show that each domain of life has a language that those who are not part of it will call "another language": art is shown to have (and to be) another language; women's world too has specific words. In line with features of life writing and its effect on the writer, for the narrator in *Life in Another Language*, too, observations include moments of *othering herself* – seeing herself in another language. The most striking examples appear in a piece entitled "Change of Predators" (1992: 72-73).

Summing up, we can say that the nomad as narrator observes how everyone speaks another language. The title is like a refusal to have diversity and multiplicity reduced to a list of different named or standard languages. In this book, language in many ways is equivalent to culture, another word that Welch tends to avoid. I would like to suggest that the title, *Life in Another Language* is the poet's response to the notion of multiculturalism, which dominated social and political discourse in Canada in the 1990s. She acknowledges difference and multiplicity but proposes her own view. Intercultural experience for her means standing between North America and Europe, coming to terms with the "language" of both.

"Another Language" (1995)

A poem in *Dream Museum* may startle readers with its unusual interpretation of "another language".

"Another Language"

Dolomite Alphabet,
another tongue:
our feet on the sky
study summits, in Italy
they start always with
C or S, Cima, Sasso.

Dream Museum (1995: 20)

Otherness can take different forms. This short piece is about the language of mountains, peaks and rocks. Called the “Dolomite alphabet”, it appears as a written code. Like rock it can give a sense of stability and permanence as counter element to moving words and voices.

This alphabet of rocks and peaks turns out to be a metaphor for a radically different representation of reality. The personal touch of the metaphor lies in the connection between mountain climbing and deciphering “another” language. “Reading” it - the “text” written in this alphabet - gives access to a world untouched by human activity but also requires a radically different position, expressed through a powerful image: “our feet on the sky”.⁸⁵⁴ Heterolingual elements – the reference to Italy and the insertion of two Italian words, “Cima” and “Sasso” – reinforce the link between a foreign language and a language to probe the mysteries of the world. The last lines playfully introduce linguistic defamiliarisation through a succinct hint at the articulation between spelling and pronunciation.

“Another Language” (2008)

The last published of the poems is a concise evocation, first, of the language learner’s first experiences of otherness, then of encounters with words that come alive and gradually take possession of the speaker (as poet). It also turns out to rest on many assumptions, which raise fundamental questions about the nature of language and writing in “another language.”

“Another Language”

In the eighth grade, they began
to engulf me: throng,
thatch, throttle –

English words – an open breath.
Most afternoons were spent
in their jubilation; coaxing scorching sounds.

The others waited inside books, the radio –
patient, loyal, the way they reside now in my notebooks.

Words are always alive, even if forgotten and unused –
not tools but hosts who await us, slip into us
the way they invaded our forebears.

Sometimes one throws a wild
glance, a laugh – our voice,

in the flash of its footsteps, for now,
resplendent, released, redeemed. (*Stealing the Flowers of Evil* 2008: 33)

⁸⁵⁴ See Welch’s essay “Mountain Climbing – Reading – Writing” included in *October Winds* 1980. 69-75 as well as the Preface to *Manstorna* 1985: 3-6.

The first lines convey the joy and the full commitment of the learner to the practice of unfamiliar sounds and new words. Language is remembered as tentative performance and as a sensual, bodily experience. The (now Anglophone) poet, retrospectively, attempts to render the experiences of an eighth grader for whom English is the “other”, foreign language, the English language, different from whatever language/s the speaker has known until then. The discovery of further dimensions of otherness through reading and the radio suggests the ever-growing scopes that the new language offers.

Gradually, the poem discloses underlying views on the nature of language, two of which seem particularly interesting: the notion of language hospitality and the claim that words are not tools but living entities. Right from the beginning there is a hint that a new language is not only a question of the learner absorbing the strange sounds, of making them her own: “they began/ to *engulf me*: throng, /thatch, throttle – “[my emphasis]. Language is also there to welcome the learner, and later the poet or the word-sensitive speaker, who is ready to be immersed in them: words are “not tools but hosts who await us, slip into us /the way they invaded our forebears.” Languages are friendly *hosts* for learners and poets, who are their guests. Yet, the next words may seem paradoxical: staying with these friendly hosts also amounts to “being invaded.”⁸⁵⁵ The guests lose their former nature, they undergo a complete change as the new words slip into them, causing a complete transformation, it seems. It is seen as a pleasant metamorphosis, which is unavoidable, presented like a fact of life: “the way they invaded our forebears.” Language has existed for much longer than those who use it; human beings consequently do not create language, it is they, it seems, who are shaped by language.

The speaker rejects the view of words as tools: they are alive, they are there for all times, they express.⁸⁵⁶ Their purpose is not to serve human beings, they are not instruments or means to an end: They are there to arouse the attention of those who may utter them. Such a view is obviously in opposition to common ideas of language as communication according to which the main purpose of words is not language itself but its potential for interaction.

The meaning of the last four lines remains opaque unless one accepts to read them as going even a step further. As the preceding lines have shown, the word precedes the human voice. So a word may signal its

⁸⁵⁵ The host as both friendly and hostile could be derived from the common etymology of *hospis* and *hostis* (see e.g. Derrida (see chapter 3.) In her theoretical writings, Welch never refers to this paradox and may not be aware of the etymological link.

⁸⁵⁶ “Words are always alive, even if forgotten and unused –” This is the synthesis of a view of language which has been defended ever since Plato and later refuted by scholars (cf. Trabandt, Cassin, and in particular Krämer, “Is there a Language ‘Behind’ Speaking? 2010).

presence (“a wild laugh, a glance”⁸⁵⁷) and the human listener attentive to its presence (“in the flash of its footsteps”) responds by following the word and giving it its voice, and letting it speak. Through speech or poetry, the words are “released or redeemed.” With these words, the poem has moved to a realm quite different from that of the initial lines about a young learner’s experiences with a foreign language. The learner has gradually turned into a poet for whom handling the language is a mission and writing comes close to a sacred duty.

Perhaps, one should read the poem simply as a playful, imaginative rendering of experiences with challenging words.

In the present context, however, the poem is seen as a piece that also invites reflections which go beyond the actual text. “Another Language” invites readers to think about the unanswered questions which it raises. For instance, one may ask *why the first language, the one that makes the English words “another language”, is not mentioned*. What role does it hold next to the new language? Has it simply vanished? Moreover, if language “has always invaded speakers,” where does it initially come from? If it is simply there for speakers to pick up, why are there different languages or what makes them different? Are words always resplendent? Do they always provide pleasure and joy?

The poem also uncovers paradoxes; though it does not provide explanations, it provokes reflections. One paradox, of language as host also becoming an invader or conqueror, has already been mentioned. I would like to emphasize **two further paradoxes** that have struck me. The first concerns the transformation of the learner of a foreign language, as described in the first lines, into a poetic persona in the second part of the poem. Does this mean that poets or language sensitive speakers could not respond to words in their first language, that only “another” language, with foreign sounds and words truly “invades” them? Why does the wonder at sounds and words not take place in the first language?⁸⁵⁸

Seeing the poet as learner and the learner as poet⁸⁵⁹ could be a bridge to connect sociocultural and literary perspectives on language acquisition. At the end of the present poem, “another” language is no longer another school subject. Learning another language is learning a language which is used in ordinary

⁸⁵⁷ I have interpreted “one” in “Sometimes one throws a wild/ glance, a laugh – our voice” as “one word”: indeed words are said to be alive and thus capable of human acts.

⁸⁵⁸ This is a question that Yildiz addresses in her study of Tawada’s relation to languages. (2012: 109-142)

⁸⁵⁹ The poet as learner: Among the many attributes that have been used to describe poetry figures the assimilation of poetry with knowledge: the poet is the one who knows or who has to or wants to acquire knowledge. In that sense, in his search for understanding, he is also a learner, and a learned person who transmits knowledge. One objective of this study is to analyse the means, images and metaphors, which the multilingual poets use to express their search for knowledge often across languages and cultures and spaces.

interaction. Poetry is the foreign language, which exposes the strangeness of another world. Words reveal meanings to the learner, which gradually lead to the discovery of “otherness” in poetry.

A further paradox concerns the origin of the poem. Is it itself an example of word creation in the tongue that has invaded, conquered or annexed the speaker for whom English initially was strange and unfamiliar? – (This it seems is a paradox worth pursuing, or deconstructing.) The poetic suggestion that the words of this poem were just lying around ready to be spoken and written in the way they appear on the page seems a way to avoid a significant stage: the writing process and what it possibly means for the translingual poet.

Investigating the poetic specificities of Welch’s translingualism

Welch dodges direct descriptions of translingual writing, yet for words to turn into a poem, they need a craftsperson attentive to their potential, skilful at bringing about their configuration and the arrangement in lines. So how do we recognize the craft, which in this case produces a remarkable, concise piece sketching out key notions of language taking hold of or appropriating the speaker – and not vice versa? Firstly, we recognize the voice of a storyteller who recalls what happened, with often the “words” as active subjects, as protagonists or heroes of the story: “they began to engulf me”, “the others waited”, “they slip into us” ... They have their own voices, in the end indistinguishable from the human voice (“our voice”). A story needs to be situated and we have a few very rough indications of Location changing from the realistic classroom to objects which shelter words (books, radio, notebooks) to evocations of body (“slip into us” and walking (“flash of its footsteps”). Even if we do not fully understand it, we become aware of the poem as a story, almost a fairy tale of discovery.

Secondly, in this poem the selection of powerful poetic words from a vast range of origins underpins the description or story of another language: throng and thrash with their Old English origins and throttle (Middle English root) are not very common words and for the learner present challenging, but in this case fascinating, sounds of otherness. The last line, with its Latinate words linked by a common prefix “resplendent, released, redeemed”, bring in a change of register: they are words one would expect in formal language, for religious subjects (cf. Milton) but they too confirm the appeal of exceptional words and alliteration, possibly reinforced by the fascination with the discrepancy between spelling and sound. A third characteristic is the use of poetic devices for those feelings or ideas that are too complex for ordinary language. “English words – an open breath” is a metonymy through which one vital impact on

the speaker is evoked: the experience of breathing freely, language is above all a physical act associated with great liberty and open spaces.⁸⁶⁰

The poem is about a learner and about a poet's response to words. What do they have in common? A *common sense view will assume that* learners look for words and use them according to rules as well as their needs and liking. Words are "objects" and humans decide on their use. The second part of this poem intends to convey the opposite situation and insists on an inverted relation between words and speaker.⁸⁶¹

Only a metaphor,⁸⁶² associated with a personification of words, can express the complexity of feelings and positions that the reversal entails: **words are the masters**, the invaders and conquerors, but despite the military connotations, and this may appear as a paradox, the speaker or learner gladly accepts the role of follower, which in the end offers plenitude. The metaphor also suggests that words occupy not only a house, but a territory: hence the need for the speaker or poet to walk in order to discover them.

Summing up or what one can draw from Welch's diverse pieces on "another language": The other language is not just the foreign language, whose discovery is only the preliminary stage for the immersion into **the truly other language: the language of poetry**. Multiplicity is above all a quality of language and its multiple words, there for the "learner", the listener and observer to discover. Voice emerges in the language not in the speaker, at least originally. Knowing Welch's fascination with Heidegger's thoughts on language one will remember his words "Die Sprache spricht." / Language speaks. ("Language" in Poetry, *Language, Thought* 1971) What the poem describes is ultimately a mystic encounter with otherness, which Welch explores in variable contexts and turns into an essential element of her response to language. It is a dimension that reaches beyond the original investigation of the present study into language multiplicity and translingual processes.

Othering the Mother Tongue

The poem "When I left Luxembourg" (included in *Stealing the Flowers of Evil* 2008: 74) is part of a sequence dedicated to her mother. It is entitled "*Léif Mam*", one of the rare examples of Luxembourgish phrases in Welch's work. As her books are primarily aimed at an Anglophone Canadian readership, a note

⁸⁶⁰ There are many examples of the association between breathing and speaking particular languages, between speaking and the rhythm of walking, between language or writing and experiences of space in the works of both Welch and Joris.

⁸⁶¹ The etymology of "host" in fact points to a double meaning: the one who offers hospitality and originally also the enemy. (Cf. previous footnote on Derrida and language hospitality.) Elaborating on this double meaning could lead to a different interpretation, not to be confirmed by Welch's poetry and ideas in general; Or is there aporia at the end of her poem Duet (in *Crossings*, her last published collection)?

⁸⁶² More on metaphors in the chapter on methodology; for this metaphor Welch may also be indebted to Heidegger's views on language.

is added: “Léif Mam” is the Luxembourgish phrase for “Dear Mother.”⁸⁶³ The heterolingual element reinforces the geographical and the temporal shift, which mark a sequence of twenty poems, conceived as letters to her mother, but they are letters she never sent and wrote after her death. In “When I left Luxembourg” (the first line is the title), she recalls her departure from home more than fifty years before. It is an emotional poem, with reflections on the notion of mother tongue, which open a perspective absent from earlier texts.

... I don't
like to think of your agitated
nights, tear-stained
pillow and me
flaring over a vast continent,
lingering in the language – my future
second mother tongue.

Her mother's distress at her departure is retrospectively explained as anguish at imagining her daughter living in a foreign language. The daughter's fault consisted, it seems, in relinquishing her mother's language and adopting “a second mother tongue.” Changing one's mother tongue amounts to rejecting one's biological mother.

More importantly, the mother tongue has become the foreign tongue on which she looks with love, but as an outsider. English remains *her* language, the language of Welch the poet, but she comes to acknowledge the presence of another important language that has marked her. In a collection that belongs to the last decade of her life, Welch has included a poem explicitly devoted to her (first) mother tongue. Opting for the autochthonous name of the language, she adds a heterolingual note that makes readers aware of linguistic difference. The poem itself is a monolingual English text.

“Lëtzebuergesch”

The words invade, invade – their
music finds me wherever I am. In
memory's prism, they refract, spill, sift
archeological finds. They never
evaporate before hitting ground. Recovery ...
did I ever carve other tongues in their
likeness, new homes? I need
no compass, no map;
their beat alone will return me
to a land dismantled, its high
furnaces, closed mine-
shafts, a land

⁸⁶³ A more conventional spelling of the word for mother would be “Mamm.”

where the dead still whisper.
 Mother tongue,
 you're never silent.
 Come, join the hallelujahs I craft.
 (*This Numinous Bond* 2003: 67)

The key words – “invade,” “music,” “memory’s prism” – recall her overall views on the power of language. “they refract, spill, sift” is an allusion to the poet’s response to words in the mother tongue which she continues cherishing and collecting like precious treasures from the past.

The question that follows (“did I ever carve other tongues in their / likeness, new homes?”) alludes to possible interactions between her multiple tongues, a thought which seemed absent from her previous reflections on languages while it also stresses the belief that languages can be homes, in the plural.

Nomad or migrant? “I need no compass, no map” is a claim that stresses the importance of nomadic notions of orientation when it comes to describing a speaker’s relation to her languages. Being multilingual means being an expert wanderer who needs no tools to find her way, in particular the way back to her origins. But the following lines echo notes of loss and attachment to the past and the native land often found in migration literature. In opposition, nomads, as theorists conceive them, mostly look forward.

The last lines replace the lookbackward by a cheerful and passionate invocation: “*Mother Tongue*, you’re never silent. Come, join the hallelujahs I craft.” In these words the poet conjures what scholars would call translingual writing. Welch’s work, however, provides no details as to the actual process of writing or as to how she conceives a partnership with her mother tongue in writing.

Othering the mother tongue also leads Welch to imagine newcomers in Luxembourg learning the native language the way she learnt *throttle* and *thrash*. (“Luxembourgish Lesson” in *Dream Museum* 1995: 90) In this poem, an interesting turn lies in the link between learning Luxembourgish and sharing dreams of other places, in this case faraway tourist destinations.

The other language of art

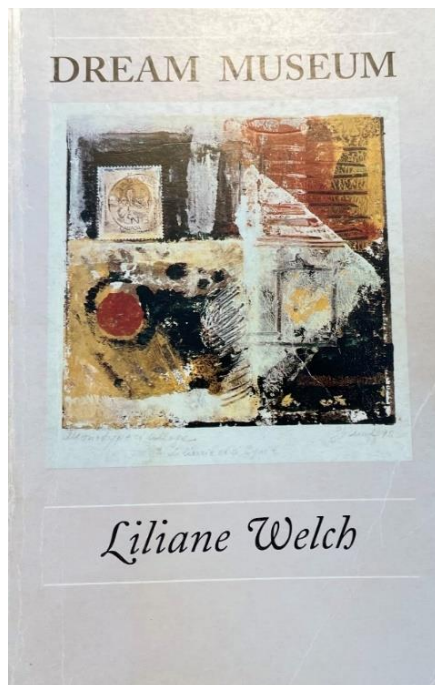


Figure 10. Cover of *Dream Museum* (1995) with collage by Ginette Knaff

“This is my language . . .” (*Dream Museum* 1995: 37): The quotation marks in the title of a poem show that Welch is quoting somebody else: They are the words of an old friend from Luxembourg, Ginette Knaff, a painter. The poem is a response to a painting by her friend with whom she has frequently exchanged on the nature of their respective arts, which are for them two ways of seeing the world and interpreting it. Their dialogue means exchanging about how they understand each other’s work and positioning. In the poem entitled “This is my language ...” Welch attempts to put into words what Knaff expresses through colours and forms. Art and words as moving across the Atlantic is the subject of a collage (it figures on the cover of *Dream Museum*) and of Welch’s answer: “Seeing Canada through a Monotype Collage”:

... I wonder
 if images are the windy fields
 which hold our lives together,
 our old and new worlds.
 Snatching the eye, a postage stamp
 taken from one of my letters, missives
 that walk off those harsh winters,
 visions I share often
 with you (*Dream Museum* 1995: 40)

In *Dream Museum*, the section entitled “Venetian Light” gives insights into Welch’s writing as articulation of places, poems, paintings and music. The opening piece evokes an impression of Venice, inspired by

Watermark, a collection of essays about Venice by the Russian-American poet Joseph Brodsky, which mingles with Knaff's paintings of the city. The poem gives a rare glimpse into the impact of reading across languages that underlie Welch's writing. The German translation of the work which she discovered before reading the English text.

"Venetian Light"

Last Christmas I read the German
Version of Brodsky's Watermark. Islanded with
That bearish Russian sniffing clever Italians,
The hunter's archaic intimacy with prey ... And
The German captured me, its atavistic sounds
Plumbing my ears, all else periphery,
And deep within the grip of its beats,
Almost like the turbulence of a bazaar's human
River revealing stillness,
I could smell, in the shoals of the hazy
Laguna of silence, in its passageway,
Frozen seaweed –
This October, when I read in English Brodsky's
Annual Christmas romance with Venice –
Flights of an exile's paradise on the page –
I savoured fully the mediated city of the sea,
Its name laced with Knaff's colours and lines,
Its waters vibrant with German words
And English images
(from "Venetian Light", in *Dream Museum* 1995:32)

A book by a Russian exile, whose words she remembers in German and in English ("German words and English images"), a painting by Luxembourg artist Knaff and her own memories of Venice become a tonic for her winter "captivity" in Canada. In "Impressions of Venice 1990," she includes further echoes of voices (notably Thomas Mann and Ezra Pound) with music (Vivaldi) and visual artists' response to the city.

Translingual processes appear to encompass multiple dimensions, which the poet assembles in her texts: poetry as foreign language is complex and multifaceted. The monolingual surface is in movement like water planes and mirrors in Venice which the painters and poets try to render in their impressions of the city. Heterolingual elements appear beyond the threshold of linguistic visibility: they emerge in names and hints rather than examples of audible otherness.

Wrapping on language and otherness:

Welch's poetic work has many more references to language as expression of a way of life, of being in the world. The polysemy of the word "language" seems endless, as a few examples show:

- The washing on the line is described as language: "until the laundry flapped a language older/ than the worn glean of the doorway stones" in "Laundry Day at Mecher," *Dream Museum* (1995: 93).

- Death too, especially the death of a writer can only be described in terms of language. “È morta la scrittrice, aveva 75 anni” (*Dream Museum* 1995 : 54) is an obituary for Natalia Ginzburg, an Italian author: “Betrayed by her body,/ she speaks now the language of stillness.” Silence is a language too.

7.2.3 Cheirography: Writing and body’s response to nature

Welch is not primarily a theorist. When it comes to speaking about creative processes, poetic writing proves to be her preferred medium. “Writing”, for example, explicitly refers to interrelated processes and illustrates how the visions exposed in essays are rendered and transformed through the poet’s words and images. In many poems, Welch enquires into the power that the language of the earth has had on her writing. Part of her poetic quest consists in listening to hidden voices and responding to them by words discovered on her wanderings.

“Writing”

Voices rise from the paper:
 today they lament,
 rage against absence,
 stir the passion of my fingers –
 guns, packs, fever,
 chase, fire,
 unfolding in the woods,
 this thirst for the hunt
 cutting my shoulders
 unearthed by the wind:
 ferment of earth,
 obsessive rebel words
 guiding my pen on its track
 as it blazes through the bush
 breaking a thin trail.
 So dream becomes action,
 brook, field, myth,
 the paper fragrant with sap,
 and the poem a swift bullet
 striking through the timber. (*October Winds* 1980:8)

For the reading of the poem it is helpful to look at words that stand out or surprise, or words that hint at some kind of broken story line. Key words in this poem are mostly nouns; two main clusters of relevant

words emerge : *voices, words; paper, pen* are linked and so are words related to *woods (bush, timber, track)* and *hunting (guns, packs, chase, fire, bullet)*. *Ferment of earth* and *obsessive rebel words* are surprising combinations that require scrutiny. Other words that often recur in her work are: *dream* (see also *myth*) versus *action*, as well as words related to place, space and movement: *Wind, earth/unearthed*. “Writing” is the opening poem of *October Winds* (1980); through images and free verse, it evokes how the poetic speaker conceives writing about the environment. Two apparently quite diverse situations are juxtaposed, poetry writing and hunting, until they eventually merge. In the first line, the context is sketched out: the speaker appears to be listening to yet unidentified voices that “rise from the paper” (in front of her). Further references to a writing context follow: “fingers” (l. 4) and later “my pen” (l. 13) and again “the paper” (l. 18). From line 5, words evoking a hunting scene erupt into the writing scene. The poem, much more strikingly than the essays, uses unexpected comparisons to speak of what is difficult to express in ordinary, literal language, notably her response to an overwhelming environment.

The reference to hunting gradually acquires two dimensions: on the one hand, it evokes the largely unexplored and inaccessible bush of inner New Brunswick and the occupation of part of the population (see also Welch’s book *Brush and Trunks*) without ever becoming a mere apology for a controversial form of activity or vocation. On the other hand, hunting appears to have many parallels with writing. The poet, like the hunter or his pack of dogs, has to chase for words, to “unearth” them. The pen is a bullet, which “blazing” a trail across the page aims at reaching the core of what the voices of the earth say.

They speak “obsessive rebel words”, which do not easily, as I see it, surrender their meaning. They come from the earth and are “ferment of earth.”⁸⁶⁴ “Ferment” suggests movement, agitation and creation; the underlying earth is not dead material. The poet’s words aim at grasping this unrest or tumult caused by natural forces or, as other texts by Welch suggest, by the turbulent history of the region.

In the poem, *two types of space* are combined: the indoor space of the writer including the space of the paper to be filled with the lines of the poem, and the natural space outside, which urges the poet to put it in the form of a text. The movement (of the pen and the bullet) linking both spaces is expressed by reference to the physical sensation created by the wind (hence its central position in the poem, l. 10). In fact, the wind is a key notion: it carries the voices of the earth and a passing bullet is perceived through a change in the air. The word “wind” is part of the title of the collection (*October Winds*) and recurs in many poems throughout Welch’s work, often in association with *voice, word, travelling and inspiration*.⁸⁶⁵

⁸⁶⁴ See also the title of a collection of poems: *Syntax of Ferment* (1979).

⁸⁶⁵ The connection between the two spaces is a good example of metaphorical writing. In chapter 2 (Methodology), the nature and power of metaphor are explained (see Lakoff and Turner 1989; Mieke Bal 2002; Derek Attridge 2005)..

Response to landscapes thus goes far beyond what the eyes see, it includes searching for what is hidden and has to be uncovered. Writing thus is an act of exposing. This poem does not specify what kind of knowledge writing can uncover, yet the collection to which it belongs, like others of that period, make it clear that the poet's interest is in the voices of nature and in the people who share this environment, including those of the past whose lives have left hardly visible but indelible traces on the landscape (the Acadians, the lumbermen of the past).

Dream becomes action: the juxtaposition of those two words stand for the double power of the poetic word: it relies on imagination, on what goes beyond the "real" world, and it is also action, not only a mental activity. This is stressed by repeated references to a hand or fingers holding the pen (see next extracts); as readers and critics we are encouraged to consider poetry writing as (social) practice.

In "Writing", the poet is a hunter of voices and words. The poem is a good example of the poet's work with multiple metaphors to explore what writing and language mean for her. In the study of the next extracts, more metaphors are analysed: the poet or poetic persona as craftsman, mountain climber, walker and traveller.

Poetry as handcraft to respond to nature

In the essay "The feet's response" (*Seismographs*), the speaker uses the unusual image of her feet "forearming [her] pen with a repertoire of images and beats". An essay entitled "Cheirography" explores in great detail the role of hands for a poet who is well aware of the physical aspects of writing and the constitutive role of words in constructing a meaningful environment for her. These are the opening lines of the essay

In nearly all my poems the thought is implicit that poetry is a handcraft, that through poems we create our place. Starting from a backward glance at my own work, I am tempted to generalize (always a risky business): poetry celebrates that contact with our circumstances which we achieve, can achieve, or begin to achieve with our hand, the "organ of organs" or "the tool of tools" (as Aristotle calls it), the most central location of the sense of touch. ("Poetry as Cheirography", *Seismographs* 1988: 61)

These few lines contain two central ideas of importance for a study of Welch's relationship with her environment: poetry must be seen as handcraft and poetry for her is a means to "create [her] place." In the poem "Writing", the role of the fingers holding the pen is already mentioned: here Welch goes a step further and calls poetry a handcraft. Seeing herself as a craftsperson or artisan, she rejects the intellectual primacy for writing. Like the many traditional New Brunswick craftspeople, whose work she has celebrated in a collection entitled *From the Songs of the Artisans*, she relies on "material" that the environment offers: its nature, people and history.

Moreover, an artisan is a maker: what the poet creates through her words is the place where she can position herself; readers too will learn to know and appreciate their place because it highlights aspects they may not be aware of (see essay “Writing in and for New Brunswick”).

The origin of the term cheirography, also chirography, gives us further clues on Welch’s views on writing. The Greek etymology refers to the hand and the part played by touch, thus reinforcing the role of sense perceptions for poetic language. The rarely used word “cheirography” is a synonym of calligraphy (beautiful handwriting) or penmanship (the art or skill of writing). Welch has borrowed the term from Martin Heidegger⁸⁶⁶ and in the essay⁸⁶⁷ she investigates his ideas in relation to her own situation.

Hands are connected with writing and with mountain climbing⁸⁶⁸. For Welch, hands, like the walker’s feet, play a crucial and double role: as an expert and passionate mountain climber, she uses her hands to touch the rock and the ropes, to proceed up the steep cliffs, while with the pen in her hand, she produces texts.⁸⁶⁹

Better than the discourse of essays, poetic language allows exploring the complex relations between thought, experience and dreams. In the essay “Cheirography” Welch inserts a poem which reveals the multiple connotations that hands can have.

“Hands”

On the summit we shake hands:
our groping hands clasped,
their bold tough palms
rubbed smooth by rock:

They’re cliffhangers and
wedges, bent, stiff
security yokes
as we scuffle up walls.

A new tongue we follow

⁸⁶⁶ “The hand is, together with the word, the essential distinction of man...Man does not ‘have’ hands, but the hand holds the essence of man, because the word as the essential realm of the hand is the ground of the essence of man...The typewriter tears writing from the essential realm of the hand, i.e. the realm of the word. The word itself turns into something “typed”’. [Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 80, 81.] See <http://www.stevenconnor.com/modhand.htm>

⁸⁶⁷ “Poetry as Cheirography”, included in *Seismographs*, 61-69.

⁸⁶⁸ Welch also mentions the connection of poetry with a doctor’s healing hands, which the word *cheirography* and its common root with *chiropractic* clarifies.

⁸⁶⁹ Is there the suggestion of a link with poetic meter? One should remember that “dactyl”, the Greek word for finger, like “foot” is a basic technical term to describe features of metre in poetry. A dactyl is a foot consisting of a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables.

when we climb, we trust
 their rhythms, their rope
 an Ariadne thread.

Our hands are steady hands
 ahead pegging nails.
 A new tongue?
 They're writing our dreams.

Trace roads for our feet,
 divine a danger's fear.
 We improvised their sorcery
 and climbed into this sky.

("Poetry as Cheirography", *Seismographs* 1988: 61)

The poem starts out as record of mountain climbing experiences. Only gradually do the hands of the mountain climber appear to be also metaphors of the poet's creative efforts, the climbing situation being used to point to core aspects of writing processes.⁸⁷⁰

"Hands" (used four times) and "tongue" (used twice) are two key words, around which rock climbing and the poet's work gradually merge. The poem opens on the celebration of mountaineers who on reaching the summit shake hands, the same hands whose work on the rock is graphically presented in the first two stanzas. The description partly depends on metonymy associating and identifying hands with situations ("They're cliffhangers" - the word literally suggests hanging from a cliff or rock but usually refers to a precarious situation whose end is not known), with conditions ("bent", "stiff") and with climbing tools ("wedge", "security yoke"). Hands in the poem acquire their own identity in stanza three, they are partners or guides moved by their own rhythm; they are in charge of the rope whose crucial role is stressed by the image of the "Ariadne thread": hands must find the solution in life-threatening situations. The word "tongue" in the third stanza is truly intriguing: the climbers are said to follow a tongue while climbing up the mountain. The human organ, which enables speech, could stand for words, voices or language. Why is it called "a new tongue"? The question is raised: stanza four connects it with the hands, now taken out of the realistic realm and said to be "writing our dreams".

Climbing, like the poet listening to voices that guide her hands, is an experience that leads beyond the actual physical contact with the environment. It brings insights into a world not normally accessible to

⁸⁷⁰ I understand metaphor here as a poet's device to reach a better understanding of complex situations that reason alone cannot grasp or express (see references to Lakoff; Bal; Attridge in ch. 2).

human beings. Several words in the last stanza evoke transcendental powers and the discovery of a reality beyond the visible, tangible world: “divine” and “sorcery”. To divine is to guess but the word also points to the magical or god-like faculties of somebody who can tell the future. A diviner is somebody who searches for underground water with a Y-shaped divining rod, an association that associates the poet with special powers which cannot be explained with rational words.

Poetry as handcraft acquires a further dimension (*which is developed in other texts as well*): poets are skilled craftspeople because through their hands and a newly discovered “language” they discern another world. This contact becomes for them a drive to create works that communicate the glimpses of knowledge of “otherness” they have attained.⁸⁷¹

7.2.4 Summing up: Response through the body and search for a poetic voice

Writing poetry for Welch is a solitary act that cannot be done without the body feeling in close contact with the natural world around her or with the voices encountered in books. In the essay entitled “Praising the earth with our feet”, Welch conveys a rich interacting relation between the poet and the ground her feet have explored. Walking is a preliminary stage to writing; it is a way of probing the ground, which in a mysterious way delivers the material for later poems. It is a process she has not fully understood herself. “I have never stopped wondering what exactly my feet tried to capture as they wandered incessantly for thirty-seven years before my poetic voice suddenly spoke and began to salvage their inventories.” (*Seismographs* 1988: 50-51)

Writing is a solitary act of communion which intricately links her to her Canadian surroundings, which have always remained her most favoured location for poetry composition: “When I pick up my pen I feel transmuted into a natural phenomenon, the human being as voyaging wind. Within me I often feel an eternal breeze. To face this alone I’m compelled to go on writing, to go on celebrating the Maritime Locale which imbibes my words, carries them, tells me who I am. When I stop writing there I’ll die” (52). For the poet, walking is a way of taking the pulse of the earth, of listening to the language of the earth. Writing is recording; it is transforming the claims of the roads that have been travelled (quote??): the poetic voice, in the form of images and beats, renders what the feet have felt.

According to this view, language, in particular poetic language, comes from the ground; it belongs to the earth. And the poet, thankful for the words her feet have captured will praise the earth as origin, also as

⁸⁷¹ For comments on hands tapping rocks and words as seismographs for the ineffable, see 6.2.2.6, on Welch’s poetics.

life giver. To the erring wanderer, earth and its language give a stand and become a source for meaning making.

It is worth dwelling a little longer on what may strike us as an almost mystic experience and the underlying view of *earth* and language. The texts describe walking as listening and capturing the language of the earth. However “real” the experience is for the poet, the description for readers has features of a metaphoric shift. Normally, hearing is associated with ears; it is an auditory, not a tactile perception. We are induced to interpret this description of walking as an instance of intense sense impression, which also encompasses seeing: “What had my feet heard and seen?” (51) What the poet communicates is a synthesis of multiple sense perceptions, an experience of synaesthesia, which is a constitutive part of poetry, notably in the work of Welch’s favourite author, Arthur Rimbaud. In the present context of cultural ecology, I see this form of synaesthesia as a powerful tool to express, on the one hand, the complex interaction between a human agent and the natural environment and, on the other hand, the multifaceted sense impressions that underlie processes of language production. Welch’s sensory perspective on language as a phenomenological experience is also reminiscent of Martin Heidegger’s views on the origin of language.⁸⁷²

The essay “Praising the Earth with Our Feet” ends on what can be read as the poet’s manifesto:

Why walk? Why write? To celebrate our immediate ground in a common foot and pen movement.
To counter the centrifugal tendencies of our age by an alert coming and going. To stave off loss of
world and disintegration by taking a stand. To be put at the edge of conversing with the great
poem of our earth. (*Seismographs* 51)

This fundamental position has hardly changed in her subsequent work. In reflections and poems included in another essay, “A Sense of Wilderness” (*Seismographs* 70-75) she further explicates her position and the notion of a poetic voice.

⁸⁷² Welch was well familiar with the work of Martin Heidegger (see ch. 6). For her views on the relation between poetry and philosophy see the article by Cyril and Liliane Welch, “Martin Heidegger: Poetry, Language, Thought and On the Way to Language” 1972, as discussed in ch.6.2.1.

7.3 Pierre Joris: Tracing relations to languages and poetic interconnections

“Language is both the instrument of discovery and the discovery.”
(*An American Suite*, “Metasemiotologies” 2016: 36)⁸⁷³

7.3.1 Scrutinizing his relation to de-centred and multiple languages

Tracing is a term that often recurs in Joris’s work. To trace is to follow a track and discover what was lost, but it also means to draw or chart and hence to write. What he always refutes is a focus on origins, only the trajectory or the trace in movement counts, as he explains:

The trace is not only the disappearance
of origin: here it means –
in the present discourse, and along
the trajectory we make
by following it –
that origin has not even disappeared,
that it has never been constituted
except by passing, by returning, through
a non-origin,
the trace,
which thus becomes the origin. (*An American Suite*, “Metasemiotologies” 2016: 46)

Joris’s conception of poetry as a means to think through all issues of writing. It accounts for the numerous poems in which he investigates his position as multilingual writer and the nature of language in general. Joris sometimes includes details, like place and time of writing, which permit a contextualization of the poems. The point here is not a biographical re-tracing of his thoughts; the focus is on the choice of words and on images, so-called deep images, as the poet’s tool for thinking through difficult notions of language. The investigation thus aims to follow the meanders of his enquiring mind across languages and etymologies and to grasp his sense for language games and paradoxes. A thorough exploration of his poems is sometimes not possible without extensive use of dictionaries and the internet, or a recall of other texts by Joris and fellow poets.

In fact, Joris considers such in-depth reading and networking as part of the poetic experience. His writing may look obscure, yet a thorough enquiry brings answers to most enigmas and shows that his word choice is never arbitrary. Poetry is like the open space of cybernetics, “[a] truly open field visualizable as a rhizomatic space with lines of flight shooting off in all directions” (*A Nomad Poetics*, “Collage & Post-

⁸⁷³ *An American Suite*, edited by Tamas Panitz and published in 2016, is a collection of pieces which Joris wrote some forty years earlier, in the 1970s and 1980s, and which had not been published before. Many texts contain reflections on language and writing, which elucidate the development of the core ideas of his later work. “Metasemiotologies” is a sequence of 124 numbered short pieces or statements.

Collage” 2003: 91). The poet expects from readers the same “thinking through” that he takes as principle for his writing. However, “thinking through” for the reader may not lead to quite the same thoughts that the poet targeted: he becomes an active co-creator:

At the same time the reader, excluded from the traditional book, can now not only read a fixed text, but alter it by adding her own lines & links – bringing to mind again that near utopian if solidly democratic vision of a “poetry made by all,” to return to a desire expressed by the man who gave us the sewing machine cum umbrella on the operating table. (2003: 91) ⁸⁷⁴

What counts is “the path” or rather the discovery of a path. As Joris writes, “Methodology is not the path but the way the path is discovered” (*An American Suite*, “Metasemiotics” 2016: 38).

7.3.1.1 “A Bambara sense of Language”: A theory of language in verse form ⁸⁷⁵

Always probing the meaning of language, Joris has explored views expressed by poets and thinkers in remote places to think through what his own understanding of language is. In “A Bambara sense of language”, an early text, ⁸⁷⁶ he starts from an African proverb and converts the ideas attached to it into a poem about the nature of language: “Man has no tail/ Man has no mane, but he can be grabbed/ by the word/ comes out of his mouth.”

The Bambara people believe that all parts of the body are organs of speech, and they explain how each of them – including the liver, the bladder, the larynx, the trachea etc. – has a function in the production of language. The last lines ring a bell with theories of language learning as well as with the holistic view of a nomadic poetics:

[T]he sexual organs give the verb the pleasure and taste for life
eyes, ears, hands, feet are all necessary for their articulation of speech
to speak is to have one’s body expel an element partakes
of the whole body:
to speak is
to give birth.

The poem reads like a theory of language in verse form and illustrates how even simple words can render complex notions of physical as well as creative features of language.

⁸⁷⁴ This is an allusion to a famous line by Isidore Ducasse, dit comte de Lautréamont : « Beau comme la rencontre fortuite sur une table de dissection d'une machine à coudre et d'un parapluie » Les chants de Maldoror (1869).

⁸⁷⁵ Bambara refers to Bambara people, an ethnic group, primarily in Mali and to their language, a lingua franca and national language of Mali. From Wikipedia and Britannica.

⁸⁷⁶ It is dated 1974 in *An American Suite* (2016: 88-89).

7.3.1.2 A riddle is not an answer

Joris calls the new speech that arises from a mixing of languages BAROCCO and evokes it with great enthusiasm (*Nomad Century Ahead* 2003: 7). In an interview (2010), he explains, “The idea was, finally, to write in all my languages at the same time, or at least to let any language that spoke through me emerge into the poem as the poem asked for it.”

What this means for the speaker who has to come to terms with the resulting confusion and tensions is the topic of a poem, formulated as a riddle:

“Anguish, a Riddle”

that all the languages are borrowed
 but how then do I count them
 that do not belong to me
 In the first
 I think in the second I sink
 the third is my rhetoric &
 the fourth my west &
 wagon its wheel
 at least traces these steps
 in harmonies of tetradic modalities
 before & after I sink. (Breccia 1987: 76)

With its puzzling title, the reference to numbers and its mystifying end line, the poem is an intriguing piece of writing. Yet, even at a first glance the allusions to language as possession and multiplicity cannot be missed. The initial question for the speaker is: How do I count my languages if they do not belong to me? The succinct description of his languages, though more enigmatic than the core question, gives valuable information about his relation to them.

The riddle has a long history as a popular genre, which goes back to antiquity (cf. Oedipus and the riddle of the Sphinx), with a strong tradition in Old English and the Middle Ages.⁸⁷⁷ Riddles can take many forms but it seems useful to recall some characteristics of the genre, as they facilitate the reading of Joris’s riddle: traditional formulations; metaphoric language; amusing details; serious or semi-serious questions; puzzling and paradoxical statements due to unusual perspectives.

The title, as appropriate for a riddle, intrigues *readers* who may wonder whether the poem is about guessing what *anguish* is (what causes anguish) or whether anguish is the solution of the riddle – or both. Riddles invite a dialogue with the audience and I will attempt to describe how I would react as an interLocutor.

⁸⁷⁷ See Jolles, *Einfache Formen: Legende, Sagen, Mythen, Rätsel* [...] (2006); and various dictionaries of literary terminology: Shipley (1970); Scott (1973; Gray (1992).

The opening sentences or first lines often provide the context or introduce the situation. Here they sum up the speaker's anguish, his mental pain in relation to his languages. The suffering is provoked by the knowledge that languages cannot be owned and that languages cannot be counted. He does not tell us whether he has acquired these beliefs through his own experience or whether they are an oblique reference to particular studies.⁸⁷⁸ His anguish then comes, we may assume, from a fear of not being in control, and of not knowing where he belongs. Who is he if not his own language/s, which ensure his identity or integrity (in the sense of wholeness)?

The phrasing in the next four lines is typical of riddles, in which the qualities of the "object" to be guessed are enumerated. From the information in the preceding lines, we know that the riddle must be related to language. The first clue is given in simple words: "In the first/I think" reads as a reference to mother tongue. Or is the aim of the riddle to upset this order, especially when considering a possible reference to the poet's own multilingual origins? The next clue is perplexing: "in the second I sink". How can a language cause the speaker to sink? Does it destroy him? Listening again to the whole line one is struck by the (false or weak) internal rhyme of *sink* with *think*. Is it just a pun to hint at the challenges of English pronunciation for a foreigner? Producing an "s" instead of the "th" is a common mistake of learners, of Germans or Luxembourgers or perhaps a way of conveying a French person's attempt at translating the common phrase "je pense." In any case, the false rhyme associated with the image of a sinking ship and a person drowning in language are elements of incongruity, which correspond to the amusing aspect of riddles. The third clue "my rhetoric" could be an allusion to a school language, or a professional use of language: French and Latin come to mind. The fourth and last clue, "my west," presents language as orientation and turns out to be part of a powerful metaphor, the link between riddle and metaphor not being unusual. Calling a language one's west introduces notions of positioning and directions. The four points of the compass implicitly stand for the speaker's four languages: they are his entire world and they help him to find his bearings, prevent him from getting lost. This part of the riddle is perhaps the least ambiguous if one tries to allocate a distinct language to the clue: the west for somebody coming from Europe is North America, and for Joris represents the English (American) language. West, in opposition to east as origin, is where the sun travels (and sets); especially in North American representations, it is the mythical destination of pioneers. Not surprisingly, in the riddle, west becomes associated with "wagon" and so also with journey. Travelling is perhaps the most common metaphor of life (Lakoff 1989); the wheel ("its wheel"), in the singular as steering wheel, is that which a driver can turn to decide on how to progress.

⁸⁷⁸ See Derrida, "Language is never owned" (2005).

The wheels, in the plural, leave traces and allow recording the journey. They work like a pen on the page, or rather like four pens running together; the next line suggests that “in harmonies of tetradic modalities” is the clue for the whole riddle. A tetrad is a group of four, and so the phrase makes sense in relation to the poet’s languages. A tetrad is also a scientific term for “a group of four cells produced by the successive divisions of a mother cell” (Merriam-Webster), which adds a reference to a central point, only implicitly stated here through the unifying voice of the speaker.

With the apparent solution of the riddle, the initial question could be: “Who am I?” “What does it mean to have four languages?” One can sum up the answer: the speaker has four languages: one for thinking, one for puns (are puns only there for fun or do they have another cognitive function?); one for formal use (based on rhetoric) and one for orientation in life, whatever that includes. The question would then be: What do we need language(s) for? The answer points at functions of language and not at distinct national varieties. In reference to the first lines, one could say that languages need not be counted: it is what they achieve, in harmony, that counts. Borrowing is no issue as long as languages work together.

But looking back at the title, one may wonder if the real question should not be about anguish and language? This brings us to the last, baffling, line: “before & after I sink” and a possible further twist.

Here’s my suggestion: the word “sink”, the only one that comes up twice in the riddle, caught my attention; literally, it obviously suggests the destruction and obliteration of the speaker but this is hard to fit in with the preceding clues of the riddle. Yet, the words may remind us of a famous nursery rhyme:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king’s horses and all the king’s men
Couldn’t put Humpty together again. (Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*)

The lines do not say who or what Humpty Dumpty was, apart from the fact that after breaking he could not be put together again. The reason is that the nursery rhyme may originally have been a riddle, and the answer of the riddle is, he is an “Egg”.⁸⁷⁹ In riddles, contradictions are resolved by the reference to a totally different object or situation.

If in the last line of Joris’s riddle one replaces “.sink” with “fall” and accepts the allusion to Humpty Dumpty, the perspective changes. An uncomplicated, short rendering of the riddle would then be: “What is a person with many languages?” And a humorous answer would be, “S/He is an egg!” Or: Joris is an

⁸⁷⁹ In *Dictionary of World Literary Terms*, Shipley makes an explicit reference to Humpty Dumpty as a riddle (1970: 278).

egg, he is Humpty Dumpty. But obviously there is more to it and the real question is, “What is the anguish of a speaker with four languages?”

Like Humpty Dumpty, the speaker with the many languages is afraid of falling and breaking, of not keeping his (four) languages together, of losing his wholeness and being definitively destroyed. That is his agony, his great mental anguish.

The poem is about the anguish of a person with many languages who is first torn in all directions (quartered), sinks or falls, before feeling whole again - like Humpty Dumpty or an egg. “Before and after I sink”: The speaker seems to say: “Before I acquired, or borrowed, several languages I was whole, like an egg and on condition of keeping my languages harmoniously reined in, with the horses of the wagon under control, I stay whole. But the fear of “sinking” or losing command constantly torments me.”

The riddle confirms Joris’s love of polysemy and puns and hidden allusions as ways to probe the meaning of words and to express difficult predicaments while it is also the illustration of what Joris writes elsewhere: “**A riddle is a question without an answer.**” (*An American Suite* 2016: 40)

As enquiry into language multiplicity, the poem shows the impossibility to give a clear definition of languages or to distinguish separate languages. An ultimate paradox is that the poem itself is entirely monolingual and gives no illustration of translingual writing processes.

7.3.1.3 Othering the mother tongue

Luxembourgish, his first language or that which he first spoke, is an undeniable dimension of his early life and has remained a presence or a ghost that he cannot ignore in his positioning towards languages. (See essays and interviews in ch.5.) In a poem, included in *Poasis* (2001:137-139), he attempts to think through and articulate some of its baffling characteristics.

“My mouth knows a language”

my hand and eye cannot imitate,
 the mother-tongue there only as *phoné*,
 as phoney – though this
 sound-rhyme be phoney
 etymology – the fake,
 the counterfeit arising
 from Old Irish/Irish Gaelic
 fawney (in which a small counterfeit deer hides), “a
 gilt brass ring used by swindlers,”
 the book does not
 tell me how
 to use a fawney –

nor if it was a rose ring
 as for cattle
 or a marriage ring
 a token of exchange,
 a useless ring except for
 the purported value of its metal
 & counterfeit in that
 So the real root of phone,
 sound, voice,
 is I-E: bhâ⁻², which gives
 a list [...]

The puzzling wording in the first lines makes this poem sound like another riddle: What is the language my mouth knows (i.e. which I speak) and which “my hand and eye cannot imitate” (which I cannot write or read). Though a reference to Luxembourg appears only at the very end, it is clear to readers who know about its linguistic practices that the poem deals with the speaker’s mother tongue. It is a piece about the characteristics of a mother tongue, the intricate relations one may have to a first language and about a few specific features of Lëtzeburgesch.

For the poet or noet, comparing words but also checking dictionaries and responding to findings is above all a process of othering the language and looking at it from a distance. Or as he puts it, “language others itself always again → nomadic writing is always ‘the practice of outside’; writing as nomadic practice – on the move from one other to another other.” (“Notes towards a Nomadic Poetics” 2003: 29)

The first lines foreground the strangeness of the phenomenon: a language only in his mouth – one could add in his ears, too. They emphasize the experience of a language that is only spoken language (which his mouth knows), but which he cannot write nor read. The poet is unable to “imitate” it: he cannot transcribe the words that his mouth knows and he does not read or make meaning of text written in it. So how would he write poetry in this language 1. without knowing how to write down the sounds 2. without having models he could refer to?

What does it mean if a mother tongue is only *phoné*? The next lines are an investigation of the etymology of *phoné*, in which he mixes scholarly explanations with spontaneous associations and language games. They sound very sophisticated and far-fetched, yet on closer inspection, they point to implications that the poet leaves to readers to explore further. The images and language games show the mother tongue associated with something fake, with a little deer, with a ring used to keep animals under control, with a wedding ring.

The lines are an example of language games and words wandering in the poet's mind. From *phoné*—oral language only—he moves to *phoney*—meaning fake: moreover this is a fake explanation of *phoné*; yet it sounds interesting and the poet pursues his investigation and proceeds to check the etymology of *phoney*: it comes from *fawney*. The poet's spontaneous response consists in a relation between *fawney* and a *fawn*, a young deer. This would mean the mother tongue is like a little deer in his mouth. Yet again the "book"—here an etymological dictionary—proves him wrong. A *fawney* is a brass ring: so what kind of brass ring would the mother tongue be? Immediately he thinks of a nose ring for cattle used to keep them under control, or a wedding ring, as token of exchange—neither is correct though they have made sense to him as explanations for a mother tongue.

Fawney, in fact means worthless, it is a swindler's item to fool buyers: So is that what mother tongue is? No, because the real etymology of *phoné* is the Greek word with an Indo-European root, which means sound and voice. The playful reflections now give way to a linguist's explanations and a list of words derived from *phoné*, such as *infant*, *confess* or *prophet* and *preface*, a whole list which reflects the poet's fascination with polysemy.⁸⁸⁰ The middle part of the poem is a scholarly, though playfully presented enquiry into the vast family of words that derive from the same Indo-European root.

The end of the poem introduces a further perspective.

the search goes on, the *phoné*-origins
 downloaded days later
 searching a CIA database
 gathered intelligence
 for Luxembourg & got this re ethnic divisions:
 "Celtic base, with French &
 German blend."
 like rich coffee, except whiter,
 & the language,
 other. (*Poasis* 2001:137-139)

The reflections start from a CIA data base on Luxembourg, which presents ethnic features of Luxembourg as a blend of French & German elements. These lines lead the poet to finish on another blend to describe the language, the mother tongue, as rich coffee with milk. Whether "this coffee" is French or German is irrelevant, what counts is emphasized in the last lines: "& the language/ other." *Other* than its components, always other according to the observer's perspectives.

⁸⁸⁰ The list and the middle part of the poem are not included in the quotation.

The final words connect the image of language as a drink that one feels passing through one's mouth with the opening line "my mouth knows a language". The emphasis on a material and sensual dimension of language is unmistakable: "So the real root of phoné/ sound, voice." Despite the intellectual space that the poems create, the *voice* remains a core notion of Joris's views on languages.

Wrapping up, with a look at important elements for understandings of translingual writing: "My mouth knows a language" is the example of a poetic thinking through of the mother tongue while it also represents the relations between language and reality as a web of associations. It is a monolingual text addressed at an Anglophone readership. In the reflections on Luxembourgish, the poet does not make use of words in Luxembourgish yet creates a vast network of interrelated words in many languages, with references to Old Irish/ Gaelic, to Indo-European languages, to Greek and eventually to French and German.

The speaker in the poem is the insider/ outsider who inspects his language and constructs a vast mental linguistic space, encompassing past and present, through which he moves to inspect links. He *others* his own language not to give a clear definition but to evoke various perspectives on what its otherness may mean. Significantly, the last word of the poem is "other."

The poem is an investigation of the poet's mother tongue but also of oral languages or of oral aspects in any language. It stresses the physical dimension of language through its relation to the body (mouth, hand, eye, voice) and its sensory dimension is humorously evoked through the image of the coffee to enjoy as rich blend. Eventually, a web of meanings emerges from the combination of factual and imagined connections.

Otherness in language can take many forms. Joris also considers its most visible form, the insertion of words in a foreign script. The aim of their inclusion in his texts is never purely decorative, an addition of couleur Locale. Such words become tools to reflect as appears in the poems from "**An Alif Baa**" (*Barzakh* 2014: 124-132) which are ponderings about Arabic as a language with another alphabet and another script. *Alif baa* is a reference to the Arabic alphabet and to titles frequently found in books for language learning. Joris's poems include stories about the alphabet's mythic origin as well as some stories which its letters can tell. They leads him to make comparisons with the poet's own first reading and writing experiences in the 1950s, while the drawings (calligraphic representation) of several letters turn the pieces into reflections that juxtapose sounds and word formation in Arabic and French.

7.3.1.4 Self-portraits and the role of language for a traveller/ nomad

In his poetry, Joris avoids speaking about himself yet inevitably, he lends his voice to whoever speaks in the poems. On a few rare occasions, the poems reveal the voice of a subject attempting to construct an

image of himself, as nomad and as multi-voiced traveller. *Janus* (1988) seems to come closest to a poetic language memoir (see 3.1). The title evokes the Roman god with the double-faced head. He is the guardian god of doorways and beginnings who has given his name to the first month in the calendar. As many of the poems in *Janus* are dated and located, they read like entries in the diary of the year 1987. That year is for the poet a door, or rather a liminal space, between his European past and his American future. Significantly, the first poem in the collection carries the following place and time indications: “1/1/ 1987, Paris 11 am.” The poems that follow give evidence of travelling and the collection ends with pieces in which he celebrates his return to America in December 1987. The very last poem (“monday dec. 28th 8.15 a.m. Annandale”) is entitled: “Nicht im Luxemburgischen beheimatet.” Many pieces comment on the migrant/emigrant/immigrant’s experiences. Thus towards the end of the year, he writes about travelling between continents:

yet again I churn
 the North Atlantic
 Turbine, tread water or thin air
 my yoyo life-route to & fro &
 above as below
 this grey elephant-hide map
 has no memory
 of our crossings
 silver wake of ships or vapor
 trails of jet race
 no old scar on water or air
 each time I come
 I come for the first time
 to America or Europe
 & have to repeat the log

entries to my heartlands:

systole of Europa

diastole of America (Janus 1988: 18; emphasis added)

In these lines, which are not dated, the nomad-migrant who regularly repeats his routes speaks of his “yoyo life-route to & fro.” The yo-yo image suggests being torn or pulled between two places but the route he follows is not marked on a map of ocean or air: each time it is a new arrival.⁸⁸¹ Some of the language here recalls the feelings of disorientation and uncertainty that prevail in migrants’ memoirs. The

⁸⁸¹ The missing traces of his travelling at his arrival may however also be a humorous reference to tedious waiting at customs rather than to a renewed sense of wonder.

poet, ex-medical student, has a telling image when he speaks of “my heartlands:/ systole of Europa/ diastole of America.”

In *Janus*, more references to his languages appear in entries made in December 1987 after he has arrived in America. Many reflections encompass his in-between position and his still outsider views on a language – American English – in which as a writer he wants to put his trust. In “Boxing day/ at kitchen table” dated 12/26/87 8.45a.m, the opposition between Europe and America marks his reflections on thought and language. He rants against *religio* with great passion, especially against the language used by religion in America (I don’t follow all the allusions) and in his anger defines his beliefs about language: ⁸⁸²

in anger I want to hold on to this:

that language should not be used cheap,
 (that) (as) language is all we have
 to make sense of us in
 the world
 that language is the only guide,
 boat, raft,
 life-raft,
 the only way for us
 to come into the awe & possibilities
 of even those events the mystifiers
 claim to be beyond words.
 There is nothing human beyond words & words
 are the only gate we have.

[...]
 our path is language
 cared for and crafted
 worked into the deepest
 recesses of what we call mind —

[...]
 we love only what we name
 & Adam destroyed paradise by naming
 animals and trees
 & we destroy what we love

⁸⁸² On language: see also article/ interview in Lëtzebuerger. Land REF where Joris speaks about the poet’s language also article by Robert Kelly, L’intérêt de Joris REF

& have to do so again & again,
damned in & through language
"our only genetics".

(& yet, & again, as always
the depth of our love
directly proportional
to the accuracy
of our naming. (*Janus* 1988, 26-27)

These lines transmit the poet's "belief" in language, which is ruled by a few principles: We need language to make sense of the world; language gives access to our deepest thoughts; language as the most precious good asks for precise naming of the world around us.

Language understood on these terms echoes a belief in its power as purveyor of knowledge. Language is a condition and a tool for meaning making as well as a tool that subverts the view of man held in traditional religion. The last lines also express awareness of the poet's commitment to exact naming and are an appeal for accuracy in naming as a sign of love of the world. The realm of language transpires as a semi-religious but entirely earthbound space in which the poet moves: accuracy in language is the truth that he is in search for. In the context of translanguaging, *naming* recalls the importance of acquiring words in the new language and of comparing them with those in other languages, an aspect to which Joris often refers.

For the multilingual poet, these thoughts also raise questions about the pertinence of his choice of English as his language of writing. The next section dated a little later on that same day conveys his excitement at being back in America, which is above all a rediscovery of the language:

I am
back
in
America
Anybody can be America. All you need is learn the
names, then say them aloud.
The verbs here are simple
over-active at times.
The tenses straightforward.
This is no land of
subjunctives, past or present. (*Janus* 1988: 28)

Again the focus is on names and on straightforward language: does it make speaking the truth simpler?

“Nicht im Luxemburgischen beheimatet”: This phrase, which seems to be the only audibly heterolingual insertion in *Janus*, occurs in two poems. It is the title (in bold) of the last poem in *Janus* (1988: 31), dated “12/ 28/1987”, yet the German title, a phrase borrowed from a *Vogelkunde*, only makes sense if read in the context of a little scene evoked in the poem of “12/25/87; 8.50 a.m.” On that Christmas morning, the speaker in the poem is listening to Handel’s *Messiah* and to the rain falling on Annandale – an autobiographical hint, as Annandale-on-Hudson is the home of Bard College where 20 years before he had arrived to start his studies. At the same time, he watches a bird at the window.

Birds are often used as images of migration and freedom and an association with Joris himself comes to mind. His emphasis however is on the importance of *naming*, on language difference, on the possible lexical shortcomings of certain languages (notably Luxembourgish) and on the (German) notion of *Heimat*.

a red crested bird
at window feeder

“Gimpel” comes
to mind. Its

German name?
A small square

light blue book
an abridged Vogel-

Kunde: “Nicht im
Luxemburgischem

Beheimatet” as we
all do not live

are not adhesive
to Heimat

Handel in England
Harold in Italy (*Janus* 1987: 23)

He is familiar with the bird, a bullfinch, which he watches on his windowsill and refers to it by its German name, Gimpel. For the multilingual speaker, the ability to translate is crucial; unable to recall what it is called in Luxembourgish, Joris notices the limitations of his vocabulary in his mother tongue – or possibly the limitations of the language which may not have its own word for this bird. He adds a quote, which he

remembers from a little German book: “*Nicht im Luxemburgischen beheimatet*,”⁸⁸³ thus subtly evoking the link between language and the notion of home.

The poem reveals undertones of the worries that the poet as nomad feels about his languages. With the reference to Handel writing his Messiah in England, the poem draws a parallel between the composer and the poet that Joris aspires to become in the US. The little bird, or rather the problem of naming it, confirms that he cannot opt for a language that lacks words or for a language about which he is not sufficiently knowledgeable.⁸⁸⁴ This would be a justification for his choice of English rather than his mother tongue as language of writing.

“*Nicht im Luxemburgischen beheimatet*”, the last poem in the collection, written three days later, approaches the mother tongue issue from yet another perspective. It opens on a cryptic reference, typical of Joris’s word games and unexpected associations, which can only be understood if one remembers that (cardinal) red is the colour of the bird he watched. At the same time, the polysemy of “cardinal” introduces another plane of reality, the world of the Catholic Church. The poem only makes sense if one knows that red robes are the distinct mark of cardinals and that (until recently) Luxembourg had no cardinal:

the cardinal not at home
only a bishopric of iron ore
so that we walk this earth
turning everyone else’s slag
over & over in our frazzled
mouths. (Janus 1987: 31)

These lines are worth investigating as they evolve into a complex image of Luxembourgers’ language. It is compared to the slag of its iron industry. Slag is waste matter; it is rusty red and not the glorious colour of cardinals and bullfinches. The iron industry operates with resources provided by others: similarly, the language used is largely imported and, as the image suggests, people’s mouths seem to be in tatters and hurt from turning over so many foreign words.

“Fin-de-Siècle Identikit”

The poem is included in the collection entitled *Breccia* (1987: 201-205). Calling the picture he is drawing (of himself) an identikit, the poet emphasizes the fact that it should not be mistaken for the real person.

⁸⁸³ Ornithology is not the object of Joris’s enquiry; as far as I know the Gimpel/ bullfinch/ bouvreuil is present in Luxembourg; obviously, Joris makes the reference to comment on his position as a migrant or traveller who worries about what he is if he has no language.

⁸⁸⁴ In his essays, too, Joris mentions the challenge for multilingual speakers who should remember names of animals and plants in several languages. See the references to his autobiographical piece, *Foghorn*, in ch. 5.3.

An identikit is an artifact, a construction, of the type we know as pictures of a person reconstructed by the police with the help of descriptions provided by others, by witnesses.⁸⁸⁵

Why *fin de siècle*? The phrase provides a certain contextualization, a link with notions of threshold and passage into another era and place, which predominate in his nomadic poetics. Joris's identikit is not an assemblage based on witnesses' statements but on a collection of imagined figures, who could shed light on who the poet is at the end of the century. It is largely a poetic self-portrait while the title suggests the speaker's wish to look at himself from a certain distance. It is drawn through imagined connections with other figures that share one or the other characteristic of his life, such as Vincent van Gogh (a "made-up ancestor") whose life tells about an itinerary similar to that of the poet's ancestor, "one Joris, who fleeing Amsterdam reached Basel and then submitted to a gruesome autodafé."

Joris's self-portrait has a few first person statements, something he usually avoids. Interestingly, they concern his linguistic particularities:

I speak in voices
always always
other people's voices
a thousand mouths
on this gorgo-head (*Breccia* 1987:203)

What do these lines evoke? "I speak in voices" is reminiscent of the Pentecost phenomenon and perhaps an allusion to translation work; "always, always/ other people's voices" suggests that his voice, and his language, is owned by others,⁸⁸⁶ that his poetry is not "original", it is always already translation; "a thousand mouths" recalls the thousand snakes of the *Gorgon* head: Gorgo-head or Gorgon's head? The image seems to merge both figures, that of Gorgo, the brave Spartan woman and *Gorgon*, the mythical Greek figure whose hair is made of snakes. Joris does not further pursue the allusion.

7.3.2 Exploring a middle in movement: the poet's positioning and becoming

7.3.2.1 In the middle and between: Puns and concepts

A sense of multiplicity and between-ness pervades his poems. It is enhanced by the thorough elaboration of carefully selected images.

⁸⁸⁵ The French and German words, "portrait-robot" and "Phantombild" bring in further connotations. See in *Fin de siècle-Phantombild* (2004) the translation of the poem by Nico Helminger into German; Jean Portante, in his French translation, keeps the English title "Identikit" (*Canto Diurno* 2017: 95-100).

⁸⁸⁶ See Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other: Or the Prosthesis of Origin* 1998; *Language is never owned* 2005.

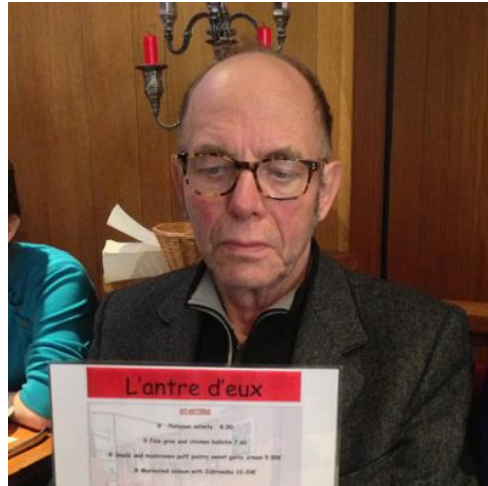


Figure 11. Pierre Joris, « L'antre d'eux » <http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/joris/>

A language game appears to be a good way to introduce this rich notion. The picture shows Joris reading from a sheet of paper, on whose back side – the one turned to the viewers – one can read a French headline “L’antre d’eux” – literally “their den” a rather improbable phrase, with an allusion at lions’ hiding place. The words are homophones of “l’entre- deux” – a time or space between two, which turns the phrase into a witty statement, through which Joris seems to suggest that using a French pun – on an American website - may be the best way to describe a complex in-between position. In fact *L’antre d’eux* is also the name of restaurants, an additional language game, and what we see is the page of its menu.⁸⁸⁷ A recurring notion, often related to nomadic wanderings, is that of a middle position, expressed in terms of “middle voice” or Middle Kingdom.⁸⁸⁸ Titles of poetry collections prove to be intriguing allusions to between-ness (*Justifying the Margins*), movement (*Barzakh*) and momentary standstill (*Poasis*). The term *Breccia* moreover refers to a fragmentary and composite nature that results from between-ness. A definition used as epigraph explains:

Breccia: 1. a rock consisting of sharp fragments embedded in a fine-grained matrix (as sand or clay)
2. an agglomerate deposit of debris in a cave or other site occupied by prehistoric man. (*Breccia* 1987: 15)

I read the description of this type of rock as an image of the nomad’s poetry consisting of one dominant material, similar to the dominant language of a text, in which other elements emerge. Breccia suggests a

⁸⁸⁷ See <https://pierrejoris.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Antre-Deux-e1379784026938.jpg>

⁸⁸⁸ In “Fin de siècle Identikit”, the Middle Kingdom is related to travelling up the Rhine river – I understand it as hint to languages spoken in the area which stretches from Holland to Switzerland, between Germanic and Romance languages.

foundation of sand or clay forming the ground or matrix of the text - with insertions in other languages. These fragments of otherness stand out and being sharp, they prevent smooth walking, yet they also appear as covered with the sand or clay of the foundation text. The second part of the explanation underlines the agglomerate nature, evoking a clustering and gathering that occurs over a long period of time. The insertions and agglomerations are often the voices of thinkers and writers that the poet has encountered on his route.⁸⁸⁹

Barzakh is an Arabic word that stands for isthmus, in between, or margin.

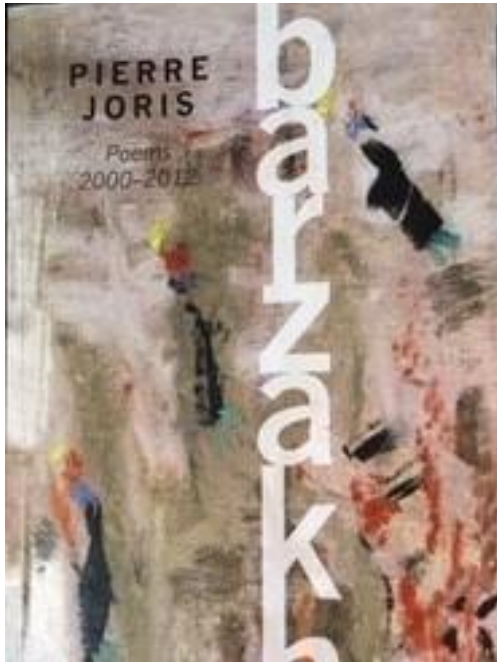


Figure 12. Pierre Joris, cover of *Barzakh*, painting by Nicole Peyrafitte

The literal meaning of 'Barzakh' is a veil or a barrier that stands between two things and which does not allow the two to meet. It is also the name of an online magazine, of which Joris is an editorial board member. He tells us that *Barzakh* is "a word / concept that names the connecting link, the "between" of something, such as different spheres of existence. As a temporal concept it can be, and historically was, considered an interval of time — say, the time between death and Resurrection in the Qu'ran, (similar to the Bardo Thödol of the Tibetans,) or the travel between life and death as the Egyptians imagined it. Thus traditionally seen as a separator, it is however also and more interestingly thinkable as a "between" that links, and in that sense can be translated as "isthmus." In the poetry collection entitle *Barzakh* (2014), the term is used as title of the second part (which makes up almost the whole book) "II: 2000 etcetera:

⁸⁸⁹ Some parts of the text that follows are drawn from a previously published article, Hansen-Pauly, "Pierre Joris. A mediator of cultures and languages" (2017).

the Barzakh". It thus turns into the name of an epoch now used with a definite article: Could we read as the name of the in-between era to which all the poems belong? It also seems to refer to the position of the poet-speaker who writes from the middle of things, immersed in the world that he describes. It is a highly diversified world, with voices in many languages, full of heterolingual elements even if most come in translation.⁸⁹⁰ A middle position cannot be dissociated from a language, or rather a voice that *articulates* multiple relations.

7.3.2.2 Becoming a middle voice: "The Work of Al-Ishk"⁸⁹¹

The middle voice is a key notion of Joris's poetics (cf. 6.3.3.3), which allows him to think about the relation between a poet's different languages, but also to conceive his place between the voices of other poets. As a nomad's voice, it is always in movement.⁸⁹² It helps locate the poet's voice among an on-going line of poetic voices.

"The Work of Al-Ishk" describes how the speaker-poet looks for his place among the meanders of literary traditions and the title with the Arabic word for *love* points to the topic on which the speaker in the poem muses. It is a poem about traditional features of love poetry handed down from Arabs to Greeks, passing through Byzantium to the troubadours. They are the nomad poets *par excellence*, whose words for centuries wandered within the vast space of the Mediterranean.⁸⁹³

Poems are a succession of voices, with as key junction point Guillaume IV of Aquitaine who explains the transmission process that gives orientation to later poets:

I've made this verse I know not what with
 & I'll transmit it to someone
 who'll transmit it to someone else
 all the way to Poitiers
 so that he may send from his pouch
 the counter-key. (*Janus* 1988: 3)

These first-person lines are an example of heterolingual insertion where no typographical marks identify the words as translated quotation or paraphrase. Poetic tradition is described in concrete terms of travelling and the final words of the passage add a strong image to evoke the process: counter-key is not

⁸⁹⁰ Most pieces analysed in ch. 8 (on translingual and dialogic writing) come from *Barzakh*.

⁸⁹¹ "The Work of Al-Ishk" was first published in *Janus* (19987), it is also included in *Poasis* (2001) in an abridged form.

⁸⁹² The middle voice also refers to the in-between space or route that words travel between (perceived) reality and the text. It is reminiscent of what Derrida explains as *différance*, the gap of postponement and deferring (1972/2017).

⁸⁹³ In an etymological study Joris has shown that contrary to common belief, troubadour and trouvère are not derived from the Italian word *trovatore* but actually go back to an Arab word and genre. (Various references, in interviews and in *Joris & Adonis, Conversations I the Pyrenees* 2018)

a common word. Like any key, it gives access to Locked-up objects or places. A counter-key however seems to stand for a tool with segments on both sides, able to turn left and right, backwards and forward. It is thus the key that unLocks the past as well as the future, the instrument that enables the articulation between different parts.

Joris's text is his translation and poetic rewriting of the 12th century Provençal poem.⁸⁹⁴ One brief insertion, *ab la dolchor*, reminds us of the original text in Provençal. The *work* of Al-Ishk refers to the way nomad poetry *functions*. Its transmission allows the speaker (Joris, as poet) to position himself within this nomadic movement:

from Arabia Deserta to Proensa⁸⁹⁵
 I follow my reading
 a camel sensing water
 a season ahead
 like spring months ahead
 I sense in today's sky's
 inhospitable icy blue. (*Janus* 1988: 3)

The image of Arabia emphasizes the role of the Arabic language in the process, which the troubadours wished to transform.⁸⁹⁶ For the 20th century speaker in Joris's poem, Al-Ishk poetry is a struggling with unfamiliar language, "those Arab letters / so difficult to pronounce / for a European/ consonant clusters/ can't get my mouth around/ they stick in te throat/ they gag your life", while it also reminds him of the troubadour plea for "vowels, melody, sweet/ water to flow/ between hard rock." (1988: 3-4)

7.3.2.3 Aural tracings of language

A poem about hearing and the ear analyses audible aspects of a middle position through a multifaceted image. It corroborates the more theoretical views on between-ness that characterize the nomad's poetics (see 6.3.3.):

BUT THE EAR
 is the middle
 voice, in

⁸⁹⁴ For the original text and its translation, see <http://www.planck.com/rhymedtranslations/aquitabla.htm>; <https://lyricstranslate.com/fr/ab-la-dolchor-del-temps-novel-la-douceur-du-temps-nouveau.html>)

⁸⁹⁵ *Proensa* is the Occitan or old Provençal word for *Provence*. It is also a reference to a collection of troubadour poetry by Robert Creeley (1953). See also *Proensa: An Anthology of Troubadour Poetry*, translated by Paul Blackburn (re-edition 2017).

to translations of Troubadour poetry into English by Robert Creeley and Paul Blackburn.

⁸⁹⁶ Note on Joris's etymological comments on "Troubadour": it is not as often believed related to *trovatore*, the one who finds, but goes back to an Arabic origin: it derives from "tarab," to sing. See in Joris interview with Peter Cockerlbergh <http://jacketmagazine.com/40/joris-cockleburgh-marginalia.shtml>

one out the other
side, tympanum
or hymen

whatever plays either
side, the skin mem-
brane is

hide of an intelligence
more telling than
the core

so grey and massive
a night in the ear
in medina

the medully of tone
is articulated affect
pre-thought

in the middle of
things, the double
heard heart.

Barzakh (2014 : 145)

“The ear is the middle voice” is an example of deep imagery. The poem succinctly elucidates the process: The ear is the skin, or hide, or mem-brane (notice the typographic emphasis) between the outside and the centre, the core, the medina – or as the last line has it – the heart. It is a “double heard heart.” The phrase echoes with two meanings: the heart is double, and relying on two ears the source of the heart’s hearing is double.

Several lines refer to what one could call a border line for information arriving and departing. But this borderline is easy to cross: “in/ one and out the other” echoes the popular way of saying how fast one forgets what has just been heard. In the poem the reference is to the ever so thin barrier between the outer world which permits sounds or words to pass to the other side (inside the head, to reach that place where intelligence is situated and understanding takes place).

The thin barrier inside the ear stands for porosity on which the poem elaborates through various comparisons. A look at some terms gives a hint of the ways in which the poet’s thinking and writing depend on scientific and medical terminology which merges with other areas of knowledge. The tympanum or eardrum is likened to the hymen; the middle becomes the medina, probably through an implicit language game with etymologies: on the one hand medina is the Arabic for city (which in a way is

the hub or middle of things), whereas in Latin languages the word is reminiscent of medium, the centre. The most surprising word in the poem is “medully,” probably a word that Joris has coined from melody and medulla (medullary), which is the marrow and thus connects with core and heart.⁸⁹⁷

The poem evolves around two notions, the one of barrier that the ear represents and on the notion of centre: they constitute the indissociable or inextricable link that ties “between-ness” and “being in the middle,” those central features of nomadic movement. It is about the articulation of what and how we hear and think: hearing is pre-thought. Receptive language is not only a matter of reading, the dimension which is most often underlined in relation to literature; it is also indissociable from hearing. Moreover, the poem shows articulation as it occurs between multiple forms of language: medical terminology, everyday speech and connotations in different languages. In the poetry of Joris, the highly imaginative movement between words is a key feature of translingual processes and opens new routes for thinking. *Wrapping up on a middle in movement:* The poems highlight how a middle voice is situated between voices or languages. The middle voice is the realm of the translator and mediator between languages. Therefore, poems that refer to other poets whose work Joris has translated become the predilected place for reflection on between-ness. The selected texts allow some insight into how Joris works with elements taken from the other poets’ writings. Poems referring to Paul Celan are further examples to investigate images of between-ness and interacting voices.

7.3.3 Poetic translingualism: the creation of imaginary communities with other poets

Many poems examine the relation between the persona (Joris as speaker in the poem) with other writers and their work. They are often writers whose work in French or German he has translated into English. The intense involvement with the words of the other induces Joris to think through in his poems what they mean for his writing process: thinking is the middle position between reading and writing. Thinking gives rise to the complex images in which his poems describe the articulation that links two voices.⁸⁹⁸ It is articulation in its double sense of *joining* different strands or voices and languages but also articulation as *expression*, putting into words the composite deep images that are the foundation of understanding and knowledge.

⁸⁹⁷ The poem can be related to earlier texts included in *Breccia*: a piece entitled “The Ear” (1987: 125-128) and to two elaborate dictionary notes on “Hymen” (119) and “Tympan” (120), which the later poem synthesizes in its image of the middle ear.

⁸⁹⁸ See also the palimpsest as articulation.

7.3.3.1 Paul Celan: The Book of Luap Nalec ⁸⁹⁹

para mis Europeos

para mis muertos

The dedication to dead European poets (among them Gottfried Benn and Paul Celan), who have had an enduring effect on his work, sets a multilingual context. The title with Celan's name back to front alludes to a specific relation that Joris has with the poet whose work he has been translating since the late 1960s. Other elements of visible heterolingualism follow in the quotations selected as epigraphs, one in English by Edward Dorn and one in German. The statement by Gottfried Benn, "... im Grunde also meine ich, es gibt keinen andern Gegenstand für die Lyrik als den Lyriker selbst," however points to Benn's view of poetry that Joris wants to overcome through the work of another European poet of death: "Celan dares/go further" (*Breccia* 1987: 110).

The poems from *The Book of Nuap Nalec* contain numerous allusions to Celan's poetry. A few lines from the section called "The Birth of Luap Nalec" already give an insight into how (Joris) the translator and poet sees his relation to the other poet and how he describes the way in which Celan's words have moved towards him:

Sight threads sense shreds
from the folded image knit
behind time:
invisible enough
to see you, you came
through all the walls
you came turncoat eye

eye turned
inside out
of which
I see (in *Breccia*, 111-112)

The image that describes the poet-translator's action evokes articulation in its two senses. He finds Celan's poetry described as "folded", not fully visible and as belonging to a past that is not entirely accessible. The poet-translator looks at the shreds or fragments, makes sense of them and aligns – or "threads" – them into a sequence; it is a process which turns the images and words of Celan into another text. Does the poem speak of Joris's work as translator or as poet? Faithful translation or new poem? Though the products are completely different, both processes of writing are so intensely linked that the distinction

⁸⁹⁹ The collection was published in (1975/76); references here go to the extracts included in *Breccia* 1987: 108-115.

here is not relevant. (See 6.3.5 and essay “Community of Translation & Translation of Community in Robin Blaser” in *A Nomad Poetics* 2003: 102-109.)

Some elements of the description recall « une poétique de la bouche invisible » (see reference to Kryszewski in ch.3.1) reinforced by the vision of a « turncoat eye ». Beyond the notion of spy, the phrase adds the idea of looking both sides, like Janus (or working in two directions like a counterkey, the image in “The Work of Al-Ishk”). It is the point or moment of articulation, where the poet looks back at others, including other languages, before turning into a new direction for his own creative work.

In the first place, Joris’s words refer to Celan’s writing (and an underlying feeling of betrayal), yet they also involve the observer (“den Lyriker selbst”) who will transform Celan’s words into his own words and poetry in another language. Reading Celan’s name backward and the image, which the word “turncoat” literally conjures, are powerful means to evoke writing as articulation processes.

“SPRECHGITTER,” a section in *The Book of Luap Nalec*, adds the audible dimension, with allusions to the resonance of words despite distance and separation. The word “Gitter” as part of the compound noun in the headword – evoking a grid, a railing or perhaps most appropriately *bars* (cf. the expression “behind bars”) – contains the notion of obstacle with openings through which words can pass: ⁹⁰⁰

SPRECHGITTER

I
the shifter, am spoken
through
these chambers –
a quartering
of words
badly bruised
& water-logged

Joris has extensively commented on this passage in an article entitled “An “E” for an “A” (2010) where he explains that whereas Celan actually writes *Sprachgitter*, he mistakenly read it as *Sprechgitter*. In an elaborate analysis of this confusion, he takes it to stand for his move from a focus on language, *die Sprache* (the traditional view from which Celan looks at language) to an emphasis on speaking – *sprechen* - as indicative of changing views towards the performative dimension of language. The involuntary switch thus marks the difference between former European views (on poetic diction) versus the more active approach

⁹⁰⁰ *Sprechgitter* is the title of a poem in an eponymous collection (1959). *Speechgrille* is the term Joris uses in a recently published translation of Celan’s earlier poetry, *Memory Rose Into Threshold Speech* (2020).

In 2019, he offered “*Speechgrille*” for World Poetry Day and posted it on his blog, with a commentary. <https://pierrejoris.com/blog/speechgrille-a-celan-poem-for-world-poetry-day/>

of Americans, to which his poet friends have introduced Joris. The basic idea of “Gitter” as separating element remains the same: it is a mostly unsurmountable barrier, but not quite the same as a wall as it does not completely bar sight and lets words or the sound of voices pass.

In an essay appropriately entitled “An ‘E’ for an ‘A’” (2010), Joris elaborates on the confusion and what it conveys about his view on language, at the same time providing relevant insights into a translingual poet’s approach of language.

7.3.3.2 “Goosefeet”

In a poem entitled “Goosefeet” (*Poasis* 2001: 128), Joris muses on what could be called different forms of translingual devices through an image gathered from a text by Celan. The title is a literal translation of a German expression used for quotation marks (“Gänsefüßchen”), an image whose figurative meaning Celan has playfully investigated:

“Gibt es nicht gerade in »Leonce und Lena« diese den Worten unsichtbar zugelächelten
Anführungszeichen, die vielleicht nicht als Gänsefüßchen, die vielmehr als Hasenöhrchen, das
heißt also als etwas nicht ganz furchtlos über sich und die Worte Hinauslassendes verstanden
sein, wollen?”⁹⁰¹

My aim is not to investigate the innumerable references and levels of meaning included in Joris’s poem. I see Joris’s poem as a playful—and serious - translingual reflection leading to further views on the interface in texts and a poet’s middle position. “Goosefeet” prove to be a powerful image to think about the role and position of heterolingual voices emerging in texts. The word(s) between “goosefeet” are the “a stranger’s or outsider’s words enfolded in the text, which do not quite fit in with the main voice or language, and like hare’s ears point to another audible reality. In Celan’s text, the image further involves fear of an invisible threat.

The importance of “Gänsefüßchen” and its many implications for Joris may be reflected by the cover of Joris’s English translation of *The Meridian*, which displays the page of Celan’s manuscript with the passage about Leonce and Lena, about “Gänsefüßchen und Hasenöhrchen.”

⁹⁰¹ „Der Meridian. Rede anlässlich der Verleihung des Georg-Büchner-Preises“, Darmstadt, am 22. Oktober 1960. In Paul Celan, *Gesammelte Werke*, Dritter Band: 2000: 202. Also see Joris’s translation *The Meridian* (2011: 12).

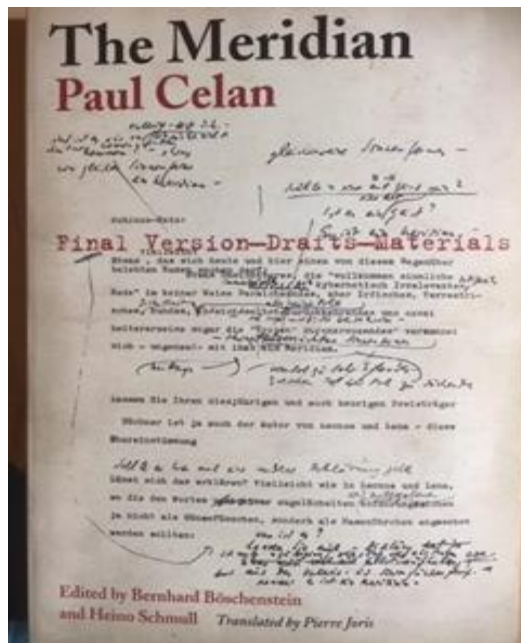


Figure 13. Paul Celan, from final draft of *Der Meridian*, used as cover for the English translation

We may say that goosefeet are signs of heterolingual shifting, in the sense that interrupt a text and bring in another voice with its array of connotations. For a multilingual listener, like Joris, goosefeet also become the occasion for a language game, the literal French translation, *pattes d'oie*, brings a different idea and diversion in this exploration of what quotations do. Yet, “pattes d’oie” as wrinkles or crow’s feet also point to age, just as words between quotation marks are signs of older words in a new text.

Quotations refer to the words of others, or may be double echoes, like Celan’s words ghosting Hölderlin who is imagined to react to a comment on a poem of his in these words:

I am played
 along the interface
 of someone else’s
 dream & heard to say:
 “Patmos is on
 the level of the judgmental.”
 To know what you mean
 with my words.
 Interface of you
 & I. 902

(*Poasis*, “Goosefeet” 2001:128)

⁹⁰² The reference is to “Tenebrae”, a poem by Paul Celan included in *Sprechgitter*. In the introduction of the translation, Joris presents it as “a carefully constructed refutation of Hölderlin’s “Patmos” hymn, which [...] negates(Christian/ pagan) hope for salvation.” (2020, kindle location 246)

The lines reflect meta-reflection on how “original” speakers may respond to the use of their words. In his poem, Joris also uses the term “breccia” - fragments of rock – to speak about quotes (see 7.3.2.1) and admits that what is between goose feet requires thorough care: “quotes as/ breccia,/ potted plants/ need water/ of exegesis in this/ dry climate.” (129)

We find one of Hölderlin’s favourite fantasy used with quotation marks in Joris’ text:

“Pallaksch./ Pallaksch,”/ untranslatable, untranslatable/ status of goose feet,

while a few lines further on in the poem, an example of mixed language comes without quotation marks:

Brot & Kaffee,/ this morn, a Klatsch/ of friends, a gaggle/ of geese

The examples show how within one poem Joris uses a wide range of defamiliarising devices. They call for the reader’s close attention since they signal changing roles of heterolingual elements, as literary citation and as echoes of more colloquial language (or code-)switching.

“Goosefeet” shows that translingual writing can combine the voices of Hölderlin via Celan as well as cackle of geese and Kaffeeklatsch in the same text. It is an audible palimpsest of elevated and ordinary heterolingual language with a few striking visible marks such as “Gänsefüßchen,” implicit “Hasenöhrchen” and “pattes d’oie”. The juxtaposition of voices recalls Joris’s elaboration in a text on post-collage (1997), where he exposes how seams between fragments may vanish. The poem may also be read in association with the essay “Polysemy without mask,” (discussed in ch. 6.3.4).

7.3.3.3 From a middle voice to Arabic perspectives

The Dream of the Desert

A central poem for a study of Joris’s positioning as a middle voice in the world of poets is “The Dream of the Desert in the Book” (2001: 183). The title recalls a work by Edmond Jabès, the Francophone Egyptian thinker, *Du désert au livre. Entretiens avec Marcel Cohen*, which Joris translated into English (1989).⁹⁰³ In the poem, the speaker evokes the necessity of *writing as witnessing* (see article on Celan, “An ‘E’ for an ‘A’” 2010) but also of positioning in “the book” of literature, which comprises dreams as diverse as those of Stalin, Celan, Heidegger and of all parents.

Other poems emphasise the power of the desert to evoke nomads, exile and the kind of existential questions that Jabès asks. In Arab thought; travelling requires a special sense of orientation and does not follow roads like those of the Western world.

“The desert is the awakening of the soul.” (173)

“All clarity has come from the desert” (174)

⁹⁰³ See also “Writing/ Reading # 13, via Edmond Jabès” (*Poasis* 2001: 173-176).

Wandering creates the desert./ *You say desert true place of word?* (176) ("Writing/ Reading # 13, via Edmond Jabès," in *Poasis* 173-176)

These ideas are reflected in many poems often with allusions to language dimensions. "Getting there" (in *Poasis* 2001) is a good example.

"Getting There"

Key words for my reading of the poem are heterolingual elements, notions of orientation and of a nomadic translation, all seen as elements that contribute to meaning making. The title "Getting there" indicates moving and arriving; it is a common way of stating that one succeeds or is about to achieve what was projected. In the context of the poem, it appears as quest for an understanding of nomadic writing as a form of translation. Such writing involves creating a nomad's wide space to travel across. The dominant poetic voice (in English) is crisscrossed by foreign words (in Latin, German and Arabic) and English language quotations sprinkled across the text.

For the nomad orientation is essential, yet while he wanders he is struck by the relativity of directions such as east and west. Words and languages, too, change places. Maghreb, for instance, literally means west but for the poet it is east from where he lives.⁹⁰⁴

This leads him to inquire into the movement of languages in translation through a powerful image of what he calls "towards a nomadic translation."

Clear summer skies
the only lightning this
morning in the book
the spark of translation arcs
between the poles of languages,
hesitant instant, zigzag, throwing
light on light.
("Getting there," *Poasis* 2001: 189)

Translation is a way of making sense and blurring difference: "Was transported here to make sense of, a north making east into west and west into east, fear/ the loss of discrimination." (189).

The last lines, a quotation, confirm that all language is translation:⁹⁰⁵

"We are initially translators then; and in coming into our native speech learn that language as we translate ourselves into language. We did then come from an other world. And the problems of translation are not secondary to our being native." ("Getting there," *Poasis* 2001: 189)

⁹⁰⁴ For a detailed exploration of east-west distinctions, see Joris's introduction to *Exile is my Trade. A Habib Tengour reader* (2012).

⁹⁰⁵ The words are attributed to RD, standing for the American poet Robert Duncan (1919-1988).

These words are reminiscent of studies on understandings of translation in chapter 3.1 (Karpinski and self-translation; Busch, “Die Macht präbabilonischer Phantasien”). The text however also emphasizes *exile* as another key notion of nomadic translation.

Exile as h.j.r

Joris has extensively explored what exile means for language, for instance in comments on writers' work that he has translated. He often refers to it as *h.j. r.*, as also in the title of a collection of poems (1999).

A helpful comment on Arabic linguistics and cultural connotations appears in connection with the translation of a sequence of poems by Nabile Fares, *Exile: Women's Turn* (2017):

“The tri-consonantal Arabic root h.j.r. states the fact of exile in the nouns hejer/hejira, while simultaneously naming the woman Hagar, mother of Ishmael, she who personifies exile as the condition of woman in the Abrahamic cultures, where, as Nabile Fares says, she is ‘an illegal in language.’ And it is the great merit & beauty of these poems to speak to & of (without the male arrogance of claiming to speak for) the women (of his native Algeria, & of elsewhere & not only in the Arab world) in their double exile, ‘these women who] resembled / Clandestine vowels / Of the Unwanted Languages, ‘humbly declaring his work to be ‘your voyage // my translation.’” (Pierre Joris, on blurb for *Exile: Women's Turn*; see entry on his blog, September 8, 2017 <https://pierrejoris.com/blog/exile-womens-turn-a-poem-of-east-and-west-by-nabile-fares/>)

The explanation confirms the wide scope of meanings that h.j.r and exile open and which underlie many of Joris's poetic texts.

7.3.3.4 Encounter with Mansur A-Hallaj

A presentation of multiple languages in Joris's poetry would not be complete without references to Arab culture and examples of Arabic insertions. *Meditations on the Stations of Mansur Al-Hallaj* (2013) is not a bi- or multilingual text in which the poet smoothly switches from one language to another, or in which the speaking persona effortlessly exchanges with voices in other languages. The inserted words, in Arabic script, first of all signify a break in the visual appearance of the printed text (whose sound most readers outside the Arabian world cannot imagine). They point to a need for reflection and openness for other ways of conceiving the world. Joris's interest lies in a fascination with otherness in thinking and language, which he attempts to render in his own poetry. He is the *noet* who explores a world which his other languages can only tentatively apprehend.

In a Postface to *Meditations*, Joris situates the context of his writing process. “I started this sequence of poems shortly after the US invaded Iraq, somehow wanting to ward off, or hold at bay, the utter destruction of the people & the city of Bagdad, one of the greatest old cities in the history of humanity” (2013: 91). During his stay in Algeria in the 1970s, he had been enthralled by the work of a French Orientalist on Mansur al-Hallaj, the tenth century sufi poet and thinker, but he did not own a book with

the texts of the poet. The process of writing which he describes accounts for the presentation of the poems: “I [...] quickly scoured the internet for al-hallaj material & came up with a very basic – anonymous, as far as I could discover – list in English & Arabic of forty concepts taken from al-Hallaj’s teachings.. Deciding to use the found list as titles for a sequence of forty poems, I started to work.” (*Meditations* 2013: 91) Later he read up further scholarly work on al-Hallaj and noticed some inconsistencies between texts. What is interesting is his comment, a statement that sums up a core idea of his poetics:

“But such discrepancies are to be expected, & it is probably in the fissures between miscounts, recounts, etymologies, misreadings, neologisms, etc. that much of the poetic force of language resides.” (*Meditations* 2013: 92)

What interests me is the way a *complex form of translingualism* is implemented in the book: Each poem displays a juxtaposition of a term or concept in English, with its form in the Arabic script and finally in its phonetic transcription.⁹⁰⁶ Joris does not primarily dwell on the concepts as developed in sufi thinking but rather explores possible associations. For instance, the poem on “labor” has several features that show how the multilingual poet responds to otherness.

19. labor كَدَّ (kada)

to each day
its labor

isn’t sufficient
& is certain-

ly not wisdom maybe
a laborious essay

to veil the condition
we claim as ours

à chaque jour
suffit sa peine

to unveil this
morning’s condition

translates *peine*
as labor

⁹⁰⁶ For a discussion of the diversity of scripts as aspects of multilingualism, see Schmitz-Emans.

thinks of *cada*
as each

in Spanish now
of a tail

or *cauda* as in
what is the

coda of labor?
asleep in

fatigues conned
again by what M

had cleared: labor
is not work

work is sufficient
if you can

get it
work at

the great daily
unworking. (37-38)

The poet's first spontaneous response seems to consist in juxtaposing the word and notion to equivalents in his languages. Thus the poem opens on an immediate association with a French proverb (*à chaque jour suffit sa peine*), quoted a little further down. What follows are reflections about the problems of translation (different connotations) that words such as labor, or work and the French *peine* have; from there his mind wanders to associations of sound between "*kada*," the transcription of the Arabic term for labour, and the languages that are close to him.

A wide net of related words and meanings emerges: the apparent homonym *cada* in Spanish means "each" thus echoing with "each day/ chaque jour" in the French proverb. From there his thoughts move to *cauda* - the tail in Spanish and Italian. Then reading it the English or French way it becomes *coda* - or *code* of labor. The poem moreover stimulates further thinking through the polysemic dimension of carefully selected terms and their meaning across languages; *fatigues* is a good example.⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰⁷ Note on the polysemy of "fatigues": Fatigues are what soldiers wear when they're working or engaging in battle. In the 1770's, fatigues meant "extra duties of a soldier," from fatigue, or tiredness. It came to also mean "military clothing" in the mid-1880's.

Writing about the concept of *labor* in relation to Mansur's stations of meditations is an opportunity to *think through* the difference between related words which come to mind in association with various linguistic and cultural contexts. The poem foregrounds the processual dimension of translingual writing and shows how the poet's mind wanders between languages.

7.3.4 A poem to sum up the writing of exiles and nomads

"Le lieu des routes" is a poem from Joris's collection *h.j.r.*, in a French translation. The title and first line point to the importance of words and sum up what space means for the nomad and exile:

« Le lieu des routes »

est hors la route –
 fais des pistes
 av. des mots, grains
 de sable agités
 dunes
 sabre
 cliquetant
 les fennecs sont yeux
 de la nuit
 mobiles
 l'aube découvre
 des cercles de minces
 pierres
 proches de
 l'eau sous
 le désert
 il y a de l'eau
 au-dessus de l'eau
 il y a
 le désert.

(in h.j. r. 1999: 81)

The paradox of the title line – "the place of roads" (my translation) – stresses the preeminence of movement over place and fixity. The poet's paths lie away from ready-made, conventional roads. This poem sums up the nomad poet's work with a word game: *avec des mots* becomes abbreviated as *av. des mots* (standing for word avenue): travelling is making poems. The space that the nomad crosses has no roads: it is up to the traveller to create the tracks.

The desert looks barren but the water under its surface promises fertility. The imagery of the poem is appropriate for concluding the comments on nomads' roadways: as poets, they keep away from the motorways of translatable monolingualism (cf. Gramling 2016).

8. Translational processes and writing as dialogue

8.1 *Word-House of a Grandchild*: Welch's pseudo-translation of imaginary voices

When I explore the paths of my background I write poems (Preface 1987:9)

8.1.1 Context and a short note on pseudo translation

Word-House of a Grandchild (1987) is a collection of poems with an underlying narrative about the passion and later estrangement of a Luxembourg-French/Italian couple, Welch's maternal grandparents. Culminating in imagined dialogues between the lovers, these pieces in English are complex examples of implicitly heterolingual texts produced, as the analysis will show, by translingual writing processes. They provide rich material for a discussion of original and translation, of spoken and literary languages, of memory and imagination, of authenticity and poetic truth, of fact and fiction.

I will also argue that next to the frame provided by the grandparents' story, another narrative frame emerges with the poet/ speaker at its centre, while it further opens up to literary figures and numerous intertextual spaces. What holds all the figures together is their passion for nomadic travelling as well as dreams for its counterpoint: a home that offers protagonists a stable and sheltered life.

Word-House reveals itself as poetic life writing where intricately linked voices and first, second and third person poetic narratives attempt to translate culturally and linguistically diverse worlds. The analysis thus fits in, at least partly, with research on fictitious and (auto)biographical works about migration. (See ch. 3.1) and requires a careful disentanglement of fact and fiction as well as respect of artistic unity and cohesion.

What then is pseudo-translation?⁹⁰⁸ Writing a text *as if it were* a translation creates a specific kind of fiction: it overlays the act of authorship with an invented author, and the original text with an invented original in a different language, aimed at a different audience. Also called "original translation" it does not only invite readers to imagine a fictional world, but to imagine a fictional original version of the very text

⁹⁰⁸ See Brigitte Rath, "Doppelte Rede und Antwort. Pseudoübersetzungsphänomene in «La fille d'un héros de l'Union soviétique» und «Le testament français» von Andreï Makine." (2012); see also CFP for an ACLA seminar 2015: Double frames: authors, texts, audiences in original translation. Seminar Organizers: Brigitte Rath (Innsbruck/Berlin) and Beatrijs Vanacker (Leuven). The CFP refers to famous examples of translation without an original, for example, Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, a 12th century history of the Kings of Britain, purportedly translated from an ancient book, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605/1615), mostly a supposed translation from an Arabic manuscript, Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* collected in the Highlands of Scotland (1760), and Merimée's *Guzla* (1827), a collection of "authentic" folk songs from the Balkan.

they read (Rath 2012). In *Word-House*, the fictitious underlying text is not a literary piece but the imagined exchange between grandparents.

Pseudo-translation is a productive concept to discuss texts that are not quite original because they bear traces, but also hide traces of underlying texts in other languages, of other cultures, while primarily addressing an audience unfamiliar with those contexts.⁹⁰⁹ Through the lens of the concept of pseudo-translation, we can analyse the attempts at finding a language, a form of literary expression, for different voices which as original voices cannot have used the language in which the work is written. Only a closer look at the texts and the structure of Welch's book discloses what the poems tell us about translingual writing and the poet's underlying heterolingual ethos.

Word-House of a Grandchild was published in 1987 in Canada. Welch was then fifty and had lived in North America for 30 years. Her writing so far mostly reflected responses to the Maritime environment and to mountain climbing in the Dolomites. Some of these experiences become subtly intertwined in the imagery of an imagined past. The book is a collection of poems with an underlying narrative that foregrounds the lives of her maternal grandparents, their love story as well as their eventual separation.

The Preface, in prose, is followed by three distinctive parts in verse, the middle one appearing as the climax with the "translation" of a dialogue between her Luxembourgish grandmother and her Italian grandfather, whom Welch had never known.

In the Preface, Welch explains her fascination with her grandparents' lives whose story was kept secret for decades because in the family the foreign grandfather's behaviour was considered so scandalous that only silence could avert shame from the following generations. As a young countrywoman from a small Luxembourgish village (near Schengen), her grandmother had eloped with an Italian migrant mine-worker from across the border in France, who was too restless to settle down on the farm. After attacking his wife with a knife, he was banned from her life and spent many months a year tramping around southern Europe, as far as Turkey, while she returned to her farm, worked it single-handedly and brought up their children.

Welch's all-English poetic text is a re-construction that needs to absorb the multiple cultural and linguistic differences.

Approaching it through the lens of pseudo-translation, I wish to highlight various perspectives on translingual processes that (see ch. 3.6 and the proposed cornerstones for the analysis). *Word-House*

⁹⁰⁹ Other terms that refer to the practice or phenomenon are "original translation," "fictitious translations" (Bassnett) while implied languages in fictitious translations are "translations without an original" (Apter). See ACLA call for papers 2015. https://www.acla.org/sites/default/files/files/Full_Program_Guide_2015.pdf

translates lives, thoughts and discourse and allows moving from a pragmatic, sociocultural approach to an aesthetic reading of Welch's poetic life writing, which encompasses self-construction within the grandparents' narrative.

On the one hand, pseudo-translation is *a mode of writing* or an aesthetic device for the poet's translingual writing. On the other hand, pseudo-translation shows some features of heteroglossia as defined by Bakhtin (see 3.1 and glossary). This is very much in agreement – as far as I understand it – with Rath (2012), who proposes thinking of pseudo-translation as *a mode of reading* that oscillates between seeing the text as an original and as a translation pointing towards an imagined original, produced in a different language and culture for a different audience.

8.1.2 The missing dimension of language diversity in *Word-House*

In the Preface, Welch insists on giving us the facts, names of people and places as well as some dates, but nothing is said about languages used by protagonists. No deceit is involved, it is just that the language aspect is hushed up, ignored, as if languages did not belong to the background information. This seems a surprising omission for at least two reasons: In this story, language/s could, it seems, reflect cultural and personal specificities; the grandmother's first language was the Local idiom, Luxembourgish; she may have communicated in French with the Italian husband. The second reason is that it seems impossible for the poet, especially a multilingual poet like Welch, to write such a story without an awareness of the impact of language use on conflictual situations.

Through the English text, the cultural identity of the protagonists is blurred. Several questions arise: How can such a seemingly language 'neutral' text, without a hint at the original use of words, without a suggestion of lexis, syntax and sounds as expressed in different languages, convey the underlying tensions, prejudices and violence? Is this short-sightedness, is it a way to comply with an Anglophone audience – or is it a literary and writerly device which needs to be explored much further? For readers conscious of sociolinguistic and cultural contexts, this may at first be disturbing; the present analysis aims at showing how the concept of "original or pseudo-translation" can progressively provide new insights into Welch's work, its literary and artistic qualities, the writing processes behind it, the underlying conception of poetic language/s and the writer's own heterolingual ethos (s defined by Suchet).

Pseudo-translation as an aspect of translingual processes will progressively take the investigation from a pragmatic, matter of fact, literal interpretation to an aesthetic approach and an intercultural, heterolingual view of the imagined underlying original.

As announced in the preface and through paratext on the cover, we can read these poems primarily as a family epic with strong intercultural connotations derived from multiple perspectives on mobility and migration. We can also see it as an attempt at poetic self-construction or accept the text as a 'universal' story with many instances of intertextuality and palimpsestic writing.

Pseudo-translation as a mode of reading for a sociocultural approach

If we take pseudo-translation as a mode of reading, we see the text as a translation pointing toward an imagined original produced in a different language and culture for a different audience. The researcher's or critic's primary interest is then in the fictional original behind the speech and the dialogues. One assumes the existence of an authentic text, like a record of the grandparents' exchanges, which readers hope to discover, taking it for granted that before the text that they read there was another text – written or spoken.

The Preface provides enough details to situate the story historically and geographically; one might say the author establishes an autobiographic pact (cf. Lejeune) and prepares readers for a story in line with migration narratives.

Readers expect an extensive account, the protagonists' own version of events with perhaps the intimate exchange of an in-camera meeting. The circumstances of the assumed original behind the grandparents' speech in Welch's book, are vividly reinforced through paratextual elements, in particular photographs, which are to take the reader "across the threshold" into the story, to use Genette's terminology.⁹¹⁰ The front cover displays a proud-looking, smartly dressed up and fairly young man with an impressive moustache (obviously the grandfather in his youth), while the photo on the back cover shows an elderly woman together with Liliane, who must be in her forties.⁹¹¹ Both photos look like being taken from a family album; so do two more photos inside the book. Consequently, readers assume that the book is about real people who have an interesting story to tell.⁹¹²

Moreover the short biographical details about Welch on the backcover are likely to raise an interest in a multicultural context.

Part 2 is a sequence of 13 poems, in the form of a dialogue, with seven poems entitled HE, which means the speaking persona is her grandfather (Rinaldo), alternating with six poems entitled SHE, where the

⁹¹⁰ This the terminology used by Gérard Genette to describe the material supplied by editors, printers, and publishers. The paratext is believed to operate like a fringe and a threshold, which largely controls one's reading of the text. Cf. *Seuil* 1987, translated as *Paratexts. Thresholds of interpretation* 1997.

⁹¹¹ Liliane appearing in a lower position than the elderly woman, the photo underlines the child's relation to her grandmother.

⁹¹² In the 1980s and 1990s such realistic looking documentation was repeatedly used, also in fictional autobiographies, such as *The Stone Diaries* by Carol Shields (1993).

responding voice is that of her grandmother (Clementine). The imagery linked to natural elements enhances the movement suggested by the alternating voices: ‘the wind’ stands for the migrant grandfather and the poet herself, whereas ‘the mountain’ represents the grandmother but also Welch the rock climber. For readers, the poems are difficult to match with the expectations set by paratext and preface. The poems do not sound like translations, or pseudo-translations, as the following quotes show:

He:
The Wind and the Mountain
... your silent hands married
with my whirlwind rings,
you bear my unrest bound
to your deepest core. ...

She:
The Icon
... My south wind you are, a blind God
Longed for. Awake in the winter ahead.

She:
The Mountain and the Wind
... I hold my snows
Ablaze to the sky,
Draw down your empty world
With my rocky hands. (WH 33,34)

He:
Requiem
The north wind paces
Through heavy dreams,
A cold foot over the past.

(*Word-House* 1987: 44-45)

In no way do these lines seem to echo the grandmother’s words that Liliane Welch reports in the Preface, “[H]e was a no-good vagabond-rogue who had no land, kept a knife under his pillow at night, lived off the surface of things and places, trekking each year south and east, as far as Turkey.” (9) The poems have none of the concrete and direct quality of her words. They evoke the voices of two people who hint at their innermost feelings and passion through metaphors and hermetic language. Some of the imagery is strikingly close to Welch’s earlier poems about mountain climbing, a context that if taken literally hardly fits her grandparents.

How does Welch ‘translate’ the imagined words of her grandparents? The poems have an *explicit dialogic appearance*: the use of personal and possessive pronouns reflects the imitation of direct address and give the poems an undeniable sense of immediacy. There is a natural progression, a subtly orchestrated movement from early days of complete infatuation, from passion, to doubts and eventual separation. But do their words really sound differently, in agreement with the ways of life they represent? Can we distinguish the voices of a man and a woman? There is no easy answer though one notices some differences in lexis and syntax; the lines attributed to Rinaldo are more often short nominal statements, whereas Clementine’s lines are meandering and softer in tone. However, the overall voice is that of the poet, constructing in her own words those imagined dialogues.

Using pseudo-translation as a sociocultural *reading mode* for *Word-House* is problematic. The logical mistake, to which a certain reading of the paratext can lead, becomes obvious: it is the “reproductive

fallacy,”⁹¹³ which consists in applying reality-bound criteria to imaginative work. Essential elements of the text as poetic creation are disregarded.

In migration literature and life writing, one may expect the insertion of foreign words or multilingual misunderstandings, which could indeed underline cultural specificities as well as resulting problems. Yet the fact that such features are totally missing points to the poet’s emphasis on other aspects. Welch’s texts cannot be read as mere transcription of multilingual and transcultural practices. This does not mean the concept of pseudo-translation is inadequate for a study of *Word-House*. The problem is an exclusive focus on translating or interpreting the sociocultural elements which the paratext foregrounds.

Pseudo-translation: an aesthetic device for poetic life writing

Welch’s renderings – or pseudo-translation – of the lovers’ words are delicate evocations that sometimes involve multi-layered images. More suggestively and concisely than through a realistic transcription of speech she alludes to the clash of languages in a poem called “Language that ground”:

Over her fields she saw his words striving.
Thistles. Nettles. Her ground grown-over
with his superlatives, bewildered by weeds,
peat-floe in dark bog. //“He robbed me,
betrayed me. He is wolfish, possessed.” (*Word-House* 1987: 22)

Linguistic specificities are subtly woven into the poems, thus for instance the impact that the grandfather’s Italian must have had on his young wife (“Italian Superlatives”). The language of the grandmother on the other hand is the language of the ground which she works and to which she remains attached.

Word-House of a Grandchild is **fact and fiction intertwined through language**. Pseudo-translation must be understood in such a way that it helps elicit a level of abstraction and personal reflection that an overtly multilingual text – a cacophony of transcribed utterances – could never have achieved.

The headline of the opening poem of the imagined dialogues is “I write the Love -Poems They Never Wrote” (32) while the poem that concludes the dialogue takes up the title “Word-House of a Grandchild” and comments “I only dream their love-poem/ not knowing/ *its tongue of touch*” (46; emphasis added). The lovers’ tongue also refers to their words. The poet/ speaker acknowledges that she does not know in which tongue or language they communicated; the poems do not act as a sociolinguistic reconstruction of the life of a migrant Italian and his wife, whose lives were determined by border crossing, and consequently by constant shifts between languages. Languages are hardly ever named, beyond a reference to particular qualities and the impression they leave on listeners and Locutors.⁹¹⁴ **The poet**

⁹¹³ See Lennon (2015) and the differentiation between degrees of mimesis that Sternberg proposes (1981)

⁹¹⁴ “bold Italian superlatives -/ bracing and musical to her “ (18)

dreams up their exchanges in her poetic tongue, language needs no name, it is universal like the grandfather's voice she hears in the calls of Canada geese (62).

Seen through the lens of pseudo-translation, the dialogues and speech attributed to the grandparents have no original. The poet has invented it. If there is no original text, no document, no letter to refer to, one must also wonder about the poet's original language. Admitting there is no original text, amounts to questioning the language from which the poet "translates": the notion of first language or mother tongue is challenged: it is the poet's "invented" language, through which she creates the characters, including herself.

8.1.3 *Word-House of a Grandchild*: pseudo-translation as a mode of self-writing

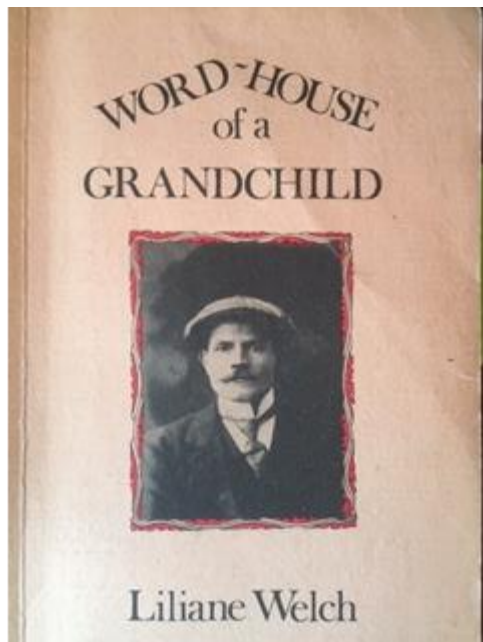


Figure 14. Liliane Welch, *Word-House of a Grandchild* (1987). Photograph of Rinaldo Bravi

The paratext of *Word-House* holds further information which facilitates other entries into the text. The word "grandchild" in the title is an important clue. Re-reading the preface, especially beyond the scandalous details of the grandparents' lives, one will notice how attention gradually focusses on the first-person narrator, the poet, who moves more and more into the centre. Moreover, it is significant that the book features two photos of Welch. Another, complementary, reading foregrounding the grandchild is essential and, as I will argue next, pseudo-translation is also an implicit mode for the poet to position herself and her relations to different worlds.

If original or pseudo-translation is considered as *a mode of writing*, the focus will no longer be on the supposed origin but rather on the notion of pseudo as standing for a façade, for something projected and

constructed as imaginary world. *Word-House of a Grandchild* on the outside may be the story of the grandparents, but it covers another search that can only be grasped through a dimension of the poet's pseudo-translation: Welch's inquiry into her own life. It appears that the grandparents' story is partly contrived as a surface narrative, on which her own story is being inscribed.

The title contains one keyword that has not yet been commented on: "*Word-House*". Though it is a term which cannot be found in the dictionary, it is self-explanatory: a house being built with words to offer shelter. The typographical arrangement of words and the photograph on the cover correspond to the outlines of a house and, to a very rough sketch of a person, the grandchild, Liliane Welch with the grandfather's photo in the centre, "inside" her. "*Word-House*" also echoes with the terminology of the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, on language and being: Language is the house of being, which recalls his interpretation of Hölderlin's words "*dichterisch wohnet der Mensch*."⁹¹⁵ (See ch. 6.2.)

Thanks to the words and stories gathered around her grandparents, she constructs her own life and life-story. The book turns out to be mostly about herself, about her attempt to find roots while also seeking meaning in her love of migration and her restlessness. As she writes herself, "When I explore the paths of my background I write poems." (*Word-House* 1987: 9).

When Welch is asked in an interview about the autobiographical dimension of her poetry, she explains:

Word-House of a Grandchild is above all a "wordhouse." I never met my grandfather. Everything in that book about my grandfather is fictitious. I have very beautiful images of my grandmother, but again those are images. Our past and all of reality around us are very dynamic and elusive. We can never really hold it or grasp it, or understand it once and for all.

And she adds, in line with her poetics:

I do not believe that there is an autobiographical writing that is strictly autobiographical. All writing that is worth anything is fiction. Everything that a poet does with reality transforms it. Otherwise, it is not art; it might as well be journalism. I don't really think that you can take the "I" who speaks in these poems as my empirical "I." I believe what Rimbaud said, " 'I' is an another." (Anne Compton, "Ascension Liliane Welch Talks About Poetry" 2000: 127)

⁹¹⁵ See Martin Heidegger: „Die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins. In ihrer Behausung wohnt der Mensch. Die Denkenden und Dichtenden sind die Wächter dieser Behausung. Ihr Wachen ist das Vollbringen der Offenbarkeit des Seins, insofern sie diese durch ihr Sagen zur Sprache bringen und in der Sprache aufbewahren." (Brief über den Humanismus 1949: 5). For the idea of language as home, see *Poetry, Language and Thought*, last chapter entitled ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . ." ("*dichterisch wohnet der Mensch*") (1971: 211-227). For a contextualization in Welch's work, see chapter 6.2.

Welch writes her own story – neither a biography nor an autobiography.⁹¹⁶ She is looking for origins in order to bridge her estrangement from Europe and Luxembourg: her aim is as much to understand her present self as her grandparents' past. Insisting on the parallels between the grandfather's wanderings and her own life as a migrant, she sees some continuity, perhaps a justification for her own life choices, of which her parents had totally disapproved: "Grandfather I heard you/ in the flock of Canada/ geese last night/ when their honk came peeling/ from the wind, through clouds,/ past rooftops into my bed, that pure/ lonely, soaring call/ lifted me out of my dreams/ to the confines of your migrations/ to earth's ends." (*Word-House* 1987: 62)

The resulting work is pseudo-translation in a double sense: she *translates* the grandfather's migrations and adventures into the language of her own experiences. Likewise, her own life is *translated* into that of Rinaldo, the grandfather, while she also expresses genuine sympathy for the grandmother, Clementine:

I uncode his errands bequeathed me as
migrations and almost persuade myself that
by coming, going I am saved.
My grandmother, once his earth-queen,
I meet at Delphi and, halting, settle
the secrets of her days. Fields, house, vines
her growth-rings, spaces always the same. ("The Navel of Delphi," in *Word-House* 1987: 53)

In the dialogues, the imagery linked to natural elements enhances the movement suggested by the alternating voices: 'the wind' stands for the migrant grandfather and the poet herself, whereas 'the mountain' represents the grandmother but also Welch the rock climber. There is no attempt at a perfect identification with either of them but correspondences, especially with Rinaldo, the outcast, the restless wanderer, possibly a pilgrim, are stressed. "I also learned that, whether remembering the web of experiences lived with my grandmother or examining the cast of characters in faded photo albums, unawares I was always penetrating from the outside of my background and antecedents into the *inside of my life's narrative*." (Preface, *Word-House* 1987 : 11; emphasis added)

The metaphoric language of movements is linked to the underlying dialogic structure of the poems. The reference to maps as in the poem "The Atlas" (*Word-House* 1987: 39) is also a particularly relevant illustration of mobility and movement. The first function of a map is to translate the physical world; on maps, however, various journeys by different travellers can be inscribed, each one to be seen as the translation of earlier or later travelling: the grandchild here is said to follow the routes of her grandfather.

⁹¹⁶ See link with ch.3 on self-writing and self-translation as migrants' meaning making process. For the role of grandparents, see Karpinski (on grandmothers), while Nancy Huston, another translingual writer tells the story of a mythical grandfather in *Cantique des Plaines/ Plainsong* (1993).

8.1.4 Pseudo-translation, mobility and the creation of new spaces for the nomad narrator

Looking backward and forward to create new spaces for the nomad poet

Mobility and restlessness in texts could be understood as the poet's urge to integrate vast spaces and spans of time, constantly linked and energized by each other.⁹¹⁷ In addition to the family perspectives, *Word-House* includes other levels of relations whose scope is much wider than that of grandfather and granddaughter in Europe and North America. It is a book about a nomadic self who finds sense in her travelling when she can establish links with a vaster net of stories and characters.

The poems' settings and references read like a summary of Western history and literature: the fall of Troy, Ulysses, love in Carthage, Aeneas, Hannibal, Delphi, the treks of Marco Polo, Venice etc. All become linked by the dynamics of a powerful imagination which creates the most fantastic settings for Rinaldo while also casting the lyrical "I" at his heels. The sense of a literary community which *Word-House* thus conveys corresponds to an important dimension of nomadic and translingual writing.

In *Word-House*, the opening and the closing poems establish the frame of the grandchild's "story"; they are also excellent examples of a complex multi-layered mobility. The titles are "I Sail Not of My Own Free Will," a citation from Virgil's *Aeneid* and "Migrations" (see quotation above: "Grandfather I heard you ..."). Attachment to either one or the other point alone, to origins or an always momentary arrival is not possible. This explains the focus on the restlessness of a nomad poet, pilgrim or migrant worker, constantly in search of a destination.⁹¹⁸

"I Sail to Italy Not of My Own Free Will" ⁹¹⁹

We're in Italy to dig up my roots.
We want to bring a secret to light,
search for a name.
He is still lost
in the darkness of the countryside.
The blue hills glitter in the lucid dawn
over the low-lying plains that sleep.
Mid-morning

⁹¹⁷ In his book *Zwischenweltenschreiben: Literaturen ohne festen Wohnsitz* (2005), Ottmar Ette extensively analyses numerous types of such mobility in literature.

⁹¹⁸ Welch needs embeddedness despite her life as a 'vagabond' (as seen by others); she is still the pilgrim who needs a destination to strive for (cf. Z. Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist, or a Short History of Identity," in S. Hall & P. Du Gay, eds, *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 1996: 18–36).

⁹¹⁹ As the note at the back of the book says: "The title hearkens back to the line Aeneas says to Dido in Virgil's *Aeneid* when he leaves for Italy." (*Word-House*, 64). In connection with issues of heterolingual elements in texts, one may add that these words are a translation that has a Latin original (*Aeneid* Book IV) hinted at but not explicitly inserted in the text. The absence of the original positions the work amid the languages of a modern writer.

you'll read and I'm going to write
 about that dead grandfather
 from Marischio, the devil's hole.
 The enduring root of the legions
 hungry and road-weary since
 Caesar's time.
 You ponder your childhood:
 The Pacific ocean, waves so high
 they were dragons, noons so brilliant
 they hurt the eyes and feet.
 You love Italy because Virgil's light
 still casts a shadow on us today –
 tragic dusk, pull beyond time,
 the memory of Roman virtues.

I care more for
 the poetry of the present day,
 Italian superlatives, and
 the promise of Hesperia.
 Invading
 the North my grandfather settled down.
 Sleeping or waking, he carried a knife –
 later stabbed his wife.
 We are in love,
 our story in its intensity
 is so real because it ought to be real. (*Word-House* 1987: 14)

The poem sets the three frames that rule the action and evokes their overlapping spaces:

- The poet as speaker, together with her companion, travels to Italy in search of her grandfather's village.
- The poem evokes the family secret.
- It makes a link with Aeneas sailing leaving his beloved Dido to sail to Rome.

Opening her family epic with a reference to Virgil's *Aeneid* Welch enhances Rinaldo's role and position: His drive to move and leave his family every summer is an impulse he cannot oppose; it is like the supernatural call Aeneas received from the gods. Being a nomad is destiny to which one has to submit. Like Aeneas sailing to Italy, the poet or speaking persona has just arrived in Italy, with a mission: find traces of her grandfather, another great traveller. Yet, the comparison involves no sense of hero worship. The grandfather's native village is called a "devil's hole" and the colloquial tone, far removed from epic glorification, gives a light touch of parody and self-depreciation however not further pursued in the subsequent poems.

Heterolingual elements in the poem solely depend on names, not on inserted foreign idioms. They refer to people (Caesar, Virgil) and places (Italy, the Pacific ⁹²⁰). Marischio and Hesperia through their foreign sounds produce a heterolingual shift (cf. Suchet); Marischio is the name of Rinaldo's remote village in the Marche, while Hesperia is polysemic: it is the Greek word for land in the west and was used by Ancient Greeks when speaking of Italy, by Romans to refer to Spain and beyond. A near synonym of the west, "the promise of Hesperia" suggests America for the European migrant. However, Welch here hints above all at the name of a village in Luxembourg, Hesper (Hespérance).⁹²¹

"Migrations"

The last piece in the collection, "Migrations" (*Word-House* 1987: 62) is a poetic account of the poet's desire to communicate with the grandfather, in which looking backward and forward merge through imagined dialogues. As the title indicates, it is a poem about wanderings, in which she juxtaposes Canada to Europe and foregrounds the crucial role of travelling as a source of freedom and renewal.

The whole poem consists of words addressed to the grandfather; it is a sequence of visions and memories, in which she recalls his life and dreams. Evocations of their talk occur not through heterolingual features but through imagery and fragments of narrative. Heterolingualism takes an altogether different form: She imagines communicating with him through the honk of geese that fly over her house:

Grandfather I heard you,
in the flock of Canada
geese last night
when their honk came peeling
from the wind, through clouds,
past rooftops into my bed that pure
lonely soaring call
lifted me out of my dreams
to the confines of your migrations
to earth's ends.

The non-human sounds that inspire the poet's language are opposed to despicable slander. It includes the deformation and annihilation of the grandfather's name, which assimilation in the other's language involves: Rinaldo Bravi was robbed of his voice when he lost his name: "...You were bereft of voice/ when

⁹²⁰ The Pacific is a short allusion to Cyril Welch's origins and broadens the space of action with each frame dominated by one pair of lovers: Aeneas and Dido, Rinaldo and Clementine, Liliane and Cyril. The poems do not dwell on parallels in relations.

⁹²¹ The Welches were about to acquire a house in Hesper at the time when she wrote *Word-House*. (See letters of Fonds Liliane Welch.)

the northern law willed/ a separation from table and bed, when/ the wives of two sons changed your/ Italian name to flattened French René/ Bravy covered once and for all Rinaldo's / yearly southern sins." For the poet as speaker, the grandfather's wandering cannot be dissociated from storytelling: being a nomad on the road amounts to gathering and creating narratives, of oneself and others: "You wanted/ to kick the dust, the open land/ telling stories, and find the source / of power there." She shares his visions of a free life and his urge to travel. His example is promise of liberation as expressed in the passionate outburst on which the poem ends:

I too am driven by your need
for a hundred migrations to come

I seek you, Rinaldo. Promise of flight. (*Word-House* 62)

Welch's view of poetic writing processes is similar to Joris's description of *ghosting* (2013). It is intertextuality felt in the body, with a voice echoing in the writer's head or guiding the writing hand (cf. a palimpsestic view).

8.1.5 Authorial positioning and heterolingual ethos

Authorial positioning and heterolingual ethos

The reading of *Word-House* so far should have shown that the concept of pseudo-translation or the problem of differentiating translations from original texts seems particularly relevant in the case of writers who move between languages, whose "first mother tongue" – if one may use such a pleonasm – becomes a foreign language or the other's language.

In the end, the distinction between the statuses of different languages may become blurred. A chronological view of a writer's languages is undermined by their own positioning. What counts is self-defined or self-constructed subjectivity rather than a language identity imposed by origins, nationality or authorities. Writing processes imply working with numerous frames.

The role of English for Welch

In Welch's work, there are few direct quotations from other languages; echoes rather occur through cultural associations than through an imitation of sounds or the integration of foreign words. Nor does she particularly care for word games, puns and a crisscrossing of etymological explanations, as other multilingual writers do. What Welch aims at is an artistic form which ensures coherence, cohesion and aesthetic unity.

The presentation has also aimed at pointing out through notions of original or pseudo-translation how multilingual writers like Welch position themselves and their work within various **frames** of space, language and time.

Her grandparents' lives give the story a frame of her origins in Luxembourg with its ramifications reaching beyond national borders into France, Italy and the whole Mediterranean world.

Then there is the Canadian frame, the perspective from which she constructs the family epic. It includes the personal level with parallels between her grandparents and her own migratory life.

Finally, there is the literary frame which situates her search for identity – and a place for her work – within a vast tradition of Western literature, with her reference to Virgil already in the first poem: “I Sail to Italy Not of My own free Will.” In this last frame, we may also see a parallel with her choice of a ‘universal’ language, English, which like Latin could also be seen as a *literary lingua franca* speaking to all.

8.1.6 The text and its heterolingual reality: reading *Word-House* as the poet's assemblage of voices

Why can *Word-House* strike readers as a multilingual work despite the texts being all in English?⁹²² To analyse the multilingual dimension of the book, studies of heterolingual texts bring some clues.

Next to identifying and describing specific devices that translingual writers use, scholars point to the importance of context and the resonance of voices in texts (Grutman; Suchet). They agree that in literary texts, a multilingual dimension cannot be reduced to the presence of foreign elements in texts. The poems in *Word-House* have indeed multiple other indicators of a world, real or imagined – *un imaginaire* – which lies beyond its English surface. A closer look at names, for example, shows how the poems or the voices in the poems refer to an extra-textual reality, which is utterly heterolingual in relation to the English language text. Foreign names act as *shifters*, to use a term of linguistics and critical theory: their meaning lies in the context in which they appear.⁹²³ Only through context do we recognize the role of shifters: they reveal a core dimension of texts that fundamentally contributes to what the text aims to tell the reader. They *stage* the text, allowing us to imagine words as a dramatic performance (*mise en scène*, *Inszenierung*). Shifters thus significantly contribute to the frame for the imaginary world that poetic language creates.

In *Word-House*, foreign (non-English) names introduce a sociocultural but also introduce an additional literary space. Names – as well as the people or places or literary works – that they refer to become

⁹²² In the poems, French and Italian are occasionally mentioned, Luxembourgish is not and English is the unnamed language of writing.

⁹²³ Pronouns are often seen as shifters; yet other words can fulfill a similar function of connectivity. See Ian Buchanan, *Dictionary of Critical Thought* 2018; Suchet: “L’hétérolinguisme fonctionne donc comme un « embrayeur » (2014: 40) [Suchet has taken the term from the French translation of Jakobson’s work]; « L’embrayage hétérolingue, qui branche le texte sur le monde, et lui permet d’en modifier les perspectives, s’accompagne ainsi d’une mise en scène qui dote chaque œuvre de sa propre scénographie. » (2014: 42)

connected with the context of the poems and contribute to a net of relations, which turns the text into a multilingual space. They initiate a heterolingual shifting, generate echoes or mirroring worlds and create several spatial and temporal layers.

Rinaldo Bravi, the Italian migrant worker, has a name that “conceals power and panic.”⁹²⁴ Through his surname Bravi he is remembered as the bodyguard of a medieval Italian nobleman; he errs around the Mediterranean like Ulysses, is the follower of Marco Polo and many famous travellers and pilgrims, but eventually he is degraded to an unremarkable French-Luxembourgish René Bravy (62). In Welch’s poems, he moreover appears like Aeneas, the founder of Rome, who had abandoned his beloved Dido in Carthage: “I try to fathom Rinaldo’s desires, / foresee holding his hand, / huge and powerful / in the handshake of Italian friends, / in the light of Latin words. / I make songs about him: was he Odysseus, / Aeneas, Hannibal? Or was his Carthage a cauldron of / unholy loves?” (52) Later in the book, Rinaldo also metamorphoses into Sandro or Ghigno, Liliane’s mountain guides in the Dolomites – all figures and characters whom she remembers back in Canada while writing the poems.

The merging of real people, mythical stories and literary quotations are the hallmark of Welch’s translingual writing. Names of places similarly open interrelated spatial dimensions and display a constant shifting between real places and characters’ imagined actions, all framed by the poet’s text in English, written in Canada. In *Word-House*, the poems move from Rinaldo’s supposed native village in Italy to many cities he may have visited but also to the locations the poet remembers from her own travelling (e.g. Naples, and Venice) and to mountain places with their evocative names like “The Veil of the Madonna” or Pala di San Martino (60-61).

8.1.7 Reception – or “triple refraction”

“World Literature,” according to David Damrosch, is “always as much about the host culture’s values and needs as it is about a work’s source culture” (2003: 283). In the case of Welch and *Word-House of a Grandchild*, this distinction between the host country – Canada – and the source culture, Europe and more particularly Italy and Luxembourg, points to potential differences in reception.

Reception in Canada, where the book was published and reviewed, was very positive. In Luxembourg, there was little response as the book was not easily available through bookshops, if at all. Poetry in English does not sell well. In those days, dissemination relied on the support of friends and the academic interest of a few: there was no proper university yet and the national centre for literature was only created in 1995. From today’s perspective, it is easy to place the story of an immigrant Italian grandfather alongside

⁹²⁴ See the poem entitled « Names » (1987 :15)

other narratives and poetry about migration and the large and lively community of Italian migrant workers who have had a decisive impact on Luxembourg society and culture (e.g. Jean Portante). Luxembourg literature used to be defined as trilingual (with works in French, German and Luxembourgish). Presently, however, this definition is being revised as multilingual literature (Glesener 2013)⁹²⁵ and Welch's works in English are also part of the national archives.

In Canada, the publication of Welch's family epic coincided with the growing interest in a definition of an autonomous Canadian literature and the ensuing debate on the roles of ethnic minority writing, among which authors of Italian descent were particularly prominent (cf. Joseph Pivato).⁹²⁶ The Italo-Canadian community welcomed *Word-House* with great enthusiasm and to Welch's own surprise, she was suddenly hailed as a member of the Italo-Canadian community (Anna Foschi, L'Eco d'Italia). At first she felt somehow overwhelmed: Was it enough to claim an Italian grandfather, whom she had not even heard about until she was forty, to become an "original"? Was she not a fake, a pseudo Italian – with an imagined, original grandfather in the background? The very idea of ethnic communities for somebody from tiny Luxembourg, who insisted on being Canadian, must have been somewhat strange.⁹²⁷ Welch certainly kept up her keen interest in anything Italian, language, literature, the country and its people for the rest of her life. In 1992, she received the Bressani Literary Prize which honours and promotes the work of Canadian writers of Italian origin or Italian descent. Several of her poems became included in *The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Writing*, edited by Jo Pivato in 1998. This ascription of her work to a new cultural space had a remarkable impact on her self-perception; while strengthening her position as a Canadian poet, it also confirmed the change of her problematic relation to Europe already announced at the end of the Preface in *Word-House*: "I could love the Old World again" (11).⁹²⁸

⁹²⁵ Glesener, J.E. 2013. Le multilinguisme comme caractéristique et défi de la littérature luxembourgeoise. In: *Vielfalt der Sprachen – Varianz der Perspektiven. Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart der Luxemburger Mehrsprachigkeit*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

⁹²⁶ Cf. Joe Pivato (1998; 2015) who has strongly advocated the role of Italian immigration literature, within the general move towards a focus on ethnic minority literature; see also Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek for studies on ethnic minority writing in Canada *Comparative literature*

⁹²⁷ Previously, she had been awarded the Alfred Bailey Prize in the 1986 Literary Competition of the Writers' Federation of New Brunswick. This early recognition as a poet of her own province corresponds reinforces her strong attachment to the area where she lived. She often referred to herself as a Maritime poet.

⁹²⁸ One could also draw some parallels between Welch's position in Italo-Canadian literature and the role of Italian immigrant literature in Luxembourg (see Caldognetto, "Italienische Literatur in Luxemburg?" 2004).

8.2 Pierre Joris: Dialogic and translingual writing

8.2.1 Multilingual and nomadic aspects to look out for

Finding ways to navigate across poems with explicit heterolingual elements is a crucial step towards the elaboration of a reader's poetics. For the approach of the poets' work, I proposed a rough conceptual framework with four conceptual cornerstones (see ch. 3.3). Joris's deep reflections on nomadic writing in his poetics bring further dimensions to consider in the analysis of dialogic and translingual writing, notably

- the relational dimension of the text: the references to a real-life context, and/ or literary references;
- the choice of insertions: foreign words, quotations, echoes of spoken language;
- the dialogic nature of the texts: the role of interacting voices;
- the writer's contribution: the orchestration of voices (cf. Bakhtin); meta-reflections on language; the search for a new voice and for innovative form;
- nomadic elements, such as movement and transformation.

Another focus of the analysis is on the poet's underlying motivation for embedding and orchestrating multiple voices, like a wish to create some authenticity (of voice), a strategy for an aesthetic transformation, or a way to stress a sense of between-ness.

It is worthwhile to recall Joris's key ideas on the poet as **noet**, the poet as reader and on the writer as learner (see ch.6.3), as already expounded in an earlier version of his poetics:

The NOET learns & then writes in foreign languages (real or made-up ones) in order to come to the realization that all languages are foreign. Do away with the prison-house of the mother-tongue, or, as I have written elsewhere: "...why does one have to write in the papa-mama, the mummy/daddy language, why should that oedipal choice be the only possible or legitimate one, why should it not be my own sexual choice, that moment of one's discovery of the other, that moment when it is our sex that speaks and not that of our progenitors. So now the mother-tongue will have lost the m and have become the other tongue but that other will also now lose its hairy, unpronounceable, "the" & gain a lamda & a little victory-sign and become the lover's-tongue. As if the vowels somehow stood steadfast while the consonants, like my continents, kept on drifting. The lover's tongue then." A nomadic language of affects, of free lines of erotic flight, that break the triangular (the strongest of shapes, as Bucky Fuller has shown us) strictures of the Freudian scène de famille. Which also brings to mind an unfinished project—I'm offering it here to anyone who wants to pick it up—I had concocted in the late seventies with my sadly departed old friend, the Swiss-Italian poet Franco Beltrametti (another true noet): an anthology to be called BLOWS AGAINST THE MOTHER-TONGUE & which would gather the work of poets who had written nomadically in a language that was not their mother-tongue: from Ovid, say, to Anselm Hollo. from: The Nomad Manifesto : NOTES TOWARDS A NOMADIC POETICS [version 1.02b] <https://www.albany.edu/~joris/nomad.html>

Or, as explained in *A Nomad Poetics*:

A nomadic poetics will cross languages, not just translate, but write in all or any of them. If Pound, Joyce & others have shown the way, it is essential now to push this matter further, again, not as “collage” but as material flux of language matter, moving in & out of semantic & non-semantic spaces, moving around & through the features accreting as poem, a lingo-cubism that is no longer an “explosante fixe” as Breton defined the poem, but an “explosante mouvante” (ANP: 38)

What this means is that Joris wants to move beyond high modernist practices of insertions (cf. ch. 3.1; Forster, Perloff): a poetic text for him is language in movement (“material flux of language matter”), not a system. He has further expounded his views on collage and a revision of its static features in several texts. (“The Seamlessly Nomadic Future of Collage” 2009; “The Nomadism of Pablo Picasso” 2001; “Samizdat Interview” 2000)

8.2.2 “Writing in all my languages”: What it means in the poet’s practice

I will attempt to point out various ways that the poet has conceived to address the challenges of multilingualism by proposing a closer look at several poems. They show that for the poet “writing in all [his] languages” or working with “the material flux of language matter” usually involves

- the selection of an addressee or interLocutor (most of them are poets), with whom he imagines a fictitious exchange,
- the language(s) of the imagined exchanges,
- the choice of the type of exchange or response: informal conversation, letter, debate; ultimately they remain monologues though via quotations answers are suggested,
- the nature and amount of inserted heterolingual elements: imagined answers, extracts from literary texts, key words, in the original, in translation or as paraphrase,
- a context that refers to nomadic dimensions of the chosen situation.

The most important point concerns the issues of language and writing that the poem allows Joris to think through, often through language games.

Title, addressee	Type of (imaginary) exchange and languages	Nature of insertions	Nomadic features	What Joris is <i>thinking through</i> in the text
“Writing/ Reading 1 via Bruno” Giordano Bruno, 16 th c. Italian philosopher and poet)	starts with formal address; reference to Derrida Italian, French and mixture of formal /informal	epigraphs quotation from Bruno’s work, plus quote from Hamlet	Bruno, like Joris is a restless traveller; they live and write between countries and languages; reading is a nomadic act	Process of writing as linked to reading; How a poet is to write and address his readers; The key question is how to bring about a cosmological revolution in language and literature: how apply Bruno’s revolution to

	language for parody or satire			writing: DECENTRALISE indefinitely
“Canto Diurno #2 A/ To Jack Kerouac” American writer of French Canadian origins	It is called a bilingual ode EN-FR; it has also words in Spanish/ Italian the language is informal, with code-switching	foreign insertions in everyday language, plus names, short lines in French references to Kerouac’s work referred to in English other voices are reported	It is a poem about being on the road, fast rhythm	What it means to be a bilingual nomadic poet The nature of a bilingual exchange How writing involves combining voices, past and present
“Telegrammatica per Franco” Swiss-Italian artist and poet	Poem as etter in telegram style	informal mixture of Italian, English, French and German	Beltrametti is a nomad and expat like Joris	How to reject the mother tongue and write a book which is truly multilingual Their common never realized project of an anthology
“Letter to Steichen’s Ed”	direct address; style of a letter to a friend (or cousin), with a few sentences in Luxembourgish	informal Luxembourgish, code-switching no quotations but a paraphrase of Steichen photographic technique	both have left their home country	On exile and losing the practice of the mother tongue Reflections on writing and photography as two modes of representing the world
“Winnetou Old”	response to May’s protagonist, monologue reflecting the poet’s wandering thoughts	collage of words/ Locutions; a kind of multilingual inner “rhyme”; homonyms; Insertions attract attention to repetitions, associations across languages, language games, etymologies	language or multiple languages in movement	How write a multilingual piece; how use multiple languages to reflect a state of mind or a mind in movement
“Meditations on the Stations of Mansur Al-Hallaj”	response to selected Arabic words	Arabic Script occasionally other languages	a flux of language matter	Reflection on language: on the gap between words (script or sound) and their meaning

8.2.3 Writing/ Reading

In a series of poems entitled “**Writing/ Reading- via ...**”, (Breccia 1987: 149-168), Joris examines core ideas on these interrelated activities. In each section he refers to a thinker that has left an important imprint on his work. Thus the first section is called “via Bruno”, a poem in which he explores his response

to Giordano Bruno.⁹²⁹ On the one hand, Joris acknowledges his indebtedness to other thinkers and poets, on the other hand, he emphasizes the desire to find novel ways of writing. This double vision of nomadic poetry as continuity and as break is enhanced by inserted quotations in French and Italian, which recall the range of his languages of reading. To echo his own words, we may say that the writing process involves a multiple and decentred “material flux of language matter.”.

The series of poems included in *Breccia* is preceded by two epigraphs, which point to the theoretical issues that the poet addresses in the lines that follow, while they also cast light on his general poetics. As a nomadic reader, Joris roams widely in his search for insights.

Jacques Derrida and Giordano Bruno as inspiring interLocutors for thoughts about multilingual reading and writing

Before examining an extract from “via Bruno”, I wish to comment on the citations that Joris has selected as epigraphs. Both thinkers explain approaches of writing that turn out to be **general mottos for Joris’s positioning as poet.**

Jacques Derrida : On writing/ reading as “jeu”/ game

“... S’il y a une unité de la lecture et de l’écriture, comme on le pense facilement aujourd’hui, si la lecture est l’écriture, cette idée ne désigne ni la confusion indifférenciée ni l’identité de tout repos; le est qui accouple la lecture à l’écriture doit en découdre.

Il faudrait donc, d’un même geste, mais dédoublé, lire et écrire ... Le supplément de lecture doit être rigoureusement prescrit par la nécessité d’un jeu, signe auquel il faut accorder le système de tous ses pouvoirs. »

Jacques DERRIDA, *La Dissémination*

It is worthwhile taking a closer look at Derrida’s reflections as they elucidate Joris’s approach.⁹³⁰ **Writing-reading appears as a unity though it involves two separate acts (“geste dédoublé”):** they are not a sequence; they occur simultaneously as part of the same, concurrent process.

The French term *découdre* is interesting. It is juxtaposed to “accoupler”: “is” stands for connection (writing and reading as couple) while also being opposed to each other. *Découdre*, as used in the expression *en découdre avec quelqu’un*, implies confrontation with somebody else, struggle and conflict

Literally, *découdre*, means to undo systematically what has been sewn, to undo the seams or stitches. It is a fitting image to texts, which, etymologically, refer to something woven or rather stitched together. *Découdre* as its opposite in the context of Derrida refers to deconstruction.

⁹²⁹ Other sections are [... via] (Michel Foucault, 3. Jacques Derrida, Robert Kelly, Robert Duncan. Later texts follow, e.g. Writing/Reading via. Edmond Jabès in *Poasis*.

⁹³⁰ The Derrida excerpt is taken from the essay “La pharmacie de Platon” included in *La dissémination* 1972: 79-80.

We may deduce that for Derrida and Joris the emphasis is on a collaborative but also conflictual or confrontational relation between reading and writing. Derrida goes on describing the process, which works like a game (“jeu”) with its rules for supplementary reading, which becomes indispensable for writing. (We notice that in the title of the poems Joris, too, puts writing first, not reading, even if the double arrowed slash between the words cancels any priority.)

“Jeu” is an important notion whose connotations describe the multiple roles of interplay between texts. It is not merely a ludic activity; beyond its associations with play and playfulness, “jeu”/ game refers to endless possible combinations. Moreover, “jeu”/ game is based on rules to observe; however, rules may be broken or interpreted in different ways. Therefore, it involves taking risks. Derrida insists on the double connotation of rules and risks that any “jeu”/ game implies:

Et celui-là n'aurait rien compris au jeu qui se sentirait du coup autorisé à en rajouter, c'est-à-dire à ajouter n'importe quoi. Il n'ajouterait rien, la couture ne tiendrait pas. Réciproquement ne lirait pas celui que la « prudence méthodologique », les « normes de l'objectivité » les garde-fous du savoir » retiendraient d'y mettre du sien. (Jacques Derrida. *La Dissémination* 1972: 80)

It is not an attitude of « anything goes » nor a mere observation of rules and conventions.

Giordano Bruno: On writing/ reading as “dialogue” (genre and exchange)

The second epigraph that Joris has selected also refers to the necessary balance between “regole” or rules and the freedom which is inherent in poetic creation:

« ... la poesia non nasce da le regole, se non per leggerissimo accidente; ma le regole derivano da le poesie; et pero tanti son geni e specie de vere regole, quanti son geni et specie de veri poeti. »
Giordano BRUNO, *De Gl'Heroici Furori*

The extract requires a brief contextualization, which should explain why Giordano Bruno is a highly significant interlocutor for Joris. Bruno was a great Renaissance thinker, astronomer and poet. What also attracted Joris was his nomadic life: he wandered widely in his life, all across Italy, to France, England and Germany and learnt the languages of the places where he stayed so that he is considered the patron saint of translation. (See below)

In the lines quoted by Joris in his epigraph, Bruno speaks not as a philosopher and cosmologist but as a poet, yet he looks at writing in much the same terms as he looks at the world. Similar to his concept of a multiverse - or an infinity of possible worlds - Bruno's view of poetry is decentralized with many ways of writing offering themselves to the poet.

Like Derrida, who speaks of the interaction of writing/reading as *un jeu*, Bruno refers to rules of poetry as being at best accidental: what comes first is the text and the content, from which one may derive a few rules – poets like philosophers or astronomers must re-think what they are doing. His insistence on

multiplicity - *tantison genie specie de vere regole, quantison geni et specie de veri poeti* – is reminiscent of rhizomatic growth. **It recalls a nomadic poetics that conceives literature in constant movement with writing not to be centred on one set of conventions or one national language.** Repeatedly referring to Bruno,⁹³¹ Joris suggests parallels with his own quest for a revolution in understandings of poetry: content, language and form are to interact in novel ways so as to create a meaningfulness for a world in which the old notions of centres, borders and stability no longer make sense.

De Gl'Heroici Furori, from which the epigraph is taken, is a work that has attracted Joris's attention because it takes up many of the issues that he wishes to integrate in his writing. In the vast and multifaceted oeuvre that Giordano Bruno has left, *De Gl'Heroici Furori* is referred to as one of his "Italian dialogues" which he composed during his sojourn in England (1583-1585).⁹³² Italian refers to the language in which the "dialogues" are written and Italian is stressed as the vernacular in opposition to the still commonly used Latin.

Bruno's understanding of the dialogue is worth briefly examining as dynamic model and inspiration for Joris's search of new concepts of writing. Renaissance writers adapted the form to numerous subjects: philosophy, ethics, politics, religion, the arts, the study of language, and literature. A short review of the features of the dialogue shows many commonalities with Joris's writing and can provide a key for reading of his multivoiced, constantly decentred poetry:

- Bruno puts content over form, his aim is to convince readers of the legitimacy of his philosophical, scientific or literary views. In every realm of investigation, the text should "convince because of its matter and arguments, not its style or its respect for tradition, conventions, and fashions." Hence his rejection of genres and models. (Canone and Spruit 2007: 367)
- Content can be expressed in many ways, the selection of an appropriate way also largely depends on the targeted audience or readership. Formal rules of genre writing are not a priority: Bruno often likes to mix genres (for instance inserting poems in his argumentative writing). He also adds introductory epistles, such as the one from which the quote is taken.
- Dialogues depend on the contribution of interlocutors; they are multivoiced, with forms or modes of interaction varying greatly.

⁹³¹ Cf. *A Nomad Poetics* and interviews.

⁹³² For details of publication see Eugenio Canone and Leen Spruit, "Rhetoric and Philosophical Discourse in Giordano Bruno's Italian Dialogues" (2007), to whom I am also indebted for most of the details that follow.

- Languages inside a text vary: the variation may include social or professional languages and involves a broad view of intra-language multiplicity (repertoires or registers) though occasionally a multivoiced text also encompasses different national languages (dialects).⁹³³
- A dialogue can be serious, comic or critical in tone; it may also combine different approaches.
- Dialogues are conversations and assume interlocutors. The relation between author and spokesperson(s) is a crucial aspect of dialogues. The text of a dialogue cannot be simply read as evidence for the ideas of an author as if it were a one-voiced speech or monologue. Critics have noted parallels with Bakhtinian dialogue and polyphony:

What distinguishes the dialogue is the diversity of opinions and characters. A dialogue is a way of bringing different opinions together while preserving the voice of each opinion, that is, what Bakhtin (1981: 324) defined as polyphony; the interaction of different voices and the difference between what he calls “the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author.” (Canone and Spruit 2007: 374)

- Literary and philosophical dialogues are understood as tools to reflect or create the views of a community.⁹³⁴ Formally, the Renaissance dialogue works on two levels:

Dialogue is unique among the familiar genres of argument and exposition in that, at the same time as presenting a multiplicity of variegated information, opinions, and views, it also represents the process by which information or views are exchanged between particular speakers and then transmitted to a particular audience. (Canone and Spruit 2007: 369)

Similarly, Joris “speaks” to or responds to Bruno or the voices in the *Heroic Frenzies* while he also addresses us, his own readers. This distinction also underlies the opening of his poem (see extract below). For a reader’s approach of Joris’s work, awareness of dialogic features with a wish to provide information is a crucial first step. Multiple voices and languages are then seen as contributing to the ongoing discussion.

Joris’s multivoiced poem

Writing/ Reading 1.

via Bruno

“To cleave the general ear”
 De l’Inghilterra, o vaghe Ninfe et belle
 whom do we address o Nolano
 reading in writing
 at the opening of your beached furors
 a heroic excuse
 those darn white-blooded nymphs
 my rigor cannot reach

⁹³³Cf. studies of multilingualism in Renaissance literature, as mentioned in chapter 3.1

⁹³⁴ Joris does not refer to Bakhtin

through love sonnets where the arsenic bite
 belabors the style (*Breccia* 1987: 149)

The dialogic form appears in line three where the speaker formally addresses Giordano Bruno with his byname, “o Nolano,”⁹³⁵ simultaneously indicating that the question of address is his concern. Whom should he consider as his interlocutors for texts that he writes while aware of other voices encountered in books? In line 4, “reading in writing” is a near chiasmus of the title and following the English and the Italian lines, it points to an interactive process that crosses languages.

But whose voices does the text contain or echo? It opens on a line from Shakespeare. The words echo Hamlet’s comments (II, ii, 515) on what he considers actors’ vile way of addressing an audience by their “horrid speech”. The words in Italian that follow “De l’Inghilterra, o vaghe Ninfe et belle” is Bruno’s own apostrophe by which he opens *De Gl’Heroici Furori*. They are mythical figures which he greets from England according to literary conventions which he questions in the next lines. After the somewhat confusing reference to “beached furors” – a literal translation of Bruno’s description of the nymphs - the apparently serious and solemn tone of the beginning switches to colloquial language in the speaker’s impatient outbreak: “Those darn white-blooded nymphs”.

Numbering the languages used in this short extract proves a more complex problem than just adding Italian to English. *Voice* proves a better term than language to account for the surprising mixture of registers and the dialogic character of the text. On the one hand, we have the literary voices (Shakespeare, Bruno) which the main poetic speaker (Joris) quotes, already with a hint at Bruno’s and Shakespeare’s implicit criticism of some forms of speech. On the other hand, in line with practices of the Renaissance dialogue, the main speaker, addresses his readers and warns them through a parody of *De Gl’Heroici Furori* that his own writing will not reach up to this model. In other words, Joris is looking for his own way of addressing readers while at the same time he is inspired by Bruno’s revolutionary approach.

In the next passage he expands on the process of reading and writing, imagining Bruno’s double response to the theories of Scholasticism:

thoughts / words
 darkening (as I can) these pages
 Cause, principle & unity
 shown up shot values
 & Giordano speaketh in the vulgar tongue
 puts his cards down
 on this table

⁹³⁵ Nolano is a reference to Nola, the location not far from Naples where Giordano Bruno was born.

book & notebook
 two eyes
 to look with and through. (*Breccia* 1987: 150)

All through these lines runs the opposition between transmitted knowledge (book) and the poet's active use of words (in his notebook). "The vulgar tongue" - Italian - stands for Bruno's new, revolutionary reading of the ancient texts. He "puts his cards down" means he will not continue the old game. He is honest and will reveal his beliefs: The key words are "book and note book" that stand for the texts being read and written (cf. Derrida). The lines also recall the central notion of Joris's poetics: writing is a process of knowing and thinking through. Book and notebook are "two eyes/ to look with and through."

A little later, a further voice is introduced whose words confirm the poet's firm belief in **the interrelation of poetry and science as well as the key role of translation:**

but what held me most was this, by one NW ⁹³⁶: "You cannot forget that which Nolanus... truly noted by chance in our schools that *by help of translations all sciences had their offspring.*" (from *Writing/ Reading*, *Breccia* 1987: 151; emphasis added)

In an essay Joris has investigated the significance of the statement. ⁹³⁷ With "offspring of sciences," he means new developments and all forms of progress, which on the one hand the dissemination of work brings because more thinkers are involved in the process and because different cultural and linguistic contexts cause new connotations and links that broaden the scope of sciences. Language interaction increases knowledge: This is a crucial position on multilingualism that Joris defends for all his work.

When he claims, "For me, Bruno has always been the Patron Saint of Translation," it is worth recalling the traditional role of a patron saint: for an individual and for a group of people he represents a model, a guide, a protector; the patron saint for professional group, like translators, a patron saint creates a sense of community for those that adhere to his principles.

Bruno's radical decentering of the helio-, theo-, mono-centric post-medieval universe was a radical doubting of greco-xtian thought, a statement that there are a thousand suns and no center in the

⁹³⁶ Joris does not tell who these initials stand for, but the quoted sentence is mentioned in many studies of Giordano Bruno. (Google search)

⁹³⁷ The full passage brings a contextualization of the key statements, which is also relevant for the analysis of *The Agony of I.B.* in the next chapter. "By help of translation all sciences have their offspring — Giordano Bruno is reported to have said this when he lectured at Oxford in the 1580s. A memorable lecture: Bruno's ideas were badly received by those he would call the "grammarian pedants." A few years later he was arrested for heresy. After nine unrecanting years in the Vatican jail, he was brutally murdered by the Papal inquisition for heresy: tortured, gagged and finally burned at the stake in Rome's Campo dei Fiori in 1600. For me, Bruno has always been the Patron Saint of Translation — & even if the heretical belief for which he was burned was framed in terms of theological & cosmological disagreements with the church of Rome, that frame is only another version, a translation, if you want, of the Oxford sentence, All science has its origin in translation. (from "Toward a Nomadic Concept of Translation Translation Review," Vol 54, Iss 1, 1998.)

universe, and thus, in terms of the work of knowledge, a thousand translations, and no single original text. That conclusion clearly links Bruno's thought to a range of contemporary theoretical investigations. ("Toward a Nomadic Concept of Translation Translation Review," Vol 54, Iss 1, 1998.)

Translations must be multiple (see his poetics in ch. 6), like any other scientific work. For translingual writing, it means that the focus on multiple interacting voices aims at enlarging the scope of knowledge and understanding.

The text about Bruno's core beliefs is thus a poetic enactment of Joris's theoretical positions, in which translingual writing and heterolingual elements are tools for thoughts and argumentation.

This text reflects key ideas of Joris's poetics of translingual / translational writing. It proves elucidating for other texts, especially *The Agony of I.B.*, which has more references to Giordano Bruno. (See 9.3)

For Joris, new knowledge is a way of confronting various voices; so is poetry and all the more so when several languages are involved. If all writing is translation, Bruno's words sum up what he means when he speaks of "writing in all (one's) languages." The reference to Giordano Bruno also implies an important link between science and writing, in particular translation. It links up with Joris's conception of the poet as *noet*.⁹³⁸

8.2.4 More examples of dialogic multilingualism

The focus of the next sections is on selected poems that allow exploring how the poet implements his view, how he investigates various ways of writing which reject one single linguistic or cultural centre. Decentring the language of literature⁹³⁹ involves a drive towards multiple cultural and linguistic centres. A writer like Joris produces a multicentred or multicentric⁹⁴⁰ work: he borrows from different languages and puts his texts in interaction with writers who refuse being bound by one language.

In the pieces included under *Writing/ Reading*, Joris explores the possibilities of a philosophical and theoretical foundation for his poetics of the in-between. The work of Giordano Bruno (and other thinkers) provides him with solid arguments for linguistically and poetically innovative work. Closer to him in time,

⁹³⁸ Joris has referred to Giordano Bruno in other contexts, notably in relation to translation where he underlines a further aspect: "¿Por qué traduzco? Asked why he translates, he answers: Porque soy lo suficientemente insensato como para creer en el filósofo y poeta del siglo XVI Giordano Bruno, que dijo que *toda ciencia tiene su origen en la traducción*, y fue quemado en la hoguera por ello y por otros pocos pecadillos, en 1600 en Campo Fiore, Roma. Bruno es, por supuesto, el santo patrón de los traductores. 27.11.10 pierre joris / siete minutos sobre traducción <http://lasrazonesdelaviador.blogspot.com/2010/11/pierre-joris-siete-minutos-sobre.html>

also see: <https://arablit.org/for-translators/pierre-joris-seven-minutes-on-translation/>

⁹³⁹ Cf. Bakhtin, who speaks of centrifugal rather than centripetal forces.

⁹⁴⁰ Cf. Slavoj Žižek, who speaks of a multicentric world, a term which is also used in medicine; pluricentric on the other hand refers to a language that has more than one centre as it in use indifferent territories

he has found other inspirational work that allows him to put into practice his vision of a poet “writing in all his languages.” In the examples that follow, he continues working with the two levels of dialogue that Bruno showed him: he addresses a literary or otherwise public figure (Kerouac, Beltrametti, Steichen), while at the same time, at least implicitly, turning to his own readers.

In dialogic texts, a poetic speaker orchestrates two or more voices. His own concern becomes relativized; his voice is not central but becomes consolidated through juxtaposition with interLocutors. The others’ voices – and their languages – help him (the poetic speaker and the poet) think through a great diversity of issues.

“Canto Diurno #2, A/ To Jack Kerouac: Ode Bilingue”⁹⁴¹

Translating natural language mixing (code-switching) into poetry

Jack Kerouac (1922-1969), key figure of the Beat generation of writers and author of the novel *On the Road* (1957), is the example par excellence of a nomad moving between languages. As a child, he spoke French with his French Canadian parents who had moved from Quebec to Massachusetts. Thus English was not his first language but became his language of writing. The fascination that Kerouac, and more generally the jazz age, has held on Joris is evident in much of his early poetry.⁹⁴² Joris has translated Kerouac’s novel *Mexico City Blues* (1959) into French (1995), which shows how close he felt to the poet’s two languages.

“Canto Diurno # 2, A/To Jack Kerouac: Ode bilingue,” is a response to the American poet and his work. The poem is a mixture of genres: a beat poem, a memorial piece, an ode, in which Joris experiments with voices and languages. The following presentation focusses on the way the poem establishes a dialogue around the work and life of Kerouac through a continuous switch between French and English.

The structure of the poem: A factual context provides the framework for the imagined exchanges of various voices. The poem belongs to a series that goes by the title *Canto diurno*, initially inspired by Ezra Pound. What Joris does in these poems is to provide spontaneous accounts of things and thoughts as they happen: a canto diurno is a song of the day. On the particular day described in the ode to Kerouac, 23 June 1999, the poetic speaker – Joris – relates stages of a journey that starts early in the morning when he travels to Lowell, the city where Kerouac grew up. The poem is an account of trip, a road story of some kind - which is his way of paying tribute to the man who died thirty years before (1969).

⁹⁴¹ In Barzakh 2014: 17-24.

⁹⁴² See essays and interviews in *Cartographies*.

What interests me is the dialogic nature of the account and the way language switches occur. A quick overview of the text shows that it is not an English text with heterolingual elements. It is truly bilingual (and in some places multilingual), with French and English roughly taking up equal space⁹⁴³ though never systematically alternating on the page.

To grasp the way voices and languages mix, it is helpful to imagine listening to the poem rather than merely read it. Not only will this raise awareness for the fast rhythm of the lines, it will also show that English is mostly used for the documentary scaffolding that provides details about stops on the road, places seen and associations with experiences made through English. French appears as “the other voice,” as the language of encountered voices, memories, quotations, translations, imagined dialogues.

A closer look at a few selected passages should give an idea of Joris’s numerous strategies and techniques. The first lines may well be the most mind-boggling

L’-à-
 tout Kerouac
 deux as
 sans volant,
 son cosas
 de tristessa, la
 vida goes
 on as I
 start 6:06 a.m.
 23 June 1999 from
 Joey’s Riverside Restaurant ... (“Canto Diurno #2,” *Barzakh*, 2014: 17)

The linguistic confusion – or fusion – starts with a bilingual word-game; the words of the title, “A/ To (Jack Kerouac)”, transformed through French sound, may indeed become “l’-à-/ tout Kerouac” (*tout* with the connotation of the whole Kerouac, or *tout* reminiscent of “tout-Paris”, also pointing to distinctive feature). We hear it as “l’atout Kerouac” – as asset or some kind of trump card. Anyway, it is as if from the start the stress is on a game – Kerouac’s life as a game he played – while it also suggests the reader may play or read/ interpret it as he wishes.

The rhythm does not allow us to stop at each word, but we notice that the next two lines are in French (an allusion to Kerouac’s novel *On the Road*); they are followed by lines in Spanish thus hinting at Kerouac’s *Mexico Blues* and his novella *Tristessa*. *Tristessa*, the name of the title figure, is an additional comment on language mixing in the spelling of names: it is neither the Spanish/ Portuguese *tristeza*, nor the Italian *tristezza* nor the French *tristesse*.

⁹⁴³ Because of the complex breaks and merging of languages, an actual word-count is difficult: still, it looks as if the lines and words in French outnumbered those in English.

Then in the middle of a line, the language switches to English, “vida goes”, and after the French-Spanish prelude the temporal and geographical details situate the speaker and traveller who starts out on his journey—literally a one-day drive.

A polyphony of voices

Making out the speakers in the text is not always easy without actually listening to the text (or seeing it performed).⁹⁴⁴ Yet the text gives helpful hints

il y a 45 ans
tu écrivais (235 Chorus):
« Je sais que je suis mort.
Je ne camperai pas. Je suis mort maintenant.
Qu'est-ce que j'attends pour disparaître ?... »
30 years ago - & aujourd'hui ("Canto Diurno #2," *Barzakh*, 2014: 18)

The passage is taken from Kerouac's own work (*Mexico Blues*), but actually the French words are those of the translator – Pierre Joris. Quoting from his own translation of another poet's work is a technique that Joris has used in several works (e.g. *The Agony of I.B.*).

It is a play with masks: the translator puts on Kerouac's mask and it is no longer clear whose words he speaks. Some voices are identified as those of well-known literary figures, like those of poets who were close to Kerouac, for instance Allen (Ginsberg) and William (Burroughs). A short, four-line poem by Emily Dickinson who spent all her life in Amherst, not far from Lowell, is also inserted, with each line followed by its translation in French. Whose words are they now? In a daring, humorous image, the poem raises the question of language ownership and intellectual property:

arrêt à Blanchard MOBIL station [...] la
table en bois déjà d'où je veux t'écrire/ déjà inscrite :
"Opinion is a flitting thing
L'opinion est chose passagère
But truth, outlasts the Sun—
Mais la vérité, dure plus que le soleil –
If then we cannot own them both –
Si donc nous ne pouvons les posséder toutes deux –
Possess the oldest one –
Possédons la plus ancienne – "
Emily Dickinson
"Poème utilisé avec permission"
nom gravé sur le banc sous mon cul, ("Canto Diurno #2," *Barzakh*, 2014: 20)

⁹⁴⁴ Franca Bellarsi has made a similar comment in a note to "Unexploded Bombshells (Brill 2019)

Other voices (like that of Yves Buin) are attributed to figures that appear in Kerouac's writing or that the poetic speaker / Joris encounters on his way. Like Ricardo who "sells, on tap/ de la Stella/ Artois" (22)

Intertextual dialogues

The poem has occasional allusions to other texts, also by Joris himself, for instance to the essay - Goodbye to Derrida – another Jack, with whom he conversed in French. An echo of Derrida's words may be heard in the passage with the word play on "pas:"

"J'ai croisé un visionnaire
et nous avons fait quelques pas."
le pas, le pas
le suivre au, ne pas
n'est pas là
la difficulté (23)

when Joris plays with the double meaning of the French word *pas*, which as Derrida shows in *Pas d'hospitalité* may mean a step (to follow, or a step towards) while it is also a general term of negation, hence simultaneously a refusal of hospitality.

One is also reminded of the epigraph of "Writing/ Reading" where Derrida's words emphasize the complex relations between a writer and those he will/ will not follow. "*Pas*" is an example of untranslatable polysemy, consequently in Joris's poem this observation must be made in French.

Word games in French: « repasser sur ta tombe, passer en trombe, trompe l'oeil ou trompe-la-mort, trompette de la mort », all associated with death ... des trompes en Floride (19)

Examples of agile language switching

Jack's nights
mon teenage dream
of America
mon truck stop blues
un blues for Jack gone these thirty years now

and

Drove out to cemetery
j'ai foncé jusqu'au cimetière
kneeled in front of
the plaque, 2 cannettes vides,
1 empty sweet peach brandy bottle
1 twisted fork
2 notes gribouillées: Dear Jack...
3 candle butts (23)

Provisional concluding comments:

- The thoughts about Kerouac and his work that the poet as speaker is thinking through on this imagined trip can only be expressed in two or three languages.
- The mixing of voices in “Ode A/ To Jack Kerouac” announces a way of writing that disregards language borders.
- The poem confirms a point about language difference: what we hear may mean one thing in one language and something else in another: there is no concordance between word and thing.
- The poem ends on a note of ambiguity:

Et là je pense à toi,
 Jack, la chose-Kerouac,
 la prose-Kerouac, l’amer-
 ique. (24)

In the hiatus of the line break, the American dream turns *amer* and the poem ends on this – playful yet serious note of bitterness.

“Telegrammatica per Franco” - Writing in Barocco

Marking the languages of the text in different colours could give a first, visual impression of the non-stop language switching in this poem: English can hardly be called the dominant language.

“Telegrammatica per Franco”

Caro, son qui: ti scrivo
 (I write to tell you
 per dirti...”
 (two or three things
 not bad at all
 (all words borrowed only)
 vetri/ polvere/ rossa
 no, I have no Greek theatre in my backyard
 “continuazione in (p)rosa”
 “a dead poet and one alive”
 “una specie”
 “can laugh at it all”
 (la poesia)
 (un matin de neige)
 « di filosofia d’azione
 AT THE HEART OF THE WORLD
 It’s our turn. I think so
 wiederholen

abwandeln
 meditiere"
 and the world is becoming
 far less elegant
 "un trapasso
 dal sangue al sasso"
 desolation/ we will be her no longer/ not
 J'emporte avec moi
 a book to be called
 Blows Against The Mother Tongue
 a cura de
 (toi et moi)
 (così così)
 vos images
 merci, mon ami,
 abrazos Pierre
 (Barzakh 2014:43-44)

Who is Franco? Joris mentions him in *A Nomad Poetics* and calls him "another true nomad poet" (see ch. 6.3.3):

BAROCCO. Which allows me now to bring up an unfinished project [...] I had concocted in the late seventies with my sadly departed old friend, the Swiss-Italian poet Franco Beltrametti (another true nomad poet): an anthology to be called BLOWS AGAINST THE MOTHER-TONGUE and which would gather the work of poets who had written nomadically in a language that was not their mother-tongue: from Ovid, say, to Anselm Hollo. (2003: 45-46)

A few details about Beltrametti's life and work found in the internet prove helpful to understand his importance for Joris and his notion of BAROCCO as a nomad's language.⁹⁴⁵

The Italian title sets the frame: The word for telegram in Italian is *telegramma*; *telegrammatica* here seems a reference to the fragmentary, telegraphic style. This poem is an example of BAROCCO, of the writing Joris predicts for the 21st century (ANP 2003: 7; 45). It is a truly multilingual letter which reflects the two men's shared repertoire of languages (Italian, French, German, English plus the Spanish *abrazos* as closing word), with quotation marks signalling borrowings from texts in French, German and Italian. Unlike in

⁹⁴⁵ Franco Beltrametti, poet, painter, architect: born Locarno 7 October 1937; died Lugano 26 August 1995. The Swiss-Italian artist and writer Franco Beltrametti published over 30 books and pamphlets of poetry, prose, collaborations and translations, in several languages and countries; and had a similar number of solo and group exhibitions of his graphic works. He was a true nomad, who began to study architecture in Zurich, travelled in Italy, France and England, worked in Rome and Zurich before taking the Trans-Siberian Express to Japan. From Japan he travelled by cargo boat across the Pacific, briefly taught architectural design at California Polytechnic, crossed the United States, and returned to Europe determined to devote all of his time to "life" and "writing." (Obituary: Franco Beltrametti, by Tom Raworth, Monday 4 September 1995)

“Ode to Jack Kerouac,” language breaks occur at the end of lines, which makes it look like the collage of a conversation with references to other texts.

What is it the poet/speaker-letter writer is thinking through together with his friend Beltrametti? He is trying out a fully multilingual text in a natural flow of languages: The German words sum up key procedures: “wiederholen/ abwandeln/ meditieren.” As usual, with Joris, it also contains some insider allusions or jokes.

“Letter to Steichen’s Ed” : Two modes of seeing and thinking⁹⁴⁶

In fact, every photograph is a fake from start to finish, a purely impersonal, unmanipulated photograph being practically impossible.

– Edward Steichen

Leiwen Ed,
Ech wees net ops du ons Sprooch nach gekannt hues,
that’s why I’ll address you in American English.

You were born zu Béiwen, bei Roeser, in Luxembourg,
I was not
You were an American citizen,
I am still not,
I am just a plain citizen of Luxembourg.

You believed in the family of man
I am weary of families of any order and species.
[...] (“Letter to Steichen’s Ed,” Barzakh 2014: 224)

Formal and informal features characterize the beginning of this poem and both are related to language aspects. On the one hand, in its form, it reflects the tradition of epistolary poems known since classical antiquity; a quotation from a text by Edward Steichen introduces the perennial issue of the impossibility of objectivity in art. On the other hand, the use of a spoken, non-literary idiom, Lëtzebuergesch, underlines the colloquial tone. Indeed, the opening words of the letter, in Luxembourgish, after the epigraph in English, mark a striking linguistic break with readers’ expectations. Soon the context is clarified. Joris’s poem is an imaginary address at a famous compatriot, Edward Steichen, who like the presumed author of the letter was born in Luxembourg. The epistle is thus created from an everyday, fictitious occasion, which for the poetic persona implies he should first address Steichen as you would speak to your countrymen, that is in their shared language of origin, Luxembourgish.

⁹⁴⁶ This poem is also briefly presented in ch. 1.2.

The form of the name used in the title, *Steichen's Ed*, must look (and sound) both familiar and unexpected to English readers. In Luxembourgish, the genitive, "Steichen's Ed" is a common, slightly outdated way of referring to people that are well-known in the speaker's community: the surname being followed by the first name is reminiscent of an English (and German) genitive, (though this s' genitive form is not much otherwise used in Luxembourgish). In the poem, rather than an imitation of authentic speech, this combination of language uses becomes a kind of word play, or a play with forms, which blurs the boundaries between languages.⁹⁴⁷

The two languages, English and Luxembourgish are not juxtaposed but present a natural mixing as one may easily find it in the speech of people changing languages and trying to negotiate their form of communication. "You were born zu Béiwen, bei Roeser, in Luxembourg" shows how a similar syntax in English and Luxembourgish supports an authentic form of "code-switching". One may note that a third variety is surreptitiously introduced with "Roeser", the name of this village appearing in its administrative written (German) form. Thus, gradually, place names move from oral Luxembourgish (*Béiwen*), to *Roeser* (written form of the name) to *Luxembourg* (in English). To Luxembourgian readers, used to different designations for the same location, this slight shift may appear quite normal, especially as they know that spelling and pronunciation for them do not always coincide.

The important point however is that the small talk of this multilingual letter opening, though arousing surprise in readers, is not likely to cause problems of understanding. It also has an interesting (though paradoxical) comment on citizenship: for the letter writer, the name of Steichen's well-known collection of photographs, *The Family of Man*, becomes an opportunity to distance himself from any affiliation with a group or species: "I am weary of any families of any name and species".⁹⁴⁸ If it is meant as a rejection of nationality there seems to be a contradiction with the preceding line: "I am just a plain citizen of Luxembourg". We are left to imagine that the words lead to further comments.

The main subject of the epistolary poem is indicated in the epigraph, a quotation from an essay by Steichen: "In fact, *every photograph is a fake from start to finish, a purely impersonal, unmanipulated photograph being practically impossible*" (emphasis added). The poetic persona writing to the photographer reflects on the parallels between their "trades" or crafts; we may just guess at the thoughts he develops on the nature of the poet's language and its relation as well as responsibility to reality. Language thus is not just a matter of national idioms, it is a way of apprehending the world, like (or unlike)

⁹⁴⁷ In Luxembourg, the photographer is never referred to as Steichen's Ed, a form that may sound too chummy or awkwardly familiar to refer to a public figure or artist. He is known as Edward Steichen.

⁹⁴⁸ If it is meant as a rejection of nationality there seems to be a contradiction with the preceding line: "I am just a plain citizen of Luxembourg".

photographers, a way of translating, or of expressing the untranslatability of direct experiences and may be read as an allusion at the importance of subjectivity for artists.

Joris is thinking through differences and similarities between poet and photographer. The text is an imagined dialogue, in which Steichen, the photographer, explains the autochrome that the writer of the letter has just mentioned as avant-garde process

Ah the autochrome!
 Hot off the 1903 minds of the Frères Lumière,
 them I've seen the Light Brothers,
 first marketed in our year 1907,
 it is an additive method
 a process involving millions
 of microscopic
 grains of potato starch
 (did you ever think of
 the Luxembourg staple
 food, d'gromper, when you
 loaded the camera?)

 dyed
 bright blue-violet,
 bright orange-red
 & Kelly green ("Letter to Steichen's Ed," *Barzakh* 2014: 225-226)

One may see a parallel between Steichen's innovative way of rendering shades of colour and his own use of words from multiple languages. The reference to the potato is to justify the comparison: Just as Joris owes his multiple languages to his origins, Steichen's technique relies on what used to be considered the quintessentially Luxembourg food, the potato. In fact, the description of the process is also reminiscent of palimpsestic layering:

dusted on a slightly concave piece of glass
 already coated with liquid pitch mixed
 with a dram of beeswax
 to keep it "tacky"
 the random spaces filled with lamp-black
 & a panchromatic silver halide emulsion

The poet, however, rejects the photographer's desire to approximate reality and wishes to leave the "seams" visible in his texts. Yet, the letter ends on an amical note of shared concerns:

and all we are left with
 is the beauty of doing the work,
 the handwork, the hands on work,

your plates, my words.

Merci, cousin,

'daz gut ze wessen

daz du hei wars virun mir.⁹⁴⁹ ("Letter to Steichen's Ed," *Barzakh* 2014:227)

Calling Edward Steichen "cousin", Joris underlines the close relation he feels to his compatriot. The poem turns out to be a humorous, implicit comparison of two national features: What exiles take from Luxembourg, one might deduce, is multiple languages and *gromperen* (potatoes), - each the condition for their successful, innovative artistic work.

8.2.5 Winnetou poems: a decentralized, multiple voice in "a material flux of language matter"⁹⁵⁰

Only a few pieces in Joris's poetry collections are unmistakably multilingual, with a mixture of languages. The most striking and baffling examples are those in *Winnetou Old*, where aesthetic and innovative features, possibly reminiscent of Dadaism, dominate over explicit meaning making.⁹⁵¹

Winnetou Old

Vier Takte vor K time then before
 starting a poesis that keeps that other that
 began in bone arete return to turbulence break
 the slippery line to work thanatos tetanos Verkrampfung
 second movement process of individuation social
 aspects in aspic hides a soul caught already encysted
 blastula reaps a soul in titanic paralysis the
 horizon inked end of my life there rises frostbite
 blaming outside genetics the sea a tree a cloud a clubfoot
 this homunculus frozen brass monkey bone monkey
 teton titan peeled of all flesh & fleas all noise &
 bloodroar all Staub und Blut ein Würfel Milch
 (*Winnetou Old*, in *Poasis* 2001: 71)

This is the opening piece of a work in many stanzas, entitled *Winnetou Old*,⁹⁵² which Joris wrote when he felt at a standstill in his life and his writing. Winnetou is the mythical, fictional figure from Karl May's novels, who is to show the poet the way to a meaningful in-between-ness that consists in acknowledging

⁹⁴⁹ (Thank you, cousin. It is good to know that you were here before me.)

⁹⁵⁰ See « Nomad Century Ahead, » *A Nomad Poetics* 2003:5.

⁹⁵¹ *Winnetou Old* appeared in 1994, a year after the translation of Kurt Schwitters' poetry, which Joris did in cooperation with Jerome Rothenberg. The texts are reprinted in *Poasis* (2001:69-84).

⁹⁵² The version in *Poasis*, on which the present study relies, consists of 14 stanzas and a note in which Joris gives some background information (85-86). The first stanza is also available in its audible version (as a song) on the audio CD *Routes not Roots*. See also the blog <https://pierrejoris.com/blog/karl-may-1842-1912/>

an outsider position, in movement, while also reminding him how to borrow elements from his multiple languages, as does Karl May in his numerous travel stories (see ch. 5.3)

[T]he name Winnetou [...] names the figure of the other, or, to use an American order of space and poetics rather than a European psychological distinction, the figure of outside. (*Poasis* 2001: 85)

Winnetou, the figure of the other and of the outside is the quintessential nomad, who combines features described by Deleuze and Guattari as well as by Kenneth White. (see ch. 3.2 – for White, the nomad is also the figure of the outdoor). For Joris, Winnetou is the guide that gets the poet moving again rousing him from a paralyzing lethargy:

I borrowed information on basic meditation techniques [...] This is how Winnetou came back, when in an entranced meditation I asked for a guide figure for a work that was to get me moving again. He came back as a haggard, wizened old Indian, the near-Blakean figure of Europa's Other & indeed offered to lead me through the cultural charnel house of Europe. (*Poasis* 200: 86)

The reference to Blake hints at a prophetic vision of the world and of writing. The poet's position as outsider and other calls for a language and a way of writing that is different from that of conventional sedentary poets. Winnetou's voice also reminds Joris of what he did as a young boy when he "tried to make up [his] own – secret – language out of all those shards" encountered in May's novels. (ANP, and ch. 5)

With these clues in mind, we can read the Winnetou poems as the expression of a novel approach of the world, which needs its own, new language code. In agreement with Giordano Bruno's vision, such a world cannot have one stable centre. In Winnetou Old, form and language indeed aim at mirroring a decentralized view of reality. The shape of the text on the page is unusual⁹⁵³ but what strikes, and possibly irritates, the reader is the absence of a meaning-making syntax and the startling insertion of foreign words. Each stanza seems to be mostly a sequence of grammatically unrelated words with just a few fragments of brief sentences and looks like a collage of unrelated elements. The broken syntax and fragmentary style prevent readers from constructing meaning in any of the conventional ways and force them to keep their eyes and ears open for Joris's specific ways of creating meaning.

In this decentralized writing, an array of poetic and multilingual devices come to evoke thoughts, perceptions and feelings, which ordinary language would fail to render. Joris invents poetic forms, for which he has no direct handbook. Even if he is familiar with the ways other poets resort to various forms

⁹⁵³ Its shape on the page is vaguely reminiscent of concrete poetry which often also has elements of multiple languages. See Claus Clüver, „Das internationale konkrete Gedicht: Schreiben in vielen Sprachen“ (2002); Maximilian Schlegel, „Mühelos polyglott.“ Mehrsprachigkeit in Konkreter Dichtung“ (2014). Yet, I have not further explored this connection of Joris's writing with concrete poetry.

of language multiplicity (notably, Ezra Pound, Paul Celan, Kurt Schwitters), he attempts to clear his own path through words, meanings and sounds. For this reason, an analysis of a “Winnetou” poem cannot start from a list of well-defined poetic devices, as they would not quite fit his translingual writing practices. Moreover, it is often the combination of strategies, which mark the poetic space that emerges.

The aim of the following reading of extracts is not a detailed exegesis but rather a survey of instances that can elucidate a vision of writing “in all one’s languages.”

“Vier Takte vor K time then before”: German words open the poem; they look like a fragment remembered from another, unidentified text. The initial K adds to the mystery but also introduces a letter which is rare in English. The stanza similarly closes on German Locutions that despite the language break smoothly fit in with the preceding English phrase: “all noise & / bloodroar all Staub und Blut ein Würfel Milch”. The link comes through the little word “all”, which is indeed both German and English: only the pronunciation varies.

One strategy of mixing languages then consists in using words that are common to both languages and so appear as natural connectors.

The German shards, to use Joris’s own term, look like quotations. Especially *ein Würfel Milch* is a startling image: we speak of ice cubes, not milk cubes. Or should one rather call it a dice, suggesting fate (cf. “*alea jacta est*”, Winnetou’s words as an experience of Rubicon-crossing for the poet), or does it stand for a game with its own rules? But these rules, for writer and reader are not fixed in advance: one only needs to recall the epitaph taken from Giordano Bruno’s work: “ *... la poesia non nace da le regole, se non per leggerissimo accidente; ma le regole derivano da le poesie; et pero tantison geni e specie de vere regole, quantison geni et specie de veri poeti.* ” (Quoted above)

“Verkrampfung” is one more blatant example of a German insertion: its position suggests that it is a clarification of “tetanos,” (the scientific Greek form of “Starrkrampf” in German). “Verkrampfung” however adds the notion of crispation and tension: physical and mental states are merged.

The use of German illustrates the workings of a bi- or multilingual writer’s mind and the **complexity of translation movements**. They are neither one-way movements nor do they produce exact equivalents.

Words in different languages appear as a source for the poet to render thinking and writing processes.

Another example of German as English or English as German is the word “titan”; the pronunciation varies and in the context of the poem, it is part of a word game (pun) with “teton.”

More points to consider for a poetics of multilingualism

Despite the mixing of languages and repertoires, the dominant language is English, which determines the perspective on difference. English sets the temporal frame of the stanza from the start with three key

words: time, then, before. The dimension of time is further sketched through verbs: “starting” (line 2); “began” (l. 3); “return” (l. 4) and the expression “end of my life” (l. 8).

Joris’s multilingual repertoire is scientific, medical and musical while it also includes playful elements with the tongue twister “teton titan” and its variations in pronunciation. Trying to read it aloud, the bi- or multilingual speaker is likely to hesitate between an English, German and French pronunciation of the vowels.⁹⁵⁴ The term “arete” (cf. arete in Greek, in French arête) and its various possible meanings is another example.

Crosslingual rhymes, pseudo-rhymes, alliteration; images and translingual polysemy are some of the striking devices that contribute to the poetic quality of text.

Multiplicity seen through a lens of nomadism

In many of Joris’s poems one finds nomadic features of roaming, but also of language multiplicity. The following extracts from “Winnetou Old” underline language multiplicity as aspect of wandering words.

yourappian Kulchur hang the big O
l’outre l’autre now becomes au-tonomia another alphabeta
begins towards mania l’altera ô becomes au begins
towards dawn drawn with our fingers in shellacked snows
[...]
(*Poasis* (2001: 78))

von Hollands Grachten bis tief ins Russische
Reich a Ganovenweise sung in Luxembourg anno domino 3
post world war 2 all the way to Ancel in the Bukowina
and still we go at it turba scriptorum tralala trying
to wring something from this long night how not to escape
[...]
(*Poasis* 2001: 84)

Like Welch, Joris integrates elements of his readings in his poems; the links with May’s adventure stories may not be visible at once: “Winnetou Old” encompasses a complex vision of life and language, which readers must gradually uncover. Especially the second set of lines exposes a link between a vagrant’s nomadic roaming and the wandering of words.

Echoing the work of Rimbaud, Welch’s nomadic figure is a *bohémien*; Joris speaks of “Gauler and” Ganove”, a travelling rogue as evoked in a popular German song, while “Ancel in the Bukowina”, presents

⁹⁵⁴ In English, *teton* means big breast and recalls the name of mountain peaks and a national Park in the Rocky Mountains. The origin of the word is the French *téton*, a synonym of “mamelon.”

a link with the poet Paul Celan and his wandering life.⁹⁵⁵ In fact, the word *Ganovenweise* is part of the title of a poem: „Eine Gauner- und Ganovenweise gesungen zu Paris emprès Pontoise von Paul Celan aus Czernowitz bei Sadagora“ (*Die Gedichte, Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe* 2012: 135).

The language multiplicity is dazzling: words wander as quickly as rascals do and their mixing across languages brings new meanings. Not each word can be attributed to one language: and not only words from living languages interact: “turba scriptorum” creates an echo of Latin to position the poet among a crowd of writers (or copyists). Sometimes, English just about remains the dominant language. The blatantly unconventional spelling of “yourappian Kulchur” (European culture) arrests readers. The words look like the code words of modern technology, but for readers familiar with classical culture, they may also be reminiscent of the Roman Via Appia, which thus appears as another road for the nomad to travel – a suggestion which is reinforced and immediately contradicted by “hang the O” ... the Greek letter or ... hang yourappian Kulchur. It becomes a mocking comment of Western high Culture, with a capital C. However puzzling the first words are, the lines present an example of word game that beyond the apparent playful juxtaposition of sounds across languages also hints at how nomadic heterogeneity (or rhizomatic multiplicity) lets new possible associations emerge: the other (*l'autre, altera*) in no time becomes *autonomia*. The exact relation of words with a language is no longer important: altera, the key word, is Latin, but also has its place in other Romance languages.

Whatever we read into the lines, they come across as **a skillful mixture of erudition AND playful response** to the sounds of words in different languages. Joris's writing appears as a continuation of early traditions of multilingual writing (cf. Forster in ch. 3.1), in line with Bakhtin's interest in Rabelais' work, as expression of heteroglossia and the carnivalesque.

A work like *Winnetou Old* seems **untranslatable** (cf. Grutman's work on multilingualism and translation 1998). Even if English is the recognizable dominant language, it is not always clear where the other language begins. The poem is an illustration of what the porosity of languages can create in poetry. *Turbulence*, the poem discussed as example of heterolingual devices in ch. 7.1, can in many ways be read as a first instalment of *Winnetou Old*. Critical response has also underlined the power and appeal of non-intellectual readings of the text, which questions traditional notions of poetic language. Peter Cockelbergh thus reports on a multimedia, interdisciplinary performance: “In 1995, *Winnetou Old* was turned into a dance and reading performance, *Frozen Shadows*, by Ellen Sinopoli and her dance company, and was

⁹⁵⁵ Ancel is Paul Celan's original surname (Antschel or Ancel), which he changed to Celan. Joris always assumes that readers have a vast knowledge in many domains, or are ready to check references. This is an aspect of Joris's writings that I would link with poetry as a form of knowledge, an aspect which is also present in nomadic theory (see Deleuze and Guattari as well as Kenneth White, for whom writing poetry is a way of acquiring and diffusing knowledge).

premiered in “The Egg” (Albany, NY) in April 1995. Neither “dance performance” nor poetry reading, *Frozen Shadows* mixes and merges voice, performance, dance, song and poetry into a hybrid and heterogeneous “poem-as-a-happening.” (<http://jacketmagazine.com/40/joris-cockleburgh-marginalalia.shtml>)⁹⁵⁶

8.2.6 Citational framing and citation as text

Thinking through what writing suits the nomadic poet, one idea predominates: it must be an **open form**, with broken lines, or “windows” opening to further writing movements. Key words which qualify such nomadic writing should include terms like *fragments, shards, collage, mosaic, run-on texts*. They describe Joris’s theoretical work but also his poetry, which follows a predilection for free verse with a diversity of voices, languages, patterns and rhythms. In longer pieces, the nomadcity of words and or voices is most tangible; a short extract from a series of poems all called *Canto Diurno* (each followed by a number) can give a glimpse into an example of poetic wandering across languages. *Canto Diurno # 1* is the first poem in *Poasis*.

⁹⁵⁶ Notice the spelling “cockleburgh” (sic) in the hyperlink.

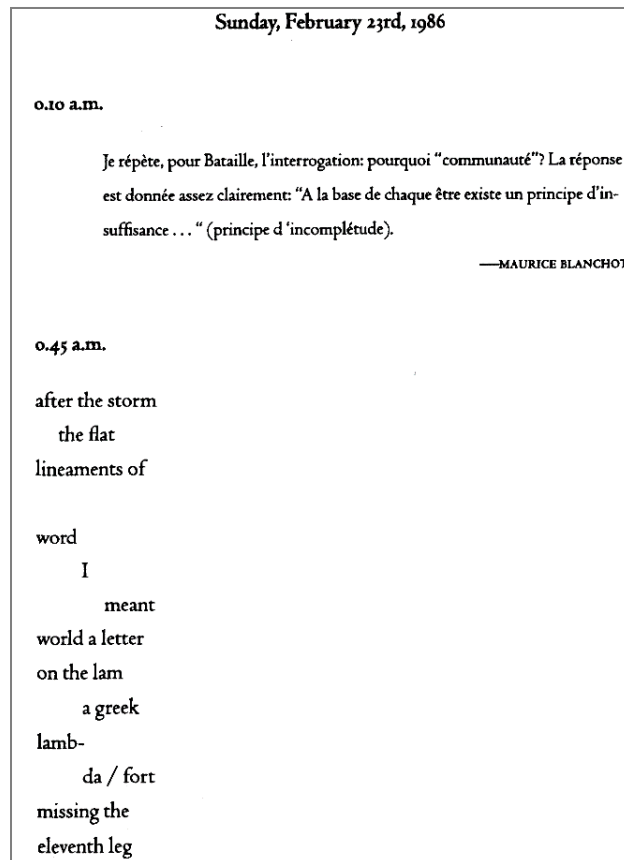


Figure 15. Opening page of "Canto Diurno #1" (Poasis 2001:1)

Already the opening lines of the 24-page long poem give some idea of its hybrid form, its forward moving thrust, multiple voices and language games. The Italian title *Canto Diurno* is reminiscent of Ezra Pound's famous poems; *diurno* – "of the day, daily" evokes the origin of the English word diary: the poem is in fact a poetic diary entry with notes that cover one entire day - the 24 hours of February 23rd, 1986. The opening quote, in French, from Maurice Blanchot, recalling Georges Bataille, hints at the role of communities – another way suggesting the rhizomatic accretion and growth of words in the poem. The following rapid sequence of syllables, respectively words, changes their meaning across the lines, moving from English to Greek with a brief insertion of German. The rest of the poem contains many quotations, as well as several pages in prose (see in *Poasis* 2001: 2-24).

Joris is aware that such writing (with frequent breaks in the syntax and without a narrative voice or a stable centre) is difficult to follow for readers. In "Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics" he points to similarities with the work of visual artist and recommends a reading similar to the eyes following the meandering and crossing lines in ink drawings, such as those by Nicole Peyrafitte (ANP: 41 – 42). The parallel drawn between the (fragmentary) text and the pictorial space of the painter underlines a visual or spatial aspect of multiplicity in the text.

Innovative forms: re-thinking poetic nomadism as space on the page

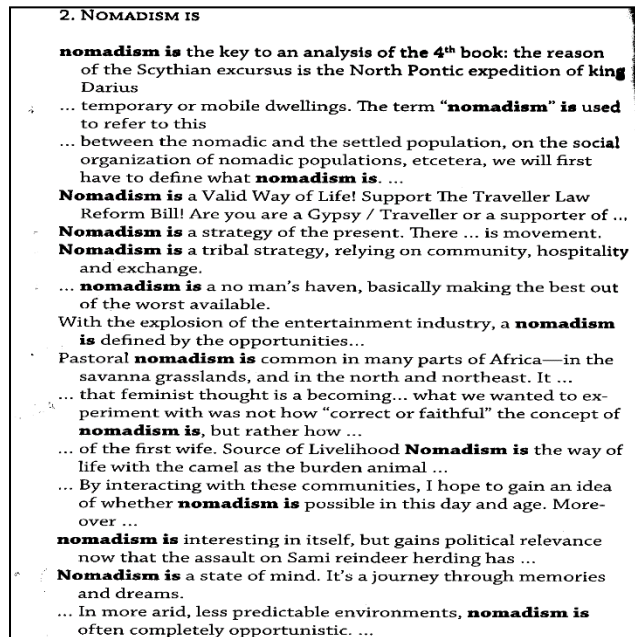


Figure 16. Extract from a piece entitled "Nomadism" ("Three Ontological Goggles," Barzakh 2014)

"Three Ontological Goggles" (Barzakh 2014: 109-119) are fragmentary texts that look very much like extracts from corpus linguistics. Goggles are large spectacles equipped with special lenses, here suggesting that they bring insights into what nomadism is. The similarity with "google" and the internet is unmistakable; English here fittingly is used in its function as international lingua franca. These pieces illustrate the poet's search for ways to investigate multifaceted notions, such as nomadism, diaspora and poetry, by juxtaposing diverse understandings and voices. His role is to assemble the quotations and create conditions for a dialogue.

8.2.7 Provisional conclusion on translingual writing and multilingual poetry

In each of the selected poems, the focus of the presentation is double; on content (**what** the poem in multiple languages allows the poet to think through) and the (formal) linguistic features or writing processes involving several languages (**how** the interaction of languages works in the poem: translingual writing, dialogical processes and speakers' reflections based on word-games).

A conclusion on "Writing poems in all my languages" is best formulated in the form of questions and an inventory of important features, which can lead to a proposal of a reader's poetics of multilingual and nomadic work (see ch. 10):

- How subversive is multilingual poetry? Does it correspond to Giordano Bruno's idea of multiverse?
- Is multilingual poetry a crucible of languages which can create a new space (term crucible borrowed from the title of an essay by Franca Bellarsi 2019)
- Is it the language, the poetry of the future?
- Does it convey a sense of wonder at the way language travels, becomes different languages?
- How can readers respond to it? Must they change their approach?
- Is reading sophisticated detective work for an elite attempting to identify the "real" voices and making out the meaning of complex hidden relations? Or is reading a process of following hints and making out a general scaffold which readers must fill in with their experience and imagination?
- Is reading a poetic language game in which you try to make out the code?
- Is reading a nomadic process to follow the routes and languages of outsiders?

For the reader, I would argue, approaching the text consists in making out some of the unconventional – literally ex-centric – rules or practices. It is a bit of **a game**, for which the reader must find the rules. Entries may differ and ways of playing consequently too; rules derive from the practice of reading as much as from the practice of writing. (cf Derrida and Bruno, above)

Joris's poetry shows that it is addressed to bi- and multilingual readers who easily switch between the languages. The smooth movement between languages opens a perspective on writing and reading for those who live with and between languages.

The combination of languages can only be an example of the infinite possibilities that languages offer.

Alice Notley, a poet friend of Joris's offers a complementary perspective. She is impressed by his languages but does not think it poses questions of understanding: "Does it seriously bother anyone that this poem is in two languages, is there really anyone who doesn't understand it?" (*Cartographies* 377 Notley is

convinced that the true nature of poetry is music and rhythm. She underlines his “ability to enable reader-aloud’s tongue to accommodate itself to both languages, even though they change back and forth so quickly.” (378)

She raises the question of the Ur-language, the language before Babel for all poetry, an issue that Joris raises in “Nimrod,” and which links up with researchers’ focus on pre-Babylonian fantasies (Busch 2010).

Striking features of translingual writing:

- the diversity of languages
- the ease with which the lines move across languages
- poetry as dialogue
- the multiple ways of referring to literary voices, attempts at rendering “interLocutors” / imagined interLocutors’ voices (through quotation, translation, paraphrasing): colloquial and playful exchange, learned reflections
- the poetic speaker’s explicit or underlying attempts at situating his own voice, at exposing writing processes/ nomadic movements

One may add an inventory of procedures or poetic devices crosslingual rhymes- and alliteration

- crosslingual polysemy or a polyglot’s word-games: arete; l’oute, l’autre
- analysis of etymology: rhizomatic multiplication of texts across languages
- insertion of citations: interaction of popular and literary texts (eg von Hollands Grachten --- and Celan, in Joris’s poem in English)
- translational writing or translingual switches from one language to another: Thanatos, tetanos, Verkrampfung; also teton titan, here as tongue twister
- the variety of repertoires
- references to other poets and thinkers who do not write in their mother tongue

9. Palimpsestic writing and the creation of translingual spaces

This final chapter of analysis may profit from a reference to spatial features in literary studies of multilingualism and in nomadic theory (notably the diverging views of Deleuze and White) which resulted in choosing spatial dimensions as a cornerstone for the inquiry into translingual processes. (See ch.3.) A dynamic view of space as changing substratum, is linked to movement and to transformation: words travel and are turned into new texts. In the poets' texts selected for the analysis, space is also where voices and languages interact. Space is where palimpsestic, superimposed inscriptions take place and where real and imagined environments become intertwined.

Studies on space and literature point to the following distinctions, which account for various perspectives on translingualism:⁹⁵⁷

- The poem *as* space on the page or the page as space (Davidson 2007): it means looking at the arrangement of lines on the page; at typographical features such as the use of italics and quotation marks.
- The poem *in* space: multimodal and intermedia connections: relations between poems and other arts or media.
- The poem *of* space, of urban or natural spaces (cf. Yeung 2015:) I would add mental spaces of thought for Welch and Joris (for the latter in connection with the *noet*). Kenneth White emphasises both conceptual and physical space in the nomad's work, while Deleuze disregards the natural environment.
- The *space of voices* in the poem, including the wandering writer's voice, his/ her address of readers and the insertion of others' voices (also via quotations).

For a focus on otherness and the creation of imaginary spaces through interacting languages and voices, the last two points are most relevant.

⁹⁵⁷ See Ian Davidson, *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry* (2007); *Space, poetic* (2012) and Heather Yeung, *Spatial Engagement with Poetry*. 2017. Also see the methodological considerations on space and mapping (ch.2).

9.1 Liliane Welch: Palimpsestic voices and the creation of imaginary nomadic spaces

9.1.1 Staging other poets on the scene of her poetry

In many of her poems, Welch ponders about the work of other poets, imagining their lives as writers: “We yearn to be like her –”, is what Welch writes about the American poet, Emily Dickinson, in an eponymous poem. She goes on quoting Dickinson when she writes “*a Loaded Gun in Corners,/ yet can’t fathom staying/ sequestered,/ being so private, anonymous/ invisible*” (*This Numinous Bond* 2003: 24)

The lines read like a continuation of another poem entitled “Emily Dickinson’s Stage” (Fire to the Looms Below 1990: 55), in which Welch fancies Dickinson’s writing as the *staging* of imaginary characters. Similarly, Welch looks for ways to *stage* other poets next to herself and inserts a few lines from Dickinson’s work into her own poem and stages them in imagined contexts: she blends the two voices in what I will call a *palimpsestuous connection*.⁹⁵⁸ It seems that Welch, the translingual writer, is listening to Dickinson’s words (and those of other poets) to find her own poetic voice. Listening carefully, the present chapter aims to show, is a crucial aspect of translingual processes.

Writing about other poets is also a way for Welch to reflect on her own authorial posture. “Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman” (*Dream Museum* 1995: 55), is a poem which succinctly sums up two complex ways of poetic positioning, with on the one hand, Whitman, the public figure, from whom Welch shrinks away, and Whitman the traveller and lover of freedom whom she admires, and on the other hand, Dickinson to whose quiet voice she feels close while she cannot understand her refusal of moving, even beyond the boundaries of her garden.

To investigate further into translingual processes, I will look at examples of poets whose work Welch reads in other languages, mostly in French, before responding to them in English. The selected poets are nomadic figures, reflecting on exile and between-ness, and trigger comparisons with her own position. Her texts are never translations but imaginative responses, or poetic narratives, in which she discreetly figures in the margin, as observer, listener or imaginary interlocutor.

9.1.2 Rewriting Rimbaud: Analysis of a palimpsestuous relation⁹⁵⁹

As a professor of French literature, Welch particularly liked symbolists and early modernists, with Arthur Rimbaud, her favourite, appearing in many of her own poems.⁹⁶⁰ What has fascinated her is the poet’s

⁹⁵⁸ Sometimes the inserted words are put between quotation marks while in other poems they appear in italics or are completely integrated in the text.

⁹⁵⁹ On difference between palimpsestic and palimpsestuous, see ch. 2.2.

⁹⁶⁰ See (1) her critical work: a chapter on Rimbaud in *Address* where Rimbaud is shown as following the path of immediacy, of “life”. His poems – like any poet’s work – are to be seen as “embodied responses, creatively

language, his imagination and attempts at reinventing, like Baudelaire and Verlaine, the power of words. She also saw parallels between his life of errancy and her own nomadic, migratory life, especially between his rebellion against the bourgeois conventions he was brought up with and her own frustration with what she experienced as dullness and narrow-mindedness in her family and her home town. Esch is another boring and rainy Charleville from which, like Rimbaud, she desperately tried to escape.⁹⁶¹

“He lets in distance”

In *Dispensing Grace*, a section entitled “He lets in distance” with 13 poems is devoted to the French poet, his work and his life (2005: 53-68). Though his name is only mentioned in passing, to anyone vaguely familiar with Rimbaud’s work, it is clear that the poems are connected to his life, to his ceaseless travelling, the places where he stayed; the poems also contain numerous lines recalling his writing while some titles are direct allusions to Rimbaud’s work: “The Drunken Boat,” “The Man with Soles of Wind,” “*The Illuminations*.”

For her presentation of Rimbaud, Welch may have been initially influenced by her reading of a study in which the author, Yves Bonnefoy, merges words from the poems, which he puts in italics, with his own prose writing (*Rimbaud* 1976). Welch’s work however adds *transpoetic*⁹⁶² and *translingual* dimensions: she creates a new poetic text in English, which one may say echoes or ghosts the French words of Rimbaud’s poetry and letters. It is the outcome of what I call a palimpsestuous, transformative process, which offers some visible and audible traces of underlying sources. The mixing of voices and latent heterolingualism is best explored through a closer look at a few passages.

The arrangement of the poems is chronological: Welch’s sequence opens with a poem called “Charleville,” the name of the town in the French Ardennes where Rimbaud grew up.

Wet hell of top hats, bowler hats, umbrellas. Ocean
of silence and provincial mud –
Place de la Musique, thirsty summer evenings,
Soldiers fondling babies to seduce the maids
 Pale blue eyes,
 sulky lips, Rimbaud took it in.

interpretive, to the exigencies of our own time” (1979: xiii). (2) Several poems in different collections refer to Rimbaud, notably in *Dream Museum*; the analysis here focuses on the poems included in *Dispensing Grace* (2005: 54-68).

⁹⁶¹ In the context of the present study, Rimbaud’s love of foreign languages may also be relevant; see Bonnefoy 1976: 176.

⁹⁶² *Transpoetic* is a term I borrow from Hédi Bouraoui, *Transpoétique. Éloge du nomadisme* (2005), see ch. 3.2. ; see also Marília Librandi et al., *Transpoetic Exchange. Haroldo de Campos, Octavio Paz, and Other Multiversal Dialogues* (2020).

The lines are clearly reminiscent of Rimbaud's early poems entitled "À la musique."⁹⁶³ In Welch's poem Rimbaud is staged as sulky onlooker who mocks the Local concerts and their settings thus indirectly indicating his impatience to create a very different language and art. Here is what Rimbaud writes (in a poem which is much longer than Welch's):

Sur la place taillée en mesquines pelouses,
Square où tout est correct, les arbres et les fleurs,
Tous les bourgeois poussifs qu'étranglent les chaleurs
Portent, les jeudis soirs, leurs bêtises jalouses.

In the next four stanzas, he continues his description of the bourgeois audience before pointing out the young soldiers listening from the fringes and his own position as an observer on the outside:

Au bord des gazons verts ricanent des voyous ;
Et, rendus amoureux par le chant des trombones,
Très naïfs, et fumant des roses, les pioupious
Caressent les bébés pour enjôler les bonnes ...

Moi, je suis, débraillé comme un étudiant,
Sous les verts marronniers les alertes fillettes :
Elles le savent bien ; et tournent en riant,
Vers moi, leurs grands yeux pleins de choses indiscretes.

Je ne dis pas un mot, je regarde toujours ...

(« À la musique. Place de la gare tous les jeudis soirs, à Charleville » (*Poésies complètes* 1998 : 77-78)

One will immediately notice more differences than parallels between both works, with changes of perspective, of emphasis and interpretation. The second word in Welch's poem "hell" well renders the atmosphere but also foreshadows Rimbaud's *Une saison en enfer*. « Très naïfs, et fumant des roses, les pioupious/ Caressent les bébés pour enjôler les bonnes » in Welch's text is *Soldiers fondling babies to seduce the maids*, the italics signalling an insertion. Welch's poem also has a line with no apparent equivalent in Rimbaud: "He dressed and undressed before the mirror/ of poetry, his private boudoir." It could be a reference to Aragon, "La poésie est un miroir brouillé de notre société et chaque poète souffle sur ce miroir"—or it is a humorous comment on the poet's posturing, with a hint at the cover of Welch's collection *Dispensing Grace*: a painting by Colville showing a naked, not very young woman in her boudoir facing a mirror, with a man in evening wear observing her from the background. It would then be an amusing example of latent transmedial author positioning in translingual work.

⁹⁶³ « À la musique. Place de la gare tous les jeudis soirs, à Charleville » (Les premiers textes: l'année 1870); two versions are given in *Poésies complètes* 1998 : 77 and 118.

A first juxtaposition of Welch's and Rimbaud's poems raises questions of sources, of translation and differences. A detailed study of origins is not the purpose of my enquiry, the aim is to get some insights into how in Welch's work the poetic persona establishes a palimpsestuous relationship with the voice in Rimbaud's poems.

The palimpsest as metaphor and concept proves a productive tool to understand how the transposition operates. My attention goes to instances of erasure or reduction (of Rimbaud's French text) and of construction, the emergence of traces and processes of reinscription, effects of estrangement, the movements and positioning of the poetic persona in Welch's poems, as well as to palimpsestic writing as dialogue and an implicit narrative thread that links both poets' voices. Moreover, as examples of implicit heterolingualism, Welch's texts require a careful scrutiny of typographical breaks, notably the use of italics.

Reading Welch's poems as palimpsests brings a new perspective on her texts as translingual work, especially when the palimpsest is seen as erasure and new writing, as destruction and re-construction. Palimpsestic writing involves a more or less careful scraping away of the old underlying text. In the case of Welch's poem, the most striking effects of deletion consist in the elimination or overwriting of the French words and the sounds they evoke, in many cases the removal of rhymes and alexandrines (as in *Charleville* and *The Drunken Boat*) and an overall reduction of Rimbaud's work and life to thirteen (and a half) pages of free verse in English. Another striking modification occurs through the change from Rimbaud's frequent use of the first person to an observer's third person presentation.⁹⁶⁴ In *A la musique*, Rimbaud, the poetic persona, watches the young girls whereas in "*Charleville*" the persona observes Rimbaud; we may assume the poems are (the memory of) a woman's empathetic observations of the French poet with meta-reflections on what words and writing have meant for him.

This transformation from first to third person stands for a change in perspective and for the *distance* that prevails between the speaker's words and the object of the poems. It introduces a further dimension of the chosen title, "He lets in distance." They are not only texts about far away places: Welch's poems are independent hypertexts or superscripts that reveal a voice of their own.

The emergence of heterolingual insertions

Supposing however that Welch's texts are the surface text of a palimpsest, where and how do Rimbaud's words emerge in the poems?

⁹⁶⁴ For examples of translated quotations interspersed in Welch's poems, see pages 57, 60 ("I is another"), 64, 66, 67, 68 (in *Dispensing Grace*).

In fact, a typographic peculiarity immediately catches readers' eyes: in every poem, some words or passages appear in italics, often well integrated in the flow of lines – like foreign words interspersed in a text. They are all **citations** from Rimbaud's work and should be perceived as his voice erupting in Welch's poems. But they come in English translations, Welch's own translation we may assume, and become part of the new poems. At first sight, they correspond to quotations in translation according to Suchet's spectrum of heterolingual elements: yet because they are well integrated in the syntax of Welch's text, they could count as an additional category.

I will discuss some of them in relation to effects of estrangement and to poet positioning.

A few examples

The Drunken Boat ⁹⁶⁵ (<i>Dispensing Grace</i> 2004:56) with italics as in Welch's text	Bateau ivre: corresponding passages quotes from <i>Oeuvres complètes</i> 1998: 203-207 The words corresponding to the italics are underlined..
He lets in distance, lets in the milky sea. Not the prison of teachers, but the inside waters, when surf assaults reef – At dawn, unmoored blessing, countless golden birds rise. Distance. The burning deep.	(Welch's opening lines are her response to Rimbaud's extensive descriptions in the first pages)
Charleville. All is a cemetery. The river Meuse a Lethe. He lays his cheek against the pine hull of the boat, good luck from children, who want to hold his <i>golden singing fish</i>. Why can't he swim with them? Why can't he sail aimlessly where hurricanes lend wings?	J'aurais voulu montrer aux enfants <u>ces dorades</u> Du flot bleu, <u>ces poissons d'or</u>, <u>ces poissons chantants</u> (206)
Cataracts loosed by a young poet, the backwoods split by dreams; the drunken boat, cork-like dances through star-infused tides, tempest-tossed and iceberg-grazed on the vast <i>Poem of the Sea</i>. <i>Steaming. Free. Mad plank</i>. Yet, Old World parapets mesmerize him still.	Et dès lors, je me suis baigné dans <u>le Poème</u> <u>De la mer</u>, infusé d'astres, et lactescent, Dévorant les azurs verts ; où, flottaison blême Et ravie, un noyé pensif parfois descend : (204) Plus léger qu'un bouchon j'ai dansé sur les flots (203) Gla ciers, soleils d'argent, flots nacreux, ci eux de braises ! ...(205) ... <u>la carcasse ivre d'eau</u> (206) libre, fumant, monté de brumes violettes Moi qui trouais le ciel rougeoyant comme un mur ... Qui courais, taché de lunules électriques, Planche folle, escorté des hippocampes noirs ... Je regrette l'Europe aux anciens parapets 207

⁹⁶⁵ Welch's poem ("The Drunken Boat") is barely one page of free verse, compared to Rimbaud's 25 quatrains in alexandrine verse. The subdivision into three parts is my own and aims at highlighting different forms of rewriting in translation.

Estrangement and the poet's affirmative positioning

A key feature of interlingual palimpsests is the tension between texts, between voices languages and perspectives, between surface text and underlying voices (in another language, for the cases here considered).

Tension, I argue, entails estrangement. It stands for distance and separation *after* (or possibly alternating with) a time of alliance or close association. There is still empathy but also an awareness of distance or detachment. The newly gained distance may also arouse a sense of wonder, a rediscovery of what now looks or sounds unfamiliar and has to be re-acquired and resituated.

In the case of poems that are being inscribed on texts in another language the challenge for poets is to negotiate their own voice through their poetic persona whom we as readers encounter and listen to. How do poems express the ambivalent relation between of entangled voices which are both close to each other and yet different without the surface voice completely merging with the underlying text (or vice versa)? The notions of estrangement and wonder can help us reconstruct / understand the following complex process which governs the palimpsestuous relationship of Welch's texts with those of Rimbaud:

For Rimbaud, estrangement from the bourgeois life in Charleville was a first motivation for his fascination with poetry and through his writing he expresses his frustration but also the sense of wonder at the origin of a world in words that he strived to create.

Welch's poems are an attempt to render a reader's sense of wonder at Rimbaud's poetic world by transposing her response (and positioning) into another poetic voice.

For the present study, the tensions resulting from interlingual palimpsests, estrangement, wonder and liberation through the creation of a new poetic work are best analysed through a close reading of selected passages.

We will see that in a palimpsestuous relationship, the notion of estrangement stands for a recreation of Rimbaud's experience but also for an attempt to create her own poetic persona and eventually to distance herself from the 'model' through her own language. A sense of wonder at similarities gradually becomes a recognition of separation.

Distance: the title suggests the promises of unknown worlds that Rimbaud's poetry offers the reader, remote countries, adventure, a break with conventions. Distance however is not only openness it also evokes separation, remoteness and detachment.

"Charleville Sonata"

The last poem of the Rimbaud sequence (68) clarifies the frame of the sequence: it is about Charleville *today*, which the speaker, together with her companion, appears to visit trying to revive the past and conjure the echo of the poet's words.

In the central lines, an alternation of third- and first-person pronouns epitomizes the merging of his voice with her memories of texts:

[...]
 Charleville today
 lacks its demystifier, its poet of revolt.

Here he wrote I have never belonged to this race.
 Here he wrote everything is well behaved, the flowers
 and the trees.
 Here he wrote free, on fire, I dug a hole in the
 reddening sky.
 Here he wrote departure into new affection, new noise.
 He wrote,
 I am the Master of Silence.

Sensing music unheard, we stop.

If we read the poem as palimpsestic overwriting, it is Welch's words, including her English translations, which constitute the visible surface. They cover Rimbaud's French words that constitute examples of latent heterolingualism, situated on the threshold of audibility, immersed in the syntax of the new poem. The role of the italics as visible marks are reminiscent of the quotation marks on which Joris reflects in relation to "Goosefeet" by Celan. In Welch's poem, the absence of a comma before the quotation marks further strengthens the impression of fusion.

A few reflections on Welch and Rimbaud in English: a question of ethos?

Welch loved Rimbaud's poetry, which she read and taught in French.⁹⁶⁶ Her poems are evidence of the appeal that the music of lines, his choice of words and rhythms had on her. I cannot help wondering why she refrains from inserting Rimbaud's own words through quotations in French. One may find plausible answers (such as publishers' requirements, considerations of readers' language skills) but she does not explicitly tell us about her motivations for transforming or "silencing" Rimbaud's French voice.

Only an oblique approach with sensitivity to implicit poetic considerations may clarify the issue. Considering Welch's poems as **palimpsests**, as hypertexts, allows us to see her efforts to impose her own

⁹⁶⁶ See letters from her students.

voice. The words in italics are the remnants of the underlying text but attest a partial assimilation⁹⁶⁷. Only by repressing the former text can the scribe impose –literally– a new text. Creation requires destruction. Rimbaud’s poetry helps Welch find her own voice, a distinct voice, in a different language. (See Dillon’s references to intimacy and separation as features of palimpsests.) Rimbaud is the admired model but a palimpsestuous rewriting requires innovative changes: the translingual process is the most remarkable in Welch’s case. A palimpsest suggests that here is no identification, le *je est un autre* also applies to her relation to the admired model: Estrangement is indispensable; despite the parallels, distance is upheld and increased.⁹⁶⁸

For Welch, distinguishing between natural languages does not make sense in relation to poetry. Like Rimbaud, she believes that the language of poetry is universal, like music, and eventually ends in silence (see “Charleville Sonata”). In Rimbaud she finds inspiration to describe poetic multilingualism: and harmony in language: “He/ builds crystal boulevards/ from pink and orange sand, understands/ all languages, contains/ all lives.” A little further unity is stressed: “Midnight and/ darkness speaks in tongues:/ *To possess truth in one body and one soul.*” (“*The Illuminations*” 61) Rimbaud spoke many languages, “five languages” (see “The Man with Soles of Wind” 60) , but as he explains in a letter, the future of poetry is one language : « Du reste, toute parole étant idée, le temps d’un langage universel viendra ! [...] Cette langue sera de l’âme pour l’âme, résumant tout, parfums, sons, couleurs, de la pensée accrochant la pensée et tirant. » (*Œuvres complètes* 1998 : 154)

⁹⁶⁷ May possibly be compared to cultural « cannibalism » in postcolonial studies, another way of seeing the palimpsestuous relationship?

⁹⁶⁸ “He lets in distance” may be interpreted not only as the open perspectives his poetry offers but also as the distance that she gains through his example.

9.1.3 Thought and imagination in translingual processes

“*Commedia Mia. A Journey through Dante*”⁹⁶⁹

This sequence about her reading of Dante, is part of a late collection of poems (Gathered in *Memory's Hands* 2006: 61-80). *Commedia Mia* is the only work in Welch's poetry collections with explicit heterolingual elements. Each of the eighteen poems has a translated quotation from Dante's *Divine Comedy* as its heading, which is then followed by the Italian original. The poems are Welch's responses to selected passages, as in the case of Ulysses, a wanderer and master of “beguiling words” (67). The direct address towards the end of the poem (“Restless prince/ of departures”) has a dialogic quality, while the whole sequence is an example of translingual rewriting in English after reading the text in Italian.

In a poem, *Dinner at a Country Inn*, she muses in general terms about how thoughts and memories connect as we interrelate in talks with others. With its questions about locations, it is a pertinent introduction to texts in which literary voices from Luxembourg and its periphery merge with her own memories and responses to the world she has left. Mostly implicitly, the poem also raises questions about translingual processes.

A poetic representation of voices in multilayered spaces of thought

“Dinner at a Country Inn” is a talk on the location of thought which can be read as an illustration of the brain as palimpsest in movement, as described by Dillon (2007; see 2.2.2):

“Dinner at a Country Inn”⁹⁷⁰

The diners' chitchat clammers over
 portraits of British queens, through the room toward our
 table
 and us, who ignore it, pondering Heidegger's phrase:
 Language is the house of Being and man is its
shepherd, and Hannah Arendt's question *Where are we*
really
when we're thinking? Remember the dislocation,
 you say, “and the relocation, when
 with others we draw upon shared thoughts.”
 The dining guests talk louder.
 Outside, beyond the marshes,
 across the bay, Albert county glances sideways
 at us. It flames red where frost has kissed

⁹⁶⁹ See a short extract introduced in ch. 1. For more details about the Welches' experience of reading, and re-reading *La Divina Commedia* in the original Italian version, which inspired the poems, see Cyril Welch, *Dante: Three Meditations* (2007), in particular the Preface.

⁹⁷⁰ I have left out extensive notes on places mentioned (the actual inn, Albert County and exact locations of translated often paraphrased passages from the original philosophical texts and the poetry by Elizabeth Bishop). They could be a diversion from a focus on the construction of imaginary spaces and translingual processes.

its maples, yellow where sun beats on birches, while we,
 two clowns from another show, continue musing
 about the habitat of thought. Plato naming *amazement*
 as its beginning, amazement at what is familiar and
known ...

Outside, at the crossroads, a swarm of bikers
 guns it up the hill, fractures the air like a battalion from hell.
 The guests' mouth anger, their eyes flash:

something to disapprove of, upholding peace
 is their art.

Language speaks: Heidegger's thought crosses ours, braves
 bikers' roars and diners' raised voices rocking the
 room, as Elizabeth Bishop
 comes back to us, it is like what we imagine knowledge to be:
 dark, salt, clear, moving, utterly free,
 drawn from the cold hard mouth
of the world. As we finish our carrot cake,
 the road and room have calmed. Our eyes meet.
 "The residence of thinking," you say,
 "is a place of stillness and solitude."

(Dispensing Grace 2004, 17-18)

The poem revolves around a pleasant, casual occasion where a network of voices arises to question the path of thoughts and meaning. For the reader, the words and lines in italics point to insertions of text by "others": several spatial and mental layers appear, which can be linked to distinct visual and audible features that provide the space for what I call translingual processes. The poet stages a scene in which different levels interact:

- The dining room at the country inn provides a basic, realistic setting. Note that it is given a historical dimension through the portraits of British queens. With its windows it opens on the country outside and the world at large, presented as natural environment and as space for the deafening noise of motorbikes.
- The level of thought ("habitat of thought") erupts with the reference to Heidegger and most significantly through the question asked by Hannah Arendt: *Where are we really when we are thinking?* and Plato's emphasis on *amazement* as the beginning of thinking.
- The level of poetry and imagination triggered by sensual perceptions of the world, as suggested by the words quoted from the American poet, Elizabeth Bishop.

The distinct voices, words and noises, together with interrelating thought, are assembled in a dynamic collage, also reminiscent of different planes or windows of reality in a Picasso painting. For me as reader,

the text represents a poetic and open process of meaning making and an opening on translingual routes of thinking.

Where are we really when we are thinking? This is the question that one could also ask about translingual writing processes. The reference to “dislocation” and “relocation” of shared thoughts corresponds to notions of decentered languages and the creation of new spaces which studies of translingual writing highlight. (see ch. 3.3). Whether they imply articulations of implicit named languages (English, Greek, German) or of poetic and philosophical language against a background of chitchat and other noises, translingual processes become tangible through overlapping physical and imaginary spaces. Space appears as an indispensable dimension for all the multiple and diverging routes on which thinkers and speakers engage.⁹⁷¹

9.1.4 The creation of imaginary transpoetic spaces

“Edmond Dune in New Brunswick”: Opening a transatlantic translingual space⁹⁷²

In this essay included in *Frescoes* 1998: 91-94, Welch describes a project she devised for her literature students in New Brunswick, who read French prose poems by Edmond Dune, a Luxembourg poet.⁹⁷³ It is the poet as teacher, or the teacher as poet, who provides insights into some aspects of creative processes which are also relevant for a study of translingualism.

Interestingly, the setting is similar to the one evoked in “Dinner at a Country Inn,” as her class appears to meet at the same location, whose congenial atmosphere contributes an important element to Welch’s staging of the scene. Welch sketches out a portrait of the poet, “A Luxembourger, he was not a member of the French literary establishment.” She adds a quotation from a text in which Dune presents himself:

I belong to that Foreign Legion of French writers who fight at the outposts to defend the advances of what is called ‘Frenchness’ I’m one of those lost soldiers who don’t expect from the Republic of Letters any medal of recognition, not even the one for poets fallen on the battlefield of oblivion.
(92)

Choosing this passage, Welch shows that Dune’s self-positioning as a wanderer and outsider speaks to her.⁹⁷⁴ She mentions a few of Dune’s works and always gives the titles in English, without any reference

⁹⁷¹ P.S. Welch may have written the poem as response to, or in interaction with her husband, who around the same time wrote an essay entitled “Thinking of Hannah Arendt” (2004: 192-206). His arguments and reflections are not considered in my reading of the poem.

⁹⁷² Also see: “Den Nic Weber, d’Liliane Welch an e Lunch zu Éiere vum Edmond Dune.” https://cni.public.lu/fr/actualites/objet-mois/20201/03/objet_du_mois_mars_2021.html

⁹⁷³ See the note by Wilhelm and Seil in *Dictionary of Luxembourg authors* for more information.

⁹⁷⁴ She probably also enjoys his irony or sarcasm when he mixes his experience as a soldier in the French Foreign Legion with his reception as a poet.

to the original. Nor does she comment on her students' approach of the language in the text which they read and (probably) discuss in French, though for most of them French is not their first language. Indeed, her project (as she describes it) does not focus on language differences or specificities. Her aim is to stimulate readerly responses to texts created *in a foreign context*.

It is a form of translingualism that remains an implicit process while her focus is on the creation of imaginary spaces. Students are invited to imagine ways to *stage* one of Dune's prose poems, to describe a scene that it evokes for them, in a space that would render their (Canadian) response to Dune's texts. Her central question is "What do they read into Dune's prose poems?" The words she uses to describe the outcomes are significant: students "dramatize," "recreate" or "reconfigure" the selected pieces with great imagination, yet she does not comment on any instances of translanguaging Dune's words into their own French. The focus is on students' sense of poetry not on possible linguistic hurdles or on how they respond to puzzling words. For herself, this transposition of Dune into a Canadian context is what counts:

Far from Luxembourg, we continue to talk on the Marshlands Inn's veranda. The sharp autumn wind hastens down Bridge street, it smells of Dune's "winter, white word, silence and dream." Stirred and thrilled I walk home with my companion. In a context antithetical to Europe's old parapets, we have tapped a secret spring that opened panels in the riddle of poetry. (94)

"Terres Rouges: Minescapes": A transborder space of memories

The essay (*Frescoes* 1998: 85-90) evokes a multidimensional *transpoetic* experience, in which Welch evokes the region around Esch-sur-Alzette where she grew up. With *minescapes* she coins a term that recalls mindscapes – that which the country now has become for her. *Terres Rouges* refers to the red earth that best represents the mining country and to its "gigantic steel mills emitting vapours scarlet like the silk frock coats worn by Lucifer or the linen nightgowns of revolutionaries" (85). *Terres Rouges* however is also an allusion to the work of a poet who gives her the words to describe her attachment to the land. "What remains of my childhood there, its spell of mystery, I search out best in poetry. Via the poems of Anne Blanchot-Philippi." (85)

Who is Anne Blanchot-Philippi?⁹⁷⁵ A border poet, in the true sense of the word: the father French from Lorraine and the mother Luxembourgish: she grew up in Audun le Tiche and went to the Lycée de jeunes filles – Welch's own school – in Esch. Her poetic work is all in French. (For more details, see Dictionary of Luxembourg authors.) As she does with Dune, Welch wants to share her readings with her students and in this case feels emotionally engaged:

⁹⁷⁵ See the note by Sandra Schmit in *Dictionary of Luxembourg authors* for more information.

I return to southern Luxembourg, wondering whether the line, “But I shall only be truly myself in that land”⁹⁷⁶ will ground me enough there to teach again with conviction about a place abandoned fifty years ago. For the moment the “iron song” in these texts speaks loudest when the Maritime sky outside my window performs a ballet around the burgundy cloud-pillars. (85)

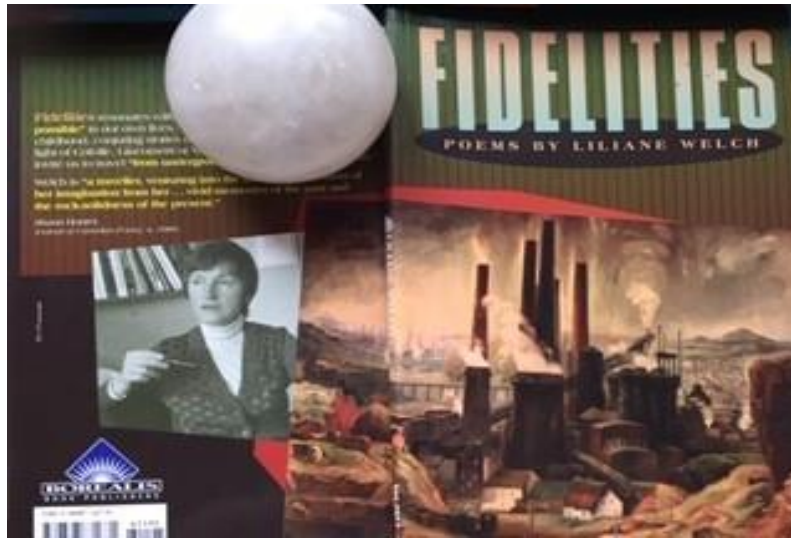


Figure 17. Liliane Welch, cover of *Fidelities* (1997): *Terres Rouges*, painting by Harry Rabinger

Welch’s text has a strong *palimpsestic translingual quality*: her voice echoes with words and lines in French recast in English, with a Canadian Maritime background. The rhythmic quality of Anne Blanchot-Philippi’s poems are further enhanced with references to the painting by Harry Rabinger (see 4.2.2: it figures on the cover of *Fidelities* 1997) and to two movies based on Blanchot’s poetry: *My Country* and *My Gardens of Red Earth* by Gaston Rollinger.⁹⁷⁷ As in the essay about Dune, **Welch once again juxtaposes New Brunswick to Luxembourg**: home for her, it seems, consists of superimposed spaces that she explores in her memory and in poetry. And in both texts, she shows her preference for “peripheral” voices.

9.1.5 A nomad’s memories and dreams

The Duet

I

Southern Luxembourg lies in wait,
a daunting palimpsest.
Its horizons are the past and the future,
the present its scribe.
A site I like to return to, and often do:
the far-off draw. From this ground

⁹⁷⁶ Welch’s translation

⁹⁷⁷ Welch’s correspondence with Rollinger is documented by many letters in the archives. (L-190 II.R2) It is a bilingual exchange, Welch writing in English, Rollinger in German.

have branched off what happened
 and what is still meant to be.
 The hometown's red
 mineshafts and flaming night skies
 are abandoned now,
 yet always carried along.
 They restore and restore.

II

Maritime Canada's wide-open skies
 are always calling. Land of sea-breezes and north winds
 that keep me fit and alert. This is the place
 I like to inhabit, and sometimes believe I own:
 the magically generous.
 Around its empty roads, the earth stretches wildly –
 all woods and marshes and green light.
 Left open, its gates and unhurried pull
 keep together a plethora of secret destinations.
 It stills and stills. (*Crossings* 2010: 67)

Edens

I pictured America as paradise,
 a gigantic meteor fallen from the future,
 home to the soldiers who ended
 the war and gave us children
 chewing gum, and Switzerland was
 also a garden of Eden
 made by confectioners, its mountains
 so many chocolate days of another life.
 And France was a bazaar with peasant women
 selling live rabbits and camembert.
 I craved those places until it hurt
 as they crowded into my scribbles,
 prayers, or exploded all night
 glowing round the room.
 They stretched over my eyes,
 buzzing like hallucinatory fairs.

And Luxembourg?
 Crimson skies of a mining town, storm-tossed
 steel arks with sirens, three churches
 mounting guard with belfries and stained glass
 eyes. Was it a stage-setting, a puppet show?
 I startled into life there, year after year. (*Fidelities* 1997: 3)

9.2 Joris: Staging multivoiced responses to disaster

A link with the present pandemic was surely not planned, yet reading *The Agony of I.B.* and *The Gulf* opens perspectives on translingual writing as response to events whose reverberations are felt across borders. Though both texts start from real events – a personal disaster and a natural catastrophe – Joris attempts meaning making through the creation of poetic spaces where real-life voices mingle with echoes from literature. The texts deal with situations which require poetic heteroglossia because one language is not enough to evoke loss and disaster.

They are both dramatic pieces meant to be performed. Better than any other genre, theatre allows the writer to mix voices and merge his own words with those of characters. *The Agony of I.B.* follows some of the conventions of the genre, such as a subdivision into acts and scenes, while the structure of *The Gulf* is an innovative composition integrating various genres and musical scores. For an understanding of explicit and implicit language interactions the palimpsest as metaphor and concept proves to be a suitable tool to observe movements and translingual processes as key features of the new poetic space that emerges.

Studies on multilingualism in contemporary drama tend to stress sociocultural dimensions and explore distinctions between implicit and explicit forms of multilingualism (de Toffoli 2015; Conter 2017).⁹⁷⁸ On stage, multilingual theatre is most effective when it can rely on the audience's own experiences with the languages. Often, comic elements are underlined.

Joris takes a different approach and integrates aesthetic and poetic elements in the interaction of voices without neglecting links to facts and topical issues. What he creates might come under the name of **poetic translingual** drama. The following analyses are based on the published texts, which does not preclude occasional reflections on dimensions of performance.

My main interest is in Joris's innovative approach of translingualism, which is often seen as self-writing (Karpinski 2012; Ausoni 2018). But does the focus on translingualism have to be on *self* and auto-translation? Joris shows that other driving forces may lie behind translingualism.⁹⁷⁹ In his section focusses on how he takes translingual writing as a means to explore the lives of *others*: "translating" their lives into poetic dramatic pieces, he aims at meaning making through crossing languages.

Translingual writing often involves the juxtaposition of *two* languages and situations. My interest in these texts lies in the articulations of several languages and voices and in the ways in which Joris stages

⁹⁷⁸ For Conter's distinctions between different forms of *Mehrsprachigkeit*, see explanations in the glossary.

⁹⁷⁹ In a well-argued paper (2018), Ausoni also highlights other aspects and puts translingualism in a broader context, though always in relation with specific aspects of Francophone literature.

interrelations. (Staging is understood as *mise en scène*, *inszenieren*). For the analysis of *The Agony*, the term **orchestration**, borrowed from Bakhtin, is used to further underline the constructed nature of interacting voices.⁹⁸⁰ Recognizing multiple voices, we wonder whose text - texts—we read: How relevant is the **palimpsest** to speak about the superscription, erasure and merging of texts? Can it highlight the poet- speaker's affirmation of a new voice versus *latent* other voices or implicit heterolingualism?

9.2.1 *The Agony of I.B.* : Whose text is it? A wealth of translingual strategies

Pierre Joris has briefly presented his work and the circumstances of its creation:



Asked by the TNL (Theatre National du Luxembourg) to be author-in-residence for the 2015-2016 season, I proposed [...] a 3-act drama concerning the death of poet Ingeborg Bachmann. She died — mythically speaking — through fire, falling asleep with a lit cigarette; though what actually caused the 3-week coma from which she wasn't able to come out, was her addiction to pills. In my play she is visited by the three most important men in her life: playwright Max Frisch, composer Hans Werner Henze, and her greatest and earliest love, Paul Celan. <https://x-peri.blogspot.com/2016/12/pierre-joris-opening-scene-from-agony.html>⁹⁸¹

9.2.1.1 I.B. versus Ingeborg Bachmann.⁹⁸²

The play is set in Rome in 1973 and contains detailed stage instructions which enhance the mixing of realistic details with increasingly dream-like situations.⁹⁸³ It is a sequence of imagined monologues and dialogues, which in addition to Max Frisch, Hans Werner Henze and Paul Celan, include interpolations by two other ex-lovers, Max Opel and Henry Kissinger, as well as by Maria Teofili, an Italian-speaking character playing the roles of Bachmann's confidante, of nurse at the hospital and of phone receptionist. Based on the published text (2016), my reading focusses on the protagonist as a poet between voices, a nomad. I approach it as a play that creates imaginative spaces for the dying I.B. who remembers a life on the move in search of her own voice as well as her intense relationships with other poets and artists.

⁹⁸⁰ See Glossary.

⁹⁸¹ Joris adds: The play premiered, **as a staged reading**, at the TNL on 14 June with Sascha Ley as Bachmann, Nickel Bösenberg as Frisch, Fred Frenay as Henze, Raoul Schlechter as Celan & **myself as the poet/presenter**. [my emphasis]

⁹⁸² The poster makes use of the cover page of Ingeborg Bachmann. *Sämtliche Gedichte* (2003): "Umschlagmotiv: Isolde Moser/ Dr. Heinz Bachmann (Foto)."

⁹⁸³ The factual framework of the text is undeniable: almost all the details in the drama can be traced in various documents about Bachmann's life or in her own writing. They are consolidated by the writings of those who have marked her life, notably Paul Celan and Hans Werner Henze. A precious source of information for me was the biography by Andrea Stoll, *Ingeborg Bachmann. Der dunkle Glanz der Freiheit*. 2015

Readers could be tempted to see Joris's drama as biographical or critical writing about Ingeborg Bachmann. A first warning against this approach appears in the title of the book where Joris avoids using the full name. *The Agony of I.B.* is a poet's fictional text about what he imagines Bachmann's last days to have been like.⁹⁸⁴

In *The Agony of I.B.* Joris explores numerous forms of interaction, alluding to real-life encounters in Bachmann's life. My objective, however, is not to show his work as research on Bachmann but as a literary piece, which I propose reading through the lens of key notions of nomadism and multilingualism. Why does he stress hetero- or multilingual elements in a play about a German poet? What effects does his use of English have for the meaning making process that, as I assume, underlies his translingual writing? I have a particular interest in Joris's orchestration of voices and in his implementation of a large repertoire of translingual and translational practices, which move from the apparent realism of language switches in act 1 to the creation of an idiosyncratic poetic space, which encompasses past and present, voices and echoes or dreams and recitations from poets' texts in act 2 and act 3.

9.2.1.2 I.B., a nomad whose predicament is constant in-between-ness

With I.B., Joris creates a patently nomad character. Rather than investigate how the play deals with the myth of Bachmann,⁹⁸⁵ my reading refers to cornerstones of nomadic theory, including her elation to multiple voices and languages.⁹⁸⁶ Literally, the dying poet is on the threshold between life and death, described as *barzakh* – a state of between-ness, which is of the key notions of Joris's poetics. In Act one, speaking to herself I.B. reads aloud a passage she has just written: "The in-between that is not just the page but that is time, in-between time. Time is in-between, in fact that is all time is: an in-between. What was the word Mohammed used? Bar...bar... Barz-zakh." (2016: 17) *Barzakh* is time and space, the path that you travel between death and rebirth, as later pointed out in the exchange with Celan. (2016: 79)

I.B. emerges as the traveller and nomad poet who in many ways fits the description Joris gives in his poetics. All her life, she has been on the move. Her origins from a border region, Carinthia, are said to account for her dislike of borders and the appeal that other locations have held for her. In the dream-like recollection of her past, she mentions many of the places where she stayed: Vienna, Paris, Rome and

⁹⁸⁴ In order to underline my focus on the character in Joris' play and not on the real persons I use the initials I.B. as soon as the focus moves from the real person to the imagined figure on stage.

⁹⁸⁵ Cf. the reference to the Cassandra myth in the play: "I'm not Cassandra, I don't want to be Cassandra" (37),

⁹⁸⁶ In the reception of Bachmann's work, the term nomad does not seem to be used, as in German it rarely has the meaning of the French *esprit nomade*, in which I understand it. To refer to her life of travelling, Andrea Stoll speaks of "vagabondage" (168).

Egypt. She lives between cultures and languages, but also stands for a memory of Austria as *Vielvölkerstaat*. Henze's statement is well suited to evoke her multilayered identity: "You are Wendisch, my country-cousin, neither tedesca nor austriaca, a Carantanian slave, slovene, you are ..." (2016: 46). She picks up from there, insisting on borders she had to cross: "I've travelled that road, I spent my youth down there, south, in the corner, surrounded by borders to be crossed – that's why I have this travel bug, borders need to be crossed ... " (2016: 47)⁹⁸⁷

Mentioned on several occasions, Egypt, or the desert, appears as the space par excellence for a nomad's wandering. The desert transforms the traveller, as Max Opel's effusive words sum up his memories of their visit to Egypt: ⁹⁸⁸

She was there, very much there. In Egypt. In the desert. I never saw anyone who was more there than she was. [...] Only in the desert, she became herself, a magic, full presence.. A woman, a true goddess. A strange reverse descent. As if going through the cities was the journey through hell and she emerged in the underworld as Inanna, the goddess, finally home in paradise, the desert. She loved the desert, called it her chosen exile. (61)

I.B.'s references to Egypt, recall the experiences told in "her Franza"⁹⁸⁹, but also Celan's poem "In Ägypten" that he wrote for her.⁹⁹⁰ When Paul Celan appears in the play: she says, "Do you feel the sand underfoot? To go into the desert is the most powerful change you can create, dry fire cleanses the soul and gives life back." (69)

Egypt as exile is also at the core of I.B.'s words to Celan, speaking about what happens after they die: "We are out of Egypt, thus somewhat closer to a promised land, maybe, no?" (Act III, sc 3: 80) For I.B., Egypt, the world of nomads, is exile (from hell) and paradise; it is the in-between place of escape and transformation. I.B. is a nomad whose restless life is marked by encounters with multiple voices; through motives of nomadism and the desert, Joris evokes the wanderer in search of self (*Opfer-Täter* in II, 1: 68); haunted by death.

I.B. appears as a figure of between-ness, between life and death; between places, characters, visions. As readers, we also perceive her moving and emerging between languages.

⁹⁸⁷ In her biography of Bachmann, Andrea Stoll *describes* her life of travelling and also stresses her multilingualism in her correspondence with Henze, which she refers to as "Der in vier Sprachen balancierende, zwischen ästhetisch pointierter Konversation und hemmungsloser Klatschlust hin und her springende Bachmann-Henze-Briefwechsel" (2015: 144).

⁹⁸⁸ Adolf Opel, *Ingeborg Bachmann in Ägypten: "Landschaft, für die Augen gemacht sind"*, 1996. Im Frühjahr 1964 reiste die Dichterin Ingeborg Bachmann siebeneinhalb Wochen lang durch Ägypten und den Sudan. Ihr damaliger Begleiter, der Publizist Adolf Opel, hat die Reise jetzt in Text und Bild rekonstruiert.

⁹⁸⁹ *Der Fall Franza* is an unfinished novel in which Bachmann processes her memories of Egypt.

⁹⁹⁰ "In Ägypten," from *Gegenlicht*, in *Die Gedichte, Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe* (2005: 42). See also the translation by Joris, *The Collected Earlier Poetry. Memory Rose into Threshold Speech* (2020).

9.2.1.3 The orchestration of translingual processes and reflections on tolerance of otherness

In this play the challenge for Joris, as I see it, consists in **finding aesthetic means to** render the characters' multilingual repertoires. He wants to turn the multiplicity of voices into a driving force for the play (which has no real plot): he breaks up the discourse in the dominant language while still aiming to create an artistically coherent whole, which respects the expectations and linguistic abilities of the audience (and readers).

I borrow the idea of orchestration from Bakhtin who writes "the novel is the maximally complete register of all social voices of the era." (1982, 2004: 430-431) and adapt this statement for an analysis of voices in poetic texts (including drama) **where not so much the social as the aesthetic dimension is crucial for meaning making.**

Let's recall the languages at play in *The Agony of I.B.* A crucial point is that they all come in variations of everyday language and as literary language through quotations and translations. This intralingual diversity accounts for the range of the repertoire and the sheer impossibility of counting languages.

- **English** is the dominant language, a fact that would justify a classification of the text as "literature in English."
- German is the language that the major characters would use in real life: in the text it appears mostly in translation.
- Italian is the language of the location in which the play is set: it mainly provides some *couleur Locale*.
- Words in further languages, French, Latin and Spanish, are occasionally inserted.

The Agony of I.B. remains a primarily translingual text as the dominant language, English, neither corresponds to the language of the real-life characters nor to their language of their poetic work (Bachmann and Celan). It is a **vehicular language** for the presentation of Bachmann and her lovers; only gradually does it emerge as **the language of poetry in translation**. However, one must remember that Joris too is a translingual writer, who insists on his **own position in language** as always in-between. Through staging scenes and orchestrating voices, he indicates the principles that rule his approach of languages. The notion of orchestration is also helpful to understand the strategies, which Joris uses to accommodate **multiple explicit and implicit forms of heterolingualism**. Orchestrating involves deciding which non-English elements can come in their original form and evaluating on how much linguistic otherness readers and spectators would be ready to bear or **tolerate**.⁹⁹¹

⁹⁹¹ Tolerance for foreign books and multilingualism has been discussed in terms of publishing rules and constraints (especially for the US context, see Walkowitz 2006; Lennon 2010; Gramling 2016).

Tolerance in the context of language multiplicity is a notion worth dwelling upon briefly. It may mean willingness to accept otherness in language and could involve curiosity and readiness to deal with difference. Tolerance however also refers to the degree of intelligibility that an audience or readers require: a text must remain comprehensible; Suchet speaks of thresholds of “*lisibilité*” (which is both **legibility and readability**). (2014:79)

Tolerance of otherness not only concerns the *insertion* of “foreign” idioms, it also involves a *response* to unconventional practices in literature, such as code switching. Some heterolingual practices may entail a quick classification of texts as comedy or “low” culture; **on the other hand, quotations and** references to “great” classics could involve the opposite: a distrust of what would seem too elitist literature.

Orchestration also means focusing on the connections or articulations between languages. A closer look at the text will reveal diverse strategies. In *The Agony of I.B.* Joris faces the problem of how to orchestrate diverse German voices⁹⁹²: he solves it through translation and occasional quotations. The translation process elicits reflections on otherness – though it may also cancel differences through the translator’s poetic voice that covers up all differences, (as discussed in relation to Act three).⁹⁹³ It is important to keep in mind that creative work, like Joris’s play, must not be approached as scholarly work or critical study!

9.2.1.4 Staging situations of heterolingualism: Joris’s diverse translingual practices

The play has no proper plot but rather consists of a sequence of imagined and reconstructed encounters between I.B. and her former friends and lovers. It has many examples of “language joints/ articulations”, that is of moments when the flow of speech in one language is interrupted and turns for a while into another language direction.

Heterolingual situations, by which I mean situations where foreign words occur or emerge in the English text: e.g. I.B. reading out a passage from an Italian newspaper; a speaker intrudes a word or a name in another language; implicit heterolingual elements occur when a character refers to an event or work which is not directly quoted (Opel about Giordano Bruno, 32); the recital of a poem.

Translingual practices include

- paraphrase of foreign elements in English

⁹⁹² Austrian (for Bachmann from Carinthia; and Opel from Vienna), Swiss: (Max Frisch); Henze, from Germany; Celan, from Romania; Kissinger, the American emigrant with a heavy German accent)

⁹⁹³ See Suchet’s critical position towards a translator’s hiding of heterolingual elements (2014: 251 ff); what she describes is similar to erasure as discussed in the context of palimpsests. However, despite the insights that her analysis provides, one must keep in mind the difference between works of translation – the object of her study – and poetic creation, which is what Joris does in *The Agony of I.B.*

- translation of quotations or of isolated words : they are either provided by the speaker or given in brackets in the text
- explanations given by speaker or interlocutor
- notes added in stage instructions and author's comments
- explanation or enhancement through multimodal means

The challenge for Joris is to orchestrate voices, which at the beginning bear an authentic ring, while as soon as I.B. is said to have fallen in a coma, a dream-like and imaginative dimension dominates in the exchanges between characters and I.B.'s monologues.

The play shows an evolution from the mostly monological and monolingual discourse of polyglot characters, with occasional insertions of foreign words or quotations in Act I (Bachmann, Opel and Frisch), to plurilingual and multimodal exchanges that broaden the aesthetic and literary space in Act II (Bachmann and Henze), while translingual writing is further enhanced in Act III through the merging of poetic voices (Bachmann and Celan) in translation.

In other words Joris uses different forms of translingual writing, moving from explicit or visible heterolingual elements to more complex interactions and palimpsestic dimensions.

1. Act One: multilingualism occasionally relies on literary insertions: relies on the insertion of everyday words in different languages, usually with an emphasis on ordinary life and comic relief for the tragic situation; *keywords*: polyglot character and heterolingual text.
2. In Act Two, multilingual, **multimodal** and multimedia exchanges broaden the aesthetic and literary space; *keywords*: translingual, multimodal; the play is not just text. For the performance Joris conceives a multi-media background, in which music and visual material underline the mixing of languages and words.
3. In Act Three, translational writing involves the merging of poetic voices; *keywords*: poetic dialogue and translingual poetry.

A more detailed analysis of the play shows a wealth of strategies and devices that underline the complexity of ordinary and literary voices interacting and merging across languages.

9.2.1.5 Introducing multiple languages as natural component of I.B.'s life

In Act one, I.B. is introduced as a historically situated character Located in Rome, with unmistakable allusions to a political context, in which death and fire appear as sinister omens for later developments. September 1973 was the time of the counter revolution in Chile and Bachmann reads aloud from the Italian papers about Neruda's death:

Infamia: I militari devastano e razzano la casa del poet ... I golpisti hanno bruciato I.I.B.ri e riviste dello scomparso ... rompendo, bruciando, rubando ed hanno 'perquisito' anche la villa de Isla Negra dove il poeta si è stabilito in modo permanente da alcuni anni. (23)⁹⁹⁴

She repeats the words used to evoke destruction – “rompendo, bruciando, rubando” – obviously appreciating their power to render the horror of destruction. She thinks aloud, types, empties a pill bottle and smokes while the other character on stage, Max Frisch, does not react to what she says. His soliloquy is about his view on writing as an act comparable to an architect’s not bothered by political “engagement (*spoken with a French accent*)”. Exchange in the scenes with Max Frisch is a “dialogue de sourds” (2016: 25). I.B. thinks about ways of dying for herself⁹⁹⁵ and makes brief allusions in Spanish to Calderon and to Neruda’s words: “La vida no es sueño, la vida es pesadilla, incubo. ...”⁹⁹⁶ (2016: 27)

Act One, which ends with I.B. falling asleep after having set fire to a paper in her hand, and so to herself and the room, brings more texts and voices that mixing: her poem “My bird”; arias by Henze; allusions to her unfinished *Franza*. Joris also conceives a multimedia dimension: Stage directions indicate a “filmic montage of images” that evoke scenes of death in Vienna (“Third Man”) and Rome (Giordano Bruno’s statue in Campo Fiori). The link with 16th century poet and philosopher, Giordano Bruno, is elucidated a little later: He was burned alive for speaking the truth, in Campo de Fiori, not far from Bachman’s apartment (32).⁹⁹⁷

9.2.1.6 Language mixing as a light-hearted frame for the play

In Act One, heterolingual elements reach from parody and *couleur Locale* to intertextual echoes across languages. From the start, we are aware that this is an English language text about the German language poet I.B. The play is set in Rome. Indications of time and places confirm the partly documentary character of the text and account for the occasional use of Italian.

The words of the prologue, moreover, hint at the context of a performance in Luxembourg:⁹⁹⁸ “Meine Damen und Herren, Ladies and gentlemen, Mesdames et Messieurs, guten Abend, good evening, bonsoir!” The words are spoken by Adolf Opel, (*described* as “lover and travel companion” in the cast of characters) who enters the stage “prancing: something reminds us of Joel Grey in ‘Cabaret.’ The tone is

⁹⁹⁴ The English translation follows underneath as a quotation from the AFP: “This morning the military searched and sacked the poet’s house – windows shattered, bed disemboweled, manuscripts & books torn and thrown all over, pre-Colombian terracotta figures broken, smashed to pieces.” (23)

⁹⁹⁵ cf. her pieces called *Todesarten*.

⁹⁹⁶ This is an echo to the lines by Pedro Calderon de la Barca : *La vida es sueño*.

⁹⁹⁷ The reference to Giordano Bruno also provides a connection with Joris’s work : see “Writing/ Reading 1,” in *Breccia* 1987 : 149.

⁹⁹⁸ However, no Luxembourgish is used.

sarcastic and slightly bombastic.” (2016: 13) The casual mixing of languages, a cliché of public speeches in Luxembourg, is explicitly related to a light-hearted Broadway style. Yet the tone accounts for a startling discrepancy in the presentation of the play as “a real tragedy [...] a glorious tragedy [...] tonight, you will witness [...] the great lyric poet and prose writer Ingeborg Bachmann, called – or calling herself – back all too early but making a great exit, worthy of a Greek tragedy. (2016: 13)

The clash between the tragic situation and instances of comic relief or sarcastic comment also punctuate some later scenes, mostly the prologues that constitute the realistic frame of the drama.

Bizarre and macabre language games

Adolf Opel repeatedly contributes comments that echo different languages. Their partly comical effect is largely due to the incongruity of long and learned comments in a situation of extreme emergency. He rather pompously points out a macabre parallel between Bachmann and Giordano Bruno, who was executed in a place nearby for speaking the truth: “Trial by fire. *A Cena de la Ceneri* [sic]⁹⁹⁹ so yes, so even if the upshot is a meal of ashes in one’s mouth. Poor Ingeborg, who also spoke the truth. ‘It was murder.’¹⁰⁰⁰ Ashes to ashes. But you can’t take the fire out of her words. They will keep burning...” (2016: 33).

A similar association of foreign words and their unexpected associations occurs in Act Three. Opel’s speech unwittingly brings some momentary relief to the tragic events and literal translations out of context introduce a note of black humour. Thus, remembering how on arrival at the hospital I.B. is taken upstairs on an ambulance stretcher in the elevator, Maria Teofili calls it “a real *assunzione*” (2016: 60). Opel takes up the image with a further translingual wordgame: “A true *Himmelfahrt* [sic], as you say. A sad catholic end, flying off to a non-existing heaven in a clunky Italian mid-twentieth century elevator, after a bumpy ambulance drive through via dell’Umanesimo, the street of Humanism! The irony of it!” (2016: 60) Opel uses *Himmelfahrt* in both the meaning of ascension (to heaven) and of risky, dangerous ride (colloquial use).¹⁰⁰¹

Another instance of language mixing that brings a humorous break occurs when Henry Kissinger’s voice with “a perceptible German accent” speaks on the phone to an Italian receptionist: She does not know

⁹⁹⁹ It should be *delle Ceneri* (or *Cena de la Ceneri*, the title of Bruno’s work), literally *An Ashwednesday Supper*. The reference to Giordano Bruno also provides a connection with Joris’s work: see Writing/ Reading 1, in Breccia 1987: 149.

¹⁰⁰⁰ “Es war Mord.” Bachmann’s novel *Malina* (1971) ends on these words.

¹⁰⁰¹ There may also be an allusion to a poem by Paul Celan “Zürich. Zum Storchen” dedicated to Nelly Sachs (in *Die Niemandrose*).

who Henry Kissinger might be and he does not understand that it is midnight and she cannot put through a call.

The multilingualism of opera and emotional bonds

The greater part of Act Two deals with translingual and multimodal exchanges that broaden the aesthetic space. They render Bachmann's relation with composer Hans Werner Henze,¹⁰⁰² their common projects and their deep friendship. Joris conceives language multiplicity as it affects common creative projects as well as the articulation of emotional bonds. In Act II, which centres on I.B.'s imagined encounter with the composer, music as an important other language dominates all exchanges. While opera introduces the topic of cooperation between composer and poet, it quite naturally involves a smooth flow of words across national languages. A sparkling intellectual exchange follows which underlines their diverse perceptions. Opera as a dynamic space of in-between-ness may resolve the tensions that arise between the poet's and the musician's conceptions of creation.

Their discussion about a work dealing with the ancient myth of Orpheus and Eurydice points to several, intertwined levels of in-between-ness, which involve the passage from life to death but also refer to gender issues (for instance, female voices singing the part of Orpheus). Moreover, I.B. and H.W.H. do not quite agree on where to situate a new work: should it comply with the old story or rather break with tradition?¹⁰⁰³ In Joris's text, the constant switching of languages, especially in Act II, scene 3, underlines these uncertainties. The reference to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice not only fits the situation, it also allows a natural switching of languages, based on two famous arias from Gluck's opera, one taken from the original Italian text, the other from Gluck's re-adaptation of his opera in French.

The successively heard voices work like an audible palimpsest, with always new texts superimposed on former versions, while the confusion of voices suggests that in music language borders are irrelevant. The text which the audience first hears is the nurse humming "Che farò senza Euridice / Dove andrò senza il mio ben" (2016: 42). It is followed by the voice of Maria Callas singing the same text in French, before I.B. too "tries in a very croaky voice" to sing the famous lines, "J'ai perdu mon Eurydice/ rien n'égalé mon Malheur/ sort cruel!" (2016: 43)

For I.B. in her half sleep, the fact that women sing these lines of Orfeo/ Orphée reinforce the muddle, as does the name Maria sometimes referring to Maria Callas and at other times to Maria Teofili, I.B.'s confidante also playing the role of the nurse: "Eurydice, my Eurydice ... Your dice, your dice ... Maria,

¹⁰⁰² "Hans Werner Henze. Composer. Close friend, companion & oftentimes collaborator. Only his gayness forbade their marriage." (from Cast of Characters)

¹⁰⁰³ Several years after Bachmann's death, H.W. Henze's work *Orpheus Behind the Wire*, based on poems by Edward Bond, was published and performed.

Maria... Ecco un artista ... A woman sings Orfeo Is Orpheus ... Ecco un poeta ...” (43) Italian words too can be misleading for foreigners: thus *poeta* and *artista* are used for both male and female poets and artists.

A little later, we cannot help noticing Joris’s own words that he lends to I.B., who has again fallen in the coma: “This is not a place I like. It is not nowhere but is in-between. That’s all it is – an in-between, a *barzakh*”. (45) An Arabic concept seems best suited to evoke her state and appears as a striking example of translational / translingual re-writing.

In the scenes with H.W.H., a vast range of contexts and heterolingual shifts stresses the multifaceted dimensions of language mixing: translingual texts and speech reach from playful word-games to great artistic performance, while also including the expression of deep emotion. Before the composer arrives on stage, we hear strains from his music and still off-stage, he starts reciting lines in German, Latin and English, whose apparent nonsense and onomatopoeia evoke gaiety as well as feelings of loss:

Zika Zika Zaus und Strauss Singen, scherzen, schreien, zetern Sol fuget, flagrata aestas, cantant cicadae... Zig zag the crickets be gone ... are gone... Silent summer sun return ... shut up you sick cicadas, you crickets you crick you crock you croque-mortes [sic] (37)¹⁰⁰⁴

Joris has borrowed the German and Latin opening from Franco Serpa’s text for Henze’s piece in memory of Bachmann; he has added the lines that follow in English, with the final pun in French, which playfully but unmistakably rings with the sound of death. The passage illustrates a translingual process moving from sounds and words in one language to similar sounds and words in another language, gradually shifting the meaning as well.

For the expression of strong feelings, terms of endearment in one language seem inadequate while mixing languages appears to have magic power. When I.B. does not respond to his questions, “*HWH says as if trying to summon her with a magical name formula*: Liebste Inge, carissima Inge, meine liebe arme kleine Allergrösste, liebe Pupetta, my darling wagtail” (39) Words and sounds of different origins are to work like a charm and wake her up from the coma.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Quick research in the internet shows that the lines are from a piece by Henze, *Elogium Musicum* (2008). Here is how the work – in memory of his beloved friend, I.B. – is presented: “This “eulogy” is by way of an obituary filled with memories and mementos, of sadness, loss and sorrow. A friendship that lasted for almost half a century is destroyed, dead and will not come again. But it lives on in thoughts and affectionate feelings. In this unfamiliar and empty world in which I find myself, it is not easy, nor perhaps possible, to cope, even undesirable to do so. Yet my thoughts and feelings constantly return to a relationship that was unique.” The website also provides the text of the poems by Franco Serpa. <https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/36329/Elogium-Musicum--Hans-Werner-Henze/>

At the end of act II, when she falls completely silent and sinks deeper into the coma, Henze's loving words even more forcefully convey his feelings of deep attachment and sorrow. Only an accumulation of words and sounds of different origins can approximately express the confusion in which he finds himself.

My dear poor little giant illustrious Bachstelze wagtail tender Bachmammal, liebe Eiche, Inge,, dear oak, Carissima, Pupetta, Pupella, Pupa, my poor little angel, poetessa, dear Saphetta, Bachmanita
Jahrhundertnärin, nightingale, Zerbinetta, Ingelchen
Karfunkelsteinhafte
adorabile sorella, Baby, Bimba, Vostre Altezza Serenissima, Ingelilili, Ingeborgalina ... (59)¹⁰⁰⁵

This time the combination of languages and puns arising from etymologies and translation and a mixing of suffixes and alliterations should express genuine emotions, which the conventions of one language fail to render.¹⁰⁰⁶ To prevent any connotation with comedy the stage instructions recommend electronic means for an effect of alienation: "As [HWH] disappears the lines are picked up by the sound-system and multiplied, electronically reworked, fill the stage & the house as the stage light [sic] go to full darkness" (58).

The encounter with the composer offers a multimodal or intermedial perspective on the multiplicity of languages. Through references to mythical and past voices as well as future projects the dialogues open a wide imaginative space evoking a vast network of connections around the theme of between-ness.

The voices of poetry and music fuse at the end of Act II: "The words fade into an excerpt from HWH's *Orpheus Behind the Wire* [end of section 4: "But it is true I went to hell/ & like you I lost/ Eurydice/"] (59)¹⁰⁰⁷

Notes on multilingualism on stage.

For a performance, such a mixing of languages raises questions of voices, pronunciation and accent. Though the complex mixing of languages and registers in this act suggests the irrelevance of language borders, one may imagine the diversity of interpretations that such a variety of languages can entail for actual performances. Will the actor playing Henze foreground a native English accent, in agreement with the dominant language of the play, or rather have / or imitate the German voice of the "real" Henze? How will he pronounce Italian words or made-up names (e.g. Vostre Altezza, Karfunkelhafte, Ingeleinichenli)? Other scenes in this play also raise the issue of acting multilingually, which I have not pursued further.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Accommodating these words in an English text, is also an example of translingual practice. Joris has borrowed many of the terms from the published letters that Henze wrote to Bachmann (*Briefe einer Freundschaft*, 2004).

¹⁰⁰⁶ One may draw a parallel with the insertion of heterolingual terms of abuse, another category of strongly emotional language, which was pointed out in Welch's work (essay and poem, "A Public Man").

¹⁰⁰⁷ Henze composed the music for a work called *Orpheus* based on poems by Edward Bond: *Orpheus Behind the Wire*.

Multi-media effects underline the multiple spaces of languages and language experiences: Stage directions include the use of musical recordings. They also refer to changing visual backgrounds (slides) that can evoke the multiple locations in Bachmann's life and work.

Merging poetic voices in a translingual space

In the last Act, with I.B. in a deep coma, her imagined encounter with the great love of her life Paul Celan is a dreamlike remembering of exchanges based on their poetry.

At the heart of Act Three is Joris's *thinking through* how the words of Bachmann and Celan interact and how an English language text can create a space for poetic cooperation. Much of the intense dialogue of I.B. and P.C. closely echoes their poetic work. Joris's play is a rewriting, which sometimes reads like a "seemingly seamless collage" (in ANP- "*The Seamlessly Nomadic Future of Collage*") of the two intertwined voices. As the poets share the same language, this act presents none of the mixing of languages, which characterizes the preceding encounters.

Keeping in mind that *The Agony of I.B.* is Joris's reflection on the German poet's work, we must not overlook a "third" voice, the voice of the playwright, of Joris himself as it transpires in each of the exchanges. The play is translation in a double sense: he translates his vision of Bachmann into a work of his own by choosing elements of her life and her work that strike him particularly; yet, the play, above all Act III, also mirrors translation into English of Bachmann and Celan's poetry which was originally written in German.

I will briefly evoke examples of several strategies that Joris uses in Act Three. **Sometimes, direct quotations from texts in German are followed by their translation in English.**

Remember, Inge, I spoke of all this many years ago, just after we met: Water and fire, Wasser und Feuer; remember the lines: ich sprach ein Wort zu den Eiben/ daraus sprang eine Flamme, die maß dir ein Kleid an, dein Brautkleid:// Hell ist die Nacht, / die uns Herzen erfand/ hell ist die Nacht! [I spoke a word to the yew-trees/ from which a flame shot forth, a flame that measured a gown for you, your wedding gown: // Bright is the night/ bright is the night that invents hearts for us,/ bright is the night.] You like the night, my Inge, the night is becoming light, could be day breaking, no matter if it be the last day, come, be with me, Ingeborg... (64)

Fire and water are allusion to motifs in their poetry and anticipate their ways of dying; Celan by drowning in the river Seine and Bachmann through fire – as Joris says, "mythically speaking."¹⁰⁰⁸ In the passage three voices interact:

- the voice of P.C. in the text, in English, as created by Joris for his drama (an instance of translingual writing, of imagining another poet's speech)

¹⁰⁰⁸ With my emphasis on the articulation of multiple languages in the play, I have neglected the reading of Bachmann as mythical figure, as Cassandra (as voice responding to other voices) and as Undine.

- the voice of the poetic speaker in Celan's original poem, *Wasser und Feuer* (in German; it is a direct quotation¹⁰⁰⁹)
- the voice of the translator of the poem (Joris¹⁰¹⁰) between square brackets (in English)

Joris brings in his voice not only through the linking passages and the creation of a plausible, though imaginary context of I.B.'s encounter with P.C. It is also his translation of Celan's work, previously published REF that is inserted here however without bibliographical details.¹⁰¹¹ It is an example of self-quotation or self-citation¹⁰¹², which provides yet another dimension of multivoicedness, of the self as other: the poet and the translator are hard to dissociate.

The Agony of I.B. displays other strategies of translingual writing. When a little later in her memories I.B. mentions Egypt (and herself as Franza), **P.C. and I.B. alternately recite lines in German** from "In Ägypten,"¹⁰¹³ the first poem that Celan wrote for her.

lines spoken by P.C.

Du sollst zum Aug der Fremden sagen: Sei das Wasser.
 Du sollst, du du im Wasser weißt, im Aug der Fremden suchen.
 Du sollst sie rufen aus dem Wasser: Ruth! Noëmi! Mirjam!
 Du sollst sie schmecken, wenn du bei der fremden liegst...

and lines by I.B.

Oh yes, I know how it goes on:
 Du sollst sie schmücken mit dem Wolkhaar der Fremden.
 Du sollst zu Ruth und Mirjam und Noëmi sagen:
 Seht, ich schlaf bei ihr! (67)

This time there is **no translation into English, just a paraphrase or comment** by I.B. who abruptly prevents P.C. from finishing the poem: "Stop! You are talking to yourself. And you give yourself biblical orders to make me weep so that you can see old lovers in my tears. I understood back then. I was not such a Fremde after all, I knew what had happened, I knew it well." (68)

In another exchange, their **voices become completely entwined**, as they speak lines from two different poems, about Paris, both here **only in their English translation (by Joris)**. P.C. starting with his poem:¹⁰¹⁴

P.C.

¹⁰⁰⁹ The poem "Wasser und Feuer" is part of *Mohn und Gedächtnis* (Gesamtausgabe 2012: 52-53).

¹⁰¹⁰ See Joris's translation included in *Memory Rose into Threshold Speech: The Collected Earlier Poetry: A Bilingual Edition*, eBook published in 2020.

¹⁰¹¹ The information given at the back of the book mentions Joris's translation work.

¹⁰¹² In French, *autocitation*, in German *Selbstzitat*, a strategy that is sometimes discussed in terms of self-plagiarism in non-creative work.

¹⁰¹³ Gesamtausgabe 2012: 42; also in Joris's translation, *Memory Rose* 2020.

¹⁰¹⁴ "Erinnerung an Frankreich," *Gesamtausgabe*: 34; also in Joris's translation, included in *Memory Rose* 2020.

You, think with me : the sky of Paris, the great autumn crocus...
 We buy hearts from flower girls:
 they were blue and blossomed in the water.
 It started to rain in our room...

and I.B. quite naturally carries on with the opening of her poem *Hôtel de la Paix* ¹⁰¹⁵:

... In the Hotel de la paix
 The weight of roses dropped silently from the walls
 While floor and ground shone through the threadbare carpet...
 P.C.
 ... and our neighbor came, Monsieur le Songe, a thin little man...
 I.B.
 ... The lamp's lightheart shattered
 P.C.
 ... We played cards, I lost the pupils of my eyes;
 you lent me your hair, I lost it, he beat us down.
 He stepped outside the door, the rain followed him...
 I.B.
 ... Darkness. Steps.
 The shootbolt kept death at bay...
 P.C.
 ... We were dead and could breathe. (80-81)

On stage, visual backgrounds create impressions of settings that the audience may not recognize in the words of the poem. For instance, before they recite the poem, "a slide of Place de la Contrescarpe comes up slowly, bathing the stage in an autumnal light, projecting some of the buildings and pawlonias against the backdrop." (79)¹⁰¹⁶

In Act Three, in-between positions turn into representations of doubleness (72-73). P.C. and I.B. continue walking across the stage. The constant movement between voices and languages, adroitly orchestrated by the author (Joris) is a way of enlarging the nomads' space. **Exchange and translation reinforce the impression of doubleness.** The wonder at differences between names for the same thing – flower or person – confirm the gap nomads and poets always feel:

P.C.

¹⁰¹⁵ Ingeborg Bachmann, *Hôtel de la Paix*. Die Rosenlast stürzt lautlos von den Wänden,/ und durch den Teppich scheinen Grund und Boden./ Das Lichtherz bricht der Lampe./ Dunkel. Schritte./ Der Riegel hat sich vor den Tod geschoben. *Sämtliche Gedichte* 1998 : 162.

¹⁰¹⁶ Place de la Contrescarpe is a square in the Quartier latin in Paris, known for its large shady trees. It is also the title of a poem by Celan, "La Contrescarpe" included in the collection entitled **Die Niemandsrose**, See Gesamtausgabe 160.161)

Türkenbund, Türkenbund its common name, lilium martagon, its esoteric name, a doubleness we all carry – I was Paul and I was Pessach – and I am the Paul inside the Pawlonia, trees that followed me, or that I followed all the way from Bukowina to the Contrescarpe. (72) [...]

I.B.

We are all double, Paul, I too am double, there always have been two humans inside me, neither understands the other.

P.C.

This is the essence of poetry – not the bloodbath, but the marriage of the thing and the word. (72-73)

For readers of the text, **the author-translator's voice** adds a further dimension, as comments on another flower's name show. In words attributed to P.C. and addressed to I.B., Joris highlights the nomadism of words: "*Leonorus Cardiacæ*, motherwort or lion's tail, *Herzgespann* in my mother's tongue and in my heart. It came here from Central Asia, it is here now everywhere. Its natural habitat is the title of that poem you know well: *Embankments, roadsides, vacant lots, rubble*." (92)¹⁰¹⁷ The poet as nomad notices how plants as they wander change their names and connotations: one name, one language will never do for the poet to reflect on the meaning of words.

The various names of this ordinary plant foreground the heart. *Herzgespann* hints at a team of animals for travelling, two people or lovers on the road ¹⁰¹⁸. The plant also suggests a lion (with either an association with its tail or the heart) and as the comment suggests it is also reminiscent of a mother's tongue, although this is a fake etymology as *wort* originally meant plant.

The inevitable tragic end of a nomad as permanent exile

The last scenes convey a vision of I.B. and P.C. as nomads whose restless but exhausted and dreamlike walking around the stage is visualized:

A sequence of 2 or 3 slides will be used to mark the characters' progress from the Viennese landscape – where I.B. and P.C. emerge at the beginning of the scene, but with the city already behind them – via Auen-gardens and a tundra-like Pusztá scape toward their final destination: the "Red Door" of Irving Petlin's painting, which replaces an unreachable Buchenland, Bukowina. (90)

The open space gradually narrows. **Motifs from Celan's poetry** (like keys and doors) blend with the words of the dying woman who longs to leave the time and space of *barzakh*: P.C. says:

I know not how much further before your and my barzakh will be over. Look around: all this was and is one again our between-land, the place that has to be crossed, the place made up of borders, where everything is always inbetween, archipelagos... (93-94)

Still a nomad and exile in death, I.B. recites lines from her poem "Exil": ¹⁰¹⁹

¹⁰¹⁷ Cf. « Bahndämme, Wegränder, Ödplätze, Schutt, » in *Sprachgitter* (Gesamtausgabe: 112)

¹⁰¹⁸ See also in "Auf Reisen" the line, Es ist ein Gehöft, da hält ein Gespann für dein Herz (Gesamtausgabe: 42)

¹⁰¹⁹ Sämtliche Gedichte 2003: 163.

Ein Toter bin ich der wandelt
 Gemeldet nirgends mehr
 Unbekannt im Reich der Präfekten
 Überzählig in den goldenen Städten
 Und im grünen Land.
 Abgetan langeschon
 Und mit nichts bedacht
 Nur mit Wind mit Zeit und mit Klang
 Der ich unter Menschen nicht leben kann. (96)

A translation in German follows between brackets but is probably not meant to be spoken on stage: the playwright and translator has withdrawn: only Bachmann's words should be heard, followed by Celan's brief response: "Die Welt ist fort. Ich muss dich tragen."¹⁰²⁰

Irving Petlin's painting, *The Red Door*¹⁰²¹ is the backdrop for the last scene: a door stands for closing on a space left behind and for opening up on a new space. Or as Martin Buber, whose words are quoted as general epigram for the drama, has put it: "Man is always passing through two doors: out of this world and into the next, and out and in again."



Figure 18. Irving Petlin, *The Red Door*.¹⁰²¹

9.2.1.7 Wrapping up on *The Agony of I.B.*

Recalling the initial question, *Whose text is it?* I would say it is the work of a poet–translator as palimpsestic writer. Rejecting conventional play writing, Joris creates poetic hypertexts, while the play is also interesting for the combination of explicit and implicit heterolingualism. By attributing nomadic

¹⁰²⁰ From « Große glühende Wölbung, in *Atemwende* (Gesamtausgabe: 210) and in Joris, *Breathturn*: 96: His translation is added: "The world is gone. I have to carry You."

¹⁰²¹ <https://jacket2.org/reviews/life-death-agonizing-between>. A similar painting by Irving Petlin of a closed door figures on the cover of *Justifying the Margins*.

features to the protagonist, Joris can resort to several dimensions of language multiplicity in the text. *The Agony of I.B.* shows that heterolingual elements in a text with a dominant language vary greatly and may consist of:

- Insertions of words or Locutions in another language that belong to everyday life. They mark the authenticity of a nomad and traveller's sociocultural context.
- Insertions of quotations from texts that allow weaving a broad net of cultural and literary connections based on real and imagined voices. Multiple voices and languages are compositional elements of the literary text, which can be read as collage.
- Heterolingual elements may also be part of translational writing processes, which means that the aim is a text that does not highlight linguistic breaks but adroitly merges voices so as to create a new poetic space. Not otherness inside the text is central but the wish to overcome notions of monolingual writing as much as notions of translation based on a separation of languages.

Is the palimpsest an appropriate metaphor to describe Joris's creation of his text in Act Three? He certainly does not hide the origin of the characters' speeches. In that sense it is not a perfect palimpsest: his words constantly let the words of Bachmann and Celan emerge in his text. However, the fusion of the voices with his own demonstrates an intimacy that Genette (and Dillon) could qualify as *palimpsestuous* relation. A rewriting of myth: The play has been called a modern version of the Cassandra myth (REF). Just as in the play I.B. pleads for a rewriting of myths by turning around the action of the old story or reinventing the characters, Joris seems to question the conventional limitation of speech within well-defined and separate languages.

At the end, we are faced with a few open questions: Why bring texts by Bachmann and Celan in translation for a public (in Luxembourg) that understands German better than English? Is English a poetic lingua franca? Or is language choice for writers ultimately a personal matter, linked to the environment in which they live and to a literary community in which they wish to participate?

9.2.2 *The Gulf*: Language and disaster

Language and Disaster: "The Gulf (Between You and Me)" by Pierre Joris

The present analysis of *The Gulf* investigates two aspects: On the one hand, it focusses on the poet's response to disaster, which consists in *borrowing voices* of various writers and in *giving a voice* to those that normally are not heard. On the other hand, it examines the nomadic poet's creation of translingual spaces.

An event, Jacques Derrida says, implies surprise, exposure, the unanticipatable (2007: 441). In that sense, Joris's work "The Gulf (From Rigwreck to Disaster/ Between You and Me)"¹⁰²² is *about* an event – the disaster that occurred in Gulf of Mexico in 2010 – while for most readers, Joris's poems too *are* an event – a work whose form is likely to take readers by surprise, bringing to light startling associations and introducing perspectives one might not expect in relation with ecological disaster.

I would like to argue that the effect produced by the poems is largely due to translingual elements which are best explored against a background of nomadic notions of a multiplicity of voices, of movement and of transformation through the poet's words and imaginative spaces.

Translingualism in this work involves the perspective of ecopoetics, an important dimension of nomadism (cf. Kenneth White in ch. 3), which so far I have not yet considered in relation to Joris's writing.¹⁰²³ *The Gulf* deals with the inevitably political response of the nomad poet who questions and resists entrenched beliefs and practices, notably through proposing a juxtaposition of voices. The poet's task is eminently translingual: "trans" or via poetic texts he draws pictures of the multifaceted aftermath that follows the catastrophe. The palimpsestic nature of this work progressively appears in layers of texts, voices and references to nature. Imagining the poem – in its structure, its description of nature and its "stories" – as palimpsest shows how the poet's response to disaster echoes and articulates multiple languages and voices.

A few more details about the circumstances in which the work was created seem indispensable for an understanding of the text and underlying procedures. In April 2010, a terrible explosion caused a huge conflagration on a BP oilrig, *The Deepwater Horizon*, in the Gulf of Mexico. Eleven members of the rigging team were killed. The ensuing oil spill continued for almost three months and more than a thousand miles of coastline were fouled. This ecological disaster of unprecedented magnitude had an impact on almost every aspect of life in the region. Behind all the suffering and destruction loomed the question of cause and responsibility. Who should be made accountable? In the months that followed the catastrophe, innumerable scientific and documentary reports were published and information was assembled for lawsuits against the big corporations, in particular British Petroleum.

¹⁰²² In the present text, I refer to the subtitle "*Between You and I*." However, some confusion is possible as *The Gulf* has appeared with two different subtitles. In the text version published in *Barzakh* (2014), it is "From Rigwreck to Disaster" (the titles of the first and the third part), while the performance of *The Crossing* was called "The Gulf (Between You and Me)," a title which Joris also adopted for his performance in Luxembourg in 2015.

¹⁰²³ Elements of nature are present in much of Joris' work, though not in the sense of "nature poems" which reflect 19th century cultural ideology and literary convention (see for instance his early collection "Antlers"). In essays ("Nimrod in Hell" 2009: 1-3), talks and interviews (2013; 2017) he has clarified his position while recent publications also evoke themes of nature ("Foghorn" 2012; *The Book of U. Le livre des cormorans* 2017; *Fox-trails, -tales & -trots* 2020).

The surge of response did not exclude communities of visual artists and musicians. In 2011, the Philadelphia-based chamber choir *The Crossing* decided on a musical creation on the subject, to be entitled *The Gulf (Between You and Me)*. The conductor, Donald Nally, commissioned Pierre Joris to write three texts while he also asked three composers to create choral works based on these poems. The project, aimed to address the increasing gap between humans and the natural environment and to offer a response by art to a catastrophe, which, despite extensive coverage, still left many unanswered questions. On the leaflet the work is described in the following words, “a project addressing the earth as a lover whom we hear but to whom we do not listen, hinged on the poetry of Pierre Joris.” (Donald Nally, *The Crossing* 2012-2013 Season. “The Nature of Our Art.”)¹⁰²⁴

Though music and performance significantly contribute to the expected impact on spectators, the following analysis is solely based on Joris’s text, included in *Barzakh* (2014). The challenge for the poet is to compose texts that, while relying on factual information, add dimensions of the event that can only be expressed through poetic, symbolic representation. The main question is not *What do we know?* but *How do we know about disaster?* What means does translingual poetry have to make sense of a huge natural – human-made – catastrophe?

9.2.2.1 *The Gulf*: A poetic creation of nomadic space

Overview of a multivoiced assemblage

Under the general title, *The Gulf (Between You and Me)* Joris conceived a triptych, which consists of three quite loosely connected pieces and two intermezzi. The text appeared in print as part of *Barzakh. Poems 2000–2012*, where Joris also provides information on his sources (2014: 299). The opening poem – “Rigwreck,” a word based on *shipwreck* – is about the sinking of the oilrig after the explosion. The disaster is mostly seen through a literary lens, with echoes of a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé. The next part, “Love at First Sight,” is closest to a lament. Based on documentary texts, it focuses on those directly hit by the explosion; it includes the voices of a driller who is about to be killed in the conflagration, of his wife/

¹⁰²⁴ The brochure is available on-line: e+OCT12+The+Crossing+questions, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55215c2ce4b0e4ad50063b7d/t/55a7379ce4b08cf45ec3fc54/1437022108626/e+OCT12+The+Crossing+questions.pdf>. See also other quotations that help understand Joris’s texts: “The intention of art has always been to deepen, extend, elevate, ennoble, strengthen, and refresh the experience of living. It cannot begin to do these things until it accepts part of the management of the physical life of man, which is now in the hands of inferior men” (William Saroyan); “Here we make no pretensions toward having answers, we simply aim to sing beautiful, thought-provoking music that is relevant to our lives as we engage art to better understand our world.” For more background information, also see youtube versions and the website of the Théâtre national du Luxembourg: Pierre Joris, *The Gulf Between You and Me*. (archives: https://www.lesarchivesduspectacle.net/?IDX_Spectacle=70416).

widow and of the choir. The concluding piece, “Dis/aster – Oildreck,” a collage of disparate textual sources, deals with the aftermath, as experienced by a Local fisherwoman. Her words are juxtaposed with dictionary quotations and fragments from the work of Maurice Blanchot on disaster. “The Interludes” (1 and 2) are lists of items from a newsflash, as they could have appeared on the day of the explosion, 20 April 2010.

A Triptych

1. Rigwreck / composer Gabriel Jackson – *literary voices*
Interlude: Word Swarm 1 – news speaker
2. Love at First Sight / composer: Chris Jonas – *American voices*
Interlude: Word Swarm 2 – news speaker
3. Dis/aster – Oildreck / composer: Gene Coleman – *voices of fisherwoman, Blanchot, & lexicographers*

In a note, added to the text published in *Barzakh* (2014: 299), Joris provides some background information. However, beyond its references to a well-documented natural catastrophe, the work offers striking formal features that are best explored against Joris' general views on poetry and his reflections on writing processes. Like most of Joris' work, *The Gulf* is experimental, avant-garde poetry, which for Joris means it should bring the reader something new in form and content while also expressing a political stance.¹⁰²⁵ He has repeatedly quoted Paul Celan's words: “Reality is not simply there, it must be searched for and won” (Joris 2003: 4, 30).

To become aware of the translingual processes that underlie the texts of *The Gulf*, one must keep in mind that at the heart of his nomad poetics is the wish to move forward, to change and connect.¹⁰²⁶ The quite diverse texts that make up *The Gulf* illustrate what poetry as rhizome, with no centre and no end, is like and can do. According to this view a **noet**,¹⁰²⁷ or nomadic wandering poet, seeks no permanent ties but collects and connects all ideas he encounters on his real and virtual journeys. A noet combines poetry with “knowing,” with intellectual thought; the Greek *nous* is at the origin of the term and has given the

¹⁰²⁵ Joris in an interview with Peter Cockelbergh: “Poetry interests me only in so far as it brings me something new (in form or content), as it tells me something I didn't already know.” In his eyes, avant-garde poetry also expresses a strong political positioning: “For me, all avant-garde poetry, from Dada to the Language poets has inevitably a strong political stance. If the old dichotomy between form and content has been sublated in modern poetry, then the whole poem, including what we used to call form, is political” (2010b).

¹⁰²⁶ Cf. his leitmotif: The millennium will be nomadic or it will not be: this is / paradigmatic, unless we learn the art of moving & connecting all / contents, all languages, all machines we will be the tail of the 20C/ tail wagged by the 19C dog. (2003: 55)

¹⁰²⁷ For the *noet*, see also ch 6 on Joris poetics and compare to what Brian Massumi states in the foreword to his translation of *A Thousand Plateaus*: by Deleuze and Guattari. Cf. definitions: Noology: derives from the ancient Greek words νοῦς, nous or “mind” and λόγος, logos. Noology thus outlines a systematic study and organization of everything dealing with knowing and knowledge.

term noetics, standing for a study of mind and intellect. *Noet* also suggests negation – a poet-noet writes about absence, about what is not or cannot be put into words.¹⁰²⁸

I wish to show that *The Gulf* can help us understand the poet's search for innovative conceptions of a poetic space, unrestrained by literary genre or by the boundaries of a national language and culture (Joris 2003). For Joris thought, information and even science are the proper domain of poetry and he would shy away from nature poetry if understood as lyrics of mood. Questioning the position of humans in relation to their environment – natural, social or cultural – he has compared his approach with the present discourse on ecology and ecopoetics (Joris 2016a). In an interview he explains his view, which perfectly reflects the approach in *The Gulf*:

[Ecology] is an all-encompassing system, in which all living beings and other matter, including human beings come into "their comparisons" – an egalitarian view, not one with the species speciously known as *homo sapiens*, is always the top or tip of the pyramid. In that sense all poetry that deals inventively with the complexity of our world could be called ecopoetry – & not just some kind of self-conscious nature poetry. (Barzakh 2013)

A nomad at ease in several languages, Joris has gathered many of his ideas from reading and translating. In accepting to write about the disaster of the oil spill he may have had in mind what he calls, in relation to Celan, the duty of poetry: "give witness for the witness" (Joris 2010a). His poem should testify for those who can no longer bear witness to the horror they have experienced; it also becomes translation of the words of those whose words are not heard, including the voice of nature.

Always in movement, the nomad, cannot conceive poems as finished products: writing is an ongoing process and the poet's work should stay open to further changes, by the poet or readers, across languages and cultures (Joris 2009a). Joris's ideas are thus close to the work of other nomadic thinkers, like Édouard Glissant or Rosi Braidotti, who writes: "Thinking is about tracing lines of flight and zigzagging patterns that undo dominant representations" (Braidotti 2011: 2) – thus expressing philosophical thoughts of nomadism in terms similar to those of Joris, the poet. In *The Gulf*, he follows what Glissant calls the main themes of his poetics: "the dialectics between the oral and the written, the thought of multilingualism, the balance between the present moment and duration, the questioning of literary genres, the power of the baroque, the nonprojectile imaginary construct." (*Poetics of Relations* 2010: 35).

¹⁰²⁸ For further ideas on the NOET, see ch. 6 and the review by Robert Sheppard: NO stands for play, for no-saying & guerrilla war techniques," he writes in a grand refusal, eliding the Deleuzoguattarian war machine with a distantly romanticized sense of guerrilla warfare ("Notes," 7). Ancient knowledges are hinted at in "gNosis" and modern ones in "Noetics," but again, the collocations are vitiated by lack of detail ("noetic" operates also as an adjective from the Greek, *nous*). Poetics and the manifesto. On Pierre Joris and Adrian Clarke. 2014 <https://jacket2.org/article/poetics-and-manifesto>

9.2.2.2 Underlying views on writing

Among the numerous connections that Joris establishes between *The Gulf* and other texts, the reference to *The Writing of the Disaster* [*L'écriture du désastre*], a book by the French philosopher and writer Maurice Blanchot (1995 [1980]) is perhaps the most challenging but also the most relevant for its underlying ideas on disaster and aftermath. Blanchot's work in general has had a significant impact on Joris's conception of writing (cf. Joris 2009c: 67–68). A parallel reading of *The Writing of the Disaster* and the Triptych on the ecological disaster of the oil spill will underline the differences between the two works (a philosopher's wide-ranging thoughts versus a poet's response to a concrete situation). Yet it may also raise awareness of features in Blanchot's text that become relevant for a reading of Joris's poetic piece. I will touch on a few features that contribute to an understanding of specific aspects of Joris's poetic space construction.

The title, *The Writing of the Disaster*, already deserves closer inspection. It is not just a clumsy translation but reflects one characteristic feature of Blanchot's writing (and thinking): the reversibility of all expressions, which means that "the writing of the disaster" could also be *the disaster of the writing*. A first reading of the title suggests that it refers to writing *about* the disaster: Is it possible at all? How can it be done? Another reading of the title, however, considers the disaster as subject: the event itself writes the work. Disaster is the one that acts *and* writes; disaster is the author; the book is about what disaster is writing, that is, the annihilation of everything, including writing itself. The focus, according to the second reading, is on the effects of disaster understood as a condition in which all order is destroyed. Disaster has its own way of writing, which is quite the opposite of what is usually conceived as a creative act. In her introductory remarks, Ann Smock, the translator of Blanchot's book, has explained the ambiguity of the reversibility of expressions of the type "the — of —":

"[T]he writing of the disaster" means not simply the process whereby something is written – communicated, attested to, or prophesied. It also means the writing done by the disaster – by the disaster that ruins books and wrecks language. "*The writing of the disaster*" means the writing that *the disaster* – which liquidates writing – is, (just as "knowledge of the disaster" means knowledge as disaster and "the flight of thought" the loss of thought, which thinking is).

Blanchot 1995: e-book, introduction Loc 48; emphasis added.)

In the second case, writing about disaster seems to become impossible as disaster has annihilated all previous writing, as well as the meaning of all previous writing.

The only alternative to silence for a writer like Joris is to draw on his nomadic principles and invent a new way of writing, as conventional forms have become meaningless. Blanchot's book about death and the impossibility of conceiving it deploys some features pointing to a different approach of using language,

which we also find in Joris's work. An immediately striking characteristic of *The Writing of the Disaster* is its **fragmentary nature**: the entire book is an accumulation of short, disconnected, often paradoxical statements, as the opening paragraph already shows:

The disaster ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact. It does not touch anyone in particular; "I" am not threatened by it, but spared, left aside. It is in this way that I am threatened; it is in this way that the disaster threatens in me that which is exterior to me – an other than I who passively become other. (Blanchot 1995:1)

Blanchot gives us a sequence of thoughts, often followed by their opposites, by questionings and re-formulations. As soon as a statement is made, it is reversed, refuted or connected to other thoughts.

A second feature I wish to mention is Blanchot's **exploration of etymologies**, such as the analysis and explanation of the word, *dis/aster*, which Joris will take up too. He recalls the (Italian) origin of the word, with "aster" meaning star (from the Latin *astrum*) and "dis" standing for separation (while also carrying the general negative meaning of a reversing force).

If disaster means being separated from the star (if it means the decline which characterized disorientation when the link with fortune from on high is cut), then it indicates a fall beneath disastrous necessity. (2)

Dis-aster means no longer being submitted to destiny nor, it seems, to any law of the universe. Is disaster that strikes then not also a sort of liberation? Disaster conceived as stars coming out of joint, with all relations to a cosmic order being broken, radically affects our conception of time. The attempt at re-conceptualising time is the third feature that I wish to mention. Blanchot's view of time is rather the absence of time. Knowledge of death takes us out of time and once you consider life from a position out of time, disaster has always already happened. Disaster has always already touched, inhabited, ruined everything even before "things" begin.

Blanchot also contemplates the death and suffering of others. Disaster does not absolve a person from a duty towards the Other/s. Personal suffering as opposed to relations with and responsibility towards the Other(s) emerge in the wake of any disaster. In *The Gulf*, the uncertainty of response and the apparent impossibility of accommodating both subjective response and empathy with the Other are key features of the aftermath.

The last feature I wish to mention is Blanchot's **abundant use of quotations**. The book contains innumerable further thoughts about death with references to literature and philosophy. At moments, it becomes a sequence of quotations and comments on works by mostly French and German philosophers and poets, like Levinas, Hegel, Heidegger, Derrida, Rilke, Kafka, René Char and Mallarmé. The text

becomes an invitation for readers and writers to pursue the suggested links between poets and philosophers, without a distinction between linguistic and cultural borders.

9.2.2.3 *The Gulf (Between You and Me)*: Translingualism from several different angles

Joris is not a philosopher; he is a poet, albeit a poet who sees poetry as a means to convey thoughts and knowledge in its own way. Keeping in mind what Blanchot says about (the) writing of the disaster, one can approach *The Gulf (Between You and Me)* as a poetic record attesting to what has happened. Yet, one may also remember the second reading in which disaster is seen as the subject who does the writing and ask: What can poetry do when all is destroyed, including traditional ways of thinking and writing? What new forms does it have to invent to respond to a radically new context or newly discovered environmental circumstances? How can it support innovative ways of thinking the world?

The Gulf never aims at offering a definitive answer¹⁰²⁹: multiple voices and fragmentation echo the consequences of disaster and become forms of poetic response to destruction. Unitary language and belief in the world as one homogeneous whole are no longer possible. Heteroglossia and fragmentation become a way of expressing “[a] certain impossible possibility of saying the event” (Derrida 2007).

The heterogeneity of voices, of different social, cultural, and multiple literary and linguistic origins all contribute to the poem as response to disaster. Yet, one must not imagine *The Gulf* as merely an accumulation of quotations. In poetry, voices always speak through the mask of a persona. The words one hears are echoes of discourse, which the poet assembles.¹⁰³⁰ Knowing whose words a poem echoes the reader discovers additional dimensions, which enlarge the perspective on the central theme, death and destruction.

The three sections of *The Gulf* are rewritings of texts that the poet takes from quite diverse sources; some require translation from another language, others are examples of the poet’s conversion of documentary texts and of everyday speech into elements of his poetic pieces. The poet’s writing thus appears as a “trans-lational” process in a broad sense, which involves many forms of conversion, adjustment and imaginative re-conceptualising, thus contributing to our understanding of translingualism. The words of the title, *The Gulf (Between You and Me)*, have rich connotations, which appear to the reader who progressively discovers layers of meaning making in the three consecutive sections.

¹⁰²⁹ See the interview with S.J. Fowler, which is an investigation into the notion of fragmentation and incompleteness, central to Joris’s poetics. It reflects an “open universe” and an ethical stance that rejects any belief in one stable, unchanging truth (Joris 2012).

¹⁰³⁰ In his critical writing and interviews, Joris has repeatedly explained his use of collage; the notion of palimpsest is equally helpful to investigate the less conspicuous traces of others’ voices. In the note added to “The Gulf,” Joris speaks of “a partial writing through of Stéphane Mallarmé’s poem” (299).

Section 1. Rigwreck

The opening is a good example of Derrida's definition of "event." It takes the audience by surprise, exposing an unexpected connection of this text about the *Deepwater Horizon* disaster with another literary event, which they would not have anticipated.

A THROW
 what do we know, what can we know?
 OF THE DICE
 of science, of love
 only the facts, that is to say,
 only effects
 NEVER
 can this happen
 NEVER even if, can this happen
 in science, in love
 EVEN WHEN CAST
 Indra's net of love ¹⁰³¹ [...]. (258)

"A throw [...] of the dice" is a direct allusion to a famous French symbolist poem, "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard/ A Throw of the Dice Never Will Abolish Chance" by Stéphane Mallarmé (1897), which incidentally is also about a shipwreck and its drowning captain. For this part of the poem, Joris uses translation but moves beyond in what I would call a poetic translingual process. As he explains, "The first two sections of the work are a partial writing-through of Stéphane Mallarmé's poem "A Throw of the Dice," using both Daisy Aldan and my own translations." (299)

The opening of Joris's poem sets the complex theme by the allusion to chance (the dice), but also to the interconnectedness of all life (Indra's net) as well as to a range of challenges to science and love. Soon, the speaker's urgent tone comes to evoke the widening repercussions of the shipwreck, spreading like rings in the water, from a central heart to the entire surroundings, eventually swallowed or engulfed in a bottomless Abyss. The rings of death are widening until everything turns white, like the colourless, lifeless fish on the surface of the water.

A SHIPWRECK at the heart that the
 gulf widens
 between water & oil, you & me
 fish & water, me & and you
 that the
 Abyss
 between water & water, you & you
 me & me, oil & fish

¹⁰³¹ For an elaboration of Joris's views on Indra and the nomad poet, see Joris 2003: 42–43.

widened than whitened. (*Barzakh* 2014: 260)

The repetition of the central phrase “between you & me” recalls the ambivalence of the preposition *between*. In most cases, it expresses separation or a place that divides two points (objects or people). But *between* may also be used to stand for a connection or relationship, in particular when it refers to a shared effort or activity. Thus, the quoted extract, on the one hand points to the speaker’s attempt at positioning him/herself among all that surrounds him (her). On the other hand, the recurrence of *between* puts the emphasis on all that is separated, with the perspective gradually widening to encompass all living organisms and natural elements: “between water & oil, you & me/ [...] between water & water, you & you/ me & me, oil & fish.” The repetition of “between” evokes the horror of a situation where bonds have turned into division and destruction. The gulf that widens is omnipresent literally and metaphorically and reaches far beyond the geographically Located Gulf of Mexico.

The poem has an eco-critical undertone, insisting on the indissoluble ties of “you and me,” of speaker and addressee, or other, while trying to say what climate change really means for them:

What we know is you & I have to mix
 what we know is you & I have to live
 under an incline
 clinamen of a warming clime
 an angle not an angel tells us
 me & you want to live
 even if despair desperately soars
 & gets an angry rise. (*Barzakh* 2014: 261)

This is the voice of a contemporary observer, who loves using word-games to reach to the core of the matter. Putting the words *incline*, *clinamen* and *clime* close together, he points at their semantic relationship. The fascination with learned etymologies becomes a tool to point out the causes and consequences of natural disasters and changes. The lines suggest that in the face of an all-encompassing threat, like climate change, the experience of separation should turn into an awareness of collective involvement in the interest of survival. *Between* as separation and *between* as sharing are but two sides of the same situation.

At the end of “Rigwreck,” a poetic voice openly accuses those who are responsible for the catastrophe. It is not destiny or a throw of dice – it is money and greed that have caused the ruin of man and nature, it is British Petroleum and, or MoLoch, that have abolished a sense of responsibility. The repetition of “MoLoch, MoLoch/ MoLoch–/ rules, MoLoch/ rules/ all rules broken when MoLoch rules” (268) is another example of intertextuality, creating an interrelationship between this poem and “Howl” by Allen Ginsberg,

who in a sheer endless enumeration of MoLoch's misdeeds accuses capitalist practices and all the evils of his time.¹⁰³²

Interludes: Word Swarms

Inserted between sections 1+2 and between sections 2+3, the interludes offer a seemingly unfiltered selection of the news broadcast on 20 April 2010, the day on which the Gulf disaster happened. Here is one example, the beginning of Interlude 2:

WORDSWARM 20 APRIL 2010
 death toll of foreign soldiers in 2010 to
 166 in Afghanistan
 McLaren driver Jenson Button won the
 Chinese Grand Prix
 re-open the skies over Europe
 ash from a volcano in Iceland
 a high pressure here and a low pressure there
 News broke that an explosion occurred at 11
 p.m. EST on B.P.'s Deepwater Horizon oil rig
 (Barzakh 2014: 284)

The space for news is global and brings new relations. Names rather than words in another language provide the heterolingual dimension, which for listeners and readers requires quick mental movements or what Suchet calls gear-shifting. In a performance, the items are read out so fast that words are perceived as a chatter, or prattle – just background noise. Though in the book the text is arranged vertically on the page, like a list, it is also reminiscent of a news ticker on a TV screen. The interludes situate the disaster in the context of its time, among many other events and disasters, further highlighting the impression of heterogeneity and fragmentation.

Section 2. Love at First Sight

The nomad poet finds his voices across wide stretches of time and cultures. He never stands still; from literary sources, he moves on to popular culture, with a direct reference in the title to *Love Story*, Erich Segal's popular book and film, and to documentary writing about the actual *Deepwater Horizon* catastrophe.

Section 2 marks a complete break in tone, structure and content with "Rigwreck." Here the information gathered from Antonia Juhasz's book *Black Tide*¹⁰³³ is converted into a piece of dramatic dialogue – or rather a piece where no dialogue is any longer possible. The words of the choir/chorus, and the voices of

¹⁰³² "Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose soul is electricity and banks! Moloch whose poverty is the specter of genius! Moloch whose fate is a cloud of sexless hydrogen!" (Ginsberg 1996: 49–56).

¹⁰³³ *Black Tide. The Devastating Impact of the Gulf Oil Spill* (2011) is a well-researched account of the rig explosion including numerous interviews with politicians, scientists and survivors of the drama.

a victim, Dewey, a driller about to be killed, and of his mourning widow remind us of Greek tragedy but, to echo George Steiner's words, tragedy is dead (Steiner 1961). Society has no shared ideals and Sheri, the surviving female character, lacks the passion of a figure like Antigone or Electra, which however does not make her mourning less authentic. She takes refuge in her memories of a bygone "American love story", succinctly evoked through such key elements as cars, a gas station and Coca Cola: "They met when he drove up to the Local Kerr/ gas station where Sheri worked. [...] It was love at first sight/ We had the old time Coca-Cola coolers" (278-279). As readers we know that the *Deepwater* catastrophe has challenged the way of life which Sheri mourns, but which she and Dewey endorsed through their jobs and implicit values.

Choir:

THE MASTER is no master
the master is a corp a corpse a corporation
beyond outworn calculations
where MoLoch where MoLoch arisen
is a manoeuvre [...] (*Barzakh*: 272)

SOLO (Dewey's voice):

Thirty years offshore
& I can smell a rat
Leaving a rig, I can, I do right now –
I'm a toolpusher, not master
should sleep but follow
Inauspicious orders [...] (*Barzakh*: 273)

SOLO (Female Voice/ Sheri):

It was love at first sight
We had old time Coca Cola coolers. ...
He had this smile. It would make you melt. (*Barzakh*: 279)

Multivoicedness may be approached by going back to Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of heteroglossia and dialogism (Bakhtin 1981: 263). It is true that for Bakhtin they were features of the novel understood as a mirror of society. He did not apply the notion of *voices* to poetry, which he would only see as the expression of one central speaker, the poet himself (284–286), and as a genre submitted to rigorous formal conventions without a link to social or cultural realities. My point is that not only poetry has much changed in the past decades, but that for complex poetic works like *The Gulf*, Bakhtin's stylistics of the novel offers relevant methodological steps for an investigation of a wide variety of social and literary voices, of their links and interrelationships. Bakhtin's main interest is in interaction, which is the core of dialogism. Dialogism is not only a form of communication but it is understood as epistemology: interaction

is a dynamic phenomenon through which knowledge and views constantly develop, creating tensions, as well as new insights (281–282). In a literary work, dialogic features not only refer to the direct exchange between speakers, they can also be identified as words, comments, references from different parts of a work echoing each other, entering so to speak in dialogue with each other and constituting an internal dialogue (279).

In the three sections of *The Gulf*, some words uttered by different voices establish such a background dialogue; they echo each other while their meaning becomes enlarged through new connotations. The poetic work as collage is more than mere patchwork. Beyond the “real” and fictitious voices, the poet “weaving” the pieces together momentarily ensures a certain unity of the whole while bringing in a critical bias, for instance, through a reiteration of words like “master,” “abyss,” “Mo Loch,” which resound from one section to the next. The most prominent is undoubtedly the word “Gulf/gulf”: in the last section, further “voices” come to complicate its rich polysemy.

Section 3. Dis/Aster – Oildreck

In the title, the typographical presentation of Dis/Aster foregrounds the etymological meaning of separation from one’s stars and the ensuing (cosmic) dis/order. The term Oildreck is an example of the multilingual poet’s imaginative approach to language: the German word “dreck” (dirt) seems more powerful than the soft sounding “mud,” commonly used to describe oil pollution.

This section deals with the consequences of the disaster through a combination of voices and sources, which is at first quite puzzling. The text on each page is divided into three parts. Quotations, or fragments from Maurice Blanchot’s already fragmentary work, *The Disaster of the Writing* provide the top title frame. The centre of the page consists of excerpts from an interview that Joris conducted with a fisherwoman, an activist, while the bottom frame is made up of extracts from etymological dictionary entries on the word “GULF”. Typographical features mark the differences. This is what the first page looks like:

DISASTER: NOT THOUGHT GONE AWRY

when all this first started
 my body broke out into real bad rashes
 my eyes my face my neck my chest my back my shoulders
 big giant holes on the back of my legs,
 holes the size of a #2 pencil
 looked just like the holes
 in the fish
 in the lab
 on the screen

GULF: FROM GREEK χόλπος (kolpos) m. [masculine], A BOSOM

FROM PROTO-EUROPEAN *BHEU-ə-: “TO SWELL, BEND, CURVE.” (Barzakh: 287)

Here are two other examples



Figure 19. Pierre Joris, *The Gulf*, "Disaster – Oildreck." (Barzakh: 290-291).

On the page, the assemblage looks like cacophony, a mixture of ordinary language, learned explanations and entirely disconnected philosophical statements. Gradually, however, with the same arrangement in the presentation repeated on every new page, the poem appears to be a proposal for a structured, multivoiced fragmentation.¹⁰³⁴

The extracts from dictionaries, at the bottom of the page, reveal a surprising wealth of meanings for the word GULF. As a simplified list of the given explanations shows, it may refer to a *bosom*, a *hollow place*, an *abyss*, a *deep chasm*, *burden or hindrance*, a *rock form scooped out by water erosion*, (*obs.*) *that which swallows*, *gullet*, *that which swallows irretrievably*, *whirlpool*, a *sucking eddy*, a *large deposit of ore* [...] in a *lode*, and *anatomically: a vagina and/or the atrium of the heart*. Non-English elements appear in the etymological explanations. The text also raises awareness of linguistic otherness and the problems it constitutes for migrant workers: the poem becomes open criticism of the authorities' total indifference to language barriers.

¹⁰³⁴ The reader can approach it as one may read Mallarmé's "A Throw of the Dice," not in the conventional way by following lines from left to right and from top to bottom, but by identifying key words and typographical markings across the entire section.

9.2.2.4 Conclusion

A critical reader could ask where the “poetry” is in all this. One should remember that in Joris’s view of the poem as *noem*, poetry is above all a form of knowledge. It is different from its documentary or scientific sources, which it attempts to connect. It is knowledge as insights relying on the tremendous potential that language in all its forms can offer. In a work like “The Gulf,” poetry conveys knowledge of interrelationships between all that are concerned by disaster: it creates a space which is never closed and which being always in movement leaves room for further developments.

Three statements borrowed from Blanchot mark the end of the last poem and of the whole sequence.

DISASTER LIES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF DANGER

DARK DISASTER CARRIES THE LIGHT

TAKES CARE OF EVERYTHING. (*Barzakh*: 297)

Yet one should not speak of an end; for Joris, a poetic work can never be completed; it is part of an open space, which always asks for further elaboration, by the poet or the reader. Another layer may be later super-inscribed on it, by readers who can add more voices and languages.

Reflections on the power of translingual writing in a palimpsestic text

The present paper was first presented at the conference entitled *Aftermath: The Fall and the Rise after the Event*. The organisers invited thoughts about “after effects of seminal events.” Is there possibly a shimmer of light at the end of Joris’s triptych? In fact, the poet’s approach should have shown that this is not really the question. *Disaster* is not affected. Poetry does not change the toxic impact of pollution, or its disgusting effects, the actual suffering or the social and economic injustice. What it does achieve is a novel way of seeing things.

The juxtaposition and superimposition of voices have an affective and an intellectual impact. Quoting Derrida at the beginning, I stated that the words take us by surprise, they expose and reveal what was hidden, they disclose and reveal, they are unanticipatable. The poem does not sum up *what* we know about disaster but enquires into *how* we may know about disaster. Poetry does not heal the disorder in nature; it readjusts readers’ outlook, their way of seeing. That is its transformational power.

In fact, each new reading is (in) the aftermath and allows a second crop of thoughts. In line with the French word *regain* for aftermath, it is a renewal of thoughts, an upsurge in meaning. Blanchot advocates the necessity for a new way of writing about or after disaster. This is what Mallarmé attempted in “A Throw of the Dice,” which was to mark a new epoch in poetry. It is also, it seems, what Joris tries to do in the wake of the oil disaster and its huge repercussions: old rules and literary conventions are dead. The creation of a radically different form of writing is thus a, perhaps unexpected, outcome *or aftermath*.

For Joris, fragmentary, multi-voiced, translingual writing is not an entirely new idea; it is central to his nomadic thought, which refuses to stand still and conform to the rules of one small *mono-voiced* or monolingual community. He has always pleaded for new ways of writing: *The Gulf* provides a complex implementation of his nomad poetics.

Like all palimpsestic work it is a challenge for readers, who in the end may wonder what to do with the issue of chance and responsibility, of destiny and guilt raised from the very beginning. The quotations from Blanchot's work as final words do not give an answer. Who has been responsible for the catastrophe? Following Joris's view that poetry "bears re-reading any number of times, in fact demands such re-readings" (2016b), I have come to question the choice of title. Does the answer lie in the selected words? Why "Gulf"? Should it not be "BP /British Petroleum: From Rigwreck to Disaster?" Is *gulf* not just a rich source of multiple connotations –or is it also a clever substitution for the "real," unnameable culprit? The oilrig involved in the disaster of the Gulf of Mexico was exploited by BP. Informed readers, aware of the importance of word play, could not miss the never mentioned, yet always present association of the term *gulf* with the name of another oil corporation, GULF OIL. Thus all along, in a subtle way, the poem explores the significance of all oil companies in the lives of people and their relationships with natural and social environments: their powerful voice is omnipresent and reaches far beyond America and the Gulf of Mexico to other oil and *gulf* countries, their promising wealth and threatening wars. Works of art thus have their own way of answering "Who is writing disaster?" and addressing questions of responsibility and accountability.

Joris's writing succeeds in suggesting a world in which the Local destruction of marine life and coastal areas can speak to all people. We feel his anger and his empathy with those directly affected. However, what the reading should also have shown is that translingual processes in their various forms (writing through a French poem; assembling news from all over the world; evoking a parallel between the bereaved survivors and Greek tragedy and finally attempting connections between language dictionaries, the outcry of victims and the philosopher's perspective) is a way to overcome traditional genres and to create a new space of palimpsestic writing, where relation and not borders and linguistic differences generate the writing.

10. Concluding remarks and outlook

The motivation for the dissertation came from a wish to obtain insights into writing processes of poets on the move, who live and work among several languages. Choosing Welch and Joris as study cases meant including a Luxembourg perspective on authors, texts and languages in movement. The goal was thus double: Expose dimensions of multilingualism as key aspects of the poets' work and investigate general facets of research on translingualism (cf. research questions in ch. 1.4). The outcomes of the study are best assessed through various perspectives assembled around major areas: 1. The foundations of the research 2. Key aspects of translingualism 3. Specific insights provided by the work of Welch and Joris 4. Comments on the research process and 4. Outlook on further research areas

10.1 Foundations for the research

In chapter 3.3 first findings deriving from overviews of research were used to outline key points for the subsequent analysis. It is now time to examine their pertinence for an understanding of poets and languages on the move.

10.1.1 The benefits of nomadic approaches for a study of languages on the move

A specificity of the present study lies in the association of nomadic theory with studies of multilingualism in literary writing. On the one hand, this combination corresponds to characteristics of both poets' lives. On the other hand, in view of the particularities of each poet's work, it provides a broad conceptual background for the diversity of responses and developments, which similar linguistic and cultural environments can produce. Looking at translingualism as a nomadic process has led to a foregrounding of several key notions that recur all through the study: movement, rhizomatic multiplicity, interrelations, resistance to prevailing practices, transformation, notions of open space and a questioning of borders, including language borders. They allow moving beyond linguistic and literary concepts for a comprehensive perspective on language processes.

Welch and Joris: the emergence of two different figurations of nomadic translingual poetry

An advantage of the nomadic perspective lies in recurrent considerations on differences between *migrants and nomads* and their respective relations to primary and later acquired languages. (See ch. 3 for a juxtaposition of theories by Deleuze and Guattari, Kenneth White and Rosi Braidotti.) The examples of Welch and Joris show that a radical distinction is not appropriate. Welch is the nomad always on the move, but the tensions between two worlds that her work expresses until the end is rather a characteristic of migrant subjects.

Nomadic theory and its emphasis on *a middle position*, especially foregrounded in Joris's work, is enlightening for an approach of translingual processes. The focus on the middle acknowledges in-between locations and rejects an over-emphasis of origin. It also encompasses the belief in multiple entryways to a writer's work and languages, as Deleuze and Guattari underline in connection with "minor" literature, while for the concerned subjects it should involve an affirmative posturing directed toward the future. Moreover, the work of Welch and Joris elucidates wanderers' diverging *approaches of nature*. For Joris, the nomad is deeply conscious of ethical issues that face humans' dealings with their environment; Welch, with some parallels to White, relies on the wanderer's direct experience of the physical world for meaning making, while her writings also transmits a mystical dimension language and being.

Mapping presents itself as a fitting methodological and conceptual tool to represent new routes and nomadic spaces with multiple entryways. The study shows that conventional categorisations cannot do full justice to the works of Welch and Joris, which require multiple maps to represent overlapping spaces and languages while maps also become tools to follow incessant movements and innumerable relations. Texts like Welch's poem "I Sail to Italy Not of My Own Free Will" (in *Word-House*), or *Aegean Shortwaves* and *The Gulf* by Joris help us imagine the complexity of the task.

10.1.2 Benefits deriving from a combination of research in literary studies and applied linguistics

The study attempts to locate the inquiry about Welch and Joris in ongoing research that could contribute to an approach of their translingual writing. The overview of research on multilingualism brings relevant insights variously developed in **literary studies and applied linguistics**, notably a focus on "trans-" processes, explored as *trans-languaging*, new forms of *trans-lating*, *trans-writing* and *trans-lingual* writing. Many studies present (auto-) biographical material not only as a thematic feature of texts produced by writers who do not use their primary language; they rather explore life writing and memoirs as a posteriori reconstructions and as examples of deep meta-linguistic consciousness. Literary studies refer to poetic features such as echoes of other texts elements of (intertextuality) or innovative forms that seek to integrate interacting, often conflicting voices seen against the backdrop of postcolonial studies. In recent years, studies have increasingly relied on interdisciplinary approaches which, with their combination of linguistic, literary, cultural, translational, comparative or gender perspectives, have proved inspiring for the study of translingual processes in Welch and Joris.

10.2 Key aspects of translingualism in nomadic poets' work

In the study of the poets' lives and work, the selected cornerstones for the analysis¹⁰³⁵ overlap and interact, thus highlighting the complex translingual process.

10.2.1 Centralized or de-centred conception of multilingualism

A broad overall observation drawn from the poets' theoretical positioning and their writing points to divergent views. While Welch's texts reflect the translingual process as a polyglot's attempt to create *one* language out of many (an aesthetic version of the motto *e pluribus unum*), the translingual process in the work of Joris consists in highlighting traces of multiplicity and to avoid, even to erase an impression of unity, according to his motto "writing in all [one's] languages."

The enquiry into the poets' texts, lives and writing processes has however revealed a richer and more differentiated picture. Despite the striking differences, their work shows some fundamental similarities that underlie their translingualism:

- Both poets' attitudes to their mother tongue largely coincide: they never considered it appropriate as language for (poetic) writing.
- The process of translingual writing for them involves *more than two* languages.
- Their work also shows that speaking about a writer's languages in terms of chronological sequence does not make sense: English which they acquired quite late has become for them the most important language.
- Welch and Joris insist that writing poetry in their fourth language may not be such an extraordinary thing to do as all poetry is a foreign language: Poetry proves a productive space for translingual processes.

With the exception of the last point, these views on specific features of their writing may be linked to their early experiences of languages and literature (reading) in Luxembourg. The study has disclosed a few specific aspects of their writing that deserve further elaboration.

10.2.2 The absence of *one* native language

The notion of translingualism involves certain views on a writer's languages. It is usually understood as movement from mother or native tongue to a newly acquired language (cf. Kellman, Arndt et al.; Ausoni).

¹⁰³⁵ See ch. 3.3: (1) a de-centred conception of languages, (2) the role of writers' positioning in encounters with otherness, (3) multifaceted models of heterolingualism as dialogue and thinking tool and (4) the construction of imaginary and innovative spaces of translingual writing.

The emphasis in these studies is usually on writers who convey and express their ideas in another than their primary language.¹⁰³⁶ Writing means moving to another cultural and linguistic space. Welch and Joris show what this means for poets who come from linguistic and cultural *in-between locations* and experiences, where language planes overlap and collide. Writing in an *additional, self-selected* language then means a constant reshuffling of language repertoires.

As Welch and Joris do not refer to a first or primary language for their writing, the dimension of otherness is quite complex as their literacy involves other languages acquired before they start reading, speaking and writing English. With reference to translanguaging one may ask what oral languages resonate in their English texts. Joris speaks of ‘ghosting’ *voices* (see exchange with Jean Portante 2013). However, also written words of different origins mingle in translingual writers’ experiences. For Welch and Joris, their languages of *reading*, notably French and German constitute an essential dimension of their translingual writing processes.

For many years, spoken and written languages constitute for them two separate domains. Joris noted about his childhood “I never read what I spoke”; while Welch, though much later in life, discovers the written face of Luxembourgish through reading the national epic, *Renert*. Translingual processes mean a movement from a language they do not write along with two “borrowed” languages into another “borrowed” language, English.

What a “belated language” means for translingual writers

English for both is a language that they began to learn in their adolescence. As we saw, Welch calls English her belated mother tongue, a phenomenon that Ausoni describes as “une langue qui n’a pas d’enfance” (*Mémoires d’outre-langue* 2018). In this sense, translingualism implies that writers first have to make up for lost time, an attitude which Welch confirms through her avid reading of American literature in her first years in the US. These works are to root her in her newly adopted country: the language of literature is a crucial dimension of identity. Reading is a translingual process not yet linked to her own writing. Joris for his part, in addition to reading, starts extensive translating work as a way to gain practice in his language of writing.

For translingual *writers*, the initial first language gradually acquires the status of a foreign language and the initially foreign language becomes their primary language. The notion of *belatedness* that is frequently

¹⁰³⁶ Studies mention exceptions, like Elias Canetti; the aim here is to situate Welch and Joris within a general context of translingualism: every writer presents specificities, which a broad understanding can accommodate.

used to define migrants' acquisition of a new language must be reconsidered. When Welch and Joris tentatively produce first texts in Luxembourgish,¹⁰³⁷ Luxembourgish is their belated writer's language! Belatedness also describes a phenomenon associated with the literatures of small countries (cf. Gilbertz 2019). This kind of belatedness is what poets who leave their country may try to escape: migration and nomadism become ways to join those communities of innovative writers from which they felt excluded.

10.2.3 Posture and positioning towards languages

A study of multilingual poets' work profits from a combination of perspectives on authorial position. When Welch speaks of English as her *adopted mother tongue* and Joris says he will write *in all his languages*, they make significant statements. The study has however shown how important further differentiations are. As nomads, they have moved on from early conceptions to views developed later in life, which attest an inevitable evolution marked by encounters, experiences and contexts. Their early relation to English and to English in connection with other languages cannot be dissociated from prevalent views, which surrounded them. Opting for English as their language of writing was for both a personal choice – but was it really a choice after their lives and work became immersed in Anglophone surroundings, including academic environments? They kept close contact with other languages, but always via English, for instance writing their dissertations, on French and German poets respectively, in English.

English is their language of writing and as it becomes their primary language in life, the mother tongue though still well available becomes a “foreign” language. Their other languages too change position and are seen from a different perspective; they become at once more distant and closer through intense reading and translation work.

One must also remember the time gap between both writers. By the time aesthetic issues of multilingualism became recognized in mainstream critical work, Welch no longer felt inclined to follow academic and theoretical debates. Joris for his part has actively contributed to debates on multilingualism in poetry.¹⁰³⁸ As a translator and as a poet, he was attracted by linguistic otherness from the beginning, yet published his most relevant reflections on multilingual poetics after 2000.

Adhering to different conceptions of nomadism impacts on their attitudes to languages. Both insist on being in the middle or between, a position that Joris readily accepts while Welch more frequently refers

¹⁰³⁷ See for Welch, the unpublished “Maus Ginette”; for Joris “E Gedicht op Lëtzebuergesch iwwer New York” (2020).

¹⁰³⁸ For instance, in 2007 Welch declined an invitation to participate in a project that on the initiative of Corina Mersch (Ciocârlie) assembled Romanian and Luxembourgish writers. She was already not feeling well. (see her correspondence.)

to being torn between two “homes.”¹⁰³⁹ She praises her life as a hermit, a *Maus Kätti*; an interest in matters of the polis and discussions about multilingualism are not part of her world.¹⁰⁴⁰ Comments on her participation in an international conference on poetry in Mondorf (Luxembourg) render the gist of her position:

Armed with Kätti’s wisdom, I attend more readings and one mammoth trilingual debate about the end of our millennium. The way these writers cross language barriers and argue heatedly, one could think that writing was not a solitary rapture at the desk but a civic activity. I envy their ardour, their appetite for intellectual combat, and remember my Canadian Novembers and Decembers: silence, solitude, time lying ahead endlessly for meditation and life-watching. (“What are poets for?” *Frescoes* 1998:82-83)

Joris by contrast is the public lecturer, the mediator, blogger, who sees the poet’s duty to witness what happens in the world and to contribute insights which thinking through his multiple languages affords. He is the *outspoken nomad*, who tirelessly defends the role of multilingualism for the poet and who insists on cognitive as well as artistic benefits as they derive from translingual practices. Multiple languages are part of his vision of a world where an infinity of relations are possible. Many studies of translingual writers have pointed out an emphasis on linguistic super-consciousness (Gauvin; Kellman; De Balsi). This view certainly applies to Joris, who has reiterated his fascination with language matters in a recent interview:

[W]e learn that language has an underbelly, that the way language is used needs to be opened up so that you can see all that is hidden. This is also the poet’s work. I take it to be the poet’s work to become hyper-conscious of the use of language and to reveal, expose this as much as possible, while doing the other work of creating new forms, new contents. (Interview with Brazil, 2021)

Welch is by comparison more reticent about her relations to multiple languages. For a long time, in her authorial posture, there were no direct indications of foreign elements. Only through public recognition in Luxembourg did she open up to wider perspectives. Reading her work, one *feels* the enormous gravity which other languages exert on her writing. Yet her views on her poetic language – as one (not multiple) – remains unchanged.

For Welch, English is the language with which she identifies, in which she has found fulfilment and balance but it is also an *ideal post-Babylonian language* which allows her to move beyond her early languages and her “original” mother tongue. The notion of post-Babylonian used here is inspired by the work of Busch

¹⁰³⁹ The last poem in *Crossings* (2010, posthumously published) is fittingly called “Duet.”

¹⁰⁴⁰ This is a reference to Maus Ketti, the country mouse and heroine of Luxembourg folklore that Auguste Liesch celebrates in his eponymous poem (1936). See ch. 4.

and Busch (2008, 2010)¹⁰⁴¹, who refer to a pre-Babylonian stage of an idealized language fantasy in an investigation of multilingual literary writers' concepts of languages. In many writers, often those traumatized by Holocaust experiences, this dream of an original language ("eine *ursprüngliche Sprache*") is situated in very early life, with close links to the mother's language. For Welch, the opposite seems to have happened. In her writing she ignores the earlier "Babylonian" – multilingual – stage and projects herself into a new language. Nowhere in her work is there an attempt at reclaiming her earlier languages as writerly languages. She has always continued to use these languages for extensive reading, for teaching in the case of French and for informal communication.

The paradox may be that the more multilingual a writer is in daily life, in reading, the more important it is for (some of) them to build up ONE literary language with the potential to express, to translate, multiple language experiences.

Pseudo-translation as a form of translingualism

My proposal is that for works like *Word-House of a Grandchild*, pseudo-translation becomes part of multilingual authors' writing process and could be understood as *negotiating* between languages, between experiences in different cultural contexts and memories of other works. If 'translating' etymologically means transporting across spaces and to another location, it must be seen as involving much more than transposing linguistic elements into another linguistic system.

Eventually pseudo-translating could be understood as this negotiating, writing and reading process which becomes part of literary creation itself. *The monolingual final product is an original piece of work which reconciles or unifies heteroglossic voices*: the inadvertent reader may or may not hear them. Literary language leaves many open spaces for interpretation. A sociocultural reading mode is too limited: the notion of pseudo and original translation always involves multiple *perspectives* in addition to potential incessant movements between them.

Translingualism and language related ethos in poetry

A writer's ethos is a matter of credibility and is therefore embedded in a socio-cultural environment and in the community of writers and readers that the author encounters and imagines for his work. For their poetic writing, both stress the importance of the natural rhythms of English; yet this does not mean an imitation of spoken language as their condensed poetic discourse demonstrates.

¹⁰⁴¹ Busch, Brigitta; Thomas Busch. *Von Menschen, Orten und Sprachen. Multilingual leben in Österreich*. Klagenfurt/Celovec: Drava: 2008. See also „Die Macht präbabylonischer Phantasien: Ressourcenorientiertes sprachbiographisches Arbeiten" (2010: 58-82).

For Welch, poetry is response and praise, it expresses commitment to a life close to nature and condemns consumerism. Experiences of otherness in language are never directly evoked. Only poetic language and form are means for her as an artist to articulate her thoughts and render difference. One might say that her ethos, though aware of language multiplicity remains monolingual. Joris's position is a much clearer example of a heterolingual ethos; his work points out differences and he astutely inserts them in his writing as part of the poetic process while it also highlights his interest in the interrelational aspect of heterolingual discourse. (See translingual passages in *The Agony of I.B.*) Moreover, his awareness of linguistic otherness heterolingual ethos involves considerations for readers' ability to make sense of intruding foreign voices; usually his heterolingual texts have hints that facilitate meaning making.

Participation in communities: re-imagining the space of nomadic translingual writers

Dialogue with other poets, across languages, as condition to find one's way through writing and to create new, imaginary spaces, is present in both authors' work, albeit formally it is expressed differently. For Kellman, an important characteristic of a translingual writer's work is a search for connections with authors who also write from the margin in a language they do not consider their own. In his eyes, these associations permit to conceive translingualism as a distinct category of literature, different from national literatures, from literatures bound by a common language or from world literature. Such views suggest the creation of translingualism as a separate study field where relations between works and writers are not primarily determined by language, nationality and territoriality. For that reason, research on the phenomenon tends to be located in Comparative Literature.

What participation in real and imagined communities involves for Welch and Joris transpires in their writing. In Welch's work one notices her ambivalent and variable relations to both Canada and Luxembourg, but also her attachment to nomads like herself, Rimbaud or Rilke, for instance. Later in life, she constructs new imaginative spaces in which she associates her Canadian environment with echoes of voices from the margins of Luxembourg literature (Edmond Dune) and regional peripheries (Anne Blanchot-Philippi). Community for her however mainly means an imagined exchange with individual, often solitary writers like herself, not with a group of people. For Joris, the notion of literature as a vast, open, multilingual, constantly moving space is a hallmark of his work. As confirmation of Kellman's model of webs of a common space arising between translingual writers, he emphasizes his attachment to poets writing from the margin, like Paul Celan or Maghrebian authors. His work as translator further corroborates his participation in literature as a rhizomatic mobile and translingual field. His ideas of a *cyberpoetics* based on a vision of literature as a vast interacting network offers a productive model for the study of translingualism.

The view of new, always changing communities of translingual writers is an alternative to approaches based on hyphenated conceptions of poets torn between two identities. The issue is not whether they belong to Canadian, Luxembourgish or American literature: as translingual writers, they remain on the move and find new combinations with writers situated between languages.

Nomadic space—an open, variable and inter-relational dimension—is able to highlight specificities of each poet's conception of poetic language. It is understood as the physical world in which Welch and Joris move; it allows disregarding national and linguistic borders, which particularly fits Joris's work, while it can also encompass the natural environment that plays a crucial role in Welch's writing. For both poets, space is also a mental dimension in which real places merge and fuse with literary locations encountered in reading. Nomadic space also has a temporal dimension and can accommodate past and present experiences. This is what happens, for instance, in texts where Welch associates her Luxembourg past, Maritime landscapes and mountain climbing in the Dolomites. The role of translingual writing is to recall places and travelling between them thanks to a poetic language that overcomes differences. Welch's space is multi-centred (rather than de-centred) and her texts evoke separations between well-defined cultural and linguistic areas.

10.2.4 Nomads' poetic creation and different forms of re-writing

Translingual writing has also been understood as re-writing, adapting and transforming a text by transposing it into another language. Elements of such processes appear in Welch's poems about Rimbaud and Dante while in the work of Joris, the process often involves several planes of language and multiple interrelations (see e.g. *The Agony of I.B.*). The poets' association with artists in other fields shows further possible dimensions of translingualism; the language of poets becomes entangled with the language of painters, performance artists and musicians.

The articulation of different language dimensions characterizes Welch's work. Though she does not foreground the translingual process, attentive reading shows that her transformation of encountered voices into the language of her poetry often implies intralingual switches in register. (See *Word-House*.) Her *trans-lations* or *poetic transpositions* of works of art (mostly paintings) as expressions of "another language" reveal a link to multimediality as a dimension of language multiplicity. Similarly, she has participated in projects that associate music, photography and poetry. Her sensitivity to multiplicity does not consist in inserting explicitly foreign language elements in her texts yet focusses on the diversity of connections that words in a poem may establish.

Joris's poetics and the analysis of selected poems has shown an interest in explicitly multilingual forms of re-writing and the creation of what he calls post-collage work. Communication with other art forms has led him to conceive multifaceted forms of interaction; poetry becomes performance in which visual, musical, poetic elements merge in body movements. When he speaks of his cooperation with Nicole Peyrafitte, his wife, he calls it *domopoetics*: they both translate thought and experiences into languages that complement and enhance each other.

Textual and aesthetic features of poetic translingualism: focus on texts ¹⁰⁴²

Using language to speak about language processes is a challenge for which poets find their own strategies. Both Welch and Joris attempt to make language a perceptible phenomenon and experience. To convey the visible, audible and palpable characteristics of multiplicity and otherness in texts, they create texts that show how attentive they are to words, sounds, voices, letters or signs on the page they are. The prevalence of implicit or latent heterolingualism often accounts for a use of striking images and language games.

Welch's work is not marked by innovative multilingual practices but by *intra-lingual differentiation*; the poet's voice dominates though as a speaker, she is prone to put on various masks and impersonate otherness. On a spectrum of otherness (see Appendix 2), her texts belong to the side of inaudible heterolingual elements, with only a few hints such as unfamiliar names (unfamiliar to an Anglophone reader) and very rare insertions of foreign words to point to linguistic otherness. The books as objects add semiotic or paratextual details that we can read as signs of an ongoing translingual process. Our understanding of some texts moreover greatly profit from imagining a palimpsestuous relation between the speaker in the poem and an underlying text that is being transformed, usually through a translational process. (more below.)

Joris's writing covers the wide spectrum of devices (textual levels of otherness), from latent, invisible otherness to a "confusion of languages," sometimes reaching beyond the threshold of readability (intelligibility). He invents his own form of creolized language, which he occasionally calls *Barocco*. Language games and etymological references with reflections on wandering words are distinctive features of his poetic writing. It is crucial to remember his belief in the cognitive potential of poetic language in particular when words from different sources and languages interact: to puzzle readers is part of the process that should trigger new outlooks on the world.

¹⁰⁴² See the diagram representing a spectrum of translingual devices in the appendix.

Italics, quotation marks, ("goosefeet"), or the absence of any typological marking are various options to indicate foreign inserts. They stand for variable forms of a heterolingual ethos that attempts the integration of outsider voices in English language texts. Markers reflect the writer's relation to readers to whom he signals what in spoken language would be suggested through pronunciation, accent, pauses or gestures and mimicry.

Otherness is a core feature of a nomadic poetics. Welch and Joris have their own, distinct imagery to evoke experiences of alterity and transformation. Welch's fascination with wild coastal landscapes and mountain peaks is omnipresent, while in Joris's work deserts dominate. What they express about attitudes to language and the poet's position has been analysed in some detail. Yet, ultimately, both arid rocks and deserts signal silence and the limits of all language.

10.3 Specific insights gained through the study of Welch and Joris

10.3.1 The poet as noet: a core feature of translingualism in Joris's work

To convey his understanding of coherence, Joris speaks of lines of flight in his poetics. He stresses breaks and fractures as part of nomadic movements, referring to *poasis* and *mawqif* as notions of rest, renewal or recharging for writing. They are moments when different strands of thought and languages are connected, moments of articulation (= as acts of joining) that trigger fresh articulation (= as expression). He remains the outsider – yet does not hide his position: his aim is to make sense of what he watches. For this he needs his knowledge of many languages; he resorts to them because the complexity of situations that he explores could not be addressed in as much depth if he could not juxtapose, compare, and question meanings in different languages – literary as well as everyday languages (See *The Gulf*).

Translingualism is a process of articulation: of expression or enunciation and of connections. An important question thus concerns *what* the poets choose to express, rewrite or *translate* in their poetic texts. For the poet as *noet* (see ch. 6.3), translingual writing consists in conveying multifaceted thinking and diverging viewpoints through poetic language. Joris shows that poetry is a privileged place to address issues across language borders. For him, combining languages and reflecting on differences as well as connections is a way of approaching the world that enriches experience, increases knowledge and creates innovative spaces for thought.

It is an epistemological dimension of multilingualism whose principles appear relevant beyond poetic expression: resorting to language multiplicity, difference and relations between words as a tool for thinking can have implications for all domains resorting to other languages.

What he does in many texts is a form of *translanguaging*, as described by linguists; the poetic dimension emphasizes the role of imagination, which is perceived as powerful instrument of thought: it projects relations that empirical studies and pure rational thought cannot prove. Thinking through in *The Gulf* what an ecological disaster represents – in a translingual process that encompasses the poetry of Mallarmé, personal records of experience, Blanchot's philosophical lens and wide-ranging interlingual lexical notes – aims at a form of knowledge that may bridge the shortcomings of separate perspectives on complex situations.

10.3.2 Poetic creation as life writing

In research on migrants' autobiographical writing, translingualism is often understood as *re-writing of the self*, as process of migrant speakers' (re) construction of self in another language (Karpinski; Ausoni). Approached through this perspective, the writings of Welch and Joris reveal their own characteristics, which deserve more considerations.

Scholars have highlighted the role of language memoirs and life writing (or self-writing) for people who move between languages. They are discussed in sociocultural contexts of migration (see ch 3.1), while they also stand out in studies of literary translingualism (Kellman 2003; Ausoni 2018; De Bansi 2019). All the examples presented as self-writing are *works in prose*, in which through explicit narrative features authors aim at telling the story of their lives.

Can we also approach translingual poets' texts as part of life writing? For me, this question gradually became more insistent while I was approaching the work of Welch and Joris from different perspectives (memories of language experiences, visions on poetic creation and analysis of poems). There is no easy answer, but what attentive reading and thinking about the question can do is point out significant differences between Welch and Joris.

In his essays, Joris reminisces and reflects on past language experiences (see ch. 5). In his poetry, however, he attempts at recording insights of the moment and at rendering the simultaneity of experience and writing. Some titles allude to the act of recording and the texts have precise time indications: *Canto Diurno* is the song of the day, while *Janus* alludes to the threshold between two years, which gives him the opportunity to assemble the poetic diary of the past year.

Joris's work reveals *fragments of a story*, with endless bifurcations and open texts, where meaning making is always still in process.¹⁰⁴³ In most of his work, he tends to avoid the first person pronoun; his goal is to

¹⁰⁴³ His texts resemble the intricate and entangled lines in some of the drawings by Nicole Peyrafitte, which Joris chooses as illustrations – or enhancement – for his poetry.

draw a broad picture that reaches beyond his life story. The poet is the observer and rapporteur, or as he writes in the Preface to *Breccia*:

What I would have liked to see come through in BRECCIA is the tension between the fragmentary nature of experience & knowledge, & the desire for a narrative syntax, for the whole story of the tribe, the telling of which does inevitably blur the sharp edges of those shards. Europe gave me my history, those ghostly voices of the ancestors, real or made up, lied to or listened to. America gave me geography, the space of my dance. My hope has been that language, or what little of it I have been able to serve, has made a threshing floor for their marriage. (1987: 13)

The image of writing as assembling shards or fragments here applies to the vast story he wishes to tell, or evoke - a cultural story involving multiple places and voices from two continents (this is before he integrates the Arabic world in his writing). He is part of that story but not the centre.

Welch's work, *seen as a whole*, can be approached as a poetic version of a nomad-migrant's life writing. The notion of articulation is helpful: many texts (with an explicit or an embedded autobiographical dimension) refer to significant events that are retrospectively perceived as crucial moments, because they involve the clash of voices or languages and impact on the subject's new directions. In poetry, as in all literary texts, the "I" may well be another ("le 'je' est un autre"), but in these texts the speaker as subject describes situations that are close to Welch's own life. They are about life in a Canadian environment; about regular, migratory travelling between the Old and the New World; they are reflections triggered by rock climbing or about intense intellectual encounters made through books and art. If not autobiographical account, life writing in this case is about possible, imagined lives and as such part of a subject's self-construction through the process of writing or literary expression.

Welch likes imagining the life stories of others in brief sketches, and most conspicuously in *Word-House of a Grandchild*, where she identifies with both grandparents while also keeping some distance. *Life in Another Language* is another example. The perspective of the observer and storyteller is that of an outsider – but an outsider who watches the road not taken, the choices she rejected. She imagines many variations of an alter ego yet her own underlying posture/ethos in "her" language – English – as a way of life and thinking always shines through. They are her "translations" and stories of between-ness.

She watches multiplicity but looks to achieve unity through her poetic voice and life. In that sense, Welch is essentially monolingual. Poetic texts are ways for Welch to articulate/express in English what she experienced in several languages. Writing is part of self-construction through a language that she has chosen for herself.

10.3.3 The palimpsest as flexible and productive tool for an analysis of translingual writing

From the start, the palimpsest has proved a powerful tool to imagine writing processes from a broad historical perspective on continuity in literature, yet also as conceptual metaphor for the individual writer's practice.

The work of Welch and Joris has shown that there are good reasons to recognize the pertinence of the palimpsest for the study of specific features of transposition across time and space, languages and cultures in texts. The palimpsest, I have tried to argue, should advantageously supplement metaphors and notions presented in the literature review, notably the idea of languages as traffic in meaning (Kramsch 2006); of heterolingual elements requiring readers' gear-shifting (Suchet 2014); of pseudo-translation (Rath 2012); and of the porosity in language (Doloughan 2015).

A *first argument* is that palimpsests stand for transformation, a key notion of nomadic theory. They visualize the transfer and the metamorphoses that words and texts undergo when passing from one language into another. The reference to a concrete object, a palimpsest, allows imagining processes of transformation. A palimpsest stresses the materiality of literary works, notably the imprint on a page and the voices or sounds that the written words in one language form suggest. On the one hand, the writing can be erased; on the other hand, palimpsests keep the memory of what seems lost and become the site of incremental changes and new resonances.

Interlingual palimpsests (Cassin 2006) present a juxtaposition of languages, of written signs and sounds, possibly also a confrontation of languages and their cultural contexts, accompanied by loss and sometimes forceful replacement yet with still perceptible traces or memories of otherness.

Palimpsests evoke intimacy and separation, which also characterize the relation that the nomad as outsider has with language(s). Literally, a palimpsest shows that two or more texts are produced on the same support but cannot quite exist together; metaphorically, the palimpsest has great cognitive power to suggest the complex relations between different levels of text.

Secondly, in line with the overall attention to nomadic elements in the present research, palimpsests offer a spatial and mobile view of texts. The study of palimpsests as metaphors prioritizes the dynamic relation between text layers with the focus not on distinct, separate and finished texts, but on the way words of underlying texts emerge and become entangled with subsequent writing. The assumption of a palimpsestuous relation precludes a centralized view and confirms a decentralized view of language.

For a study of relations between languages, palimpsests evoke movement and continuing changes; they stand for open language spaces, to which new elements may always be added and others subtracted. Language is not perceived as an assemblage of distinct and self-contained unities.

Thirdly, palimpsests emphasize the role of reading as much as that of writing. They evoke a view of writing and reading as interrelated ongoing processes, as experiences that mutually work on each other. In relation to hypertextuality, Genette underlines the importance of reading/ interpreting practices, not only on the part of the writer but also of the reader or audience. Literature approached as palimpsest asks for an active, participatory response of readers (and writers):

L'hypertexte nous renvoie à une lecture relationnelle dont la saveur, perverse autant qu'on voudra, se condense assez bien dans cet adjectif inédit qu'inventa naguère Philippe Lejeune : lecture palimpsestueuse. ... si l'on aime vraiment les textes, on dit bien souhaiter, de temps en temps, en aimer (au moins) deux à la fois. (Genette 1982: 556-557)

His close look on the relations between reading and writing has implications for multilingual poets' practices and their work. They may well read texts (or listen to texts) in one language, or several languages, yet decide to write in another language, with not only different languages but also their diverse cultural contexts coming into close contact and interaction.

In the study of selected poems (ch. 7-9), particular attention is paid to inter- or translingual practices, to echoes and ghosting¹⁰⁴⁴ phenomena which involve intricate movements between languages. The poems give evidence of the authors' immersion in one language (or more languages) for the reading of others' works while the published text appears in another (surface) language. Welch's response to Rimbaud's work offers many traces of erasure and additions, as well as of signs of estrangement and positioning.

Fourthly palimpsests allow considering, for readers and writers, constraints as well as unlimited freedom, which also characterize a nomad's progression. Freedom because a palimpsest as material support leaves complete freedom to consecutive writers as to what they "inscribe" (content, genre, language) but the material support also imposes constraints as to the available space and the emergence of underlying signs. Moreover, constraints involve problems of *legibility* for writers and readers. Near illegibility is a characteristic of many old palimpsests. Palimpsests present many obstacles to those who are not familiar with the underlying text. As a concept of involute processes, the palimpsest stands for the challenges, which the reader of culturally and linguistically intermingled texts may meet. They often require painstaking decoding skills until the former text and links between different elements appear. Yet, literature must not be mistaken for scientific work. Readers may very well enjoy the words and sounds as they discover them on the page, accept to keep to the surface text without bothering about hidden spaces, while trying to "rewrite" it in their own words and language.

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Ghosting* is the term used in the text by Portante and Joris (2013), but also in other critical work, for instance with references to Derrida. See also Michael Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material Word* (1997).

10.4 Comments on the research process

The overall structure of the dissertation demonstrates the attempt to juxtapose Welch and Joris, with the aim of stressing diverse responses to nomadism and multilingualism. A rigorous correspondence between chapters and approaches is impossible; the most telling difference in my choice of source texts appears in the selection of letters as documents for personal statements in the case of Welch, and the reference to interviews and blogs in Joris's case.

Multilingualism has been an ongoing cognitive stimulus for the research

The study as a whole has proved an experience of linguistic multiplicity and difference, a translingual process with some similarities to the poets' writing across languages. Borrowing words from French and German critical studies, comparing and transferring them into the language of the dissertation, revealed new routes for the enquiry and provided fresh insights. These benefits confirm the notion of "travelling concepts" investigated in ch. 2. They should also justify the extensive literature review, where great attention has been paid to differences in view points and to the suggestive power of a multilingual terminology.

The special place attributed to dictionaries in the bibliography is a way to point to this facet of the inquiry. But multilingual research also means "researching with an accent": This is an allusion to Braidotti's words "I'm always writing with an accent," and the title of an article which she wrote in tribute to Françoise Collin: "Thinking with an Accent. Françoise Collin" (2014). Similarly, the present study of Welch and Joris echoes my own position as researcher between languages and academic disciplines. One other not so visible aspect of the research process should also be mentioned. While the study clearly focusses on the work of Welch and Joris, a parallel reading of many other translingual writers' work has constantly stimulated the inquiry into texts, explicitly or implicitly, located between languages and cultures.

10.5 Outlook on further research topics

Some of the observed aspects of translingualism would profit from further elaboration in connection with writers working in other contexts. Such studies should include reflections on the pertinence of the proposed spectrum of translingual devices for those who write in and from Luxembourg or in different multilingual environments (see cases mentioned in ch.1 and ch.3).

Moreover, the relative "homelessness" of nomadic work has an impact on its place in research, in university departments and public discourse. Translingualism may be an adequate notion to consider

these writers as members of imaginary, mobile communities, which move across the borders of traditional maps of nations and languages.

Translingual work could also be approached through with a greater focus on links between writers' academic and poetic work. The study of Welch and Joris should have brought evidence that for various reasons *translingualism matters*.

The partial overlapping of notions of translingual writing processes and of translanguaging could inspire a study on linguistic meta-reflections and the cognitive power that thinking through two or more languages affords in diverse contexts, notably in Higher Education.

Yet, one also needs more research on issues that have only been marginally touched on in the dissertation: public responses and the acceptance of translingual work. Keywords would be *hospitality* and *tolerance*. Studies of multilingualism in literature and of translingual processes seem to circumvent issues of writers' linguistic inadequacy and of calques, which are still central in definitions of language competences or in contexts of publication. An analysis of tolerance could distinguish between readers' *tolerance of otherness* (their willingness to accept difference) and their *tolerance to unintelligibility* (their respective capacity to overcome linguistic difficulties) when confronted with heterolingual elements. Readers are ready to overlook "mistakes" or calques, as long as they remain curious but once a text becomes opaque through too many allusions, insertions and breaks, the limits of tolerance are reached.

The question is how elitist translingual writing can afford to be.

On the one hand, it seems to be up to authors to offer props to their readers so that they can appreciate the translingual dimension of their writing. On the other hand, research on guidelines for readers of translingual work seems indispensable. One could possibly start from specificities pointed out in the work of Welch and Joris and proceed from a few general recommendations, such as sensitivity to otherness in language, to polysemy, to linguistic metaphors and language games. Readers need to develop an eye and an ear for difference as well as an awareness of overlapping spaces and interacting perspectives in nomads' texts. Unless these questions of legitimacy are publicly debated and readers well prepared for the benefits and challenges of texts that follow the nomadic paths of their authors, translingual writing cannot be appreciated at its right value.

11. Appendix

11.1 Glossary

Terminology related to language multiplicity is wandering between academic contexts and languages. In English, the overall term is multilingual/ism. Various other terms can refer to specific aspects. The study on Welch and Joris is mainly based on the following distinctions, as they reflect changing foci:

- plurilingual highlights interaction
- polyglot is mostly used for people
- translingual refers to processes, such as writing
- heterolingual emphasizes otherness and is used for texts with foreign elements.

Obviously, perspectives can overlap. In some cases, the terms turn out to be near synonyms. The glossary includes further designations with a few references as to the terminology used in French and German. In many cases, more details are given in the main text of the dissertation.

	Definitions and comments
bilingual, bilingualism	For a long time, bilingual which refers to a person having two languages has also covered the presence of more than two languages (Grosjean 2018); many scholars now question this notion and prefer to speak of multilingual/ism.
calque	A word or other expression formed by transposing literally from another language; also called loan translation; from French <i>le calque</i> – <i>la copie d'un dessin</i> ; <i>calquer</i> – <i>copier</i>
change of language, <i>alternance des langues</i> , <i>Sprachwechsel</i>	A change of language can occur within a text (cf. dispositifs hétérolingues), a conversation (spoken language: code switching) or in the practice of a writer who changes his language of writing in the course of his career (translingual writers).
codemeshing	Term coined by Canagarajah (2011): He uses it in connection with multilingual students' <i>translanguaging</i> strategies (see below).
code-switching	The practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation. See ch.3.1. Junot Diaz calls it "linguistic simultaneity" (2012)
Creole	Meaning of <i>Creole</i> in English (from <i>Lexico</i>): 1 A <i>person</i> of mixed European and black descent, especially in the Caribbean. 1.1A descendant of Spanish or other European settlers in the Caribbean or Central or South America. 1.2A white descendant of French settlers in Louisiana and other parts of the southern US. 2 A <i>mother tongue</i> formed from the contact of a European language (especially English, French, Spanish, or Portuguese) with local languages (especially African languages spoken by slaves in the West Indies) Origin of the word: From French <i>créole</i>, <i>criole</i>, from Spanish <i>criollo</i>, probably from Portuguese <i>crioulo</i> 'black person born in Brazil', from <i>criar</i> 'to breed', from Latin <i>creare</i> 'produce, create'. For the meaning of creole and creolization in <i>Postcolonial Studies</i>, see Ashcroft 2013: 68-70 In relation to languages, the term is used as near synonym of the French <i>langue métisse</i> (<i>hybride</i>) or the German <i>Mischsprachigkeit</i>.

	For its use in French see the detailed entry in <i>crrtl.fr</i> (quoted in a footnote in ch. 3.2.3); for discussions of literature, especially Caribbean literature, see the writings of Édouard Glissant, who links creolization to rhizomes (Deleuze/Guattari) thus pointing to connections with nomadic theory. See also <i>Barocco</i> in Joris (<i>A Nomad Poetics</i> 2003:7) and explanations in 6.3.3.
diglossia	A situation in which two languages (or two varieties of the same language) are used under different conditions within a community, often by the same speakers. The term is usually applied to languages with distinct 'high' and 'low' (colloquial) varieties, such as Arabic. https://www.lexico.com/definition/diglossia
exophonic, exophony	<i>Not provided in most dictionaries</i> Exophony is the practice of writing in a language that is not one's mother tongue. Its meaning is close to <i>translingual</i> , as used by Kellman See Susan Arndt, Dirk Naguschewski and Robert Stockhammer, <i>Exophonie. Anders-Sprachigkeit (in) der Literatur</i> (2007); Chantal Wright: (2017). See a chapter in Perloff, <i>Unoriginal Genius</i> ("Language in Migration: Multilingualism and Exophonic Writing in the New Poetics," 2010 123-145).
extraterritorial	For its use in relation to languages, see George Steiner (1971); Lassalle, Weissmann (2014).
glossolalia	The phenomenon of (apparently) speaking in an unknown language, especially in religious worship. It is practised especially by Pentecostal and charismatic Christians. https://www.lexico.com/definition/glossolalia <i>Larousse: Langage personnel inventé par certains malades mentaux ou dans un but ludique.</i> Also close to speaking in tongues (Pentecost miracle) <i>cf. xénoglossie« Phénomène au cours duquel un sujet se montre capable, dans un état modifié de conscience, de parler une langue étrangère véritable qu'il ne connaît pas à l'état conscient ».</i> https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/x%C3%A9noglossie/82873 .
heteroglossia	The presence of two or more expressed viewpoints in a text or other artistic work. https://www.lexico.com/definition/heteroglossia also see Bakhtin: "Discourse in the Novel" in <i>The Dialogic Imagination</i> (2004: 263) and Glossary as added by editor Michael Holquist. Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, as "diversity of speech types and sometimes even diversity of languages", based on a study of discourse in the novel (1981/ 2004: 262 ff.; 324 ff on double-voiced and internally dialogized discourse; 411) has had a lasting influence on views of multilingualism. The emphasis that he puts on <i>voice and dialogue</i> rather than on national languages as coherent and grammatical and semantic systems shows a view of language as constantly in movement under the pressure of centrifugal forces.
heterolingual heterolingualism See French hétérolinguisme/ hétérolingue	<i>Not provided in most dictionaries</i> See Grutman: l'hétérolinguisme: « la présence <i>dans un texte</i> d'idiomes étrangers, sous quelque forme que ce soit, aussi bien que de variétés (sociales, régionales ou chronologiques) de la langue principale » Grutman 1997 : 37. See also in the new edition (2019). For a German translation of Grutman's definition, see Schmeling (2004: 222). The Greek prefix means different, other. Heterolingual thus refers to the use or presence of a different language, a language that is other than the dominant language; the focus is on difference, otherness. See also in Suchet (2014: 17).and chapters on differentiation between <i>hétérolinguisme visible et h. escamoté</i> (Compare with German terminology in Conter, "Mehrsprachigkeit im Drama", 2017, see below)
homophonic	<i>Music</i> : Characterized by the movement of accompanying parts in the same rhythm as the melody. Often contrasted with polyphonic. https://www.lexico.com/definition/homophonic
homophonous	1 (of music) homophonic. 'It is a style of traditional homophonous singing.'

	2 (of a word or words) having the same pronunciation as another or others but different meaning, origin, or spelling. https://www.lexico.com/definition/homophonous
idiolect	The speech habits peculiar to a particular person.
idiom	1. A group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words (e.g. over the moon, see the light). 1.1 mass noun A form of expression natural to a language, person, or group of people. 1.2 The dialect of a people or part of a country. <i>Origin:</i> Late 16 th century from French <i>idiome</i> , or via late Latin from Greek <i>idiōma</i> 'private property, peculiar phraseology', from <i>idiousthai</i> 'make one's own', from <i>idios</i> 'own, private'. https://www.lexico.com/definition/idiom
interlingual	Relating to, or existing between two or more languages ;mostly used to describe dictionaries. Cassin speaks of <i>palimpseste interlingual</i> (2006).
isolingual	<i>Not provided in most dictionaries</i> for Kellman, an isolingual writer is completely monolingual; the opposite of translingual (2019 and 2020)
language, national	Also natural language; natural may be opposed to formal (as defined for use by a particular nation) or to artificial language Perhaps to avoid such distinctions, a particular language is often referred to as "a given language" or "a named language." All these denominations or labels indicate the assumption of separate languages.
language loyalty	See Uriel Weinreich ; in L. Forster Language <i>loyalty</i> leads people to work toward maintaining the language in question even under adverse conditions. Language <i>maintenance</i> consists of strategies that groups use to keep the language to which they are loyal alive; language <i>persistence</i> is the result. sk.sagepub.com/reference/bilingual/n171.xml For language loyalty, continuity and change Joshua A. Fishman's Contributions to International Sociolinguistics Author: Ofelia García, Rakhmiel Peltz, Harold F. Schiffman 2006
Mehrsprachigkeit, Vielsprachigkeit, Mischsprachigkeit	The German distinctions are often helpful. See <i>Mehrsprachigkeit</i> ,as defined by Conter in relation to drama (2017): 1. Von einer <i>impliziten latenten Mehrsprachigkeit</i> ist dann die Rede, wenn die gesprochene Sprache in einem Drama fiktionologisch nicht mit jenem sprachlich-kulturellen Raum im Stück kongruiert, der die Kulisse bildet und die Handlung eines Texts bestimmt. 2. eine <i>explizite latente Mehrsprachigkeit</i> liegt vor wenn der Dramentext in einer einzigen Sprache gesprochen wird, obwohl die Protagonisten aus unterschiedlichen sprachlich definierten Kulturräumen stammen. 3. Formen der <i>manifesten Mehrsprachigkeit</i>. He distinguishes between versions of plays in different languages (translations) and multilingualism within the text, which consists of language switching. In certain periods, this manifest/ patent/ apparent multilingualism is a feature of comedies. It may also take on a <i>role of language criticism (comparing standard and non standard forms, for example)</i>. 4. <i>Manifeste Mehrsprachigkeit im mehrsprachigen Kulturraum</i> – like CH, BE and LU; such plays are also performed in contexts of international festivals. Conter gives several examples of innovative language combinations, some performed as multimedia productions. <i>Vielsprachigkeit</i> –and the included references to <i>multimodal, intermedial</i> (see Schmitz-Emans 2004) and <i>Mischsprachigkeit</i> , (Knauth 2004). "Muttersprachliche Mehrsprachigkeit" is a pertinent phrase to describe the situation of many people in Luxembourg (see Anne-Marie Millim 2017).

	See also Radaelli for <i>latente Mehrsprachigkeit</i> (2011: 61-67): Ein Text ist immer dann latent mehrsprachig, wenn andere Sprachen nur unterschwellig vorhanden und nicht unmittelbar wahrnehmbar sind; er weist also auf den ersten Blick eine einsprachige Oberfläche auf. Dies trifft (1) bei den meisten Übersetzungen zu, (2) wenn –ohne dass dabei ein impliziter Übersetzungsvorgang stattfindet– auf andere Sprachen verwiesen wird und (3) wenn der Text eine Sprachreflexion beinhaltet, die seiner eigenen (auch nur potentiellen) oder einer geschilderten Mehrsprachigkeit gilt.
monolingual	Of a person or society) speaking only one language. (of a text or conversation) written or conducted in only one language. (noun): A person who speaks only one language.
mother tongue	First language, native language or native tongue; primary language
multicentric	See seminar at ESSE conference in Kosiče (2014): Canadian Literature in a Multi-Centric World. The term is borrowed from Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek.
multilingual multilingualism plurilingualism	In or using several languages. https://www.lexico.com/definition/multilingual See also Council of Europe for distinction between plurilingualism and multilingualism, see below see German translation for literary contexts, e.g. in Knauth for latent (or implicit, hidden) multilingualism see above for Mehrsprachigkeit Also compare to definitions of heterolingualism (Grutman, Suchet)
multimodal	Referring to multiple modes of representation for meaning making. <i>Modes</i> include written language, spoken language, and patterns of meaning that are visual, audio, gestural, tactile and spatial. see Günther Kress Compare to intermedial (cf. Joris's dramatic pieces)
omnilingual	Speaking or understanding all or many languages. https://www.lexico.com/definition/omnilingual See Kellman (Omnilingual aspirations 2020)
orchestration	See Mikhail Bakhtin: what he says about heteroglossia in the novel appears to suit voices in some of Welch's and Joris' poetry. "The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. [...] The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types (<i>raznorečje</i>) and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions." 1982, 2004: 262-263 [<i>my emphasis</i>] Also see Michael Holquist's comment in the Glossary: For Bakhtin the music metaphor emphasizes hearing over seeing. He quotes Bakhtin who writes "the novel is the maximally complete register of all social voices of the era." (1982, 2004: 430-431) <i>Orchestration</i> also suits an analysis of voices in poetic texts (including drama) where not so much the social as the aesthetic dimension is crucial for meaning making.
panlingualism	Not provided in most dictionaries Involving or encompassing all languages. https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/panlingual See Kellman: He calls it a utopia; it is the logical –and impossible– culmination of the urge to expand through yet another language. It would transcend the curse of Babel. (Eva Hoffman. is said to aspire to panlingualism.)
plurilingual	Relating to, involving, or fluent in a number of languages; compare with multilingual. tps://www.lexico.com/definition/plurilingual See also Council of Europe 'multilingualism' refers to the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one 'variety of language' i.e. the mode of speaking of a social group whether it is formally recognised as a language or not; in such an area individuals may be monolingual speaking only their own variety.

	'plurilingualism' refers to languages not as objects but from the point of view of those who speak them. It refers to the repertoire of varieties of language which many individuals use, and is therefore the opposite of monolingualism; it includes the language variety referred to as 'mother tongue' or 'first language' and any number of other languages or varieties. Thus in some multilingual areas some individuals may be monolingual and some may be plurilingual. https://rm.coe.int/16806a892c
polyglot	A synonym of multilingual, yet as Todeva and Cenoz point out polyglot is "a generic term for a multilingual person, not infrequently in reference to people with an impressive number or mastery of languages. Multilingual for these authors is more neutral with regard to level of proficiency and number of languages involved" (2009: 18). The noun, polyglossia, is a relatively new word: The coexistence of two or more languages, or distinct varieties of the same language, within a speech community. https://www.lexico.com/definition/polyglossia For Bakhtin (see Glossary, in Holquist's translation), it means "The simultaneous presence of two or more languages within a single cultural system."
polylingualism polylingual	Multilingualism. 1930s; earliest use found in American Anthropologist. https://www.lexico.com/definition/polylingualism See also: Brian Lennon referring to Sternberg: : unilingual and polylingual for texts versus monolingual and multilingual are sociolinguistic terms for speakers and communities in Jessner/ Kramsch (2015: 145)
polylogue	A discussion involving more than two people. Cf. dialogue https://www.lexico.com/definition/polylogue In her book <i>Polylogue</i> (1977), Julia Kristeva analyzes various signifying practices such as language, discourse, literature and painting, and examines the approaches taken to them in some disciplines that have charted the course of symbolicity (linguistics, semiotics, epistemology, and psychoanalysis). Also see Derrida: N'importe qui a « droit de regard » sur une oeuvre : il peut lui prêter des voix, l'interpréter, la développer, en raconter la perspective ... Des voix multiples pourront ainsi s'exprimer, un <i>polylogue</i> se développer autour de l'oeuvre. https://www.idixa.net/Pixa/pagixa-0609151030.html
polyphony	A term derived from music which refers to audible aspects: <i>The style of simultaneously combining a number of parts, each forming an individual melody and harmonizing with each other.</i> https://www.lexico.com/definition/polyphony also in Bakhtin. As near synonym of polyglot: see the title of a collection of essays: <i>Polyphonie - Mehrsprachigkeit und literarische Kreativität</i>, by Bürger-Koftis, Michaela; Schweiger, Hannes; Vlasta, Sandra, editors; also see Julia Kristeva who speaks of "<i>l'individu polyphonique</i>" (2013).
polysemy	<i>Linguistics</i>: The coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or phrase. https://www.lexico.com/definition/polysemy associated to polyphony: lead to a multitude of readings cf. Tawada "Überseetzungen" (Ette 2014: 183)
repertoire	This is how the Council of Europe defines <i>language repertoire</i>: "The repertoire of languages known by each individual (individual repertoire) comprises languages acquired in different ways (languages learnt at home from infancy onwards, learnt subsequently during schooling or afterwards, learnt independently, etc.) for which people have different competences (everyday conversation, reading, listening, etc.) at levels of mastery which also differ (elementary, independent, experienced, etc.). These languages can have specific functions (communicating within the family, socialising with neighbours, working, expressing one's belonging to a group, etc.), but these functions can nonetheless be fulfilled jointly by several languages. This distribution of languages in the repertoire may change over time or may depend on communication situations (using several languages simultaneously in exchanges, known as code alternation)" https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680494484

	See also linguistic repertoire in Blommaert, (referring to Hymes and Gumperz): includes information on the Local linguistic repertoire, the totality of distinct language varieties, dialects and styles employed in a community. Also to be described are the genres or art forms in terms of which verbal performances can be characterized, such as myths, epics, tales, narratives and the like. Descriptions further cover the various acts of speaking prevalent in a particular group ... and finally the 'frames' that serve as instructions on how to interpret a sequence of acts. (Gumperz 1982:155; italics in original; cf. also Bauman & Sherzer 1974:7) In de Saint Georges and Weber 2013: 11 Also see the paper by Brigitta Busch, entitled "Linguistic repertoire and <i>Spracherleben</i>," (2015) with a focus on the lived experience of language.
semiotics	The study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation.
Sprachlichkeit	French and English have no direct equivalent of the German term, see in ch. 3
translanguaging	<i>Not in most dictionaries.</i> extensively commented in ch. 3 For a French near equivalent, see « Écrire en langues pour penser entre les langues » (Anokhina 2015).
translation	Translation is understood as both literal practice (converting a text in one language into a text in another language) and metaphor (see etymology of translation - which also refers to metaphor – to carry across, beyond: standing for translation in a figurative sense) See Karpinski (2012:5-6) for distinctions between broad and narrow meaning of translation "Generally speaking, broad approaches to translation are supported by different perspectives: poststructuralist, feminist, phenomenological, and postcolonial ... In poststructuralist terms, all texts and subjects are viewed as always already translated, so translation is part of any inscription of meaning." Karpinski (2012:5) Doloughan on translational writing, mostly in what Karpinski calls the broad sense of translation. translational writing: All <i>writers</i> are translators. Creative <i>writing</i> is above all a <i>translational</i> process. see Gentzler 2017 (focus on texts and meaning making; rewriting as general term) See also translational medicine: area of research that aims to improve human health and longevity by determining the relevance to human disease of novel discoveries in the biological sciences. Translational medicine facilitates the characterization of disease processes and the generation of novel hypotheses based on direct human observation. https://www.britannica.com/science/translational-medicine
translational writing	
translingual	Occurring in or involving more than one language. Also (of a person): able to switch effortlessly from one language to another when speaking or writing. Earliest use found in The Irish Times. in 1960s https://www.lexico.com/definition/translingual The term is used in literary studies and in Applied Linguistics. Its meaning is close to specific uses of translational and to translanguaging. Kellman refers to translingualism as "the phenomenon of authors who write in more than one language or at least in a language other than their primary one." He also calls it a tradition, showing parallels and connections between writers (e.g. Coetzee reading Beckett); he also refers to examples of writers <i>assuming</i> (take on, impersonate, imitate) another writer's voice (Coetzee taking on Dostoevsky's voice in <i>The Master of Petersburg</i>); translingual writing in that sense is similar to pseudo-translation.
translingualism	
<i>translingue,</i> <i>translinguisme</i>	

	For Gentzler, translingual writing is close to translation practices (2017: 198-199), when he quotes Lydia He Liu: “rather than “translation,” Liu prefers the term “translingual practice,” the process by which new words, meanings, discourses, and modes of representation “arise, circulate, and acquire legitimacy” (195: 26). (cf. translational writing) Also see Canagarajah, <i>Translingual Practice as Spatial Repertoires: Expanding the Paradigm beyond Structuralist Orientations</i> (2018): “Translingualism calls for a shift from these structuralist assumptions to consider more mobile, expansive, situated, and holistic practices.” Ausoni (2013; 2018) investigates <i>l’écriture translingue</i> and provides an overview of translingualism and its characteristics notably in the context of Francophone literature but with general implications for all who do not write in their first language. Sara De Balsi also adopts the term in French for a study of a Hungarian Francophone Swiss writer (<i>Agota Kristof. Écrivaine translingue</i>) and explains: Je reprends [...] l’adjectif <i>translingue</i> dans l’acception que lui donne Ausoni [Mémoires d’outre-langue. L’écriture translingue de soi 2018] d’un passage (<i>trans-</i>) tardif et non nécessairement définitif d’une langue à l’autre, et je l’associe plus directement aux littératures francophones, avec lesquelles les écrivains translingus partagent nombre de caractéristiques : renvoi par l’institution littéraire à une situation d’illégitimité dans la langue, problématisation du choix du français, condition d’insécurité voire de surconscience linguistique, élaboration d’un métadiscours sur la langue et sur la traduction, thématization des langues et de la traduction, un lien étroit avec les questions de l’identité, de l’étrangeté et de l’exil, dans les œuvres littéraires. (2019 :11) This description is close to what in English is described as translational writing. For similar studies in German, see <i>Exophonie. Anders-Sprachigkeit (in) der Literatur translingual is also used in German by Ette „Über Brücken gehen“</i> (in Arndt and al.); <i>ZwischenWeltenSchreiben</i>
triglossic trilingual	Used to describe multilingualism in Luxembourg; Weber and Horner 2012: 111; cf. trilingual cf. bilingual, diglossic
univocal	<i>Philosophy Linguistics</i> : (of a word or term) having only one possible meaning; unambiguous.
Vielsprachigkeit	Cf. terminology used in the CEFR by the Council of Europe: as German translation of plurilingualism, but not widely used – see Hu 2018 Schmitz-Emans: <i>Vielsprachigkeit</i> has a more general meaning than <i>Mehrsprachigkeit</i> , see also <i>Mischsprachigkeit</i>
voice	Cf. Bakhtin [golos, -glas]: “This is the speaking personality, the speaking consciousness. A voice always has a will or desire behind it, its own timbre, and overtones” (Glossary 2004: 434). For Bakhtin, the novel is double-voiced; is a single voiced discourse.
xénoglossie (Fr.)	Phénomène au cours duquel un sujet se montre capable, dans un état modifié de conscience, de parler une langue étrangère véritable qu’il ne connaît pas à l’état conscient. https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/x%C3%A9noglossie/82873 <i>Occultisme</i> : Compréhension (lecture, langage, écriture) d’un langage inconnu du médium. https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/x%C3%A9noglossie in Gasquet et Suarez, Perloff uses <i>xenoglossia</i>

COMMENT

The review of studies (ch. 3.1) reveals the use of many near synonyms. Usage often depends on the researcher’s positioning in an academic subject. For instance, literary studies prefer polyglot/ polyglossia whereas linguists rather speak of multilingual/ multilingualism.

Most terms with a Greek or Latin origin have equivalents in several European or Western languages: prefixes like *multi-*, *pluri-* referring to Latin and *mono-*, *poly-* to Greek. Some terms do not as easily pass from one language to another: *tongue* and *langue*, for instance, have a polysemy that *Zunge* has not. Also see Cassin, notably on Saussure's distinction between *langue*, *langage* et *parole* and diverging uses in other languages. (2004: 675-684) Differences in usage impel thinking about connotations of words and negotiating meanings. Roughly speaking one may distinguish between terms that derive from Latin, and those that have a Greek prefix. Some words are coined for a particular perspective: Purists will object to the mixture of Latin and Greek elements as in *monolingual*, *heterolingual*, *polylingual*, while Grutman shows the combination may fit the idea that for instance the merging of Greek and Latin in *heterolingual* expresses the meaning of the word.

Other words are rooted in a specific language with no etymological link to Greek or Latin: they have no immediate equivalents in other languages but can foreground a particular feature: see *Mischsprachigkeit*. Sometimes one term is more commonly used in one language or academic discipline than in others: for instance the French term *plurilinguisme*. Terminology leads to varying interpretations and uncovers associations, for example, to concepts of purity versus mixture (cf. *creole*, *métissage*, *hybrid*). The wealth of terms is striking and in many cases reveals the wish to stress a particular dimension of the concept, like the link to sound (polyphony).

Occasionally, dictionaries reveal surprising usage: « Cet homme est une polyglotte. » : It is a metaphoric reference to the Bible written in several languages, called *polyglotte* ; today however one would say « Cet homme est un polyglotte » or « il est polyglotte » (<https://www.littre.org/definition/polyglotte>)

11.2 The spectrum of otherness in translingual writing

Heterolingual poetic practices in the work of Welch and Joris (Part III)

Type and degree of linguistic de-familiarisation	1	2	3	4	5	6*	7*	8*
	weak forms of defamiliarization				strong forms of defamiliarization			
	all-English text about a situation in a non-Anglophone context / reflections about otherness in language	a character's foreign speech is given in E. translation (reference to language)	insertion of foreign names of people or places (literary or real-life reference)	insertion of quotation in translation or paraphrase	quotation in the original	insertion of isolated words from another language/ another alphabet	bilingual dialogue and code-switching and mixing	mixing of several languages breaks in syntax
in texts by Welch and Joris	<i>Life in Another Language</i> (W) "Anguish. A Riddle"(J):	Imaginary dialogues of or with non-English poets (W)	<i>Word-House</i> (W)	Rimbaud poems (W)	<i>Commedia Mia</i> (W) epigraphs	<i>Meditations of Al-Hallaj</i> ; "Goosefeet" (J)	"Letter to Steichen's Ed"; <i>The Agony of I.B.</i> (J)	<i>Winnetou Old</i> (J)
	latent heterolingualism ←				→ explicit (visible and audible) heterolingualism			
Writer's aim & ethos and effects on readers	a break caused by insertion of heterolingual elements could unduly disturb poetic unity	No audible breaks The name of the language is irrelevant for the poetic message subtle hints at otherness	evocation of another linguistic or cultural space; visible or audible breaks	writer considers readers' linguistic competences	couleur locale, and/ or cognitive stumbling block → stepping stones are added; e.g. italics	opening of linguistic and literary space	socio-cultural authenticity	"confusion" as condition for thinking language games
	from smooth reading to increased halts (requires "changing gear " and slowing down of the process of reading) thresholds of readability depend on readers: their linguistic skills and <i>heterolingual ethos</i>							

12. Bibliography

Primary Sources

Liliane Welch

For unpublished work, see Centre national de littérature / Fonds Liliane Welch / CNL L-190 https://az.lu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?vid=BIBNET&docid=ALEPH_LUX05000001350&lang=fr_FR&context=L

Welch, Liliane. "Angels and Roses." *Frescoes. Travel Pieces*. 1988: 63-67.

—. "A Sense of Voice." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 29-33.

—. "A Sense of Wilderness." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 70-75.

—. *Assailing Beats*. Ottawa, Canada: Borealis Press, 1979.

—. "Baudelaire: Literary Criticism and the Advent of Technology." *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, vol. 5. 1972: 46-54. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1314911>

—. "Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 34-37.

—. *Brush and Trunks*. Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1981.

—. "Canadian Returnee." *Canadian Woman Studies/ Les Cahiers de la femme, Rabonitsa* (April 1988). <<https://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/cws/article/view/11153>>.

—. "Climbing the Mountain of Translation." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 83-84.

—. "Conveniats." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 45-47.

—. "Correspondence." Unpublished; available at CNL Fonds Liliane Welch L-190; II.

—. *Crossings*. Ottawa: Borealis Press, 2010.

—. "D' Maus Ginette." Manuscript. Poème sur le modèle de "D'Maus Ketti" d'Auguste Liesch. CNL L-190; I.1.1-4.

—. *Dispensing Grace*. Ottawa: Borealis Press, 2005.

—. *Dream Museum*. Victoria, British Columbia, Canada: Sono Nis Press, 1995.

—. "Edmond Dune in New Brunswick." *Frescoes. Travel Pieces*. 1988: 91-94.

—. "E klengt Land." *Eis Sprooch Nr 9/ Nei Folleg / XVI Jor/1978?* (1979): 30-31.

—. *Fidelities*. Nepean, Ontario, Canada: Borealis Press, 1997.

—. "Free Voyages to All the Seas of the Earth." *Frescoes. Travel Pieces*. 1988: 97-100.

—. *Frescoes. Travel Pieces*. Nepean, Ontario, Canada: Borealis Press, 1998.

—. *From the Songs of the Artisans*. Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1983.

- . *Gathered in Memory's Hands*. Ottawa: Borealis Press, 2006.
- . "Grandparents: A Fragment." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 18-21.
- . "Hans Robert Jauss: Aesthetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik (Book Review)." *Journal of Aesthetics & Art Criticism* (Mar79, Vol. 37 Issue 3): 363-365.
- . "In Girls a Family Name Does Not Live On." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 42-44.
- . "La Femme et la libération." *Carnet d'accueil. Lycée Hubert Clément Esch-sur-Alzette* 1986-1987.
- . *Life in Another Language. Prose Poems*. Dunvegan, Ontario: Cormorant Books, 1992.
- . "Mallarmé: A New Concept of Poetry." *Dalhousie Review* 48.No 4 (Winter 1968-69): 523-529.
- . *Manstorna. Life on the Mountains*. Charlottetown Prince Edward Island : Ragweed Press, 1985.
- . "Marshes/ Mountains." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 58-60.
- . "Mountain Climbing – Reading – Writing." *October Winds*. 1980: 69-75.
- . *October Winds*. Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1980.
- . "On the Way to English." *Seismographs*. 1988: 38-41.
- . "On the Way to Marburg." *Frescoes. Travel Pieces*. 1988: 68-72.
- . "Painting: Not a Profession but a Religion". *Untethered in Paradise*. 2002: 106-108)
- . "Poetry as Cheirography." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 61-69.
- . "Praising the Earth with Our Feet." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 50-51.
- . "Sackville, New Brunswick: Locus of Migrations." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988. 52-53.
- . *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada: Ragweed Press, 1988.
- . *Stealing the Flowers of Evil*. Ottawa: Borealis Press, 2008.
- . *Syntax of Ferment*. Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1979.
- . "Tapping Reality." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 76.
- . "Terres Rouges: Minescapes." *Frescoes. Travel Pieces*. 1988: 85-90.
- . "The Eyeball of Time." Poem. Unpublished manuscript): CNL Fonds Liliane Welch L-0190; I.
- . "The Hands of the Tongue." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 26-28.
- . "The Mountain in the Bible and in Life / Marco Inzegneri, [trad. Liliane Welch]." (n.d.): CNLL-190; I.1.5-4.
- . "The Poet as Frustrated Rhapsode." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 87-89.

- . "The Poet as Walker." *Poetry Toronto*, 137 May 1987.
- . *The Problem of Nature in Baudelaire*. Ph. D. Dissertation. *The University of Pennsylvania*. 1964. Unpublished. Available through Proquest.
- . *The Rock's Stillness*. Ottawa, Canada: Borealis Press, 1999.
- . "The Writer as Outsider." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 90-96.
- . *This Numinous Bond*. Ottawa: Borealis Press, 2003.
- . "To Places Unknown." *Frescoes. Travel Pieces*. 1988: 3-5.
- . "Transmutations: Death to Life, Culture to Song, Time to Place. Rev. of works by Cheng Sait Chia, Hédi Bouraoui, Andy Wainwright." *The Fiddlehead* 137 (October 1983): 98-104.
- . *Untethered in Paradise*. Ottawa: Borealis Press, 2002.
- . "Ut pictura poesis/ Ut poesis pictura." *Fiddlehead* 184 (October 1982): 99-104.
- . "What are Poets for?" *Frescoes. Travel Pieces*. 1988: 78-84.
- . "Wolves and Foxes." *Seismographs. Selected Essays and Reviews*. 1988: 22-25.
- . *Word-House of a Grandchild*. Charlottetown PEI Canada: Ragweed Press, 1987.
- . "Writing in and for New Brunswick." Tapescript. Introduction for a poetry reading. Probably not published (no date; circa 1983): CNL Fonds Liliane Welch L-190; I.1.3-10.
- Welch, Liliane and Cyril Welch. *Address: Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Butor*. Victoria, British Columbia : Sono Nis Press, 1979.
- . *Emergence. Baudelaire. Mallarmé, Rimbaud*. State College, Pennsylvania: Bald Eagle Press, 1973.
- . "Martin Heidegger: 'Poetry, Language, Thought' and 'On the Way to Language'." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* Vol. XXXI.1, (Fall 1972): 117-123.
- . "The creativity of reading: Michel Butor and his *Mobile*." *Authors and Philosophers. French Literature Series VI*. University of South Carolina (1979): 101-115.
- Welch, Liliane and Nic Weber, translator. "Großeltern: ein Fragment." *Les Cahiers luxembourgeois* 35 (1988): 63-68.
- Welch, Liliane, Ben Heyart (drawings) and Nic Weber (translations). *Von Menschen und Orten*. Luxembourg: Éditions des Cahiers Luxembourgeois, 1992.
- Welch, Liliane, Lex Jacoby and Isabelle Kronz. Photographs by Raymond Clement. *Element 5*. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Centrale, 1996.
- Welch, Liliane, Raymond Clement (photographs) and Luc Devos (piano) with Philharmonisches Streichtrio Berlin. *Mosaics. Music, Scapes, Words*. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Centrale, 1998.

Pierre Joris

The following resource centres and websites have provided important information:

Centre national de littérature / Fonds Pierre Joris / CNLL-342 https://a-z.lu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?vid=BIBNET&docid=ALEPH_LUX05000016708&context=L&lang=fr_FR

<http://pierrejoris.com/nomad.html>

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/joris/>

<https://poets.org/poet/pierre-joris>. "Poetry Foundation."

Joris, Pierre. "Poet/Translator/Professor at the University at Albany."
<https://www.albany.edu/~joris/resume.html>. *last accessed 28.01.2021*.

Joris, Pierre. "A Glottal Choice (1999)." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003: 59-62.

—. "A Memoir for Mohammed Khair-Eddine (2001)." *Justifying the Margins*. 2009: 53-57.

—. "A Nomad Poetics Revisited: Poetry and Translation in a Global Age." 09 2017. *boundary 2*.

—. *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

—. *Aljibar. Poèmes. Traduit en français par Éric Sarner*. Differdange, Luxembourg: Éditions Phi, en coopération avec Écrits des Forges, Québec, 2007.

—. *Aljibar II. Poèmes. Traduit en français par Éric Sarner*. Differdange, Luxembourg: Éditions Phi, en coopération avec Écrits des Forges, Québec, 2008.

—. "An 'E' for an 'A'." Translated from the French by Peter Cockelbergh. *Jacket Magazine* 40. 2010. <<http://jacketmagazine.com/40/joris-cocklebergh-e-for-an-a.shtml>>.

—. *An American Suite*. New York and San Francisco: Impatient Press, 2016.

—. "An Interview of Pierre Joris with Barzakh." *Barzakh, a Literary Magazine* 2013.
<https://www.barzakh.net/new-blog/2016/4/18/pierre-joris>.

—. "An Interview of Pierre Joris with SJ Fowler." *Maintenant 94 3: AM Magazine* (2012).

—. "An Interview with Alexis Almeida." *Asymptote*, 2016. web.
<<http://www.asymptotejournal.com/interview/an-interview-pierre-joris/>>.

—. "An Interview with David Brazil. Under the Language: A Conversation with Pierre Joris on Paul Celan." *Los Angeles Review of Books* (20 January 2021): <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/under-the-language-a-conversation-with-pierre-joris-on-paul-celan/>.

—. *The Book of U. Le livre des cormorans*. Luxembourg: Éditions Simoncini, 2017.

—. *Antlers I-XI*. London: Exclusive Mimeograph Masterpieces, 1975.

—. *Arabia (Not So) Deserta. Essays on Maghrebi and Mashreqi Writing and Culture*. New York City: Spuyten Duyvil, 2019.

- . *Barzakh: Poems 2000-2012*. Boston: Black Widow Press, 2014.
- . *Breccia. Selected Poems 1972-1986*. 1st edition. Echternach, Luxembourg: éditions Phi (Station Hill and Guernica, US), 1987.
- . *Breccia. Selected poems 1972-1986*. New edition. Cheltenham, GB: Skylight Press, 2014.
- . *Canto Diurno. Choix de poèmes 1972-2014*. Traduit de l'anglais sous la direction de Jean Portante. Le Pré-Saint-Gervais, France: Le Castor Astral, 2017.
- . "Collage & Post-Collage: In Honor of Eric Mottram (1997)." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003: 83-93.
- . "Community of Translation & Translation of Community in Robin Blaser (1997)." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003. 102-109.
- . "Community of Translation and & Translation of Community in Robin Blaser." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, (1997) 2003: 102 - 109.
- . "Conversation with Peter Cockelbergh. Luxembourg-Géographèmes." Peter Cockelbergh, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. Prague: Litteraria Pragensis Books. Univerzita Karlova v Praze 2011: 245-251.
- . "Conversation with Peter Cockelbergh. Maghreb, Algeria - Géographèmes." Peter Cockelbergh, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011: 187-196.
- . "Conversation with Peter Cockelbergh. UK, France (, Germany)- Géographèmes." Peter Cockelbergh, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011: 315-320.
- . "Conversation with Peter Cockelbergh. US-Géographèmes." Peter Cockelbergh, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*., 2011. 125-135.
- . "Derrida/ Celan Talk." *Collège international de Philosophie* Nr 89-90/2 (2016/2): 172-180.
<<https://www.cairn.info/revue-rue-descartes-2016-2-page-172.htm>>.
- . "D'Plëss." Corina Ciocârlie, editor. *Où demeurer ailleurs que là*. Esch-sur-Alzette: Éditions Phi, 2007: 89-97.
- . "Edouard Glissant at 80." <https://pierrejoris.com/blog/edouard-glissant-80/> (s.d.).
- . "Exile: Women's Turn — A Poem of East and West" by Nabile Farès. With review of translation by Peter Thompson." 2017.
- . *Fin de siècle - Phantombild. Ausgewählte Gedichte 1974 - 2000. Aus dem amerikanischen Englisch von Nico Helminger. Ill.: Nicole Peyrafitte*. Esch: Éditions Phi, 2004.
- . "Foghorn (Extract from An Autobiographical Work in Progress)." *Black Renaissance*, Fall 2012, Vol.12(1): 88, 151.
<<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56f092c327d4bd8d421493a4/t/57058ac322482e38315a31af/1459980995801/Foghorn.pdf>>.
- . *Fox-trails, -tales & -trots*. Luxembourg: Black Fountain Press, 2020.

- . *h.j.r. Poèmes*. Translated in French by Eric Sarnier. Luxembourg: Éditions Phi en coédition avec Écrits des Forges Québec, 1999.
- . "Interview with Peter Cockelbergh. On Pierre Joris Justifying." *Marginalia* 2010.
<http://jacketmagazine.com/40/joris-cockleburgh-marginalia.shtml>.
- . "Introduction." Celan, Paul. *Breathturn*. Translated by Pierre Joris . Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1995: 13-49.
- . "Introduction." *4 X 1. Tristan Tzara, Rainer Maria Rilke; Jean-Pierre Duprey; Habib Tengour. Translated by Pierre Joris*. Albany, new York: Inconundrum Press, 2002: 5-9. Also in *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003: 110-114.
- . "Introduction: "Polysemy without mask". *Paul Celan: Selections*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005: 3-35.
- . "Introduction." Farès, Nabile et translator Peter Thompson. *A Passenger from the West*. UNOPress / University of New Orleans, 2010: 11-14.
- . "Introduction." *Exile is my Trade. A Habib Tengour Reader*. Selected Poetry and Prose. Edited and translated by Pierre Joris. Boston: Black Widow Press, 2012: 7-21
- . *Janus*. New York: Saint Lazaire Press, 1988.
- . *Justifying the Margins*. Cambridge UK: Salt Publishing, 2009.
- . "Late Prose of First Years. Autobiography." *Numero Cinq (NC magazine nonfiction)*, Vol. VI, No 7 July 2015. <http://numerocinqmagazine.com/2015/07/01/late-prose-of-first-years-autobiography-pierre-joris/>.
- . "*Lignes de Fugues/ Lettres de fuites*." An Interview with Peter Cockelbergh. *Transitzone*. Website en tijdschrift voor literatuur, kritiek & amusement. 2010
- . *Meditations on the Stations of Mansur Al-Hallaj*. Tucson, Arizona: Chax Press, 2013.
- . "Moïen." Corina Ciocârlie, editor. *En partage. Le Luxembourg d'ici et d'ailleurs*. Differdange, Luxembourg: Éditions Phi, 2013: 11-17.
- . "Nimrod in Hell (2001)." *Justifying the Margins*. 2009: 1-3.
- . "Nomad Century Ahead (1998)." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003: 3-8.
- . "Notes Toward a Nomad Poetics." *Spanner* 38 1999.
- . "Notes Toward a Nomadic Poetics (1996-2002)." Joris, Pierre. *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2003: 25-55.
- . "Notes toward a Nomadic Poetics 1.02b." *The Millennium will be nomadic or it will not be* (s.d.).
<<https://www.albany.edu/~joris/nomad.html>>.
- . "On the Nomadic Circulation of Contemporary Poetics." *Justifying the Margins*. 2009:7-23.
- . "Open Letter in Response to Adrian Clarke's (2001)." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003: 135-140.

- . "Paul Celan and the Meaning of Language." An Interview with Doug Valentine. 2005.
http://www.flashpointmag.com/Doug_Valentine_Interview_with_Pierre_Joris.htm.
- . "Paul Celan's Counterword: Who witnesses for the Witness." *Justifying the Margins*. 2009: 79-86.
- . *Poasis. Selected Poems 1986-1999*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001.
- . "Re "The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy," edited by Charles Bernstein (Roof Books, New York, 1990)." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003: 11-16.
- . "ReadySteadyBlog Interview (2006)." *Justifying the Margins*. 2009: 37-49.
- . "Regenerative Diaspora: An Interview with Pierre Joris." *The Jivin' Ladybug. A Skewered Journal of the Arts* (2011): 1-6. <<https://jivinladybug.wordpress.com/2011/04/22/pierre-joris-interview/>>.
- . "Remembrance Day in Patton Town. Autobiography." *Numéro Cinq* VII.No 4 (2016). Also in Corina Ciocârlie, editor. *Wat mir Sinn*. Petites mythologies du Grand-Duché. Differdange: Éditions Phi, 2016: 37-44.
- . "Samizdat Interview (2000)." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003: 121-134.
- . "Speechgrille. Translation of poem "Sprachgitter" by Paul Celan." 2019. Blog
<https://pierrejoris.com/blog/speechgrille-a-celan-poem-for-world-poetry-day/>.
- . "St/range: an uncertain range (1999)." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003: 17-22.
- . *The Agony of I.B.* Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg: Éditions Phi, 2016.
- . "The Case of the Missing 'M'." (1990)." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003: 63-71.
- . "The Celan Ledge." *Justifying the Margins*. 2009: 101-110.
- . "The Nomadism of Pablo Picasso." *A Nomad Poetics. Essays*. 2003: 115-118.
- . "The Seamlessly Nomadic Future of Collage." *Justifying the Margins*. 2009. 24-36.
- . "The Space Opened by Blanchot." *Justifying the Margins*. Cambridge, UK: Salt Publishing, 2009. 67-68.
- . "Toward a Nomadic Concept of Translation." *Translation Review* Vol. 54, Iss 1 (1998).
- . *Tracing*. Todmorden, Lancs., UK: The Arc and Throstle Press, 1982.
- . "Translation At the Mountain of Death." *Justifying the Margins*. 2009. 87-100.
- . "Winnetou Old. 1994." *Poasis* . Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001. 69-86.
- . Blog. *Nomadics.Meanderings & mawqifs of poetry, poetics, translations y mas. Travelogue too*. s.d. 27.01.2021. <<https://pierrejoris.com/blog/>>.
- Joris, Pierre. Eric Sarnier, translator et dessins Nicole Peyrafitte. *h.j.r. Poèmes*. Echternach, Luxembourg: Éditions Phi en coédition avec Écrits des Forges, Québec, 1999.
- Joris, Pierre and Adonis. *Conversations in the Pyrenees*. New York: Contra Mundum Press, 2018.

- Joris, Pierre and Charles Bernstein. Interview. "Close Listening." Cockelbergh, Peter. *Cartographies*. Prague, 2011. 160-172.
- Joris, Pierre and Paul Buck, editors. *Matières d'Angleterre. Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Anglaise*. 1984.
- Joris, Pierre and Nicole Peyrafitte. *Routes, not Roots*. c.d. New York: Ta'wil Productions, 2007
- iJoris, Pierre and Jean Portante. "Whales, ghosts and nomads. Pierre Joris - Jean Portante Exchange." *Transkrit No 5* February 2013: 37-46.
- Joris, Pierre and Jerome Rothenberg, translators and editors. "ppppp: poems, performance pieces proses plays poetics. The Selected Writings of Kurt Schwitters. Introduction." Schwitters, Kurt. *ppppp: poems, performance pieces proses plays poetics. The Selected Writings of Kurt Schwitters*. Philadelphia PA: Temple University Press, 1993. xv-xxxiii.
- Joris, Pierre and Jerome Rothenberg, editors. *Poems for the Millennium: The University of California Book of Modern & Postmodern Poetry*. Volume 1: *From Fin-de-Siècle to Negritude*. Berkeley & Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995.
- Joris, Pierre and Jerome Rothenberg, editors. *Poems for the Millennium: The University of California Book of Modern & Postmodern Poetry*. Volume 2: *From Post-War to Millennium*. Berkeley & Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1998.
- Joris, Pierre and Habib Tengour, editors. *Poems for the Millennium: The University of California Book of Modern & Postmodern Poetry*. Volume 4: *Diwan Iffrikya. An Anthology of North African Writings from Prehistory to Today*. Berkeley & Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995.
- Joris, Pierre et Jerome Rothenberg. *Poetry@The_Millennium: A Conversation with Jerome Rothenberg and Pierre Joris* Chris Funkhouser. Electronic Book Review, 04 05 1997.
- Celan, Paul. *Breathturn. Translated and with an Introduction by Pierre Joris*. Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1995.
- . *Breathturn into Timestead. The Collected Later Poetry. A Bilingual Edition. Translated and with commentary by Pierre Joris*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2003.
- . *The Meridian. Edited by Bernhard Béschenstein and Heino Schmall. Translated by Pierre Joris*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.
- . *Memory Rose Into Threshold Speech: The Collected Earlier Poetry: A Bilingual Edition*. Translated by Pierre Joris. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2020.
- . *Microliths They Are, Little Stones: Posthumous Prose*. Preface and Translation by Pierre Joris New York: Contra Mundum Press, 2020.
- Jabès, Edmond. *From the Desert to the Book. Interviews with Edmond Jabès*. Translator Pierre Joris. Barrytown, New York: Station hill Press, 1989.

Secondary Literature

- Allen, Graham. *Intertextuality*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Amodeo, Immacolata. *Die Heimat heißt Babylon': Zur Literatur ausländischer Autoren in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1996.
- Anokhina, Olga and Emilio Sciarrino. « Plurilinguisme littéraire: de la théorie à la genèse. » *Genesis* 40 (2018): 11-34. consulté le 23 mars 2021. <<http://journals.openedition.org/genesis/2554>>.
- Anokhina, Olga. "The Genesis of Texts: Planning and Interior Language." *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 23. (2009): 63-72.
- Anokhina, Olga, ed. *Multilinguisme et créativité littéraire*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Harmattan/ Academia, 2012.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands / La Frontera*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987.
- Apter, Emily. *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*. London: Verso, 2013.
- . *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Arndt, Susan, Dirk Naguschewski and Robert Stockhammer, eds. *Exophonie. Anderssprachigkeit (in) der Literatur*. Berlin : Kadmos, 2007.
- Arndt, Susan. „Postkoloniales Palimpsest. Igbo Relexifizierung und Lexemisierung in der englischsprachigen nigerianischen Literatur.“ Arndt, Susan, Dirk Naguschewski and Robert Stockhammer. *Exophonie. Anderssprachigkeit (in) der Literatur*. 2007. 149-164.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 3rd edition. London, New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Attridge, Derek. "Performing Metaphors: The Singularity of Literary Figuration." *Paragraph, Vol. 28, No 2, The Idea of the Literary* (2005): 18-34.
- . *The Work of Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Atwood, Margaret. *Survival. A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. Toronto, Canada: Anansi, 1972.
- Ausoni, Alain and Fabien Arribert-Narce, eds. *L'Autobiographie entre autres. Ecrire la vie aujourd'hui*. Peter Lang, 2013.
- Ausoni, Alain. « En d'autres mots : écriture translingue et autobiographie. » Ausoni, Alain and Fabrice Arribert-Narce. *L'Autobiographie entre autres. Ecrire la vie aujourd'hui*. Peter Lang, 2013. 63-83.
- . *Mémoires d'outre-langue. L'écriture translingue de soi*. Genève: Slatkine, 2018.
- . « Singulariser l'écriture translingue : une catégorie littéraire et ses usages. » *Interfrancophonies, no 9* (2018): 45-55. <www.interfrancophonies.org>.
- Austin, John Langshaw. *How to Do Things with Words. The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

- Bachelard, Gaston. *La poétique de l'espace*. 1958. Paris: PUF, 2015.
- Bachmann, Ingeborg. *Sämtliche Gedichte*. Piper Taschenbuch, 2003.
- Bachmann-Medick, Doris and Jens Kugele, eds. *Migration. Changing Concepts and Critical Approaches*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2018.
- Bachmann-Medick, Doris. „Fort-Schritte, Gedanken-Gänge, Ab-Stürze: Bewegungshorizonte und Subjektverortung in literarischen Beispielen.“ Wolfgang Hallet and Birgit Neumann, eds. *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2009. 257-279.
- . “From Hybridity to Translation: Reflections on Travelling Concept.” *The Trans/National Study of Culture. A Translational Perspective*. 2014. 119-136.
- . “Translation. A Concept and Model for the Study of Culture.” Neumann, Birgit and Ansgar Nünning. *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012. 23-44.
- Baetens-Beardsmore, Hugo. “Polyglot Literature and Linguistic Fiction.” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 15 (1978): 91-102.
- Baker, Tony. “The Benevolence of Dust. Translation and the Wiping Out of Traces.” Cockelbergh, Peter, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 267-284.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist, Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- . “Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel.” Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays*. 1981. 84-258.
- . “Discourse in the Novel.” Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. 1981. 259-422.
- . *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Transl. Vern W. McGee. Eds Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002.
- Bal, Mieke. *A Mieke Bal Reader*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- . *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.
- . “Working with Concepts.” *European Journal of English Studies* (2009): 13-23.
- Barnstone, Willis. *The Poetics of Translation: History, Theory, Practice*. Yale University Press, 1995.
- Bassnett, Susan. “Foreword.” Gentzler, Edwin. *Translation and Rewriting in the Age of Post-Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, 2017. viii-x.
- . *Translation Studies, Fourth edition*. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. “From Pilgrim to Tourist.” Hall, Stuart and Paul du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, 1996. 18-36.
- . *Strangers at our Door*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2016.

- Beaujour, Elizabeth Klosty. *Alien Tongues: Bilingual Russian Writers of the "First" Emigration*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- Bell, Andrea. "Liliane Welch." Tremblay, Tony, *editor*. St. Thomas University. *New Brunswick Literary Encyclopedia*. 2008, updated 2011. <https://nble.lib.unb.ca/browse/w/liliane-welch>. 27.01.2021.
- Benjamin, Walter. „Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers.“ *Gesammelte Schriften Bd. IV/1*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972. 9-21.
- Bennis, Mohammed. „Pierre Joris: An Arabic Islamic Turn in the Poem and Thought.“ Cockelbergh, Peter, *editor*. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 199-214.
- Bermann, Sandra. "Translation as Relation and Glissant's Work." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture; Volume 16 Issue 3* (2014). <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol16/iss3/>>.
- Bernabei, V. « Le spatial turn en littérature. Changement de paradigme et interdisciplinarité. » *Cadernos de Literatura Comparada Margarida Losa, Porto Portugal* N.º 33 – 12/ 2015: 303-321.
- Bernstein, Charles. *A Poetics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Bernstein, Charles and Pierre Joris. "Close Listening." Cockelbergh, Peter, *editor*. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 160-172.
- Besemeres, Mary and Anna Wierzbicka. *Translating Lives. Living with Two Languages and Cultures*. Santa Lucia, Queensland, Australia: University of Queensland Press, 2007.
- Besemeres, Mary. *Translating One's Self: Language and Selfhood in Cross-Cultural Autobiography*. Peter Lang, 2002.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- . "The World and the Home." *Social Text, No. 31-21, Third World and Post-Colonial issues* (1992): 141-153.
- Binder, Eva and Birgit Mertz-Baumgartner eds. *Migrationsliteraturen in Europa*. Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2012.
- Blackledge, Adrian and Aneta Pavlenko. "Negotiations of Identities in Multilingual Contexts." *International Journal of Bilingualism* 5.3 (2001): 243-257.
- Blackledge, Adrian and Angela Creese, *editors*. *Heteroglossia as Practice and Pedagogy*. Springer, 2014.
- Blackledge, Adrian, Angela Creese and Rachel Hu. "Noticing and commenting on social difference: A translanguaging and translation perspective." *Working Papers in Translanguaging and Translation (WP. 10)*. (2010).
- Blanchot, Maurice. *The Writing of the Disaster (L'écriture du désastre)*. Translated by Ann Smock. Lincoln and London: The University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
- Bleich, David. *The Materiality of Language. Gender, Politics and the University*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

- Blioumi, Aglaia, ed. *Migration und Interkulturalität in neueren literarischen Texten*. München: Iudicium, 2002.
- Blommaert, Jan and Ad Backus. "Super diverse repertoires and the individual." de Saint Georges, Ingrid and Jean Jacques Weber. *Multilingualism and Multimodality*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013. 11-32.
- Blommaert, Jan and Ben Rampton. "Language and Superdiversity." *Diversities Vol. 13, No 2* (2011): 1-21.
- Blommaert, Jan, James Collins and Stef Slembrouck. "Spaces of Multilingualism 2005." *Elsevier* (2005). <doi:10.1016/j.langcom.2005.05.002>.
- Blum-Barth, Natalia. *Poietik der Mehrsprachigkeit. Theorie und Techniken des multilingualen Schreibens*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2021.
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature. Migrant Metaphors*. Second edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . *Postcolonial Poetics. 21st Century Critical Readings*. Springer, 2018.
- Bonnefoy, Yves. *Rimbaud*. Paris: Seuil, 1976.
- Bouraoui, Hédi. "Crystalline Vision." *Waves, VI, iii*, Spring 1978.
- . "Liliane Welch: A New Voice from the Maritimes." *Essays on Canadian Writing* (Summer 85, Issue 31): 240-249.
- . *Transpoétique. Éloge du nomadisme*. Montréal: Mémoire d'encrier, 2005.
- Braidotti, Rosi. "Affirming the Affirmative: On Nomadic Affectivity." *Rhizomes, Issue 11/12* (Fall 2005/ Spring 2006).
- . *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory. 2nd edition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- . *Nomadic Theory. The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- Braidotti, Rosi. "On nomadism: A conversation with Rosi Braidotti." *European Alternatives*. Sara Saleri. 24 July 2018. <<http://politicalcritique.org/world/2018/nomadism-braidotti/>>.
- . "Thinking with an Accent: Françoise Collin. Les cahiers du Grif, and French Feminism. » *Signs, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Spring 2014)* (2014): 597-626. <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/674299?seq=1>>.
- . "Writing as a Nomadic Subject." *Comparative Critical Studies 11.2 - 3* (2014): 163-184.
- Brodsky, Joseph. *Watermark. An Essay on Venice*. Penguin Classics, 2013.
- Bruner, Jerome. "The Narrative Construction of Reality." *Critical Inquiry Vol. 18 No 1* (1991): 1-21.
- Burck, Charlotte. "Living in several languages, gender, identities." *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Volume: 1. Issue 4 (2011): 361-378.

- Bürger-Koftis, Michaela, Hannes Schweiger and Vlasta, Sandra, editors. *Polyphonie - Mehrsprachigkeit und literarische Kreativität*. Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2010.
- Burtscher-Bechter, Beate and Martin Sexle, eds. *Theory Studies? Konturen komparatistischer Theoriebildung zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts*. Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2001.
- Busch, Brigitta and Thomas Busch, editors. „Die Sprache davor. Zur Imagination eines Sprechens jenseits gesellschaftlich-nationaler Zuordnungen.“ *Bürger-Koftis, Hannes Schweiger and Sandra Vlasta, Polyphonie – Mehrsprachigkeit und literarische Kreativität*. Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2010. 81-103.
- . *Mitten durch meine Zunge. Erfahrungen mit Sprache von Augustinus bis Zaimoglu*. Klagenfurt: Drava, 2008.
- . *Von Menschen, Orten und Sprachen. Multilingual leben in Österreich*. Klagenfurt/ Celovec: Drava, 2008.
- Busch, Brigitta. *Das sprachliche Repertoire oder Niemand ist einsprachig. Vorlesung zum Antritt der Berta-Karlik-Professur an der Universität Wien*. Klagenfurt: Drawa Verlag, 2012.
- . „Die Macht präbabilonischer Phantasien. Ressourcenorientiertes sprachbiographisches Denken.“ *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik. LiLi* 40 (2010): 58-82.
- . „Expanding the Notion of the Linguistic Repertoire: On the Concept of Spracherleben - The Lived Experience of Language.“ (2015) *Applied Linguistics* 2017; 38/3: 340-358.
- . „Linguistic repertoire and Spracherleben, the lived experience of language.“ *Working Papers in Language and Urban Literacies* 148 (2015): 1-16.
- . *Mehrsprachigkeit*. Stuttgart: UTB, 2013.
- . „The language portrait in multilingualism research: Theoretical and methodological considerations.“ *Working Papers in Urban Language and Literacies, Paper 236* (2018).
- . „The Linguistic Repertoire Revisited.“ *Applied Linguistics* 2012; 33/5: 503-523.
- Butor, Michel. *Mobile. Étude pour une représentation des États-Unis*. Paris, 1962.
- . *Mobile. Study for a Representation of the United States*. New York, 1963.
- Caldognetto, Maria Luisa. „Italienische“ Literatur in Luxemburg?“ Honnef-Becker, Irmgard and Peter Kühn, eds. *Über Grenzen. Literaturen in Luxemburg*. Esch-sur-Alzette: Éditions Phi, 2004. 87-106.
- Canagarajah, Suresh. „Clarifying the relationship between translingual practice and L2 writing: addressing learner identities.“ *Applied Linguistics Review* (2015; 6(4)): 415-440. <<https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2015-0020>>.
- . „Codemeshing in Academic Writing: Identifying Teachable Strategies of Translanguaging.“ *The Modern language Journal* Vol. 95, no 3 (Fall 2011): 401-417.
- . „Translingual Practice as Spatial Repertoires: Expanding the Paradigm beyond Structuralist Orientations.“ *Applied Linguistics* (2018: 39/1 (OUP 2017)): 31-54.

- . *Translingual Practice: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan relations*. Routledge, 2013.
- Canetti, Elias. *Die gerettete Zunge. Geschichte einer Jugend*. 1979. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, 2011.
- Canone, Eugenio and Leen Spruit. "Rhetoric and Philosophical Discourse in Giordano Bruno's Italian Dialogues." *Poetics Today* 28: 3 (Fall 2007): 363-391.
- Carravetta, Peter. "The Canon(s) of World Literature." D'Haen, Theo, David Damrosch and Djelal Kadir. *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011. 264-272.
- Casanova, Pasacale. *La République mondiale des Lettres*. Paris: Seuil, 1999.
- Cassin, Barbara. *Éloge de la traduction: compliquer l'universel*. Paris: Fayard, 2016.
- . *La Nostalgie: Quand doncest-on chez soi? Ulysse, Enée, Arendt*. Paris: Autrement, 2013.
- . *Plus d'une langue*. Montrouge: Bayard, 2012.
- Cassin, Barbara. Interview. *Le vocabulaire européen des philosophies. Dictionnaire des intraduisibles* Colette Briffard. www.revue-texto.net/Dialogues/Cassin_interview.html 2006.
- Cassin, Barbara. *Translating the Untranslatable: An Interview with Barbara Cassin* Rebecca L. Walkowitz. Public Books, 16 June 2014.
- Celan, Paul. *Die Gedichte. Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2012.
- Chaliand, Gérard. *Les empires nomades de la Mongolie au Danube. Ve siècle avant J. -C. - XVI siècle*. Paris: Perrin, 2006.
- Chambers, Iain. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1994.
- Ciocârlie, Corina. "Adrift: Travelling with Pierre Joris." Cockelbergh, Peter, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 173-178.
- . *Prendre le large*. Mersch, Luxembourg: Centre national de littérature, 2014.
- Ciocârlie, Corina, editor. *Où demeurer ailleurs que là*. Esch-sur-Alzette: Éditions Phi, 2007.
- *Wat mir sinn. Petites mythologies du Grand-Duché*. Differdange: Éditions Phi, 2008.
- . *En partage. Le Luxembourg d'ici et d'ailleurs*. Differdange: Éditions Phi, 2013.
- Clark, Romy and Roz Ivanic. *The Politics of Writing*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Clarke, Adrian. "Nomads and the Demon." *Open Letter* (n.d.)
- Clifford, James. "Travelling Cultures." Grossberg, Lawrence, Cary Nelson, Paula A. Treichler, eds. *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1992. 96-116.
- Clüver, Claus. „Das international konkrete Gedicht: Schreiben in vielen Sprachen." Schmeling, Manfred und Monika Schmitz-Emans. *Mehrsprachige Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*. 2002. 311-326.

- Cockelbergh, Peter. "Marginalalia. On Pierre Joris Justifying." *Jacketmagazine* 2010.
<http://jacketmagazine.com/40/joris-cockleburgh-marginalalia.shtml>.
- Cockelbergh, Peter, editor and contributor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2011.
- Cockelbergh, Peter. "Justifying the Margins. On Pierre Joris's Nomad Poetics." Cockelbergh, Peter, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 337-375.
- Coetzee, J.M. *Boyhood: A Memoir*. London: Vintage, 1998.
- Compagnon, Antoine. *La Seconde main ou le travail de la citation*. Paris: Seuil, 1979.
- Compton, Anne / Welch, Liliane. "Ascension: Liliane Welch Talks About Poetry." *Canadian Literature* 166, 2000: 127-141.
- Conter, Claude D. and Germaine Goetzinger, eds. *Identitäts(de)konstruktionen. Neue Studien zur Luxemburgistik*. Éditions Phi and Centre National de Littérature, 2008.
- Conter, Claude D. „Die Emergenz der Luxemburger Philologie aus dem Geiste des 19. Jahrhunderts.“ Conter, D. Claude and Germaine Goetzinger. *Identitäts(de)konstruktionen. Neue Studien zur Luxemburgistik*. Differdange, Luxembourg: Éditions Phi and Centre National de Littérature, 2008. 11-30.
- Conter, Claude D. « Dramatik/ Theater. » Dembeck, Till and Rolf Parr, eds. *Literatur und Mehrsprachigkeit. Handbuch*. Tübingen: Narr Franke Attempto Verlag, 2017. 277-292.
- . „Fremdsprachen in der Komödie. Komiktheoretische Aspekte der Multilingualität am Beispiel von Lessings Minna von Barnhelm oder das Soldatenglück (1767) und Dicks' D'Kirmesgèscht (1856).“ Dembeck, Till and Georg Mein. *Philologie und Mehrsprachigkeit*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014. 253-273.
- Creese, Angela and Adrian Blackledge, eds. *Routledge Handbook of Language and Superdiversity. An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Routledge, 2018.
- Dagnino, Arianna. *Transcultural Writers and Novels in the Age of Global Mobility*. Purdue University Press, 2015.
- Damrosch, David. *How to read World Literature*. Wiley Blackwell, 2009.
- . *What is World Literature*. University Press Group Ltd, 2003.
- D'Andrea, Anthony. "Neo-Nomadism: A Theory of Post-Identitarian Mobility in the Global Age." *Mobilities*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 2006): 95-119.
- Darbellay, Frédéric, Ayuko Sedooka and Theres Paulsen. *La recherche interdisciplinaire sous la loupe*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2016.
- Davidson, Ian. *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry*. Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007.
- Davidson, Ian. "Space, poetic." Greene, Roland, editor in Chief. *The Princeton encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. Fourth Edition*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012. 1332-1333.

- Davidson, Michael. *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Davies, Bronwyn and Rom Harré. "Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* (1990, first publication).
- De Balsi, Sara. *Agota Kristof. Écrivaine translingue*. Presses universitaires de Vincennes, 2019.
- de Courtivron, Isabelle, editor. *Lives in Translation. Bilingual Writers on Identity and Creativity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- De Florio-Hansen, Inez and Adelheid Hu. *Plurilingualität und Identität. Zur Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung mehrsprachiger Menschen*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 2003.
- De Quincey, Thomas. *Confessions of an English Opium Eater and other Writings*. London: Penguin Books, 2003.
- de Saint Georges, Ingrid and Jean Jacques Weber. *Multilingualism and Multimodality. Current Challenges for Educational Studies*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2013.
- de Toffoli, Ian. « Damnation et salut babélique dans le théâtre luxembourgeois. » *Synergies Pays germanophones. Revue du Gerflint, No 8* (2015).
- Deguy, Michel. *Écologiques*. Paris: Hermann Éditeurs, 2012.
- Delabastita, Dirk and Rainier Grutman, eds. *Fictional representations of multilingualism and translation*. Special Issue of *Linguistica Antwerpiensia*. New Series 4 (2005).
- Deleuze, Gilles and Claire Parnet. *Dialogues*. Paris: Flammarion Champs essais, 1977; 1996, 2008.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Bloomsbury, (1980) 2013.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure*. Paris: Le Éditions de Minuit, (1975) 2013 . Édition électronique.
- . *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* Paris: Éditions de Minuit (1991) 2005.
- Dembeck, Till and Georg Mein. „Postmonolingual schreiben? Zum Jargon der Philologie.“ *Zeitschrift für interkulturelle Germanistik ZiG* 3/2012/ H2: 133-147.
- Dembeck, Till and Georg Mein, eds. *Philologie und Mehrsprachigkeit*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014.
- Dembeck, Till. „Für eine Philologie der Mehrsprachigkeit. Zur Einführung.“ Dembeck, Till and Georg Mein. *Philologie und Mehrsprachigkeit*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014. 9-38.
- . „Multilingual Philology and National Literature. Re-Reading Classical Texts.“ *Critical Multilingualism Studies. An Interdisciplinary Journal. CMS* 5.3 (2017): 2-12.
- Dembeck, Till und Anne Uhrmacher, eds. *Das literarische Leben der Mehrsprachigkeit: Methodische Erkundungen*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2016.

- Dembeck, Till und Rolf Parr, eds. *Literatur und Mehrsprachigkeit. Ein Handbuch*. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, 2017.
- Dembeck, Till. „Zitat und Anderssprachigkeit.“ *Literatur und Mehrsprachigkeit. Ein Handbuch*. 2017. 193-219.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1972.
- Derrida, Jacques. « La pharmacie de Platon. » *La dissémination*. Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1972. 79-213.
- . “Des tours de Babel, in English translation and in French.” Graham, Joseph ed. *Difference in Translation*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985. 166-207; 209-248.
- . *Acts of Literature*. Edited by Derek Attridge. London: Routledge, 1992.
- . *Monolingualism of the Other: Or the Prosthesis of Origin*. Trans. Patrick Mensah. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- . *Of Hospitality. Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond*. Trans. Rachel Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- . *Sovereignities in Question. The Poetics of Paul Celan*. Ed. by Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.
- . “Language is never owned.” Derrida, Jacques. *Sovereignities in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan. Edited by Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen*. 2005. 97-107.
- . “A Certain Impossible Possibility of Saying the Event.” *Critical Inquiry* 33, No 2 (2007): 441-461. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/511506?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents>.
- Dillon, Sarah. “Reinscribing De Quincey’s palimpsest: the significance of the palimpsest in contemporary literary and cultural studies.” *Textual practice* 19: 3 (2005): 243-263.
- . *The Palimpsest. Literature, Criticism, Theory*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007.
- Doloughan, Fiona J. *English as a Literature in Translation*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.
- Dorfman, Ariel. *Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998.
- Dowling, Sarah. *Translingual Poetics: Writing Personhood Under Settler Colonialism*. University of Iowa Press, 2018.
- Duclos, Michèle. *Nomade intellectuel, poète du monde*. UGA Éditions, Université Grenoble Alpes, 2006.
- Eakin, Paul John. *Fictions in Autobiography*. Princeton University Press, 1985.
- . *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1999.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Search for the Perfect Language*. Translated by James Fentress. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

- Elwert, Wilhelm Theodor. « L'emploi de langues étrangères comme procédé stylistique. » *Revue de Littérature Comparée* 34 (3) (1960): 409-437.
- Englund, Axel & Anders Olsson, eds. *Languages of Exile. Migration and Multilingualism in Twentieth Century Literature*. Peter Lang, 2013.
- Eshleman, Clayton. "Organized Nomadistoms of Broken Oases." Cockelbergh, Peter, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 323-332.
- Ette, Ottmar. *Literatur in Bewegung. Raum und Dynamik grenzüberschreitenden Schreibens in Europa und Amerika*. Weilerswist: Velbrück, 2001.
- . *Literature on the Move*. Trans. Katharina Vester. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003.
- . *Zwischen Welten Schreiben. Literaturen ohne festen Wohnsitz*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2005.
- . „Über die Brücke Unter den Linden. Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Yoko Tawada und die translinguale Fortschreibung deutschsprachiger Literatur.“ Arndt, Suasan and Dirk Naguschewski and Robert Stockhammer. *Exophonie. Anderssprachigkeit (in) der Literatur*. Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2007. 165-194.
- . « Worldwide - weltweit - à l'échelle mondiale: vivre dans des mondes transarchipéliques. » Weissmann, Dirk and Didier Lassalle Didier. *Ex(tra)territorial: Reassessing Territory in Literature, Culture and languages*. Amsterdam: Rodopi Brill, 2014. 159-194.
- . *Writing Between Worlds. TransArea Studies and the Literatures-without-a-fixed-Abode*. Transl. by Vera M. Kutzinski. Berlin/ Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2016.
- Even-Zohar, Itamar. "Polysystem Theory (Revised)." *Papers in Culture Research*. Temporary electronic book. 2005: 1-11.
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e62e/90ad25fa4aab82dfed25665034ace5f2db0e.pdf>
- Fenoulhet, Jane. *Nomadic Literature. Cees Nooteboom and his Writing*. Peter Lang, 2010.
- Fischer, Sabine and Moray McGowan, eds. *Denn du tanzt auf einem Seil. Positionen deutschsprachiger MigrantInnenliteratur*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 1997.
- Flusser, Vilém. *The Freedom of the Migrant: Objections to Nationalism*. Transl. by Kenneth Kronenberg. Ed. by Anke K. Finger. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003.
- . „My Atlas, Mein Atlas.“ <http://www.flusserstudies.net/node/338>
- Forster, Leonard. *The Poet's Tongues: Multilingualism in Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press in ass. with University of Otago Press, (1970) 2009.
- Foschi Ciampolini, Anna. "Liliane Welch: Art and nature are not just starting points." *L'Eco d'Italia. British Columbia* (8 March 2001): 18.
- Fourez, Gérard and Alain Maingain and Barbara Dufour. *Approches didactiques de l'interdisciplinarité*. Bruxelles: De Boek Université, 2002.
- Fourez, Gérard and Marie Larochelle. *Apprivoiser l'épistémologie*. Bruxelles: De Boek, 2003.

- Franceschini, Rita, editor. *Biographie und Interkulturalität. Diskurs und Lebenspraxis*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 2001.
- . „Sprachbiographien randständiger Sprecher.“ Franceschini, Rita, editor. 2001. 111-125.
- Franceschini, Rita and Johanna Miecznikowski. *Leben mit mehreren Sprachen/Vivre avec plusieurs langues*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2004.
- García, Ofelia. *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008; 2009.
- Gasquet, Axel and Modesta Suárez, eds. *Écrivains multilingues et écritures métisses: l'hospitalité des langues*. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2007.
- Gauvin, Lise. *La fabrique de la langue. De Rabelais à Réjean Ducharme*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2004.
- . « Le palimpseste francophone et la question des modèles. » Gauvin, Lise et al. *Littératures francophones. Parodies, pastiches, réécritures*. Lyon: ENS Editions, 2013. 1-17.
- L'écrivain francophone à la croisée des langues. Entretiens*. Paris: Karthala, (2009) 2016.
- Genette, Gérard. *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982.
- . *Seuils*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987.
- Gentzler, Edwin. *Translation and Rewriting in the Age of Post-Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Ghosh-Schellhorn, Martina. *Steep Stairs to Myself - Transitional Autobiography. Reflections - Literatures in English outside Britain and the USA*. Trier: VWT, 2008.
- Gieres, Michel. “Translating Pain. De Quincey, Wordsworth and Conrad.” Mémoire (Travail de Candidature) Luxembourg, 2012. Available at Bibliothèque nationale de Luxembourg.
- Gillespie, Gerald. “Multilingualism in the High Modernist Novel and Poem.” Schmeling, Manfred and Monika Schmitz-Emans. *Multilinguale Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002. 51-57.
- Gilmour, Rachel and Tamar Steinitz, eds. *Multilingual Currents in Literature, Translation, and Culture*. London: Routledge, 2018.
- Glesener, Jeanne E. « La littérature de l'(im)migration au Luxembourg. » Conter, Claude D. and Germaine Goetzinger. *Identitäts(de)konstruktionen*. Differdange, Luxembourg: Éditions Phi and Centre National de Littérature, 2008. 111-130.
- . « Une récupération de l'espace perdu par l'acte d'écriture. » *Étude comparée de trois écrivains migrants: Kazuo Ishiguro, Jean Portante et Zafer Senocak*. Dissertation. Aix-Marseille Université: unpublished, 2009.
- . “On Small Literatures and their Location in World Literature: A Case Study of Luxembourgish Literature.” *Interlitteraria* 17 (2012): 75-92.

- . « Le multilinguisme comme caractéristique et défi de la littérature luxembourgeoise. » Sieburg, Heinz editor. *Vielfalt der Sprachen: Varianz der Perspektiven. Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart der Luxemburger Mehrsprachigkeit*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2013. 107-142.
- . „Zum Konzept der „étrange langue“ bei Jean Portante. Überlegungen zur sprachinternen Mehrsprachigkeit.“ Dembeck, Till and Georg Mein, eds. *Philologie und Mehrsprachigkeit*. Heidelberg: Winter, 2014. 323-339.
- . „Komparatistische Ansätze für eine interkulturelle Literaturgeschichte Luxemburgs.“ Glesener, Jeanne E. , Nathalie Roelens and Heinz Sieburg, eds. *Das Paradigma der Interkulturalität*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2017. 41-68.
- . „Lëtzebuurger Literaturen am Verglach: Aleedung.“ *Les Cahiers luxembourgeois* (2018): 47-52.
- . „Kleinere Literaturen: Eine Übersicht der Begrifflichkeiten.“ Leben, Andreas and Alenka Koron, eds. *Literarische Mehrsprachigkeit im österreichischen und slowenischen Kontext*. Tübingen: Narr Franke, 2019. 47-62.
- Glissant, Édouard. *Poétique de la relation*. . Paris: Gallimard, 1990.
- . *Poetics of Relation*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010.
- Glissant, Édouard. *L'imaginaire des langues. Entretiens avec Lise Gauvin (1991-2009)*. Paris: Gallimard, 2010.
- Glissant, Édouard and François Noudelmann. *L'entretien du monde*. Saint Denis, : Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, Université Paris 8, 2018.
- Glissant, Édouard and François Noudelmann. *L'identité génèreuse*. Paris: Flammarion, 2018.
- Goetzing, Germaine and Gast Mannes. *Zwischenland! Ausguckland! Literarische Kurzprosa aus Luxemburg*. St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2009.
- Goetzing, Germaine. „Die Referenz auf das Fremde.“ Honnef-Becker, Irmgard and Peter Kühn. *Über Grenzen. Literaturen in Luxemburg*. Esch-sur-Alzette: Éditions Phi and Centre National de Littérature, 2004. 15-26.
- . „Schreiben in einem kleinen Land.“ Schmit, Charel et al. eds. *Actes du cycle de conférences: Lëtzebuergesch Quo Vadis?* Mamer, Luxembourg: Victor Buck, 2004. 155-188.
- Goldschmidt, Goerges-Arthur. „Une chaise à deux dossiers/ Ein Stuhl mit zwei Lehnen.“ *Sirene* 4 (1991): 89-91.
- Goll, Yvan. *100 Gedichte*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003.
- Graas, Gust. *Notes d'atelier et de peintures*. Luxembourg : Imprimerie Saint Paul, 1993.
- Gramling, David. *The Invention of Monolingualism*. New York, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.
- Grimm, Claudia. *Gestatten: Geopoetiker Kenneth White*. Berlin: Franck & Timme Verlag, 2018.

- Grosjean, François. « Être bilingue aujourd'hui. » *Revue française de linguistique appliquée* Vol. XXIII (2018/2): 7-14. <<https://www-cairn-info.proxy.bnl.lu/revue-francaise-de-linguistique-appliquee-2018-2-page-7.htm>>.
- Grutman, Rainier. *Des langues qui résonnent. Hétérolinguisme et lettres québécoises*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017.
- . *Des langues qui résonnent. L'hétérolinguisme au XIX^e siècle québécois*. Montréal: Fides, 1997.
- . « Les motivations de l'hétérolinguisme. Réalisme. Composition. Esthétique. » *Eteroglossia e plurilinguismo letterario*. Ed. Furio and Vincenzo Orioles Brugnolo. Rome: Il Calamo, 2002. 329-349.
- . "Migration and Territoriality in Deleuze and Steiner: Metaphors and Mixed Messages." Knauth, Alfons K. and and Ping-Hui Liao, eds. *Migrancy and Multilingualism in World Literature*. Wien: LIT, 2016. 171- 185.
- . "Refraction and recognition: Literary multilingualism in translation." (2006).
- Hall, Stuart and Paul du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, 1996.
- Hall, Stuart. "Who needs identity?" *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Hall, Stuart and Paul du Gay, eds. London: Sage 1996. 1-17.
- Hallet, Wolfgang and Birgit Neumann. *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2009.
- Hallet, Wolfgang. *Fremdsprachenunterricht als Spiel der Texte und Kulturen. Intertextualität als Paradigma einer kulturwissenschaftlichen Didaktik*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2002.
- Hansen-Pauly, Marie-Anne. "Liliane Welch. Poetry, a Handcraft that Elicits a Time and a Place." A. James, Glynn Pursglove with M. Wynn Thomas & Andrew Varney Davies, eds. *Writing Region and Nation. A Special number of The Swansea Review*. Swansea: The University of Swansea, Department of English, 1994. 287-298.
- . "Entering Liliane Welch's World: The Dialogic Discourse in Poetry." *English Studies 9 Publications du Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg* (2000): 99-132.
- . „Der Sprachgebrauch im Alltag der Luxemburger.“ *Sprache und Identität in frankophonen Kulturen - Langues, identité et francophonie*, Jahrbuch des Frankreichszentrums der Universität des Saarlandes Band 4 / 2001 - 2002. 83 -100.
- . "The Languages of Literature as a Reflection of Social Realities and Traditions in Luxembourg." Schmeling, Manfred and Monika Schmitz-Emans, eds. *Multilinguale Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*. Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen & Neumann, 2002. 147-161.
- . "What Frontiers? Beyond the Borders of Small Countries. The examples of Liliane Welch and Pierre Joris." Potts, Donna L. and Amy D. Unsworth, eds. *Region, Nation, Frontiers*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 172-188.

- . “School languages and hospitality.” Berg, Charles et al., eds. *Savoirs et engagements. Hommage à Georges Wirtgen*. Differdange, Luxembourg: The University of Luxembourg and Éditions phi, 2009. 201-217.
- . “Literature on the Move. Writers caught between old and new voices.” Clark, David. *Provisional: Farewell rivers, farewell streams: Loss and Exile in the Literature of Region and Nation*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, not yet published.
- . “Mapping English in Luxembourg schools until 1968 : the emergence of new linguistic and cultural spaces .” Conter, Claude, editor. *Fundstücke=Trouvailles 2016 / 2017*. Centre national de littérature, Mersch, 2018. 181-199.
- . “Pierre Joris. A Mediator of Cultures and Languages.” Szatek-Tudor, Karoline, ed. *Uniting Regions and Nations through the Looking Glass of Literature*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2017. 103-138.
- . “Pierre Joris: Language and Disaster.” Kusek, Robert, Beata Piatek and Wojciech Szymanski, eds. *Aftermath. The Rise and Fall after the Event*. Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2019. 263-279.
- Hausbacher, Eva. „Schreiben MigrantInnen anders? Überlegungen zu einer Poetik der Migration.“ Binder, Eva and Birgit Mertz-Baumgartner. *Migrationsliteraturen in Europa*. Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2012. 169-183.
- Hausemer, Georges. « Entre les langues, entre les mondes. Interview [avec Pierre Joris]. » *D’Lëtzebuurger Land* (28 March 1987).
- Heidegger, Martin. “Letter to Liliame Welch.” *CNL L-190; II.1.H2* (1968).
- . *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- . *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. (1959) Gesamtausgabe Band 19. Frankfurt a.M. : Vittorio Klostermann, 1985.
- Heimböckel, Dieter. „Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen aus interkultureller Perspektive.“ *Zeitschrift für interkulturelle Germanistik* (4/2013/ H2): 19-39.
- Heimböckel, Dieter et al., eds. *Zwischen Provokation und Usurpation. Interkulturalität als (un)vollendetes Projekt der Literatur- und Sprachwissenschaften*. München: Wilhelm Fink, 2010.
- Hein-Khatib, Simone. *Mehrsprachigkeit und und Biographie. Zum Sprach-Erleben der Schriftsteller Peter Weiss und Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2007.
- Helming, Nico. *Grenzgang. Sequenzen. Illustrationen von Bodo Korsig*. Esch-Alzette: Éditions Phi, 2003.
- Hess-Lüttich, E.W.B. „Spatial Turn: On the Concept of Space in Cultural Geography and Literary Theory.“ *Journal for Theoretical Cartography*. Vol. 5; 2012: 1-11.
- Hoffman, Eva. *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* (1989). London: Vintage: 1998.

- Hoffmann, Fernand. *Sprachen in Luxemburg. Sprachwissenschaftliche und literaturhistorische Beschreibung einer Triglossie-Situation*. Luxembourg: Institut grand-ducal. Section de linguistique, de folklore et de toponymie 1979.
- Holquist, Michael. "What would Bakhtin do?" *Critical Multilingualism Studies* 2:1 2014: 6-19.
- Honnef-Becker, Irmgard and Peter Kühn, eds. *Über Grenzen. Literaturen in Luxemburg*. Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg: Éditions Phi and Centre National de Littérature, 2004.
- Honnef-Becker, Irmgard. „Schreiben in mehr als einer Sprache: Mehrsprachigkeit in der Luxemburger Literatur.“ Sieburg, Heinz, ed. *Vielfalt der Sprachen – Varianz der Perspektiven zur Geschichte und Gegenwart der Luxemburger Mehrsprachigkeit*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2013. 143-165.
- Hornung, Alfred. "Transcultural Life Writing." Howells, Coral Ann and Eva-Marie Kröller. *The Cambridge History of Canadian Literature*. 2009. 536-555.
- Hu, Adelheid. „Mehrsprachigkeit, Identitäts- und Kulturtheorie: Tendenzen der Konvergenz.“ De Florio, Inez and Adelheid Hu. *Plurilingualität und Identität: Zur Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung mehrsprachiger Menschen*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2003. 1-23.
- . „Kulturwissenschaft(en) und Fremdsprachenforschung.“ Quetz, Jürgen and Gert Solmecke, eds. *Brücken schlagen: Fächer, Sprachen, Institutionen*. Berlin: Pädagogischer Zeitschriftenverlag, 2004. 149-160.
- . „Mehrsprachigkeit und Mehrkulturalität in autographischer Perspektive.“ *Sprachdidaktik interkulturell / FluL* 36 (2006): 183-200.
- . „Kulturwissenschaftliche Ansätze in der Fremdsprachendidaktik.“ Hallet, Wolfgang and Ansgar Nünning, eds. *WVT_Handbücher Literatur- und Kulturdidaktik Bd. 1*. Trier : Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2007. 13-30.
- . „‘On regarde une langue à travers l’autre.’ Mehrsprachigkeit als Wert und Herausforderung.“ *Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache* 38 (2012): 15-29.
- . „Languages and Identities.“ Fäcke, Christiane, editor. *Manual of Language Acquisition*. Berlin : De Gruyter Mouton , 2014. 87-102.
- . „Mehrsprachigkeit.“ Burwitz-Melzer, Eva, et al. *Handbuch Fremdsprachenunterricht*. UTB, 2016. 10-15.
- . „Plurilinguale Identitäten? Entwicklungen in der Theoriebildung und empirische Forschungsergebnisse zur Mehrsprachigkeit an Schulen.“ *Language Education and Multilingualism - The Langscape Journal* (2018, Vol. 1): 66-84.
- Hu, Adelheid & Danielle Lévy. « Soï et les langues. » Kramsch, Claire, Danielle Lévy and Geneviève Zaraté. *Précis du Plurilinguisme et Pluriculturalisme* (2008). Paris: Les éditions des archives contemporaines, 2008.
- Hume, Christine. "“No True Voices:” Listening to Pierre Joris." Cockelbergh, Peter, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 260-266.

- Huston, Nancy and Leila Sebbar. *Lettres parisiennes. Histoires d'exil*. Paris: J'ai lu, 2014.
- Huston, Nancy. *Nord perdu, suivi de Douze France*. Arles: Babel/ Actes Sud, 1999.
- . *Cantique des plaines*. (1993) Arles Actes Sud, 201. Translated by the author: *Plainsong*. Steerforth, New Hampshire, 2002.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- . *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. New York, London: Routledge 1995.
- Inkpin, Andrew. *Disclosing the World: On the Phenomenology of Language*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2016.
- Ivantcheva-Merjanska, Irene. *Écrire dans la langue de l'autre. Assia Djébar et Julia Kristeva*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2015.
- Jamet, Pierre. « L'altercation entre Gilles Deleuze et Kenneth White. » *Philosophique 9*, Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté (2006): 145-153.
- Jessner, Ulrike. *Linguistic Awareness in Multilinguals*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.
- Jessner-Schmid, Ulrike and Claire J. Kramsch, eds. *The Multilingual Challenge: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015.
- Jolas, Eugène. *Man from Babel. Edited, annotated and introduced by Andreas Kramer and Rainer Rumold*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Jolles, André. *Einfache Formen: Legende, Sagen, Mythen, Rätsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen, Witz. 1930*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006.
- Jones, Katie, Julian Preece and Aled Rees, eds. *International Perspectives on Multilingual Literatures. From Translingualism to Language Mixing*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2020.
- Juhasz, Antonia. *Black Tide: The Devastating Impact of the Gulf Oil Spill*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.
- Kailuweit, Rolf. „Nomaden' und 'Migranten'. Raumtheoretische Anmerkungen zu einer franko-rioplatensischen Oszillation.“ Müller, Gesine and Susanne Stemmler, editors. *Raum - Bewegung - Passage: Postkoloniale frankophone Literaturen*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2009. 67-83.
- . "Postmodern Nomadism and the Beginnings of a Global Village." *Flusser Studies 07* (2009): 1-18. <<http://www.flusserstudies.net/person/rolf-kailuweit>>.
- Kamboureli, Smaro. *Scandalous Bodies. Diasporic Literature in English Canada*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, revised ed. 2011.
- Kaplan, Caren. *Questions of Travel. Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Duke University Press, 1996.
- Karpinski Eva C. et al., eds. *Trans/Acting Culture, Writing, And Memory. Essays in Honour of Barbara Godard*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013.

- Karpinski, Eva C. *Borrowed Tongues. Life, Migration and Translation*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012.
- Kelbert, Eugenia. "Eugene Jolas: A Poet of Multilingualism." *L2 Journal*, 7 (1) (2015): 49-67.
- Kellman, Steven G. *The Translingual Imagination*. London and Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. kindle edition, 2000.
- . editor. *Switching Languages: Translingual Writers Reflect on their Craft*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003.
- . "Writer Speaks with Forked Tongue. Interlingual Predicament." Steinitz, Gilmour Rachael and Tamar, eds. *Multilingual Currents in Literature, Translation and Culture*. Routledge, 2018. 16-33.
- . "Literary Translingualism: What and Why?" *Polylinguality and Transcultural Practices* Vol. 16 No.3 (2019): 337-346.
- . *Nimble Tongues: Studies in Literary Translingualism*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2020.
- Kelly, Robert. *A Voice Full of Cities. The Collected Essays of Robert Kelly*. Edited by Pierre Joris and Peter Cockelbergh. New York: Contra Mundum Press, 2014.
- . « L'intérité de Pierre Joris. » *d'Lëtzeburger Land* (28.03.1986).
- . "NOMAD: A Meditation on Pierre Joris's Nomad Poetics." Cockelbergh, Peter, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 139-143.
- Kerouac, Jack. *Mexico City Blues. Translated into French by Pierre Joris; introduction by Pierre Joris*. Paris: Christian Bourgeois, 1995.
- Kilito, Abdelfattah. *Je parle toutes les langues mais en arabe*. Arles : Actes Sud, 2013.
- Knauth, Alfons K. „Multilinguale Literatur: Enzyklopädisches Stichwort als Beitrag zum literaturwissenschaftlichen Basislexikon.“ Schmitz-Emans, Monika. *Literatur und Vielsprachigkeit*. Heidelberg: Synchron, 2004. 265-289.
- Knauth, K. Alfons and Liao Ping-hui, eds. *Migrancy and Multilingualism in World Literature*. Münster: Lit Verlag, 2016.
- Koltz, Anise and Jean Portante. Journées littéraires de Modorf : *Anthologie*. Luxembourg, 1995.
- König, Katharina. „Migration und Sprachidentität. Positionierungsverfahren in Sprachbiographien.“ Betten, Anne and Eva-Maria Thüne, eds. *Sprache und Migration. Linguistische Fallstudien*. Arachne Verlag, 2011. 143-166.
- Krämer, Sybille. "Is there a Language 'Behind' Speaking?" Munz, V., K. Puhl and J. Wan, eds. *Language and World. Part Two. Signs, Minds and Actions*. Heusenstamm: Ontos Verlag, 2010. 39-50. Downloaded from De Gruyter Online via Freie Universität Berlin (2013).

- „Sprache und Sprechen oder: Wie sinnvoll ist die Unterscheidung zwischen einem Schema und seinem Gebrauch?“ Krämer, Sybille und Ekkehard König, editors. *Gibt es eine Sprache hinter dem Sprechen?* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002. 97-125.
- *Sprache, Sprechakt, Kommunikation: Sprachtheoretische Positionen des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001.
- Kramsch, Claire. "The Multilingual Experience: Insights from Language Memoirs." *Transit* Vol 1. 1 (2004). <<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9h79g172>>.
- "The Traffic in Meaning." *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 26: 1 (2006): 99-104.
- "Multilingual, Like Franz Kafka." *International* (2008): 316-332.
- *The Multilingual Subject*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- "Imposture: A Late Modern Notion in Poststructuralist SLA Research." *Applied linguistics* 2012: 483-502.
- "Why is everyone so excited about complexity theory in Applied Linguistics?" *Mélanges CRAPEL* no 33 (2012). <<http://194.214.124.224/IMG/pdf/02.pdf>>.
- *Language as Symbolic Power*. Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Kramsch, Claire and Lam, W. S. E. Lam. "Textual Identities: The Importance of Being Non-Native." Braine, George, ed. *Non-Native Educators in English Language Teaching*. Mahwah, New Jersey/ London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999: 57-71.
- Kramsch, Claire and Olivier Kramsch. "The Avatars of Literature in Language Study." *The Modern Language Journal* Vo. 84, Issue 4 (2002): 553-573.
- Kramsch, Claire and Zhu Hua. "Language, Culture and Language Teaching." Hall, Graham. *Routledge Handbook of English language Teaching*. London: Routledge, 2016. 38-50.
- Kraus, Esther. *Faktualität und Fiktionalität in autobiographischen Texten des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2013.
- Kremnitz, Georg. *Mehrsprachigkeit in der Literatur. Ein kommunikationssoziologischer Überblick. 2nd enlarged edition*. Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2015.
- Kress, Gunther and Theo van Leeuwen. *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design. Second edition*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Desire in Language. A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. Edited by Leon S. Roudiez. Translated by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Séméiotikè. Recherches pour une sémanalyse*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969.
- *Le langage, cet inconnu* (1969). Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1981.

- . *La révolution du langage poétique. L'avant-garde à la fin du XIX^e siècle: Lautréamont et Mallarmé*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1974.
- . *Strangers to Ourselves (Étrangers à nous-mêmes 1988)*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- . *L'avenir d'une révolte*. Paris: Flammarion, 2012.
- . « Entretien avec Julia Kristeva: *Penser en nomade et dans l'autre langue le monde, la vie psychique et la littérature*. » Irene Ivantcheva-Merjanska et Michèle E. Vialet, eds. *Cincinnati Romance Review* 35, Spring 2013. 158-189. 23 June 2019.
<http://www.abcdar.com/magazine/IV/Ivantcheva-Merjanska_Vialet_fr_1314-9067_VI.pdf>.
- Kröller, Eva-Marie, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature. Second edition*. 2017.
- Krysinski, Wladimir. « Poétiques de la bouche invisible. Polyglossie et codes discursifs de la modernité. » Schmeling, Manfred and Monika Schmitz-Emans, eds. *Multilinguale Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002. 39-50.
- Kulyk-Keefer, Janice. *Under Eastern Eyes. A Critical Reading of Maritime Fiction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live by*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Turner. *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989.
- Lakoff, George. *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor*. 1992.
<<https://terpconnect.umd.edu/~israel/lakoff-ConTheorMetaphor.pdf>>.
- Lane, Travis Millicent. "Foreword." Welch, Liliane. *Untethered in Paradise*. Ottawa: Borealis Press, 2002. ix-x.
- Lantolf, James P. *Sociocultural Theory and Second language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Lassalle, Didier and Dirk Weismann, eds. *Ex(tra)territorial. Reassessing Territory in Literature, Culture and Languages*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014.
- Lauret, Maria. *Wanderwords. Language Migration in American Literature*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *La production de l'espace* (1974). *The Production of Space*. Wiley-Blackwell, 1991.
- Lejeune, Philippe. *Le pacte autobiographique*. Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1975.
- Lemm, Richard. "Introduction." Welch, Liliane. *Seismographs. Selected essays and Reviews*. Charlottetown, P.E.I., Canada: Ragweed Press, 1988: 9-16.
- Lennon, Brian. "Challenges to Monolingual National Literatures." Jessner-Schmid, Ulrike and Claire J. Kramsch. *The Multilingual Challenge. Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015: 143-160.

- . *In Babel's Shadow: Multilingual Literatures, Monolingual States*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- . "The Essay, in Theory." *Diacritics* 38.3 (Fall 2008): 71-92.
- Lenta, Margaret. "Autobiography: J. M. Coetzee's "Boyhood and Youth"." *English in Africa* 30. No 1 (2003): 157-169. <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40238981> >
- Librandi, Marília, Pinheiro Dias, Jamille and Tom Winterbottom. *Transpoetic Exchange. Haroldo de Campos, Octavio Paz, and Other Multiversal Dialogues*. Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press, 2020.
- Lüdi, Georges. "Monolingualism and multilingualism in the construction and dissemination of scientific knowledge." Kramsch, Claire and Ulrike Jessner, eds. *The Multilingual Challenge. Cross-disciplinary Perspectives*. Berlin : De Gruyter Mouton, 2015. 213-238.
- Lynes, Jeanette and Liliane Welch. „Liliane Welch's Fidelities." Interview. *Words Out There. Women Poets in Atlantic Canada*. Lockeport, Nova Scotia: Roseway Publishers, 1999 : 111-116.
- Maffesoli, Michel. *Du nomadisme: vagabondages initiatiques* (1997). Paris: La Table Ronde, 2006 .
- Makoni, Sinfree and Alastair Pennycook, eds. *Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007.
- Malherbe, Jean-François. *Le nomade polyglotte : L'excellence éthique en postmodernité*. Montreal: Bellarmin, 2000.
- Mallarmé, Stéphane. Daisy Aldan, translator. *To purify the words of the tribe. Bilingual edition*. Huntington Woods, MI: Sky Blue Press, MI, 1999.
- Manderscheid, Roger. *Der Aufstand der Luxemburger Alliteraten. Notizen zur Entwicklung der Luxemburger Literatur in der zweiten Jahrhunderthälfte*. Esch-sur-Alzette: Éditions Phi and Centre national de littérature, 2003.
- Manea, Norman. *The Hooligan's Return: A Memoir*. Translated by Angela Jianu. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.
- . *The Fifth Impossibility: Essays on Exile and Language*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press: The Margellos World Republic of Letters, 2012.
- Martin-Jones, Marilyn, Adrian Blackledge and Angela Carter, editors. *The Routledge Handbook of Multilingualism*. London : Routledge, 2012.
- Masschelein, Anneleen, Christophe Meurée, David Martens and Stéphanie Vanasten. "The Literary Interview: Towards a Poetics of a Hybrid Genre." *Poetics Today* 35.1-2 (2014): 1-49.
- Massey, Doreen. *For Space*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2005.
- McHale, Brian. "Beginning to think about narrative in poetry." *Narrative* 17.1 (2009): 11-27.
- . "Thinking some more about narrative in poetry." *Narrative* 22.2 (2014): 284-287.

- Meddeb, Abdelwahab, *Talismano* (1979). Arles : Actes Sud, 1999.
- Meizoz, Jérôme. *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*. Genève: Slatkine, 2007.
- . *Postures littéraires II. La fabrique des singularités*. Genève : Slatkine érudition, 2011.
- . "Modern Posterities of Posture. Jean Jacques Rousseau." Dorleijn, Gillis J., Ralf Grüttemeier and Liesbeth Korthals Altes, eds. *Authorship Revisited. Conceptions of Authorship around 1900 and 2000*. Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2010, 81–93.
- Memmi, Albert. *Le nomade immobile*. Paris: Arléa, 2000.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phénoménologie de la perception*. Paris: Gallimard, 2014.
- Mersch (Ciocârlie), Corina. *Un Miroir aux alouettes. Petit dictionnaire de la pensée nomade*. Echternach: Éditions Phi and CNL, 1999.
- Millim, Anne-Marie. "Muttersprachliche Mehrsprachigkeit." Glesener, Jeanne, Nathalie Roelens and Heing Sieburg eds. *Paradigma der Interkulturalität*. Bieleld: transcript Verlag, 2017. 85-103.
- Molz, Jennie Germann and Sarah Gibson, eds. *Mobilizing Hospitality: The Ethics of Social Relations in a Mobile World*. Routledge, 2007.
- . "Introduction. Mobilizing and Mooring Hospitality." *Mobilizing Hospitality: The Ethics of Social Relations in a Mobile World* 2007. 1-25.
- Moran, Joe. *Interdisciplinarity. Second edition*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- Moretti, Franco. *Graphs, Maps, Trees*. London: Verso, 2005.
- Mottram, Eric. "Oasis and Crossroads: An Introduction for Pierre Joris." Joris, Pierre. *Breccia*. Echternach, Luxembourg: Editions Phi, 1987: 7-11.
- Noland, Carrie and Barrett Watten. Eds. *Diasporic Avant-Gardes. Experimental Poetics and Cultural displacement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Notley, Alice. "Before Babel". Cockelbergh, Peter, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 376-382.
- Noyes, John. "Nomadism, Nomadology, Postcolonialism: By Way of Introduction." *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 6:2 (2004): 159-168.
- Nünning, Vera and Ansgar Nünning, eds. *Methoden der literatur- und kulturwissenschaftlichen Textanalyse: Ansätze - Grundlagen - Modellanalysen*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2010.
- Orr, Mary. *Intertextuality*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003.
- Osthues, Julian. *Literatur als Palimpsest: Postkoloniale Ästhetik im deutschsprachigen Roman der Gegenwart*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2017.
- Otheguy, Ricardo, Ofelia García and Reid Wallis. "Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: A perspective from linguistics." *Applied Linguistics Review*, Vol 6, Issue 3 (2015): 281-307.

- Pasewalck, Silke. „‘Als lebte ich in einem no man’s land, mit Verlaß nur auf die Sprache‘ “ Zu Ilma Rakusas Poetik der Mehrsprachigkeit.“ Dembeck, Till and Georg Mein, eds. *Philologie und Mehrsprachigkeit*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014. 381-400.
- Pavlenko, Aneta. “Bilingualism, gender, and ideology.” *Sage Publications* (2001): 117-151.
- . “ ‘To speak a foreign language is to depart from yourself’: Late Bilingualism As (Re)Construction of Identity.” *International Symposium on Bilingualism. Actas do 1 Simposio Internacional sobre o bilingüismo*. Vigo: Servizo de Publicacións da Universidade de Vigo, 2003. 80-88.
<<https://www.tib.eu/en/search/id/BLCP%3ACN060265380/>>.
- . “Autobiographic narratives as data in Applied Linguistics.” *Applied Linguistics* 28/2 (2007): 163-188.
- . *The Bilingual mind and What it Tells us about Language and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Pavlenko, Aneta, editor. *Thinking and Speaking in Two Languages*. Bristol: Multilingual matters, 2011.
- Pavlenko, Aneta and James P. Lantolf. “Second language learning as participation and the (re) construction of selves.” Lantolf, James P., editor. *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000: 155-179.
- Pavlenko, Aneta and Bonny Norton. “Imagined Communities, Identity, and English Language Learning.” Cummins, J. and C. Davison, eds. *International Handbook of English Language Teaching*. Boston: Springer, 2007: 669-680.
- Pels, Dick. “Privileged Nomads. On the Strangeness of Intellectuals and the Intellectuality of Strangers.” *Theory, Culture & Society SAGE Vol 16 (1)* (1999): 63-86.
- Pennycook, Alastair. *Critical Applied Linguistics. A Critical Introduction*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, (2001) 2009.
- . “English as a Language Always in Translation.” *European Journal of English Studies* 12 (2008, Issue 1): 33-47.
- . “Translingual English.” *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* (2008).
- . *Language as Local Practice*. Routledge, 2010.
- . “Translingual entanglements of English.” *World Englishes* (2020; 39): 220-235.
- Péporté, Pit, Sonja Kmec, Benoît Majerus and Michel Margue. *Inventing Luxembourg. Representations of the Past, Space and Language from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Perloff, Marjorie. “Language in migration: multilingualism and exophonic writing in the new poetics.” *Textual Practice*, 24:4 (2010): 725-748.
- . *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010.

- . "The Return of Luap Nalec: Pierre Joris "Translating" Paul Celan. Peter Cockelbergh, ed. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011: 299-314.
- Petrowskaja, Katja. *Vielleicht Esther*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2015.
- Pivato, Joseph, editor. *The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Writing*. Toronto: Guernica, 1998.
- Pope, Rob. *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.
- Portante, Jean. « Écritures contre la langue maternelle. Portrait du poète Pierre Joris. » *Lëtzebuenger Almanach'87*: 469-475.
- . *L'étrange langue*. Châtelineau, Belgique: Le Taillis Pré, 2002.
- . « Justification de la marge. Le Luxembourg dans l'œuvre poétique de Pierre Joris. I." *transkrit* (2013/5): 9-25. See translation by Pierre Cockelbergh. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 234-244.
- Prade, Juliane editor. *(M)Other Tongues. Literary Reflexions on a Difficult Distinction*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2013.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation. Second edition*. Routledge, 2008.
- . "The Traffic in Meaning: Translation, Contagion, Infiltration." *Profession* (2002): 25-36.
- Qabazard, Summer. "All Hands Bury the Dead." Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of English. University of Illinois. 2016. <http://doi.org/10.30707/ETD2016.Qabazard.S>
- Radaelli, Giulia. „Literarische Mehrsprachigkeit. Ein Beschreibungsmodell (und seine Grenzen) am Beispiel von Peter Waterhouse „Das Klangtal““. Dembeck, Till und Georg Mein. *Philologie und Mehrsprachigkeit*. 2011: 157-182.
- . *Literarische Mehrsprachigkeit. Sprachwechsel bei Elias Canetti und Ingeborg Bachmann*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2011.
- Rakusa, Ilma. *Autobiographisches Schreiben als Bildungsroman. Stefan-Zweig-Poetikvorlesung*. Wien: Sonderzahl Verlag, 2014.
- . *Zur Sprache gehen: Dresdner Chamisso-Poetikvorlesungen 2005*. Dresden: Thelem, 2006.
- . *Mehr Meer. Erinnerungspassagen*. Graz: Literaturverlag Droschl, 2009.
- Rath, Brigitte. „Doppelte Rede und Antwort. Pseudoübersetzungsphänomene in La fille d'un héros de l'Union soviétique und Le testament français von Andreï Makine. » Binder, Eva und Birgit Mertz-Baumgartner, eds. *Migrationsliteraturen in Europa*. Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2012. 185-202.
- Reed, Brian M. "Poetics, Western." Greene, Roland and Stephen et al. Cushman. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton: PUP, 2012. 1059-1064).

- Repko, Allen F. *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2008.
- Reuter, Anne-Marie, Jeff Thill & Nathalie Jacoby, eds. *Fresh from the Fountain. English Writing in Luxembourg*. Luxembourg: Black Fountain Press, 2018.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Soi-même comme un autre*. Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1991.
- . *La métaphore vive*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975.
- . *Sur la traduction*. (2004) Paris: Bayard/ Société d'édition Les Belles Lettres, 2018.
- Rimbaud, Arthur. *Poésies complètes*. (1998) Paris: Le livre de poche, 2013.
- Rizzi, Mylène. "Liliane Welch: *Frescoes*." In: *Galerie 16* (1998) 3. 456.
- Roelens, Nathalie. « La question de l'hospitalité. » Glesener, Jeanne, Nathalie Roelens and Heinz Sieburg eds. *Das Paradigma der Interkulturalität*. Bielefeld: transkript Verlag, 2017. 143-164
- Rosenthal, Gabriele. *Erlebte und erzählte Lebensgeschichte*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1995.
- Rothenberg, Jerome and Pierre Joris. *Poems for the Millennium. The University of California Book of Modern & Postmodern Poetry. Volume 1: From Fin-de-Siècle to Negritude*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995.
- . *Poems for the Millennium. The University of California Book of Modern & Postmodern Poetry. Volume 2: From Post-War to Millennium*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998.
- Rufolo, Dana. *Literature in Luxembourg*. Luxembourg: European Investment Bank, *Apertura Magazine* 22, n°4 (2001): 1-78.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991. Revised edition*. Penguin Books, 1992.
- Sahl, Nicole. "Dana Rufolo." *Dictionnaire des auteurs luxembourgeois*. <https://www.autorenlexikon.lu>, mise à jour du 29.06.2021, consulté le 12.07.2021.
- Said, W. Edward. "Reflections on Exile." Said, Edward. *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays*. Harvard University Press, 2002. 138-149.
- Sax, Adam,. "Life-in-death: an agonizing in-between. A review of the *The Agony of I.B.* by Pierre Joris." *Jacket2* (2020). <<https://jacket2.org/reviews/life-death-agonizing-between>>.
- Schlegel, Maximilian. „Mühelos polyglott.“ *Mehrsprachigkeit in Konkreter Dichtung. "Komparatistik online : Komparatistische Internet-Zeitschrift / Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen* (2014).
- Schmeling, Manfred. „In jeder Sprache neu“: Zweisprachigkeit und Kulturtransfer bei Iwan Goll. "Strutz, Johann and Peter V. Zima, eds. *Literarische Polyphonie. Übersetzung und Mehrsprachigkeit in der Literatur*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1996: 157-174.
- . „Multilingualität und Interkulturalität im Gegenwartsroman.“ Schmitz-Emans, Monika editor. *Literatur und Vielsprachigkeit*. Heidelberg: Synchron, 2004: 221-235.

- . „Komparatistik als Beziehungswissenschaft.“ Solte-Gresser, Christiane et al. eds. *Zwischen Transfer und Vergleich: Theorien und Methoden der Literatur- und Kulturbeziehungen aus deutsch-französischer Perspektive*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013: 51-61.
- Schmeling, Manfred/ Schmitz-Emans, Monika, eds. *Multilinguale Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002.
- Schmit, Sandra and Nathalie Jacoby. « Pierre Joris. » *Le Dictionnaire des auteurs luxembourgeois / Luxemburger Autorenlexikon*. 27.01.2021. <www.autorenlexikon.lu/dictionnaire-auteurs.lu> last updated 07.06.2021.
- Schmit, Sandra. “Literature from Luxembourg in English.” Conter, Claude, editor. *Fundstücke/ Trouvailles*. Mersch, Luxembourg: Centre national de littérature, 2018: 251-257.
- Schmitz-Emans, Monika. *Literatur und Vielsprachigkeit*. Heidelberg: Synchron Wissenschaftsverlag, 2004.
- . „Geschriebene Fremdkörper – Spielformen und Funktionen der Integration fremder Schriftzeichen in literarische Texte.“ *Literatur und Vielsprachigkeit*. 2004: 111-173.
- Semprun, Jorge. *Le langage est ma patrie*. Paris: Libella, 2013.
- Sepp, Arvi. „Ethik der Mehrsprachigkeit.“ Dembeck, Till and Rolf Parr, eds. *Literatur und Mehrsprachigkeit. Ein Handbuch*. 2017: 54-66.
- Sheppard, Robert. „Poetics and the Manifesto. On Pierre Joris and Adrian Clarke.“ *Jacket 2*. 2014. <<https://jacket2.org/article/poetics-and-manifesto>>.
- Soja, Edward W. *Thirdspace. Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Malden, Ma, US and Oxford UK: Blackwell, 1996.
- Solte-Gresser, Christiane, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Manfred Schmeling, eds. *Zwischen Transfer und Vergleich: Theorien und Methoden der Literatur- und Kulturbeziehungen aus deutsch-französischer Perspektive*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013.
- Sommer, Doris. *Bilingual Aesthetics. A New Sentimental Education*. Duke University Press, 2004.
- . *Bilingual Games. Some Literary Investigations*. New York: Palgrave/ Macmillan, 2003.
- . „Foreword.“ Jones, Katie, Julian Preece and Aled Rees, eds. *International Perspectives on Multilingual Literatures: From Translingualism to Language Mixing*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2021. ix-xi.
- Stavans, Ilan. *On Borrowed Words. A Memoir of Language*. Penguin Books, 2001.
- Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of language and translation. Third edition*. Oxford: OUP, 1998.
- Sternberg, Meir. “Polylingualism as Reality and Translation as Mimesis.” *Poetics Today* Vo.l 2, Number 4 Translation Theory and Intercultural Relations (Summer-Autumn 1981): 221-239. <Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/1772500>>.

- Still, Judith. "Language as Hospitality: Revisiting Intertextuality via Monolingualism of the Other." *Vol. 27, No. 1, Editors' Anniversary Issue (March 2004)*, Edinburgh University Press (2004): 113-127.
- . "Figures of Oriental Hospitality: Nomads and Sybarites." (2007) Molz, Jennie Germann and Sarah Gibson. *Mobilizing Hospitality. The Ethics of Social Relations in a Mobile World*. Routledge, 2007: 193 -209.
- . *Derrida and Hospitality. Theory and Practice*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.
- Straub, Jürgen and Joachim Renn, eds. *Transitorische Identität: Der Prozesscharakter des modernen Selbst*. Frankfurt/ Main: Campus, 2002.
- Strutz, Peter and V. Zima. *Literarische Polyphonie. Übersetzung und Mehrsprachigkeit in der Literatur*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1996.
- Suchet, Myriam. « De la recherche comme création permanente. » *Revue des sciences sociales* 56 (2016): 14-21.
- . *L'imaginaire hétérolingue. Ce que nous apprennent les textes à la croisée des langues*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2014.
- . Sutherland, Thomas. "Intensive Mobilities: Figurations of the Nomad in Contemporary Theory." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* Vol 32 (2014): 935-950.
- . Swain, Merrill and Yuko Watanabe. "Languaging: Collaborative Dialogue as a Source of Second Language Learning". Wiley Online Library (2013).
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0664.pub2>
- Tawada, Yoko. *Überseesungen*. 2002. Konkursbuch Verlag Claudia Gehrke, 2013.
- . *Verwandlungen. Tübinger Poetik-Vorlesungen 1998*. Konkursbuchverlag Claudia Gehrke, 2001.
- Tengour, Habib. "The Trace & the Echo." Cockelbergh, Peter, editor. *Pierre Joris. Cartographies of the In-Between*. 2011. 333-336.
- . *Exile is My Trade. A Habib Tengour Reader. Selected Poetry and Prose. Edited and translated by Pierre Joris*. Boston: Black Widow Press, 2012.
- Todeva, Elka and Jasone Cenoz, editors. *The Multiple Realities of Multilingualism. Personal Narratives and Research Perspectives*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2009.
- Trabant, Jürgen. *Europäisches Sprachdenken. Von Platon bis Wittgenstein*. München: C.H. Beck, 2006.
- Tremblay, Christian. « Qu'est-ce_que_le_plurilinguisme? » *ResearchGate* (2019).
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331413899_Qu%27est-ce_que_le_plurilinguisme>.
- "Understanding current multilingualism: what can the butterfly tell us?" Jessner, Ulrike and Claire Kramsch, eds. *The Multilingual Challenge. Cross-disciplinary perspectives*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2015. 271-291.
- Vautour, Bart, Erin Wunker, Travis V. Mason and Christl Verduyn, editors. *Public Poetics. Critical Issues in Canadian Poetry and Poetics*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015.

- Vertovec, Steven. "Super-diversity and its implications." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30:6, (2007).
- Viala, Alain. « Posture. » *Lexique Socius. Ressources sur le littéraire et le social*. n.d. 13/04/2021. <<http://ressources-socius.info/index.php/lexique/21-lexique/69-posture>>.
- Wagner-Parker, Ariel. "'The miracle of secular transcendence'." *Galerie : revue culturelle et pédagogique Differdange* 28 (2010), n° 2 : 247-251.
- Walkowitz, Rebecca. *Born Translated. The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press/Literature Now, 2015; 2017 paperback edition.
- . "The Location of Literature: The Transnational Book and the Migrant Writer." *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2006): 527-545. <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4489178>>.
- Wandruszka, Mario. *Die Mehrsprachigkeit des Menschen*. Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1979, 1981.
- Weber, Jean Jacques and Kristine Horner. *Introducing Multilingualism. A Social Approach*. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Weber, Nic. „Zu Liliane Welch.“ *Les Cahiers luxembourgeois* (1988, 3): 114-115.
- Weedon, Chris. *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.
- Wei, Li. "Translanguaging and code-switching: what's the difference?" 9 May 2018. Oxford University Press's Blog. <https://blog.oup.com/2018/05/translanguaging-code-switching-difference/>
- . "Translanguaging as a Practical Theory of Language." *Applied Linguistics*, OUP (2017): 9-30.
- Wei, Li, editor. *The Bilingualism Reader*. London and New York : Routledge, 2000.
- Weinreich, Uriel. *Languages in Contact*. 1953.
- Weinrich, Harald. *Sprache in Texten*. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1976.
- Weissmann, Dirk. „'In jeder Sprache sitzen andere Augen.' La langue maternelle face à l'altérité ou la dimension plurilingue chez Herta Müller." *Jahrbuch für Germanistik*. Peter Lang, 2013. 155-171.
- . « L'horizon utopique d'une totalité des langues et cultures. Plurilinguisme et écriture plurilingue chez Ilma Rakusa. » *Germanica* 51 (2012): 149-163.
- . Les langues sous la langue: pour une poétique des palimpsests exophones dans la littérature allemande. » Aziz Hanna, Patrizia Noel and Levente Seláf. *The Poetics of Multilingualism. La Poétique du multilinguisme*. Newcastle upon tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2017. 281-292.
- . « Monolinguisme, plurilinguisme et translinguisme chez Paul Celan. » *Genesis* 46 (2018): 35-50. <<http://journals.openedition.org/genesis/2606>>.
- . „Vom Sprechen mit zwei Mündern. Inszenierte Sprachverwirrung und präbabilonisches Sprachverstehen in Yoko Tawadas zweisprachigem Theaterstück Till.“ Dembeck, Till and Anne Uhrmacher, eds. *Das literarische Leben der Mehrsprachigkeit. Methodische Erkundungen*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016. 169-193.

- Welch, Cyril. *Reading, Talking, Writing. 12 Essays in Philosophy*. Sackville, New Brunswick: Atcost Press, 2004.
- . *Acknowledgments*. Sackville, New Brunswick: Atcost Press, 2009.
- . *Laocius: On Paths & Powers*. Sackville, New Brunswick: Atcost Press, 2019.
- Westphal, Bertrand. *Pour une approche géocritique des textes*. Publication: SFLGC (Vox Poetica), 2005.
<http://www.vox-poetica.org/sflgc/biblio/gcr.htm> .
- White, Kenneth. *Dialogue avec Deleuze*. Éditions Isolato, 2007.
- . *L'esprit nomade* (1987. Éditions Grasset). Paris: Le livre de poche, 2008.
- . *Lettres aux derniers lettrés*. Nancy: Isolato, 2017.
- . *The Wanderer and his Charts*. Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 2004.
- . *Un monde ouvert: Anthologie personnelle*. Paris : Gallimard, 2007.
- . *Le Plateau de l'albatros : Introduction à la géopoétique*. (1994). Marseille : Le mot et le reste, 2018.
- Wilhelm, Frank. „Liliane Welch.“ last updated 01.03.2019. *Luxemburger Autorenlexikon/ Dictionnaire des auteurs luxembourgeois*. accessed 27.01.2021. < www.autorenlexikon.lu >.
- Wismann, Heinz. *Penser entre les langues*. Paris: Albin Michel, 2012.
- Wolf, Uljana. *Falsche Freunde*. Idstein: Kookbooks, 2009.
- Yanoshevsky, Galia. *L'entretien littéraire. Anatomie d'un genre*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018.
- Yeung, Heather H. *Spatial Engagement with Poetry. Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies*. Palgrave - Macmillan, 2015.
- Yildiz, Yasemin. *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.
- Ying, Chen. *Quatre mille marches. Un rêve chinois*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2004.
- Zabus, Chantal. *Le Palimpseste africain. Indigénisation de la langue dans le roman*. Translated from English edition 2007. Paris: Karthala, 2018.
- Zacharasiewicz, Waldemar. “Migration and Literature - Migrating Across the Oceans: Challenges of Settlement in the USA and Canada.” Zacharasiewicz, Waldemar and Fritz Peter Kirsch, eds. *Immigration and Integration in North America: Canadian and Austrian Perspectives*. Vienna: Vienna University Press, 2014. 111-136.
- Zaraté, Geneviève, Danielle Lévy and Claire Kramsch, eds. *Précis du plurilinguisme et du pluriculturalisme*. Paris: Editions des Archives Contemporaines, 2008. (English translation: *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism*. 2010.)

Dictionaries

- Buchanan, Ian. *Dictionary of Critical Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Cassin, Barbara, et al. *Dictionary of Untranslatables. A Philosophical Lexicon. Translation*. Princeton University Press, 2014 (2004). on-line; e-book.
- Cassin, Barbara, sous la direction de. *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies. Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*. Paris: Seuil, 2004.
- Centre national des ressources textuelles et lexicales / cnrtl. n.d. <<https://www.cnrtl.fr>>.
- Christin, Olivier. *Dictionnaire des concepts nomades en sciences humaines tome et 2*. Métailié: Paris, 2010, 2016.
- Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- De Roquefort, B. *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k2049479.texteImage>, 1829.
- Duden. *Wörterbuch*. n.d. <<https://www.duden.de/>>.
- Gray, Martin. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms. Second edition*. London: Longman York Press, 1992.
- Greene, Roland and Stephen Cushman, eds. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. Fourth Edition*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Larousse. *Dictionnaire français en ligne*. larousse (<https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/>).
- Lexico. *Oxford on-line dictionary*. <https://www.lexico.com>, n.d.
- Littre: *Dictionnaire de la langue française*. <https://www.littre.org/>, n.d.
- Luxemburger Autorenlexikon / *Dictionnaire des auteurs*. n.d. <<https://www.autorenlexikon.lu>>.
- Merriam Webster Dictionary <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>. n.d.
- Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (OALD). 7th Edition*. 2005.
- Scott, A.F. *Current Literary Terms. A Concise Dictionary*. 1965.
- Shipley, Joseph T. editor. *Dictionary of World Literary Terms. Revised edition*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970.
- Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. 2 vol. 1983.
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. n.d. <<https://plato.stanford.edu/>>.
- The New Brunswick Literary Encyclopedia*. n.d. <nble.lib.unb.ca/>.

Selected on-line resources

Al-Ishk: the original text in its translation. <http://www.planck.com/rhymedtranslations/aquitabla.htm>;

<https://lyricstranslate.com/fr/ab-la-dolchor-del-temps-novel-la-douceur-du-temps-nouveau.html>

Anne Carson, "Economy of the Unlost" (2009). <https://books.google.lu/books?isbn=1400823153>

Antlers. <https://www.wildlifeonline.me.uk/animals/article/red-deer-antlers>

Atlantic Canadian Poets' Archive. <http://www.stu-acpa.com/>

Barzakh, Pierre Joris, Urayoán Noel Posted in Uncategorized on Thursday, April 29th, 2010 by Barbara Jane Reyes. <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2010/04/shout-out-urayoan-noel-and-pierre-joris-barzakh/>

Canadian Literature. A Quarterly of Criticism and Review. <https://canlit.ca/>

Carte des trois Arabies. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005625325/>

Cockelbergh, Peter. <https://ebsn.eu/about-ebsn/members/peter-cockelbergh/>

Colloque Nietzsche aujourd'hui, <http://lesilencequiparle.unblog.fr/2012/09/17/pensee-nomade-colloque-nietzsche-aujourd'hui-gilles-deleuze/>

Colville, Alex. <http://alexcolville.ca/>; https://www.aci-iac.ca/content/art-books/25/Art-Canada-Institute_Alex-Colville.pdf

CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture. Purdue University Press
<<[<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>](http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb)>>.

Concerto Barocco, Bach's Concerto in D minor for 2 violins (BWV 1043).
<http://balanchine.com/concerto-barocco/>

Einführung in die Philosophie von Martin Heidegger. <https://www.philognosie.net/wissen-technik/einfuehrung-in-die-philosophie-von-martin-heidegger>

Helming, Nico. http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/programmes/twt_euro/euro_helminger.shtml. n.d.

Helming, Nico. „A Question about Bridges.“ n.d.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/programmes/twt_euro/euro_helminger.shtml.

International Institute of Geopoetics. <https://www.institut-geopoetique.org/en/presentation-of-the-institute>

Joris, Pierre mss., circa 1960-2000 Archives at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
<https://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/findingaids/view?brand=general&docId=InU-Li-VAD2526&chunk.id=VAD2526-00006&startDoc=1>

Joris, Pierre. L'antre d'eux <http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/joris/> Joris, Pierre
<https://delano.lu/d/detail/news/lux-nyc-writers-life/143587>

Joris, Pierre, <https://www.tageblatt.lu/kultur/der-wortnomade-pierre-joris-erhaelt-den-prix-batty-weber/>

Joris, Pierre <http://www.pierrejoris.com/blog/the-gulf-in-luxembourg/>

Joris, Pierre “Altars of light” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkfTF_Y2Bk8

Joris, Pierre “Invité am Moies Magazin D’Valerija Berdi am Gespréich mam Pierre Joris” 02. Jan 2019 - 10:04 <https://www.100komma7.lu/program/episode/234968/20190102100400/37>

Knaff, Ginette. An exhibition of Knaff’s work in Sackville, Canada:

<https://fogforestgallery.ca/exhibitions/paintings-and-collage-works-by-ginette-knaff>

La géopoétique, initiée par Michel Deguy puis par Kenneth White, <https://www.fabula.org/atelier.php?Espace>

Le silence qui parle. <http://lesilencequiparle.unblog.fr/2012/09/17/pensee-nomade-colloque-nietzsche-aujourd'hui-gilles-deleuze/>.

L’Internationale situationniste, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Situationist-International>

Liliane and Cyril Welch fonds of the national Gallery of Canada Library and Archives

<https://www.gallery.ca/english/library/biblio/ngc106.html>

Li Po, Exile's Letter <https://www.bartleby.com/265/299.html>

Heidegger, Martin, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992: 80-81).] <http://www.stevenconnor.com/modhand.htm>

Pivato, Joseph. *A History of Italian-Canadian Writing*. Athabasca University, last updated 2015.

http://engl.athabascau.ca/faculty/jpivato/itcan_writing.php access 06 Feb 2021

—. “Atwood’s Survival. A Critique.” *Athabasca University* <http://canadian-writers.athabascau.ca/english/writers/matwood/survival.php> (2020).

Pound, Ezra A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/articles/58900/a-few-donts-by-an-imagiste>

Raworth, Tom. Obituary: Franco Beltrametti, Sunday 03 September 1995 Franco 23:02

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-franco-beltrametti-1599393.html>

Rhizome. <https://biologydictionary.net/rhizome/>

Sheppard, Robert, “Poetics and the Manifesto. On Pierre Joris and Adrian Clarke” 2014 <https://jacket2.org/article/poetics-and-manifesto>

- Scholz, Antonia. *The Reinvention of Nomadic Identity*. . n.d. <<https://nomadthinktank.com/the-reinvention-of-nomadic-identity/>>.
- Statistics Canada : Annual Demographic Estimates: Canada, Provinces and Territories, 2018
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-215-x/2018001/sec1-eng.htm>
- The Annual Meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association The University of Washington, Seattle March 2015.*
https://www.acla.org/sites/default/files/files/Full_Program_Guide_2015.pdf, n.d.
- Translingual poetics: https://www.haus-fuer-poesie.org/de/literaturwerkstatt-berlin/veranstaltungen/alle_veranstaltungen/freily-ausgefranst-translingual-poetics
- Viala, Alain. Posture. Le lexique socius. <http://ressources-socius.info/index.php/lexique/21-lexique/69-posture>
- Welch, Liliane. <http://www.stu-acpa.com/liliane-welch.html>
- Welch, Liliane “Den Nic Weber, d’Liliane Welch an e Lunch zu Éiere vum Edmond Dune.”
https://cni.public.lu/fr/actualites/objet-mois/2020/03/objet_du_mois_mars_2021.html
- White, Kenneth. *Dérives*. <https://lemotetlereste.com/litteratures/derives/>.
- White, Kenneth. *Geopoetics* <http://www.geopoetics.org.uk/what-is-geopoetics/kenneth-white/>
 “Writing translation / translating writing” Master Class with Pierre Joris.
<https://pierrejoris.com/blog/writing-translation-translating-writing-master-class/>
<http://www.chicagoschoolofpoetics.com/master-class-pierre-joris/>
- Zaraté, Geneviève, Danielle Lévy and Claire Kramsch, *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism*
 Paris, Éditions des archives contemporaines: 2010
<https://u-pad.unimc.it/retrieve/handle/11393/40435/804/HandBookCompleteLight.pdf>

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo