

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600



Université d'Ottawa • University of Ottawa

**SENSE AND SENSUALITY:
A COMMENTED TRANSLATION OF
ALBERT CAMUS' *NOCES***

Thesis submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies and Research,
University of Ottawa,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (Translation).

Presented by
Sarah C. Lott

Supervised by
Dr. Barbara Folkart

Sarah C. Lott, Ottawa, 1997.



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-22002-8

**SENSE AND SENSUALITY:
A COMMENTED TRANSLATION OF ALBERT CAMUS' *NOCES***

Abstract

This thesis, a "commented translation", is comprised of two main parts. The first part features the translation of two lyrical essays, "Noces à Tipasa" and "L'été à Alger", from French Algerian writer Albert Camus' four-essay set entitled *Noces*. The second part consists of commentary: three chapters treat individual, but interrelated aspects of the source text that were particularly challenging to translation. The first chapter examines four thematic undercurrents that dominate Camus' writing; the second chapter analyzes the stylistic devices Camus favoured to highlight those undercurrents; the third chapter studies the Cagayous vernacular used in the essays. The concept that grew out of the translation and underlies the commentary is that context and style are inseparable in a literary text such as *Noces*; both must be clearly understood and adequately represented in translation for together they create the unique, complex and multi-dimensional meaning and message of the text.



**"Mourir est tout entier
le monde."**

- Albert Camus

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been, for the most part, an honour and a pleasure to complete this thesis. However, the work represented here is surely not the result of my efforts only. There are several people without whose interest, dedication and patience this thesis would never have seen its completion. Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge their invaluable contributions and to extend my most sincere gratitude for their support. I offer heartfelt thanks:

to **ALBERT CAMUS**, whose beautifully evocative writing never ceased to inspire and delight me; it was an honour to make his acquaintance and to work in his company over the course of the past few years;

to **BARBARA FOLKART**, my esteemed thesis advisor, who unceasingly provided valuable insight and sage advice on the work as it unfolded; her wisdom and erudition, her patience and encouragement, were tremendous assets to me;

to my husband, **STEVEN NOBLE**, whose gentleness and unwavering support over the past many months were dearly appreciated; I wouldn't have thought it possible, but his immutable patience and tolerance have endeared him to me even more;

to my parents, **TED AND MARIAN LOTT**, whose patience, generosity and abiding love have allowed me to pursue dreams and challenges throughout my life; they are truly one of my greatest blessings;

to **TESS THE CAT**, whose dear, furry presence and comical antics made many long days in front of the computer not merely tolerable, but actually enjoyable;

to **MEGAN**, who first opened my eyes to the possibilities;

to **CHRIS**, who introduced me to the adventure and wonder of learning;

to **CINDY**, who showed me the beauty and the poetry in life and in living.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION	
The Art of Literary Translation	2
An Introduction to Albert Camus and the Essays of <i>Noces</i>	2
An Outline of this Thesis	7
Notes	12
THE TRANSLATIONS	
The Translation of <i>Noces à Tipasa</i>	13
The Translation of <i>L'été à Alger</i>	28
THE COMMENTARY	
<u>Theme I:</u> Text in Context: The Primacy of Context and Culture in the Translation	
of <i>Noces</i>	
Context and Culture in Literary Translation	56
Context and Culture in <i>Noces</i>	59
What is the Camusian Context?	62
(i) <i>The Algerian Presence</i>	63
(ii) <i>Mediterranean Culture and the Ancient Greeks</i>	66
(iii) <i>The Supremacy of Nature and the Celebration</i>	
<i>of the Physical</i>	71
(iv) <i>Existentialism, Lucidity, Absurdity and Revolt</i>	77
The Conundrum of Cultural Items in <i>Noces</i>	82
(i) <i>"Exoticizing" through Local Colour</i>	83
(ii) <i>A Case for "Naturalization"</i>	84
Concluding Remarks	86
Notes	89

	Page
<u>Theme II:</u> Camus' Style	
Style in Literary Translation	93
Camus' Style: Specific Challenges to Translation	94
(i) <i>The Essay Format</i>	96
(ii) <i>The Narrative Voice</i>	100
(iii) <i>Lexical Choices</i>	104
(iv) <i>Poetic Devices</i>	107
(v) <i>Syntactic and Structural Choices</i>	112
(vi) <i>The Lyrical Register</i>	123
Concluding Remarks	127
Notes	129
<u>Theme III:</u> Parlez-vous le Cagayous?: The Challenge of Camus' Vernacular	
Vernacular: An Overview	133
Cagayous Vernacular: An Overview	138
On Translating the Cagayous Vernacular in <i>Noces</i>	146
(i) <i>Preparation</i>	146
(ii) <i>Context</i>	149
(iii) <i>Style</i>	151
Concluding Remarks	160
Notes	162
CONCLUSION	164
APPENDIX A: Petit glossaire à l'usage des non-initiés au langage de Cagayous	168
REFERENCES	173

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Art of Literary Translation

In describing the intricacies of literary translation, García Yebra once wrote:

"... the translator is like a painter who is obliged to reproduce a green and orange painting using reds and blues. In doing so, he is able to express the same forms and attitudes, but the difference of colour makes it impossible to keep certain nuances of the original work and adds new characteristics to the reproduction."¹

Few translators who have tried their hand at the delicate art of literary translation would argue with this brilliantly-articulated analogy, for literary translation is complex and challenging. Challenging, indeed, but rewarding, too. For literary translation affords the translator countless opportunities to confront cultural and linguistic phenomena, to reflect on and grapple with fundamental aspects of her craft, and to devise principles and methodologies that may enrich her work in other areas of translation. In short, it provides the translator with an opportunity to reflect on her practice, and the thesis that follows is a case in point. The first part of this thesis consists of a translation of two essays by French Algerian writer Albert Camus; the second part consists of an examination of several of the most striking cultural and stylistic features and difficulties encountered during that translation.

An Introduction to Albert Camus and the Essays of *Noces*

Imagine a land of unparalleled beauty; a land of golden sun, azure waters and intoxicating

fragrances; a land of beaches teeming with beautiful young men and women; a land of vivid colour, light, scents, sounds and tastes. This is the "yellow and blue world" that greets the reader of *Noces*, a set of four lyrical essays written between 1936 and 1938 by French Algerian writer Albert Camus; this is the world in which Camus grew up, and which he describes with wisdom, wit and candor in the essays of *Noces*.

Albert Camus was born in Mondovi, Algeria on November 7, 1913 to Catherine and Lucien Camus; however, Albert never knew his father, who died of a wound received during the battle of the Marne in the early months of World War I, less than one year after his son's birth.² Albert's mother was illiterate, and the impact of her husband's death left her mute. She could find employment only as a poorly-paid domestic and was thus obliged, for financial reasons, to move with her children into the small apartment of her mother in working-class Algiers. It was here, in the district known as Belcourt, that Albert lived until he was seventeen years old.

For most children in this working class section of Algiers, school was a privilege that might be enjoyed until adolescence; then it was time to seek gainful employment and contribute to the family's sustenance. Fortunately for Camus, his intellectual talents were discovered at a very early age by one of his elementary school teachers, who recognized in his pupil the capacity for original thinking and creative expression. He was thus encouraged to pursue further education, which he did, on a full government scholarship. As Camus attained the final years of the *lycée* (secondary school) curriculum, his professor, Jean Grenier, exerted great influence on his thinking, and actively became his mentor. Grenier was an admirer of the essential values of Mediterranean culture - harmony of the mind and body, clarity of stylistic expression, and a strong sense of moral responsibility - and he passed these values on to his protégé for they

clearly permeate Camus' literary works.

Camus' first published works were two slim volumes of essays, *L'envers et l'endroit* (published in 1937), and *Noces* (published in 1938). Initially, these works were published in limited numbers and thus reached only a small readership in Algeria; however, when they were reprinted in France some twenty years later, they were heralded as critical components of Camus' creative production when it became clear that each of these volumes contained major themes and imagery that would emerge in more fully developed form in Camus' later, more polished texts. During the Second World War, Camus composed several of his most important works, a number of well-received novels and dramatic works, including *L'étranger*, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, *Caligula*, *Le Malentendu* and *La Peste*. When the latter was published in 1947, it achieved great popular success and was awarded a major literary prize; Camus thus became an important public figure in the literary life of France.

Throughout the war and until the end of 1951, Camus had been working on a long and ambitious essay entitled *L'homme révolté*. When it appeared on the Parisian intellectual scene, it immediately became the subject of controversy and received negative reviews; distressed by the poor reception of a work that he considered to be essential to the entirety of his literary production, Camus published no important creative texts for five years. However, 1956 saw the appearance of *La Chute*, a short novel of great stylistic rigor and originality. It, along with the subsequent series of short stories entitled *L'exil et le royaume* published in 1957, helped reestablish Camus' literary reputation.

On October 16, 1957, Camus received the Nobel Prize for Literature. This should have been a gratifying moment for the author, but Camus found himself attacked by the French press

as a writer who had not lived up to his promise. Upon his return to France after the Nobel awards ceremony, Camus bought a home in Lourmarin, a small town in the south of the country where he could escape the relentless scrutiny of the press, and began work on a novel to be called *Le Premier homme*. He had completed some 80,000 words of this work in draft form when he was killed in an automobile accident on January 4, 1960 at the age of 46; an unused train ticket was later found in his coat pocket. It is one of the great ironies and great tragedies of our time that this man, so much engaged in life, was stripped of so many years of his own.

It is this sense of being engaged in life, of celebrating the immediate wonder and beauty of existence, that permeates the essays of *Noces*, a set of four descriptive and lyrical essays depicting the Mediterranean world whose images never ceased to haunt the literary works of Camus. *Noces* consists of a series of meditations on the ancient and enduring problems of human existence and individual transience set against a North African landscape of striking poetic intensity. Tipasa and Algiers, with their atmosphere of sun- and sea-bathed pagan sensuality, have the density of real places, but are also symbolic of Camus' inner, spiritual landscape. For the singular beauty of the African coast lies at the heart of his sensitivity and imagination; his thought and its expression are rooted in his Algerian experience. The essays that were translated for the purposes of this thesis are the first and third in the set: "Noces à Tipasa" and "L'été à Alger".

"Noces à Tipasa", the first essay, portrays the total surrender of self to the timeless beauty of the world. It features a description of a long day of delight spent in the glory and beauty of an Algerian spring: the intoxicating fragrance of aromatic plants, the intense heat of the sun, the "radiant smile" of the sparkling sea, and the ecstatic joy, the very pride in being alive and feeling

at one with the earth:

"J'avais au cœur une joie étrange, celle-là même qui naît d'une conscience tranquille. Il y a un sentiment que connaissent les acteurs lorsqu'ils ont conscience d'avoir bien rempli leur rôle, c'est-à-dire, au sens le plus précis, d'avoir fait coïncider leurs gestes et ceux du personnage idéal qu'ils incarnent, d'être entrés en quelque sorte dans un dessin fait à l'avance et qu'ils ont d'un coup fait vivre et battre avec leur propre cœur. C'était précisément cela que je ressentais : j'avais bien joué mon rôle. J'avais fait mon métier d'homme."

And as the daylight wanes, the calm of evening brings with it the certainty of a harmony that binds man to the earth, a harmony which is a form of love: "Amour que je n'avais pas la faiblesse de revendiquer pour moi seul, conscient et orgueilleux de le partager avec toute une race, née du soleil et de la mer, vivante et savoureuse, qui puise sa grandeur dans sa simplicité et debout sur les plages, adresse son sourire complice au sourire éclatant de ses ciels."

"L'été à Alger", the third essay, is concerned with the physical beauties of Algiers and its people "née du soleil et de la mer" whom Camus evoked in "Noces à Tipasa". Made for the fleeting glory of a youth fast spent, this race without a past, without tradition, lives outside the realm of Christian "grace".³ They have erected no screen between themselves and their human fate; in the harsh summer sky of Algiers and in the obstinate faces of these people, Camus finds "rien où accrocher une mythologie, une littérature, une éthique ou une religion, mais des pierres, la chair, des étoiles et ces vérités que la main peut toucher." They seek no transcendence; rather, their apathy becomes a form of unconscious nihilism, and by their very being they prove that "il n'y a pas de joie surhumaine, pas d'éternité hors de la courbe des journées". They die unreconciled with death. Thus in the midst of the sensual delight brought about by the union of

man with the earth, Camus is aware that "tout ce qui exalte la vie, accroît en même temps son absurdité."

Despite the bleaker and more critical tone of "L'été à Alger" in comparison to the unrestrained rapture of "Noces à Tipasa", the underlying message in the essays of *Noces* is one of optimism. For although life ends in death and there is no transcendence, there remains the possibility of finding and attaining happiness in the immediate surroundings, in the here and now. As squalid and absurd as human fate and the weight of the world may be, they are nullified in these essays by a total abandonment to the great universal love and compassionate collaboration between man, sun, sea and the perfumes of nature. In natural splendour, Camus finds serenity, strength and the courage to defy injurious destiny.⁴

An Outline of this Thesis

The format of this thesis is that of the *Commented Translation*. In preparing the translations and generating and synthesizing commentary, I used a "bottom-up" approach, with *Noces* serving as the foundation upon which the translation and the commentary were built. It seems logical to present the thesis in a manner that reflects that research methodology. The translations of "Noces à Tipasa" and "L'été à Alger" will be presented first, for they serve as the cornerstone to the commentary; three chapters of commentary, treating three different, but inter-related themes, will follow. Conclusions and a brief appendix will round out the paper.

The translation of "Noces à Tipasa" appears first, as the original essay does in *Noces*; "L'été à Alger" follows. Source text and target text are presented side by side, to facilitate comparison and make it easier for the reader to refer back to specific sections mentioned in the

commentary. All direct quotations from *Noces* are followed by square brackets containing either "T" for "Noces à Tipasa" or "A" for "L'été à Alger", along with a page number. Thus, [T, p. 23] refers to page 23 of "Noces à Tipasa", and [A, p. 44] refers to page 44 of "L'été à Alger".

The three chapters of commentary that follow the translations treat individual, but inter-related aspects of the source text that proved particularly challenging to translation; they spring directly from my immediate contact with the source text and overlap significantly to reflect the way form and content are woven into the narrative fabric of *Noces*.

Noces confronts the translator with two sets of recurrent difficulties: (i) understanding the complex and interwoven concepts, themes and symbols that underlie these essays, and (ii) conveying and highlighting those concepts, themes and symbols using target-language devices that will reflect Camus' style and be appropriate to the context.

The first chapter of the commentary, therefore, describes in some detail what I have chosen to call the "Camusian context". "Context" here refers not only to the concrete cultural, social and geographical landscape in which the essays of *Noces* are embedded, but also to the inner, philosophical mindscape of the author, both of which colour the writing and must be thoroughly researched and clearly understood by the translator who does not wish to misinterpret or distort the author's highly individual meaning. Many Camusian scholars have asserted that Camus' writing reveals a predominance of certain themes; these themes reflect Camus' vision of the world and without a sound understanding of them, his writing can seem maddeningly impenetrable (and thus impossible to translate). In *Noces*, I identified four major thematic undercurrents: (i) the Algerian presence, (ii) the influence of Mediterranean culture and the Ancient Greeks, (iii) the belief in the supremacy of nature and the celebration of the physical,

and (iv) Camus' "existential" tenets, including the concepts of lucidity, absurdity and revolt. The first chapter outlines those themes vital to a sound understanding and perceptive translation of the essays, and underscores the presence of those symbols and ideas that Camus emphasizes stylistically.

The second chapter of the commentary is an outgrowth of the first, and analyzes the subtle, hard to recreate stylistic devices that Camus employs to emphasize the flow and focus of his thought. Writers on translation have long debated the issue of content versus form. The view taken in this thesis is that a distinction between form and content cannot, and should not, be made. Form, or "style" is not merely ornamental; rather, it is woven into the fabric of a text and helps create the unique, complex, multi-layered and multi-dimensional meaning of a given text. This is all the more true in the case of the literary text, where the creative literary artist creates symbols and images, manipulates rhythm and cadences, makes motivated lexical and structural choices, and intentionally exploits the ambiguities inherent in the medium. The subtle meaning that flows evocatively in between the lines is no less powerful than the overt meaning of the words and lines physically present on the page. And that subtle meaning must be perceived and conveyed in order to maintain the unity and power of the text in translation. Chapter two analyzes six types of formal features found in *Noces*: (i) the essay format, (ii) the narrative voice, (iii) lexical choices, (iv) poetic devices, (v) syntactic and structural choices, and (vi) the lyrical register. It will be demonstrated that these stylistic elements impart meaning, add emphasis and contribute to the cohesiveness of the message at all levels.

The concept that underlies the commentary in this thesis is that content and form are inseparable in a literary text such as *Noces*; both must, therefore, be clearly understood and fully

represented in translation for both contribute to the meaning of the literary text. The third chapter of the commentary is thus intended to illustrate the partnership of context and style as evidenced by the Cagayous vernacular used in the second footnote of "L'été à Alger".

Vernacular can be defined in a number of ways, but in this thesis, I take it to mean a special category of "substandard" language usage that serves as a marker of class, regional or age-group affiliation and that includes such speech-oriented lexical and grammatical features as colloquial formulas and epithets, slang, obscenities and other vulgarisms, and certain kinds of allusive or elliptical morphological and syntactic arrangements.⁵ Vernacular as I refer to it here is an extreme form of language that challenges the concept of translation equivalence because vernacular represents the most native, the most peculiar, the most untranslatable property of any language. It demonstrates the inextricable link between context and style because it is a linguistic phenomenon that exists only within a limited contextual situation (time, place, social or cultural condition), and that singular contextual situation gives it unique and inimitable lexical and grammatical features. The third chapter of the commentary will, therefore, outline the difficulties I encountered in attempting to translate the Cagayous vernacular used in *Noces*; this chapter thus reinforces my contention that context and style, or content and form, work together to generate the individual meaning of a given text.

Noces, then, is a text whose beauty and lyricism are a source of endless inspiration to the translator, although James Woelfel's sentiment does seem particularly apt: "While I was rereading his novels, essays, and plays in the course of writing this book, I frequently had the depressing experience of feeling that he expresses things so superbly and lyrically that what I was doing seemed very inadequate."⁶ The translations that follow attempt to reproduce something of

Camus' artistry. And whatever failings might be found in the translations themselves, much remains to be said for the opportunity to learn from practical experience, to confront cultural and linguistic phenomena, to reflect on and grapple with fundamental aspects of the craft of translation and, in this case, to expose the utter centrality of conveying context and style which are, in effect, two sides of the same coin and work together in the literary text to create its complex, multi-layered and multi-dimensional meaning.

And now, onward to Algeria, where the intoxicatingly fragrant, vibrantly colourful "yellow and blue" worlds of Tipasa and Algiers await ...

NOTES

¹María Calzada Pérez, "Translators in Wonderland: A Study of the Tempo-cultural Aspects of Alice in Wonderland," Babel 41.2 (1995): 102.

²The biographical information detailed on pages 3 to 5 of the Introduction was adapted from David R. Ellison, Understanding Albert Camus (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990) 1-3.

³Germaine Brée, Camus (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1964) 83.

⁴Alba Amoia, Albert Camus (New York: Continuum, 1989) 79.

⁵Judson Rosengrant, "Toads in the Garden: On Translating Vernacular Style in Eduard Limonov," Translation Review 38/39 (1992): 16.

⁶James W. Woelfel, Camus: A Theological Perspective (New York: Abingdon Press, 1975) 9.

NOTE: The sketch of Albert Camus featured on the frontispiece was drawn by Marie Viton, a friend of Camus' with whom he used to take day trips to visit the ruins of Tipasa. It was taken from José Lenzini's L'Algérie de Camus (La Calada, Aix-en-Provence : Édisud, 1987) 2.

THE TRANSLATION OF
NOCES À TIPASA

THE SOURCE TEXT:
NOCES À TIPASA

Noces à Tipasa

Au printemps, Tipasa est habitée par les dieux et les dieux parlent dans le soleil et l'odeur des absinthes, la mer cuirassée d'argent, le ciel bleu écru, les ruines couvertes de fleurs et la lumière à gros bouillons dans les amas de pierres. À certaines heures, la campagne est noire de soleil. Les yeux tentent vainement de saisir autre chose que des gouttes de lumière et de couleurs qui tremblent au bord des cils. L'odeur volumineuse des plantes aromatiques racle la gorge et suffoque dans la chaleur énorme. À peine, au fond du paysage, puis-je voir la masse noire du Chenoua qui prend racine dans les collines autour du village, et s'ébranle d'un rythme sûr et pesant pour aller s'accroupir dans la mer.

Nous arrivons par le village qui s'ouvre déjà sur la baie. Nous entrons dans un monde jaune et bleu où nous accueille le soupir odorant et âcre de la terre d'été en Algérie. Partout, des bougainvillées rosat dépassent les murs des villas; dans les jardins, des hibiscus au rouge encore pâle, une profusion de roses thé épaisses comme de la crème et de délicates bordures de longs iris bleus. Toutes les pierres sont chaudes. À l'heure où nous descendons de l'autobus couleur de bouton d'or, les bouchers dans leurs voitures rouges font leur tournée matinale et les sonneries de leurs trompettes appellent les habitants.

À gauche du port, un escalier de pierres sèches mène aux ruines, parmi les lentisques et les genêts. Le chemin passe devant un petit phare pour plonger ensuite en pleine campagne.

THE TRANSLATION: *NUPTIALS IN TIPASA*

Nuptials in Tipasa

In the spring, Tipasa is inhabited by gods and gods speak through the sun and the scent of the absinthes, the silver armour of the sea, the raw blue of the sky, the flower-covered ruins and the torrents of light that splash down on the heaps of stone. At certain times of the day, the countryside is black with sun. The eye tries, in vain, to see beyond the drops of light and colour that tremble at the edge of its lashes. The voluminous odour of aromatic plants burns the throat and suffocates us in the enormous heat. In the distance, I can just make out the black mass of Mount Chenoua, rooted in the hills around the village and moving with a steady, ponderous rhythm down to the sea, to crouch in the water.

We pass through the village which opens onto the bay. We plunge into a yellow and blue world which greets us with the pungent and acrid breath of the earth in the Algerian summer. Everywhere, rose-hued bougainvillaea spill over the walls of the villas; in the gardens, the hibiscus are still pale red, and there is a profusion of tea roses as heavy as cream, and delicate borders of slim blue iris. All the stones are warm. As we step off the buttercup-yellow bus, butchers in their red trucks are out on their morning rounds, beckoning to the villagers with a toot of their horns.

To the left of the port, a dry stone stairway winds up through the mastic trees and canary broom to the ruins. The trail passes by a small lighthouse before plunging into the open country.

Déjà, au pied de ce phare, de grosses plantes grasses aux fleurs violettes, jaunes et rouges, descendent vers les premiers rochers que la mer suce avec un bruit de baisers. Debout dans le vent léger, sous le soleil qui nous chauffe un seul côté du visage, nous regardons la lumière descendre du ciel, la mer sans une ride, et le sourire de ses dents éclatantes. Avant d'entrer dans le royaume des ruines, pour la dernière fois nous sommes spectateurs.

Au bout de quelques pas, les absinthes nous prennent à la gorge. Leur laine grise couvre les ruines à perte de vue. Leur essence fermente sous la chaleur, et de la terre au soleil monte sur toute l'étendue du monde un alcool généreux qui fait vaciller le ciel. Nous marchons à la rencontre de l'amour et du désir. Nous ne cherchons pas de leçons, ni l'amère philosophie qu'on demande à la grandeur. Hors du soleil, des baisers et des parfums sauvages, tout nous paraît futile. Pour moi, je ne cherche pas à y être seul. J'y suis souvent allé avec ceux que j'aimais et je lisais sur leurs traits le clair sourire qu'y prenait le visage de l'amour. Ici, je laisse à d'autres l'ordre et la mesure. C'est le grand libertinage de la nature et de la mer qui m'accapare tout entier. Dans ce mariage des ruines et du printemps, les ruines sont redevenues pierres, et perdant le poli imposé par l'homme, sont rentrées dans la nature. Pour le retour de ces filles prodigues, la nature a prodigué les fleurs. Entre les dalles du forum, l'héliotrope pousse sa tête ronde et blanche, et les géraniums rouges versent leur sang sur ce qui fut maisons, temples et places publiques. Comme ces hommes que beaucoup de science ramène à Dieu, beaucoup d'années ont ramené les ruines à la maison de leur mère. Aujourd'hui enfin leur passé les quitte, et rien ne les distrait de cette force profonde qui les ramène au centre des choses qui tombent.

Que d'heures passées à écraser les absinthes, à caresser les ruines, à tenter d'accorder ma respiration aux soupirs tumultueux du monde! Enfoncé parmi les odeurs sauvages et les concerts

At the foot of the lighthouse, fleshy succulents with purple, yellow and red blossoms stretch down towards the rocky shore which the sea sucks at with noisy kisses. As we stand in the light breeze, with the sun warming only one side of our faces, we watch the light falling from the sky, the unrippled sea, and the smile of its glittering teeth. Before entering the kingdom of the ruins we are, for the last time, spectators.

A few steps into the ruins, we are assailed by the scent of the absinthes. Their grey wool blankets the ruins as far as the eye can see. Their essence ferments in the heat and, rising upward from earth to sky, a full-bodied liquor envelopes the world and makes the sky shimmer. We walk towards love and desire. We seek no lessons, none of the bitter philosophy expected of greatness. Except for the sun, the kisses and the wild fragrances, everything seems futile. I do not wish to be alone here. I have often come here with loved-ones and seen in their features the clear smile of love's face. Here, I leave order and moderation to others. I am utterly consumed by the sweeping debauchery of nature and the sea. In this marriage of ruins and springtime, the ruins have reverted to stones, lost the polish imposed by man, and returned to nature. For the return of her prodigal daughters, Nature has been prodigal with flowers. Between the flagstones of the forum, the heliotrope pokes out its round white head, and scarlet geraniums splash their blood on what used to be houses, temples and squares. Like men whose vast knowledge leads them back to God, these stones, with the years, have returned to their mother. Today, their past has finally left them, and nothing distracts them from the profound force that is pulling them back to the centre of all that falls.

How many hours have I spent crushing the absinthes, caressing the ruins, trying to synchronize my breathing with the tumultuous sighs of the world! Immersed in the wild odours

d'insectes somnolents, j'ouvre les yeux et mon cœur à la grandeur insoutenable de ce ciel gorgé de chaleur. Ce n'est pas si facile de devenir ce qu'on est, de retrouver sa mesure profonde. Mais à regarder l'échine solide du Chenoua, mon cœur se calmait d'une étrange certitude. J'apprenais à respirer, je m'intégrais et je m'accomplissais. Je gravissais l'un après l'autre des coteaux dont chacun me réservait une récompense, comme ce temple dont les colonnes mesurent la course du soleil et d'où l'on voit le village entier, ses murs blancs et roses et ses vérandas vertes. Comme aussi cette basilique sur la colline Est : elle a gardé ses murs et dans un grand rayon autour d'elle s'alignent des sarcophages exhumés, pour la plupart à peine issus de la terre dont ils participent encore. Ils ont contenu des morts ; pour le moment il y pousse des sauges et des ravenelles. La basilique Sainte-Salsa est chrétienne, mais chaque fois qu'on regarde par une ouverture, c'est la mélodie du monde qui parvient jusqu'à nous : coteaux plantés de pins et de cyprès, ou bien la mer qui roule ses chiens blancs à une vingtaine de mètres. La colline qui supporte Sainte-Salsa est plate à son sommet et le vent souffle plus largement à travers les portiques. Sous le soleil du matin, un grand bonheur se balance dans l'espace.

Bien pauvres sont ceux qui ont besoin de mythes. Ici les dieux servent de lits ou de repères dans la course des journées. Je décris et je dis : « Voici qui est rouge, qui est bleu, qui est vert. Ceci est la mer, la montagne, les fleurs. » Et qu'ai-je besoin de parler de Dionysos pour dire que j'aime écraser les boules de lentisques sous mon nez ? Est-il même à Déméter ce vieil hymne à quoi plus tard je songerai sans contrainte : « Heureux celui des vivants sur la terre qui a vu ces choses. » Voir, et voir sur cette terre, comment oublier la leçon ? Aux mystères d'Éleusis, il suffisait de contempler. Ici même, je sais que jamais je ne m'approcherai assez du monde. Il me faut être nu et puis plonger dans la mer, encore tout parfumé des essences de la

and the concerts of somnolent insects, I open my eyes and my heart to the unbearable grandeur of a sky soaked with heat. It is not so easy to become what one is, to rediscover one's deeper measure. But gazing at the solid backbone of Chenoua, my heart quieted with a strange sense of certainty. I learned to breathe, I became whole, and I fulfilled myself. One after the other, I climbed the hills and each had its own reward for me, like the temple whose columns measure the passage of the sun and from which one can see the entire village, its white and pink walls, its green verandas. Or like the basilica on the East hill: its walls are still standing and all around it lie exhumed sarcophagi, most of them hardly out of the earth of which they still partake. They once contained the dead; now, salvia and wallflowers grow in them. The basilica of Sainte-Salsa is Christian, but every time we look through an opening in its walls, it is the melody of the world that greets us: hillsides planted with pine and cypress trees, or the sea rolling its white breakers twenty metres away. The summit of the hill on which Sainte-Salsa was built is flat and the wind sweeps through the porticos. Under the morning sun, a great happiness is poised in the air.

They're impoverished, those who need myths. Here, gods serve as beds or resting places in the passing of days. I describe, I say: "Here is something red, something blue, something green. This is the sea, the mountain, the flowers". Why need I speak of Dionysus to say that I love to crush mastic bulbs under my nose? Was it even to Demeter, this ancient hymn that came to me later unbidden: "Happy are those living on the earth who have seen these things". To see, and to see on this earth, how can one forget such a lesson? During the Eleusinian mysteries, it was enough to contemplate. Yet even here, I know that I will never get close enough to the world. I must be naked, then dive into the sea, still perfumed with earth's

terre, laver celles-ci dans celle-là, et nouer sur ma peau l'étreinte pour laquelle soupirent lèvres à lèvres depuis si longtemps la terre et la mer. Entré dans l'eau, c'est le saisissement, la montée d'une glu froide et opaque, puis le plongeon dans le bourdonnement des oreilles, le nez coulant et la bouche amère -- la nage, les bras vernis d'eau sortis de la mer pour se dorer dans le soleil et rabattus dans une torsion de tous les muscles; la course de l'eau sur mon corps, cette possession tumultueuse de l'onde par mes jambes -- et l'absence d'horizon. Sur le rivage, c'est le chute dans le sable, abandonné au monde, rentré dans ma pesanteur de chair et d'os, abruti de soleil, avec, de loin en loin, un regard pour mes bras où les flaques de peau sèche découvrent, avec le glissement de l'eau, le duvet blond et la poussière de sel.

Je comprends ici ce qu'on appelle gloire : le droit d'aimer sans mesure. Il n'y a qu'un seul amour dans ce monde. Étreindre un corps de femme, c'est aussi retenir contre soi cette joie étrange qui descend du ciel vers la mer. Tout à l'heure, quand je me jetterai dans les absinthes pour me faire entrer leur parfum dans le corps, j'aurai conscience, contre tous les préjugés, d'accomplir une vérité qui est celle du soleil et sera aussi celle de ma mort. Dans un sens, c'est bien ma vie que je joue ici, une vie à goût de pierre chaude, pleine de soupirs de la mer et des cigales qui commencent à chanter maintenant. La brise est fraîche et le ciel bleu. J'aime cette vie avec abandon et veux en parler avec liberté : elle me donne l'orgueil de ma condition d'homme. Pourtant, on me l'a souvent dit : il n'y a pas de quoi être fier. Si, il y a de quoi : ce soleil, cette mer, mon cœur bondissant de jeunesse, mon corps au goût de sel et l'immense décor où la tendresse et la gloire se rencontrent dans le jaune et le bleu. C'est à conquérir cela qu'il me faut appliquer ma force et mes ressources. Tout ici me laisse intact, je n'abandonne rien de moi-même, je ne revêts aucun masque : il me suffit d'apprendre patiemment la difficile science

essences, to wash the perfumes in the sea, and to consummate on my flesh the embrace for which earth and sea, lip to lip, have yearned so long. In the water, I feel a sudden chill, I rise up through a cold, cloudy glue, then dive, my ears buzzing, nose running, mouth bitter -- and swim, my arms glistened with water leave the sea to bronze in the sun then re-enter with a twist of their muscles; the water flows over my body, my legs tumultuously take possession of the sea -- and the horizon disappears. On the shore, I fall into the sand, abandon myself to the world, feel once again the burden of my flesh and bones, stupefied by the sun, and glance, every now and then, at my arms as the water slips away and the patches of dry skin reveal blonde down and a dusting of salt.

Here, I understand what is meant by "glory": the right to love without limits. There is only one love in the world. To hold a woman's body is to hold in one's arms the strange joy that falls from the sky to the sea. A short time from now, when I throw myself into the absinthes to absorb their fragrance into my body, I will know, appearances to the contrary, that I am fulfilling a truth: that of the sun and eventually, of my death. In a sense, it is truly my life that I'm playing here, a life that tastes of warm stone, full of the sighs of the sea and the cicadas who are starting to sing now. The breeze is cool and the sky blue. I love this life with abandon and want to speak of it with liberty: it makes me proud of my human condition. True, others have often told me there is nothing to be proud of. And yet, there is: this sun, this sea, my heart leaping with youth, my body tasting of salt and the vast setting where tenderness and glory merge in the yellow and the blue. This is what I must devote my strength and my resources to conquering. Everything here leaves me intact, I surrender nothing of myself, I hide behind no mask: for me, it is enough to patiently learn the difficult art of living, well worth all their *savoir-vivre*.

de vivre qui vaut bien tout leur savoir-vivre.

Un peu avant midi, nous revenions par les ruines vers un petit café au bord du port. La tête retentissante des cymbales du soleil et des couleurs, quelle fraîche bienvenue que celle de la salle pleine d'ombre, du grand verre de menthe verte et glacée! Au-dehors, c'est la mer et la route ardente de poussière. Assis devant la table, je tente de saisir entre mes cils battants l'éblouissement multicolore du ciel blanc de chaleur. Le visage mouillé de sueur, mais le corps frais dans la légère toile qui nous habille, nous étalons tous l'heureuse lassitude d'un jour de noces avec le monde.

On mange mal dans ce café, mais il y a beaucoup de fruits -- surtout des pêches qu'on mange en y mordant, de sorte que le jus en coule sur le menton. Les dents refermées sur la pêche, j'écoute les grands coups de mon sang monter jusqu'aux oreilles, je regarde de tous mes yeux. Sur la mer, c'est le silence énorme de midi. Tout être beau a l'orgueil naturel de sa beauté et le monde aujourd'hui laisse son orgueil suinter de toutes parts. Devant lui, pourquoi nierais-je la joie de vivre, si je sais ne pas tout renfermer dans la joie de vivre? Il n'y a pas de honte à être heureux. Mais aujourd'hui l'imbécile est roi, et j'appelle imbécile celui qui a peur de jouir. On nous a tellement parlé de l'orgueil : vous savez, c'est le péché de Satan. Méfiance, criait-on, vous perdrez, et vos forces vives. Depuis, j'ai appris en effet qu'un certain orgueil... Mais à d'autres moments, je ne peux m'empêcher de revendiquer l'orgueil de vivre que le monde tout entier conspire à me donner. À Tipasa, je vois équivalut à je crois, et je ne m'obstine pas à nier ce que ma main peut toucher et mes lèvres caresser. Je n'éprouve pas le besoin d'en faire un œuvre d'art, mais de raconter ce qui est différent. Tipasa m'apparaît comme ces personnages qu'on décrit pour signifier indirectement un point de vue sur le monde. Comme eux, elle témoigne, et

Shortly before noon, we came back through the ruins to a little café in the port. What a refreshing change they were, to my head resounding with the sun's cymbals and the colours, the shadow-filled room and the tall glass of icy green mint! Outside, the sea and the road scorched with dust. Sitting at the table, I try to hold within my fluttering eyelids the multicoloured dazzle of the sky white with heat. Faces drenched with sweat, but bodies cool in our light clothes, we all luxuriate in the happy lethargy of a day of nuptials with the world.

The food is bad in this café, but there is plenty of fruit - especially peaches that we bite into deeply, juice running down our chins. Sinking my teeth into the peach, I hear my blood pounding loudly in my ears, I look avidly. Over the sea, the enormous silence of midday has fallen. Every beautiful creature feels a natural pride in its own beauty and today the world allows its pride to seep out every pore. Faced with that, why should I deny the joy of living as long as I know not to subordinate everything to this joy? There is no shame in being happy. But today, the imbecile is king, and imbeciles, for me, are those who fear pleasure. They've told us so much about pride: you know, the sin of Satan. Beware, they used to cry, you'll lose your soul and your vital power. Since then, I have learned, in fact, that a certain pride ... But at other times, I can't keep myself from claiming the pride in living that the entire world conspires to give me. In Tipasa, what I see is what I believe, and I do not insist on denying what my hand can touch and my lips caress. I do not feel the need to make a work of art of it, but rather to explain what is different. Tipasa is like those characters one describes to symbolize some view of the world. Like them, the town bears witness, and compellingly so. Today, the character is

virilement. Elle est aujourd'hui mon personnage et il me semble qu'à le caresser et le décrire, mon ivresse n'aura plus de fin. Il y a un temps pour vivre et un temps pour témoigner de vivre. Il y a aussi un temps pour créer, ce qui est moins naturel. Il me suffit de vivre de tout mon corps et de témoigner de tout mon cœur. Vivre Tipasa, témoigner et l'œuvre d'art viendra ensuite. Il y a là une liberté.

Jamais je ne restais plus d'une journée à Tipasa. Il vient toujours un moment où l'on a trop vu un paysage, de même qu'il faut longtemps avant qu'on l'ait assez vu. Les montagnes, le ciel, la mer sont comme des visages dont on découvre l'aridité ou la splendeur, à force de regarder au lieu de voir. Mais tout visage, pour être éloquent, doit subir un certain renouvellement. Et l'on se plaint d'être trop rapidement lassé quand il faudrait admirer que le monde nous paraisse nouveau pour avoir été seulement oublié.

Vers le soir, je regagnais une partie du parc plus ordonnée, arrangée en jardin, au bord de la route nationale. Au sortir du tumulte des parfums et du soleil, dans l'air maintenant rafraîchi par le soir, l'esprit s'y calmait, le corps détendu goûtait le silence intérieur qui naît de l'amour satisfait. Je m'étais assis sur un banc. Je regardais la campagne s'arrondir avec le jour. J'étais repu. Au-dessus de moi, un grenadier laissait pendre les boutons de ses fleurs, clos et côtelés comme de petits poings fermés qui contiendraient tout l'espoir du printemps. Il y avait du romarin derrière moi et j'en percevais seulement le parfum d'alcool. Des collines s'encadraient entre les arbres et, plus loin encore, un liséré de mer au-dessus duquel le ciel, comme une voile en panne, reposait de toute sa tendresse. J'avais au cœur une joie étrange, celle-là même qui naît d'une conscience tranquille. Il y a un sentiment que connaissent les acteurs lorsqu'ils ont

Tipasa and it seems to me that in touching it and describing it, my intoxication will become infinite. There is a time to live and a time to bear witness to life. There is also a time to create, which is less natural. For me, it is enough to live with all my body and to bear witness with all my heart. Experience Tipasa, bear witness to it and the work of art will follow. There is freedom in that.

I have never spent longer than a day in Tipasa. There always comes a moment when one has seen too much of a landscape, just as it takes a long time before one has seen enough of it. The mountains, the sky, the sea are like faces in which one discovers aridity or splendour by looking rather than seeing. But any face, to be eloquent, must be seen anew. We complain of tiring too quickly when we ought to marvel that the world seems new to us merely for having been forgotten.

Toward nightfall, I returned to a more formal section of the park, arranged like a garden, just off of the highway. Leaving the tumult of sun and fragrances, in the air now cool with the evening, my mind quieted, my body relaxed and savoured the inner silence that comes when love has been satisfied. I was sitting on a bench. I watched the countryside filling out with the day. I was sated. Above me, a pomegranate tree dangled its buds, closed and ribbed like small closed fists clutching all the hope of spring. There was rosemary behind me which I detected only by the scent of its alcohol. The hills were framed by the trees and, still further away, hung a sliver of sea on which the sky, like a becalmed sail boat, rested tenderly. In my heart I felt a strange joy, the joy born of a clear conscience. There is a feeling actors get when they know that they have played their parts well, that they have, in the truest sense, matched their gestures to those

conscience d'avoir bien rempli leur rôle, c'est-à-dire, au sens le plus précis, d'avoir fait coïncider leurs gestes et ceux du personnage idéal qu'ils incarnent, d'être entrés en quelque sorte dans un dessin fait à l'avance et qu'ils ont d'un coup fait vivre et battre avec leur propre cœur. C'était précisément cela que je ressentais : j'avais bien joué mon rôle. J'avais fait mon métier d'homme et d'avoir connu la joie tout un long jour ne me semblait pas une réussite exceptionnelle, mais l'accomplissement ému d'une condition qui, en certaines circonstances, nous fait un devoir d'être heureux. Nous retrouvons alors une solitude, mais cette fois dans la satisfaction.

Maintenant, les arbres s'étaient peuplés d'oiseaux. La terre soupirait lentement avant d'entrer dans l'ombre. Tout à l'heure, avec la première étoile, la nuit tombera sur la scène du monde. Les dieux éclatants du jour retourneront à leur mort quotidienne. Mais d'autres dieux viendront. Et pour être plus sombres, leurs faces ravagées seront nées cependant dans le cœur de la terre.

À présent du moins, l'incessante éclosion des vagues sur le sable me parvenait à travers tout un espace où dansait un pollen doré. Mer, campagne, silence, parfums de cette terre, je m'emplissais d'une vie odorante et je mordais dans le fruit déjà doré du monde, bouleversé de sentir son jus sucré et fort couler le long de mes lèvres. Non, ce n'était pas moi qui comptais, ni le monde, mais seulement l'accord et le silence qui de lui à moi faisait naître l'amour. Amour que je n'avais pas la faiblesse de revendiquer pour moi seul, conscient et orgueilleux de le partager avec toute une race, née du soleil et de la mer, vivante et savoureuse, qui puise sa grandeur dans sa simplicité et debout sur les plages, adresse son sourire complice au sourire éclatant de ses ciels.

of the ideal character that they embody, that they have entered in some way into a sketch made earlier and with one breath, made it come to life and beat with their own heart. That was precisely what I felt: that I had played my part well. I had done my job of being human, and to have known joy for one long day did not seem to me like an exceptional achievement, but like the emotional fulfilment of a condition which sometimes makes it our duty to be happy. Once again we find solitude, but this time, in satisfaction.

Now, the trees were filled with birds. The earth sighed slowly before sinking into the shadows. In a moment, with the first star, night will fall over the world's stage. The radiant gods of daytime will return to their daily deaths. But other gods will come. Their ravaged faces, though darker, will nonetheless have been formed at the heart of the earth.

For the moment, at least, the incessant birthing of waves upon the sand came to me through a space dancing with golden pollen. Sea, countryside, silence, perfumes of this earth, I filled myself with their odorous life and sank my teeth deeply into the already-golden fruit of the world, overwhelmed by the taste of its sweet, strong juice running down my lips. No, it was neither I nor the world that counted, only the harmony and the silence that enabled love to be born between us. A love that I was not foolish enough to claim just for myself, for I was aware and proud of sharing it with an entire race, born of the sun and of the sea, a vigorous and life-loving race, which draws its greatness from its simplicity and, standing on the beaches, offers a smile of complicity to the brilliant smile of its skies.

THE TRANSLATION OF
L'ÉTÉ À ALGER

**THE SOURCE TEXT:
*L'ÉTÉ À ALGER***

L'été à Alger

à Jacques Heurgon

Ce sont souvent des amours secrètes, celles qu'on partage avec une ville. Des cités comme Paris, Prague, et même Florence sont refermées sur elles-mêmes et limitent ainsi le monde qui leur est propre. Mais Alger, et avec elle certains milieux privilégiés comme les villes sur la mer, s'ouvre dans le ciel comme une bouche ou une blessure. Ce qu'on peut aimer à Alger, c'est ce dont tout le monde vit : la mer au tournant de chaque rue, un certain poids de soleil, la beauté de la race. Et, comme toujours, dans cette impudeur et cette offrande se retrouve un parfum plus secret. À Paris, on peut avoir la nostalgie d'espace et de battements d'ailes. Ici, du moins, l'homme est comblé, et assuré de ses désirs, il peut alors mesurer ses richesses.

Il faut sans doute vivre longtemps à Alger pour comprendre ce que peut avoir de desséchant un excès de biens naturels. Il n'y a rien ici pour qui voudrait apprendre, s'éduquer ou devenir meilleur. Ce pays est sans leçons. Il ne promet ni ne fait entrevoir. Il se contente de donner, mais à profusion. Il est tout entier livré aux yeux et on le connaît dès l'instant où l'on en jouit. Ses plaisirs n'ont pas de remède, et ses joies restent sans espoir. Ce qu'il exige, ce sont des âmes clairvoyantes, c'est-à-dire sans consolation. Il demande qu'on fasse un acte de lucidité comme on fait un acte de foi. Singulier pays qui donne à l'homme qu'il nourrit à la fois sa

**THE TRANSLATION:
*SUMMER IN ALGIERS***

Summer in Algiers

to Jacques Heurgon

The love we share with a city is often a secret love. Cities like Paris, Prague, even Florence are closed in upon themselves thus limiting the world that is theirs. But Algiers, like a few other privileged cities on the sea, opens to the sky like a mouth or a wound. What is most loved about Algiers is what sustains everyone: the sea at the end of every street, the palpable weight of the sun, the beauty of the race. As always, there is a secret perfume in this wanton offering. In Paris, one can yearn for space and for the fluttering of wings. Here, at least, man is fulfilled and, his desires thus assured, he can take the measure of his riches.

One must undoubtedly live in Algiers for a long time to understand how parching an excess of natural beauty can be. There is nothing here for those who wish to learn, to educate themselves, or to better themselves. This country has no lessons to teach. It neither promises nor reveals. It is content to give, but to give profusely. It reveals itself fully to the eye and yields itself even as one takes pleasure from it. There is no cure for its pleasures and no hope for its joys. It demands lucid souls, in other words, souls without consolation. It asks that one profess lucidity as one would profess faith. Singular country, that sustains a man on its splendour

splendeur et sa misère! La richesse sensuelle dont un homme sensible de ce pays est pourvu, il n'est pas étonnant qu'elle coïncide avec le dénuement le plus extrême. Il n'est pas une vérité qui ne porte avec elle son amertume. Comment s'étonner alors si le visage de ce pays, je ne l'aime jamais plus qu'au milieu de ses hommes les plus pauvres?

Les hommes trouvent ici pendant toute leur jeunesse une vie à la mesure de leur beauté. Et puis après, c'est la descente et l'oubli. Ils ont misé sur la chair, mais ils savaient qu'ils devaient perdre. À Alger, pour qui est jeune et vivant, tout est refuge et prétexte à triomphes : la baie, le soleil, les jeux en rouge et blanc des terrasses vers la mer, les fleurs et les stades, les filles aux jambes fraîches. Mais pour qui a perdu sa jeunesse, rien où s'accrocher et pas un lieu où la mélancolie puisse se sauver d'elle-même. Ailleurs, les terrasses d'Italie, les cloîtres d'Europe ou le dessin des collines provençales, autant de places où l'homme peut fuir son humanité et se délivrer avec douceur de lui-même. Mais tout ici exige la solitude et le sang des hommes jeunes. Goethe en mourant appelle la lumière et c'est un mot historique. À Belcourt et à Bab-el-Oued, les vieillards assis au fond des cafés écoutent les vantardises de jeunes gens à cheveux plaqués.

Ces commencements et ces fins, c'est l'été qui nous les livre à Alger. Pendant ces mois, la ville est désertée. Mais les pauvres restent et le ciel. Avec les premiers, nous descendons ensemble vers le port et les trésors de l'homme : tiédeur de l'eau et les corps bruns des femmes. Le soir, gorgés de ces richesses, ils retrouvent la toile cirée et la lampe à pétrole qui font tout le décor de leur vie.

À Alger, on ne dit pas « prendre un bain », mais « se taper un bain ». N'insistons pas.

and its misery at the same time! The sensual richness this country offers the sensitive person goes quite naturally hand in hand with utter destitution. Not a single truth but brings with it its own bitterness. Why should it be surprising, then, that I love the face of this country the most when I am amongst its poorest?

Here, throughout their youth, men find a life that measures up to their beauty. Afterwards, come decline and neglect. They put their faith in the flesh, knowing that they would lose. In Algiers, for those who are young and full of life, everything offers refuge and promises triumph: the bay, the sun, the interplay of red and white on the terraces overlooking the sea, the flowers and the stadiums, the fresh-limbed young girls. But for those who have lost their youth, there is nothing to cling to and nowhere can melancholy find refuge from itself. Elsewhere - the terraces of Italy, the cloisters of Europe or the rolling Provençal landscape - man can flee his humanity and gently relinquish himself. But everything here demands solitude and young blood. Goethe, on his deathbed, calls out for light, and his words go down in history. In Belcourt and Bab-el-Oued, the old men sitting at the back of the cafés listen to the young men with slicked-back hair boasting.

These beginnings and these endings, it is the summer that reveals them to us in Algiers. During the summer months, the town is deserted. But the poor remain. And the sky. We go down with them to the port and to man's treasures: the warmth of the water and the brown bodies of the women. In the evening, having gorged upon these riches, they return to the oilcloth and kerosene lamp which comprise the meagre backdrop of their existence.

In Algiers, they don't speak of "going for a swim", but of "having themselves a good

On se baigne dans le port et l'on va se reposer sur des bouées. Quand on passe près d'une bouée où se trouve déjà une jolie fille, on crie aux camarades : « Je te dis que c'est une mouette. » Ce sont là des joies saines. Il faut bien croire qu'elles constituent l'idéal de ces jeunes gens puisque la plupart continuent cette vie pendant l'hiver et, tous les jours à midi, se mettent nus au soleil pour un déjeuner frugal. Non qu'ils aient lu les prêches ennuyeux des naturistes, ces protestants de la chair (il y a une systématique du corps qui est aussi exaspérante que celle de l'esprit). Mais c'est qu'ils sont « bien au soleil ». On ne mesurera jamais assez haut l'importance de cette coutume pour notre époque. Pour la première fois depuis deux mille ans, le corps a été mis nu sur des plages. Depuis vingt siècles, les hommes se sont attachés à rendre décentes l'insolence et la naïveté grecques, à diminuer la chair et compliquer l'habit. Aujourd'hui et par-dessus cette histoire, la course des jeunes gens sur les plages de la Méditerranée rejoint les gestes magnifiques des athlètes de Délos. Et à vivre ainsi près des corps et par le corps, on s'aperçoit qu'il a ses nuances, sa vie et, pour hasarder un non-sens, une psychologie, qui lui est propre.¹ L'évolution du corps comme celle de l'esprit a son histoire, ses retours, ses progrès et son déficit. Cette nuance seulement : la couleur. Quand on va pendant l'été aux bains du port, on prend conscience d'un passage simultané de toutes les peaux du blanc au doré, puis au brun, et pour finir à une couleur tabac qui est à la limite extrême de l'effort de transformation dont le corps est capable. Le port est dominé par le jeu de cubes blancs de la Kasbah. Quand on est au niveau de l'eau, sur le fond blanc cru de la ville arabe, les corps déroulent une frise cuivrée. Et, à mesure qu'on avance dans le mois d'août et que le soleil grandit, le blanc des maisons se fait plus aveuglant et les peaux prennent une chaleur plus sombre. Comment alors ne pas s'identifier à ce dialogue de la pierre et de la chair à la mesure du soleil et des saisons? Toute la matinée s'est

swim". Enough said. The young men go swimming in the port then stretch out on the buoys. When they swim past a buoy with a pretty girl on it, they shout to their friends: "I tell you, it's a seagull". These are healthy pleasures. And one has to believe that they constitute the "ideal" for these young people, since the majority of them continue this lifestyle throughout the winter and, everyday at noon, come out naked in the sun for a frugal lunch. Not that they have read the boring sermons of the naturists, those protestants of the flesh (the theology of the body is every bit as exasperating as that of the spirit). Rather, they simply "feel good in the sun". One cannot overestimate the impact that this custom has had on our era. For the first time in two thousand years, the body has been displayed naked on the beaches. For twenty centuries, man has done his best to make the bold naturalness of the Greeks decent, by demeaning flesh and elaborating clothing. Today, leaping back through history, the young people running on the beaches of the Mediterranean echo the magnificent gestures of the athletes of Delos. Living close to bodies and through the body makes one realize that it has its own nuances, its own life and, at the risk of being nonsensical, a psychology all its own.¹ The evolution of the body, like that of the mind, has its own history, its own regressions, gains and losses. But only one nuance: colour. When you go swimming in the port during the summer, you become aware that everyone's skin at once is changing from white to golden, to brown, and finally to a tobacco colour which represents the full extent of the body's ability to transform itself. The port is dominated by the white, cubist geometry of the Casbah. Down by the water, the bodies form a bronze frieze against the harsh, white backdrop of the Arab section of town. And, as the month of August advances and the sun intensifies, the white of the houses grows more blinding and the skin takes on a more sombre glow. How, then, can one not feel a part of this dialogue between

passée en plongeurs, en floraisons de rires parmi des gerbes d'eau, en longs coups de pagaie autour des cargos rouges et noirs (ceux qui viennent de Norvège et qui ont tous les parfums du bois; ceux qui arrivent d'Allemagne pleins de l'odeur des huiles; ceux qui font la côte et sentent le vin et le vieux tonneau). À l'heure où le soleil déborde de tous les coins du ciel, le canoë orange chargé de corps bruns nous ramène dans une course folle. Et lorsque, le battement cadencé de la double pagaie aux ailes couleur de fruit suspendu brusquement, nous glissons longuement dans l'eau calme de la darse, comment n'être par sûr que je mène à travers les eaux lisses une fauve cargaison de dieux où je reconnais mes frères?

Mais à l'autre bout de la ville, l'été nous tend déjà en contraste ses autres richesses : je veux dire ses silences et son ennui. Ces silences n'ont pas tous la même qualité, selon qu'ils naissent de l'ombre ou du soleil. Il y a le silence de midi sur la place du Gouvernement. À l'ombre des arbres qui la bordent, des Arabes vendent pour cinq sous des verres de citronnade glacée, parfumée à la fleur d'oranger. Leur appel : « Fraîche, fraîche » traverse la place déserte. Après leur cri, le silence retombe sous le soleil : dans la cruche du marchand, la glace se retourne et j'entends son petit bruit. Il y a le silence de la sieste. Dans les rues de la Marine, devant les boutiques crasseuses des coiffeurs, on peut le mesurer au mélodieux bourdonnement des mouches derrière les rideaux de roseaux creux. Ailleurs, dans les cafés maures de la Kasbah, c'est le corps qui est silencieux, qui ne peut s'arracher à ces lieux, quitter le verre de thé et retrouver le temps avec les bruits de son sang. Mais il y a surtout le silence des soirs d'été.

Ces courts instants où la journée bascule dans la nuit, faut-il qu'ils soient peuplés de signes et d'appels secrets pour qu'Alger en moi leur soit à ce point liée? Quand je suis quelque temps loin de ce pays, j' imagine ses crépuscules comme des promesses de bonheur. Sur les

stone and skin, sun and seasons? We spend the entire morning diving, laughter blossoming amidst the sprays of water, paddling with long strokes around the red and black cargo ships (the Norwegian ones all emanating the scent of wood; the German ones full of odours of oil; the coastal vessels smelling of wine and old barrels). Precisely when the sun is spilling out of every corner of the sky, the orange canoe full of brown bodies brings us back at breakneck speed. And when the rhythmic stroking of its fruit-coloured double paddles suddenly stops, and we glide at length through the calm water of the harbour, how can I doubt that what I am guiding through the smooth waters is a tawny cargo of gods, in whom I recognize my brothers?

At the other end of town, the summer offers us the contrast of its other riches: silence and boredom. The quality of the silence varies, depending on whether it is born of sun or shade. There is the silence of midday at the place du Gouvernement. In the shade of the trees that surround it, Arabs sell glasses of icy lemonade, scented with orange blossom, for 5 sous. Their cry of "Fresh, fresh" carries across the deserted plaza. After their calls fade, silence settles once again over the sunny square: in the merchant's pitcher, the ice turns over; I hear its small sound. There is the silence of the siesta. In the rues de la Marine, in front of the grimy hairdressers' salons, the silence can be measured by the melodious buzzing of the flies behind the hollow reed blinds. Elsewhere, in the Moorish cafés of the Casbah, it is the body that is silent, unable to tear itself away from its surroundings, leave behind the cup of tea and regain a sense of time through the beating of its pulse. But above all, there is the silence of the summer evenings.

Those fleeting moments when day suddenly turns into night, what signs and secret messages they must impart for Algiers to be so inextricably linked to them in my mind! When I've been away from this country for any length of time, I imagine its twilights to be promises

collines qui dominant la ville, il y a des chemins parmi les lentisques et les oliviers. Et c'est vers eux qu'alors mon cœur se retourne. J'y vois monter des gerbes d'oiseaux noirs sur l'horizon vert. Dans le ciel, soudain vidé de son soleil, quelque chose se détend. Tout un petit peuple de nuages rouges s'étire jusqu'à se résorber dans l'air. Presque aussitôt après, la première étoile apparaît qu'on voyait se former et se durcir dans l'épaisseur du ciel. Et puis, d'un coup, dévorante, la nuit. Soirs fugitifs d'Alger, qu'ont-ils donc d'inégalable pour délier tant de choses en moi? Cette douceur qu'ils me laissent aux lèvres, je n'ai pas le temps de m'en lasser qu'elle disparaît déjà dans la nuit. Est-ce le secret de sa persistance? La tendresse de ce pays est bouleversante et furtive. Mais dans l'instant où elle est là, le cœur du moins s'y abandonne tout entier. À la plage Padovani, le dancing est ouvert tous les jours. Et dans cette immense boîte rectangulaire ouverte sur la mer dans toute sa longueur, la jeunesse pauvre du quartier danse jusqu'au soir. Souvent, j'attendais là une minute singulière. Pendant la journée, la salle est protégée par des auvents de bois inclinés. Quand le soleil a disparu, on les relève. Alors, la salle s'emplit d'une étrange lumière verte, née du double coquillage du ciel et de la mer. Quand on est assis loin des fenêtres, on voit seulement le ciel et, en ombres chinoises, les visages des danseurs qui passent à tour de rôle. Quelquefois, c'est une valse qu'on joue et, sur le fond vert, les profils noirs tournent alors avec obstination, comme ces silhouettes découpées qu'on fixe sur le plateau d'un phonographe. La nuit vient vite ensuite et, avec elle, les lumières. Mais je ne saurais dire ce que je trouve de transportant et de secret à cet instant subtil. Je me souviens du moins d'une grande fille magnifique qui avait dansé tout l'après-midi. Elle portait un collier de jasmin sur sa robe bleue colante, que la sueur mouillait depuis les reins jusqu'aux jambes. Elle riait en dansant et renversait la tête. Quand elle passait près des tables, elle laissait après elle une odeur mêlée

of happiness. On the hills overlooking the town, paths wind among the mastic and olive trees. It is for them that my heart yearns. I picture flocks of black birds taking flight into the green horizon. The sky, suddenly emptied of its sun, becomes tranquil. A small colony of crimson clouds stretches itself thin until resorbed into the air. Almost immediately afterward, the first star appears, taking shape and crystallizing in the depths of the sky. And then, in one sudden and all-consuming moment, it is night. Those elusive nights of Algiers - what unique quality in them releases so much within me? They leave a sweetness on my lips that I haven't time to tire of before it vanishes again into the night. Is that why it persists? The tenderness of this country is at once overwhelming and furtive. But while it is there, the heart surrenders completely to it. At Padovani beach, you can go dancing every day of the week. And in the vast rectangular dance hall, with an entire wall open to the sea, the impecunious young people of the neighbourhood come to dance until nightfall. I have often waited there for a singular moment to occur. During the daytime, the dance hall is shaded by wooden awnings. Once the sun has set, they are raised. The hall then fills with a strange greenish light, caused by the double conches of sky and sea. Sitting far from the windows, one can see only the sky and, like a shadow play, the faces of the dancers as they pass in turn. Sometimes, a waltz is playing and, against the green backdrop, the black profiles turn obstinately, like cutout silhouettes fastened to the turntable of a phonograph. Night comes quickly then, and with it, the lights. I cannot explain what I find so moving and so mysterious in this subtle moment. I remember a tall, magnificent girl who had danced all one afternoon. She wore a garland of jasmine over her clinging blue dress, which was soaked with sweat from the small of her back to her legs. She laughed as she danced, throwing back her head. When she passed close to the tables, she gave

de fleurs et de chair. Le soir venu, je ne voyais plus son corps collé contre son danseur, mais sur le ciel tournaient les taches alternées du jasmin blanc et des cheveux noirs, et quand elle rejetait en arrière sa gorge gonflée, j'entendais son rire et voyais le profil de son danseur se pencher soudain. L'idée que je me fais de l'innocence, c'est à des soirs semblables que je la dois. Et ces êtres chargés de violence, j'apprends à ne plus les séparer du ciel où leurs désirs tournoient.

Dans les cinémas de quartier, à Alger, on vend quelquefois des pastilles de menthe qui portent, gravé en rouge, tout ce qui est nécessaire à la naissance de l'amour : 1. des questions : « Quand m'épouserez-vous? » ; « M'aimez-vous? » ; 2. des réponses : « À la folie » ; « Au printemps ». Après avoir préparé le terrain, on les passe à sa voisine qui répond de même ou se borne à faire la bête. À Belcourt, on a vu des mariages se conclure ainsi et des vies entières s'engager sur un échange de bonbons à la menthe. Et ceci dépeint bien le peuple enfant de ce pays.

Le signe de la jeunesse, c'est peut-être une vocation magnifique pour les bonheurs faciles. Mais surtout, c'est une précipitation à vivre qui touche au gaspillage. À Belcourt, comme à Bab-el-Oued, on se marie jeune. On travaille très tôt et on épuise en dix ans l'expérience d'une vie d'homme. Un ouvrier de trente ans a déjà joué toutes ses cartes. Il attend la fin entre sa femme et ses enfants. Ses bonheurs ont été brusques et sans merci. De même sa vie. Et l'on comprend alors qu'il soit né de ce pays où tout est donné pour être retiré. Dans cette abondance et cette profusion, la vie prend la courbe des grandes passions, soudaines, exigeantes, généreuses. Elle n'est pas à construire, mais à brûler. Il ne s'agit pas alors de réfléchir et de devenir meilleur. La

off a scent of flowers mingled with flesh. Once evening came, I could no longer see her body pressed against her partner, but against the sky spun alternating patches of white jasmine and black hair, and when she threw her full throat back, I could hear her laughter and see her partner's profile lean suddenly forward. My idea of innocence goes back to evenings such as these. And I no longer distinguish those people charged with violence from the sky in which their desires spin.

In the local cinemas, in Algiers, they sometimes sell mint candies which are inscribed, in red, with all that is needed to inspire love: 1. questions: "When will you marry me?" or "Do you love me?", and, 2. replies: "Madly" or "In the spring". After laying the groundwork, a boy slips them to the girl sitting next to him, who either responds in kind or pretends she doesn't understand. In Belcourt, marriages have been sealed this way and entire lives have been signed away through an exchange of mint candies. Such is the childlike nature of the people of this country.

The hallmark of youth is perhaps its magnificent capacity for simple pleasures. Above all, its almost wasteful impatience to live. In Belcourt, as in Bab-el-Oued, people marry young. They start working early and within ten short years, exhaust a lifetime of experience. By age thirty, a workingman has already played all his cards. He awaits the end amongst his wife and his children. His joys have been brief and merciless. As has been his life. And thus we understand that he was born of this country where everything is given only to be taken away. Amidst such abundance and profusion, life follows the curve of the great passions: sudden, demanding, generous. Life is something to be burned, not built. There is no point in reflecting

notion d'enfer, par exemple, n'est ici qu'une aimable plaisanterie. De pareilles imaginations ne sont permises qu'aux très vertueux. Et je crois bien que la vertu est un mot sans signification dans toute l'Algérie. Non que ces hommes manquent de principes. On a sa morale, et bien particulière. On ne « manque » pas à sa mère. On fait respecter sa femme dans les rues. On a des égards pour la femme enceinte. On ne tombe pas à deux sur un adversaire, parce que « ça fait vilain ». Pour qui n'observe pas ces commandements élémentaires, « il n'est pas un homme », et l'affaire est réglée. Ceci me paraît juste et fort. Nous sommes encore beaucoup à observer inconsciemment ce code de la rue, le seul désintéressé que je connaisse. Mais en même temps la morale du boutiquier y est inconnue. J'ai toujours vu autour de moi les visages s'apitoyer sur le passage d'un homme encadré d'agents. Et, avant de savoir si l'homme avait volé, était parricide ou simplement non-conformiste : « Le pauvre », disait-on, ou encore, avec une nuance d'admiration : « Celui-là, c'est un pirate. »

Il y a des peuples nés pour l'orgueil et la vie. Ce sont ceux qui nourrissent la plus singulière vocation pour l'ennui. C'est aussi chez eux que le sentiment de la mort est le plus repoussant. Mise à part la joie des sens, les amusements de ce peuple sont ineptes. Une société de boulomanes et les banquets des « amicales », le cinéma à trois francs et les fêtes communales suffisent depuis des années à la récréation des plus de trente ans. Les dimanches d'Alger sont parmi les plus sinistres. Comment ce peuple sans esprit saurait-il alors habiller de mythes l'horreur profonde de sa vie? Tout ce qui touche à la mort est ici ridicule ou odieux. Ce peuple sans religion et sans idoles meurt seul après avoir vécu en foule. Je ne connais pas d'endroit plus hideux que le cimetière du boulevard Bru, en face d'un des plus beaux paysages du monde. Un amoncellement de mauvais goût parmi les entourages noirs laisse monter une tristesse affreuse

and bettering oneself. Here, the concept of hell, for example, is little more than a harmless joke, a preoccupation for only the most virtuous. And I truly believe that virtue is a word that has no meaning anywhere in Algeria. Not that these men lack principles. They have their morality, and a very precise one, at that. They are never disrespectful to their mothers. They see to it that their wives are treated respectfully in public. They show consideration towards pregnant women. They don't gang up against an adversary because "that's fighting dirty". He who does not observe these basic commandments "is not a man"; period. To me, this seems firm and fair. There are still many of us who unconsciously observe this code of the street, the only selfless one I know of. Yet at the same time, shopkeeper morality is unknown here. I have always seen faces around me fill with pity when a man passes surrounded by police officers. And, without knowing whether the man is a thief, a parricide, or simply a non-conformist, people will mutter "Poor soul" or, with a shade of admiration, "Now *he's* a bandit!"

There are peoples born for pride and for life. They display a singular capacity for boredom. And a particularly repulsive sense of death. Apart from the joys of the senses, their diversions are inept. For years, recreation for those over thirty has consisted solely of bowling and "club" banquets, three-franc movies and local festivals. Sundays in Algiers are as dreadful as you'll find anywhere. How, then, could such a shallow people be expected to disguise the horror of their lives with myths? Here, everything associated with death is either ridiculous or odious. These people, with neither religion nor idols, die alone after living in a crowd. I know of no place more hideous than the cemetery on the boulevard Bru, which faces one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world. It is an accumulation of bad taste and black tombs, from which emanates the sickening sadness of those places where death reveals its true face. Heart-

de ces lieux où la mort découvre son vrai visage. « Tout passe, disent les ex-voto en forme de cœur, sauf le souvenir. » Et tous insistent sur cette éternité dérisoire que nous fournit à peu de frais le cœur de ceux qui nous aimèrent. Ce sont les mêmes phrases qui servent à tous les désespoirs. Elles s'adressent au mort et lui parlent à la deuxième personne : « Notre souvenir ne t'abandonnera pas », feinte sinistre par quoi on prête un corps et des désirs à ce qui au mieux est un liquide noir. Ailleurs, au milieu d'une abrutissante profusion de fleurs et d'oiseaux de marbre, ce vœu téméraire : « Jamais ta tombe ne restera sans fleurs. » Mais on est vite rassuré : l'inscription entoure un bouquet de stuc doré, bien économique pour le temps des vivants (comme ces immortelles qui doivent leur nom pompeux à la gratitude de ceux qui prennent encore leur tramway en marche). Comme il faut aller avec son siècle, on remplace quelquefois la fauvette classique par un ahurissant avion de perles, piloté par un ange niais que, sans souci de la logique, on a muni d'une magnifique paire d'ailes.

Comment faire comprendre pourtant que ces images de la mort ne se séparent jamais de la vie? Les valeurs ici sont étroitement liées. La plaisanterie favorite des croque-morts algérois, lorsqu'ils roulent à vide, c'est de crier : « Tu montes, chérie? » aux jolies filles qu'ils rencontrent sur la route. Rien n'empêche d'y voir un symbole, même s'il est fâcheux. Il peut paraître blasphématoire aussi de répondre à l'annonce d'un décès en clignant l'œil gauche : « Le pauvre, il ne chantera plus », ou comme cette Oranaise qui n'avait jamais aimé son mari : « Dieu me l'a donné, Dieu me l'a repris. » Mais tout compte fait, je ne vois pas ce que la mort peut avoir de sacré et je sens bien, au contraire, la distance qu'il y a entre la peur et le respect. Tout ici respire l'horreur de mourir dans un pays qui invite à la vie. Et pourtant, c'est sous les murs mêmes de ce cimetière que les jeunes gens de Belcourt donnent leurs rendez-vous et que les filles s'offrent

shaped commemorative plaques proclaim that "Everything fades except for memory". They emphasize, every last one of them, the cheap eternity provided for us by the hearts of those who loved us. The same aphorisms serve every last despair. They address the deceased with the familiar "tu": "Our thoughts will never desert you", sinister stratagem attributing a body and desires to what is, at best, a black liquid. Elsewhere, amidst a stultifying display of marble flowers and birds, this reckless vow, "Your tomb will be forever flowered". But rest assured: the inscription twines around a bouquet carved out of gilded stucco, a real timesaver for the living (like the "immortelles" whose pompous name stems from the gratitude of those who are still capable of jumping onto moving streetcars). Since one must keep up with the times, the traditional warbler is sometimes replaced by an astonishing airplane made of glass beads and piloted by a silly angel fitted, illogically, with a magnificent pair of wings.

Still, how can I convey that these images of death are inseparable from life? Values, here, are closely linked. A favourite pastime of undertakers in Algiers is to shout from the empty hearse they're driving, "Want a lift, honey?" when they pass a pretty girl in the street. A behaviour that may well be emblematic, as tasteless as it may be. It may seem equally blasphemous to respond to a death announcement by winking the left eye and exclaiming, "Poor soul, he'll never sing again", or like the Oranais woman who had never loved her husband: "God gave him to me, and God has taken him from me". But all things considered, I don't see what is so sacred about death; on the contrary, I am aware of the distance that lies between fear and respect. In this country that embraces life, everything breathes the horror of death. And yet, it is beneath the very walls of this cemetery that the young people of Belcourt have their rendez-

aux baisers et aux caresses.

J'entends bien qu'un tel peuple ne peut être accepté de tous. Ici, l'intelligence n'a pas de place comme en Italie. Cette race est indifférente à l'esprit. Elle a le culte et l'admiration du corps. Elle en tire sa force, son cynisme naïf², et une vanité puérile qui lui vaut d'être sévèrement jugée. On lui reproche communément sa « mentalité », c'est-à-dire une façon de voir et de vivre. Et il est vrai qu'une certaine intensité de vie ne va pas sans injustice. Voici pourtant un peuple sans passé, sans tradition et cependant non sans poésie -- mais d'une poésie dont je sais bien la qualité dure, charnelle, loin de la tendresse, celle même de leur ciel, la seule à la vérité qui m'émeuve et me rassemble. Le contraire d'un peuple civilisé, c'est un peuple créateur. Ces barbares qui se prélassent sur des plages, j'ai l'espoir insensé qu'à leur insu peut-être, ils sont en train de modeler le visage d'une culture où la grandeur de l'homme trouvera enfin son vrai visage. Ce peuple tout entier jeté dans son présent vit sans mythes, sans consolation. Il a mis tous ses biens sur cette terre et reste dès lors sans défense contre la mort. Les dons de la beauté physique lui ont été prodigués. Et avec eux, la singulière avidité qui accompagne toujours cette richesse sans avenir. Tout ce qu'on fait ici marque le dégoût de la stabilité et l'insouciance de l'avenir. On se dépêche de vivre et si un art devait y naître, il obéirait à cette haine de la durée qui poussa les Doriens à tailler dans le bois leur première colonne. Et pourtant, oui, on peut trouver une mesure en même temps qu'un dépassement dans le visage violent et acharné de ce peuple, dans ce ciel d'été vide de tendresse, devant quoi toutes les vérités sont bonnes à dire et sur lequel aucune divinité trompeuse n'a tracé les signes de l'espoir ou de la rédemption. Entre ce ciel et ces visages tournés vers lui, rien où accrocher une mythologie, une littérature, une éthique ou une religion, mais des pierres, la chair, des étoiles et ces vérités que la main peut toucher.

vous and the girls let themselves be kissed and caressed.

I fully understand that not everyone can approve of such a people. Here, intelligence has no value, as it does in Italy. This race is indifferent to the mind. It values only the cult and adoration of the body. From this, the race draws its strength and its naïve cynicism² as well as the childish vanity that causes it to be so harshly criticized. It is commonly reproached for its "mentality", meaning its particular way of thinking and living. And it is true that a certain intensity of life is not without injustice. Here, however, is a race without a past, without tradition, yet not without poetry. But it is a poetry whose qualities I know too well: hard, carnal, not at all tender - like the poetry of their sky - the only poetry that moves and speaks to me. The opposite of a civilized people is a creative one. And I have a foolish hope that perhaps, without even knowing it, those barbarians basking on the beaches are moulding the face of a culture where human greatness will ultimately find its true face. This people submerged in its present lives without myths, without consolation. It has invested everything in the here and now and so remains defenceless against death. The gifts of physical beauty have been lavished upon it. And along with those gifts has come the singular avidity that always accompanies wealth without future. Everything they do in Algiers demonstrates their distaste for stability and their lack of regard for the future. They're in a hurry to live - if an art form were to be born here, it would conform to this hatred of permanence that inspired the Dorians to carve their first column out of wood. And yet, one can, in fact, find both moderation and excess in the fierce and obstinate face of this people, in this summer sky devoid of tenderness, this sky that makes all truths fit to be told and on which no false divinity has ever traced signs of hope or redemption. Between this sky and the faces turned up towards it, there is nowhere to root a mythology, a literature, an ethic

Sentir ses liens avec une terre, son amour pour quelques hommes, savoir qu'il est toujours un lieu où le cœur trouvera son accord, voici déjà beaucoup de certitudes pour une seule vie d'homme. Et sans doute cela ne peut suffire. Mais à cette patrie de l'âme tout aspire à certaines minutes. « Oui, c'est là-bas qu'il nous faut retourner. » Cette union que souhaitait Plotin, quoi d'étrange à la retrouver sur la terre? L'Unité s'exprime ici en termes de soleil et de mer. Elle est sensible au cœur par un certain goût de chair qui fait son amertume et sa grandeur. J'apprends qu'il n'est pas de bonheur surhumain, pas d'éternité hors de la courbe des journées. Ces biens dérisoires et essentiels, ces vérités relatives sont les seules qui m'émeuvent. Les autres, les « idéales », je n'ai pas assez d'âme pour les comprendre. Non qu'il faille faire la bête, mais je ne trouve pas de sens au bonheur des anges. Je sais seulement que ce ciel durera plus que moi. Et qu'appellerais-je éternité sinon ce qui continuera après ma mort? Je n'exprime pas ici une complaisance de la créature dans sa conditoin. C'est bien autre chose. Il n'est pas toujours facile d'être un homme, moins encore d'être un homme pur. Mais être pur, c'est retrouver cette patrie de l'âme où devient sensible la parenté du monde, où les coups du sang rejoignent les pulsations violentes du soleil de deux heures. Il est bien connu que la patrie se reconnaît toujours au moment de la perdre. Pour ceux qui sont trop tourmentés d'eux-mêmes, le pays natal est celui qui les nie. Je ne voudrais pas être brutal ni paraître exagéré. Mais enfin, ce qui me nie dans cette vie, c'est d'abord ce qui me tue. Tout ce qui exalte la vie, accroît en même temps son absurdité. Dans l'été d'Algérie, j'apprends qu'une seule chose est plus pratique que la souffrance et c'est la vie d'un homme heureux. Mais ce peut être aussi bien le chemin d'une plus grande vie,

or a religion but in the stones, flesh, stars and in those truths that the hand can touch.

To feel a connection to the land, love for a few men, to know that there is always a place where the heart will feel content, that's a lot of certainty for a single human life. Not enough, perhaps, though. But at certain moments, everything longs for this homeland of the soul. "Yes, that is where we must return". What is so strange about finding on earth the union that Plotinus wished for? Here, Oneness manifests itself in terms of sun and sea. Its taste of flesh is what makes it both bitter and great, and accessible to the heart. I am learning that there is no superhuman happiness, no eternity beyond the curve of the days. These derisory yet essential things, these relative truths are the only ones that move me. I do not have soul enough to understand the others, the "ideal" ones. Not that we should be content to love as beasts, but I do not see any sense in the happiness of the angels. I know only that this sky will last longer than I will. And what would I call eternity but that which will continue after my death? I am not expressing here the creature's satisfaction with its condition. It's something else altogether. It is not always easy to be a man, harder still to be a pure man. But to be pure is to rediscover that homeland of the soul where one feels a kinship with the world, where the beating of one's pulse merges with the violent throbbing of the two o'clock sun. It is well known that one always recognizes one's homeland when one is about to lose it. For those whose inner torment is excessive, the land of birth is the land from which they are exiled. I do not mean to appear brutal or excessive. But what rejects me in this life is what kills me. Everything that glorifies life adds, at the same time, to its absurdity. In the Algerian summer, I learn that only one thing is more tragic than suffering: the life of a happy man. But this truth could very well lead the

puisque cela conduit à ne pas tricher.

Beaucoup, en effet, affectent l'amour de vivre pour éluder l'amour lui-même. On s'essaie à jouir et à « faire des expériences ». Mais c'est une vue de l'esprit. Il faut une rare vocation pour être un jouisseur. La vie d'un homme s'accomplit sans le secours de son esprit, avec ses reculs et ses avances, à la fois sa solitude et ses présences. À voir ces hommes de Belcourt qui travaillent, défendent leurs femmes et leurs enfants, et souvent sans un reproche, je crois qu'on peut sentir une secrète honte. Sans doute, je ne me fais pas d'illusions. Il n'y a pas beaucoup d'amour dans les vies dont je parle. Je devrais dire qu'il n'y en a plus beaucoup. Mais du moins, elles n'ont rien éludé. Il y a des mots que je n'ai jamais bien compris, comme celui de péché. Je crois savoir pourtant que ces hommes n'ont pas péché contre la vie. Car s'il y a un péché contre la vie, ce n'est peut-être pas tant d'en désespérer que d'espérer une autre vie, et se dérober à l'implacable grandeur de celle-ci. Ces hommes n'ont pas triché. Dieux de l'été, ils furent à vingt ans par leur ardeur à vivre et le sont encore, privés de tout espoir. J'en ai vu mourir deux. Ils étaient pleins d'horreur, mais silencieux. Cela vaut mieux ainsi. De la boîte de Pandore où grouillaient les maux de l'humanité, les Grecs firent sortir l'espoir après tous les autres, comme le plus terrible de tous. Je ne connais pas de symbole plus émouvant. Car l'espoir, au contraire de ce qu'on croit, équivaut à la résignation. Et vivre, c'est ne pas se résigner.

Voici du moins l'âpre leçon des étés d'Algérie. Mais déjà la saison tremble et l'été bascule. Premières pluies de septembre, après tant de violences et de raidissements, elles sont comme les premières larmes de la terre délivrée, comme si pendant quelques jours ce pays se mêlait de tendresse. À la même époque pourtant, les caroubiers mettent une odeur d'amour sur

way to a better life, for it keeps us from cheating.

Many people affect a love for life in order to avoid love itself. They experiment with pleasure, "try all sorts of things out". But that is a purely cerebral attitude. It takes a rare talent to become a sensualist. A man's life unfolds without the help of his mind, with its advances and setbacks, its simultaneous solitude and companionship. Seeing those men of Belcourt who work, look after their wives and children, often without a word of complaint, I think that one can sense a secret shame. I have no illusions. There is not much love in these lives. I should say, rather, that there is no longer much love. But at least they haven't avoided anything. There are some words that I have never truly understood, like the word "sin". I think I know, however, that these men have not sinned against life. For if there is a sin against life, perhaps it lies not so much in despairing of this life as in hoping for another, and shying away from the implacable grandeur of the life we were given. These men have not cheated. At twenty years of age, with their zest for life, they were the gods of summer; now they are gods once again, stripped of all hope. I have seen two of them die. They were full of horror, but silent. It was better that way. From Pandora's box out of which swarmed all the evils of humanity, the Greeks released hope after all the others, as though it were the most terrible of all. I cannot think of a more moving symbol. For hope, contrary to popular belief, is tantamount to resignation. And to live is to refuse to be resigned.

This is the harsh lesson of summer in Algeria. But already, the season trembles and the summer slips away. After so much violence and tension, the first rains of September are like the first tears of a land delivered, as if for a few days this country began to experience tenderness. At the same time, the carob trees breathe the scent of love over all Algeria. In the evening or

toute l'Algérie. Le soir où après la pluie, la terre entière, son ventre mouillé d'une semence au parfum d'amande amère, repose pour s'être donnée tout l'été au soleil. Et voici qu'à nouveau cette odeur consacre les noces de l'homme et de la terre, et fait lever en nous le seul amour vraiment viril en ce monde : périssable et généreux.

Notes

1. Puis-je me donner le ridicule de dire que je n'aime pas la façon dont Gide exalte le corps? Il lui demande de retenir son désir pour le rendre plus aigu. Ainsi se rapproche-t-il de ceux que, dans l'argot des maisons publiques, on appelle les compliqués ou les cérébraux. Le christianisme aussi veut suspendre le désir. Mais, plus naturel, il y voit une mortification. Mon camarade Vincent, qui est tonnelier et champion de brasse junior, a une vue des choses encore plus claire. Il boit quand il a soif, s'il désire une femme cherche à coucher avec, et l'épouserait s'il l'aimait (ça n'est pas encore arrivé). Ensuite, il dit toujours : « Ça va mieux » -- ce qui résume avec vigueur l'apologie qu'on pourrait faire de la satiété.

2. À titre d'illustration, ce récit de bagarre entendu à Bab-el-Oued et reproduit mot à mot. (Le narrateur ne parle pas toujours comme le Cagayous de Musette. Qu'on ne s'en étonne pas. La langue de Cagayous est souvent une langue littéraire, je veux dire une reconstruction. Les gens du « milieu » ne parlent pas toujours argot. Ils emploient des mots d'argot, ce qui est différent. L'Algérois use d'un vocabulaire typique et d'une syntaxe spéciale. Mais c'est par leur introduction dans la langue française que ces créations trouvent leur saveur.)

Alors Coco y s'avance et y lui dit : « Arrête un peu, arrête. » L'autre y dit: « Qu'est-ce

after the rain, the whole earth, its belly wet with seed that smells of bitter almonds, rests after having given itself, all summer long, to the sun. And once again, this fragrance consecrates the nuptials of man and earth, and arouses in us the only truly compelling love in this world: a love both generous and perishable.

Notes

1. Dare I expose myself to the ridicule of saying that I do not like the way Gide glorifies the body? He asks that it stifle desire in order to make it more intense. In so doing, he is like those who, in the slang of the brothels, are called neurotic or hyper-intellectual. Christianity also seeks to defer desire. But Christianity, closer to Nature, sees such a deferral as a mortification. My friend Vincent, a cooper and junior swimming champion, sees things more clearly. He drinks when he's thirsty, tries to get a woman into bed if he's attracted to her, and would marry her if he loved her (this has yet to happen). Afterward he always says, "I feel better now" - a powerful testimony to the value of satiety.

2. As an example, take this word-for-word transcription of a brawl overheard in Bab-el-Oued. (The narrator does not always speak like Musette's character Cagayous. Which shouldn't surprise anyone. Cagayous' speech is more of a literary language, a reconstruction. Gangsters don't always speak slang. They use slang words, but that's different. The residents of Algiers use a unique vocabulary and unusual syntax. But it's the introduction of these inventions into French that bring out their true flavour.)

So Coco comes up to this guy and goes, "Hang on a minute, wait up." The guy goes,

qu'y a? » Alors Coco y lui dit : « Je vas te donner des coups. -- À moi tu vas donner des coups? » Alors y met la main derrière, mais c'était scousa. Alors Coco y lui dit : « Mets pas la main darrière, parce qu'après j'te choppe le 6-35 et t'y mangeras des coups quand même. »

L'autre il a pas mis la main. Et Coco, rien qu'un, y lui a donné -- pas deux, un. L'autre il était par terre. « Oua, oua », qu'y faisait. Alors le monde il est venu. La bagarre, elle a commencé. Y en a un qui s'est avancé à Coco, deux, trois. Moi j'y ai dit : « Dis, tu vas toucher à mon frère? -- Qui, ton frère? -- Si c'est pas mon frère, c'est comme mon frère. » Alors j'y ai donné un taquet. Coco y tapait, moi je tapais, Lucien y tapait. Moi j'en avais un dans un coin et avec la tête : « Bom, bom. » Alors les agents y sont venus. Y nous ont mis les chaînes, dis. La honte à la figure, j'avais, de traverser tout Bab-el-Oued. Devant le *Gentleman's bar*, y avait des copains et des petites, dis. La honte à la figure. Mais après, le père à Lucien y nous a dit : « Vous avez raison. »

"What's up?" So Coco goes, "I'm gonna rough y'up some." -- "You're gonna rough *me* up?" So he reaches back to, like, grab his piece, but he was just foolin' around. So Coco goes to him, "Don't you go reachin' for nothin', 'cause I'll break that hand of yours then I'll work y'over real good."

So the guy doesn't make a move. And Coco slugs him once - not twice, just once. The guy's layin' on the ground goin' "Boo hoo". So everybody comes out to take a look. And then the brawl really begins. One guy goes after Coco, then two, then three. So I says to one of 'em, "Say, ya gonna hit my brother?" -- "This guy's your brother?" -- "Well, as good as my brother." So I popped him one. Coco slugs him. I slug him. Lucien slugs him. I had another guy in a corner and I took his head and went "Bam, bam." Then the cops came. They cuffed us, right? Right through Bab-el-Oued they took us and I'm just, like, shamed. Out in front of the Gentleman's bar there's all these guys and girls, right? Man, was I shamed. But after, Lucien's pop, he says to us, "Yous guys done the right thing."

COMMENTARY THEME I

***TEXT IN CONTEXT:
THE PRIMACY OF CONTEXT AND CULTURE
IN THE TRANSLATION OF NOCES***

TEXT IN CONTEXT: THE PRIMACY OF CONTEXT AND CULTURE IN THE TRANSLATION OF *NOCES*

Context and Culture in Literary Translation

It has long been believed that language poses challenging problems to translators. However, more and more translators have come to realize that some of the greatest challenges to translation lie not simply in language, but in the differences between cultures, for language is a part of culture, not a thing in itself. Juri Lotman, the Soviet semiotician, declared that "no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its centre the structure of natural language".¹ In other words, language and culture are intimately connected: language is the heart within the body of culture. Susan Bassnett-McGuire once made the following analogy to illustrate the relationship of language, culture and the translator: "In the same way that the surgeon, operating on the heart, cannot neglect the body that surrounds it, so the translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his peril."² Language is inextricably linked to culture; it operates within it and as a part of it. Thus, it is paramount that the translator understand the socio-cultural context, the artistic fabric, of her source text in order to produce a thoughtful and meaningful translation. And in no instance is this more true than in the translation of literature.

Every literary work is bound by a distinct geo-political frame and conditioned by a particular aesthetic disposition; it reflects a unique national temperament, a specific cultural tradition, particular artistic conventions and definite historical and economic determinants. It is

the product of a culture and therefore of a people's way of life and of the values or norms inherent in the society in which it is rooted. On a collective level, literary works can reveal the spiritual, emotional and ethnic particularities of the society in which they take root. They can reflect the thinking pattern, the psyche and the mind of those people and their responses to the realities of life. Literature therefore represents one means of expressing a people's thoughts and attitudes as well as its extralinguistic reality.

"Percer les secrets d'une langue, accéder aux grandes œuvres qu'elle a suscitées, c'est déjà commencer à saisir l'identité d'un peuple. [...] Lire un poète, un romancier, ou saisir un philosophe, ce n'est pas seulement converser avec lui, mais par son intermédiaire, saisir l'âme de la communauté culturelle à laquelle il s'identifie."³

The fact of translation, by its very nature, entails a basic dichotomy between source and target languages, literatures, and cultures. "Translators are men groping toward each other in a common mist," George Steiner has said.⁴ In fact, the cultural factor in translation is undeniable, for no communication is possible unless the message transmitted is clearly understood by the those participating in it. But in order to be understood (and translated), the information conveyed by language must be supplemented by background knowledge of the facts referred to in the message.

People who belong to the same linguistic community are members of a certain culture. They share traditions, habits, ways of doing and saying things; they also share common knowledge about their country: its geography, history, climate, political, economic, social and cultural institutions, accepted morals and taboos. This information forms the basis of the presuppositions which enable the people within that culture to produce and understand messages.

In interlingual communication involving members of two different cultures, however, this knowledge may be seriously limited, thereby impeding understanding. This makes it clear that the translated message is transferred not only into another language, but also to another culture; in addition to overcoming the linguistic barrier, the translator must endeavour to surmount the cultural barrier.⁵ Translation from language to language is, thus, *ipso facto* translation from culture to culture.

From this discussion, it is clear that language represents meaning that comes out of a specific cultural framework. Thus, the translator has an obligation to study the languages and cultures involved in the texts she is working with, the "translation context". The more the translator knows about the cultural context from which the source text emerges, the better he or she will be able to mediate the author's intended meaning. The very nature of translation entails cultural interaction "for in truth, not only the various languages must be translated, but the contexts of entire human worlds".⁶

Whereas scientific or technical texts are primarily of an objective, analytical or descriptive nature and typically exhibit authorial effacement, literary works are highly subjective, and their motivated stylistic elements increase the complexity of the message :

"le texte littéraire est au contraire un *texte d'auteur*, il baigne en plein dans la subjectivité et est le résultat de l'approche d'une part artistique, de l'autre part psycho-physiologique d'un monde qui nous apparaît précisément à travers les lunettes d'un individu. Ce monde particulier du texte littéraire à une couleur, une ambiance, un ton, un style ; [...], cette signature imprègne la syntaxe, le rythme, le choix des mots, mais elle flotte aussi entre les lignes ; elle est pour ainsi dire l'âme insaisissable du texte ..."⁷

Thus, a literary work is not only embedded in the specific cultural environment in which it was created, it is also imbued with the unique features that comprise the author's individual position within that culture, on a psychological, emotional, conceptual, philosophical and aesthetic level.

The broad cultural context and the author's personal perspective together will ultimately define the content and shape the subtle elements of style that the author exploits in his writing. A study of Camus' style will be undertaken in Chapter II of the commentary. In this chapter, however, the emphasis will be placed on acquiring a clear understanding of the unique cultural context in which Camus' work is embedded, vital preparation for an attempt at translating one of his literary works.

Context and Culture in *Noces*

Cicero once remarked that one should translate not the orator's text, but the orator himself, *i.e.* the individual, highly relative meaning of a text in a given time and place.⁸ In other words, a translation should be grounded in a specific environment, taking into full consideration all aspects of the source text's creation: social, cultural, historical, geographical, political, psychological and philosophical, for these aspects are inherently reflected in the content of the text and ultimately, in the style in which it is written. A translator who neglects to study the full spectrum of a given text's context may be unable to make informed choices and interpret subjective or connotative elements appropriately, and runs the risk of committing mistranslations or writing nonsense translations due to a lack of knowledge or understanding of the contextual environment.

Camus' writing has been described by some as "impenetrable", and indeed its complex and interwoven themes and symbols present many challenges. Yet it is imperative that the

translator make the effort to penetrate his writing in order to convey his thoughts and intended message with accuracy. The most logical means of penetrating his work would be for the translator to become acquainted with the cultural and social factors that played a determining role in his life and in his development as an artist, to immerse herself in Camus' contextual environment, in order to perceptively convey meaning as it grows out of his own personal context. I found that I was not consistently able to elucidate and understand the texts as well as I would have liked and, as a result, my translation is uneven at times; it is somewhat rougher in those sections where I had only a tenuous grasp of the contextual environment.

Let us now define Camus' contextual environment. It is comprised, in equal parts, of both landscape (the tangible reality of life in Algeria during the first half of the twentieth century), and of mindscape (the intangible psychological and philosophical convictions that grew out of the Algerian experience). Camus' writing is deeply embedded in the world in which he grew up, for it was in that land, as the essays of *Noces* reveal, that he found his truest and most lasting inspiration:

"Pour parler d'Albert Camus, il aurait fallu d'abord parler de l'Algérie - non pour l'«expliquer» par son pays - mais parce que des traits de son caractère ne peuvent se comprendre que par là"⁹; and,

"Entre l'Algérie et Camus, c'est un long et interminable dialogue. Tantôt «l'artiste» [...] interroge, scrute, observe et, par touches précises, reconstitue le paysage avec ces subtilités qui échappent au regard hâtif, en tire les enseignements".¹⁰

Both of the essays in *Noces* which were translated in this study were set in Algeria, and the primacy and significance of the location is evident: the essays are steeped in the context of

Camus' Algeria. The narrative cannot be separated from the location -- in fact, in a sense, the narrative *is* the location. Camus himself asserted: "Je n'ai jamais rien écrit qui ne se rattache, de près ou de loin, à la terre où je suis né".¹¹

To speak of Albert Camus and his time is to separate two things that are essentially one. "It was characteristic of Camus' career from beginning to end that he sought to immerse himself in, to identify with, the special agonies and problems of his historical period, while at the same time uncovering through those agonies and problems universal and enduring truths about man".¹² As an artist, Camus could neither turn away from his time, nor lose himself in it; his writing is marked personally, culturally and philosophically by the historicity of its emergence. Camus was aware that men are "subject to history", thus he endeavoured to speak for all in a common language and illuminate many of the issues of his era. In 1957, he was awarded the Nobel Prize not only in recognition of the excellence of his lengthier works, but also in recognition of his essays, such as those in *Noces*, which illuminated major social problems of his generation.¹³ These essays were written concurrently with his novels and plays; in them he depicts the Mediterranean world whose images unceasingly haunt both his literary and philosophical works, and he explores several recurring themes, including Hellenism and Mediterranean culture, the supremacy of nature, the dualism of human destiny and the life of the body with its inevitable end, a paganism which rejects any afterlife, the Absurd, and the importance of lucidity. The essays often provide insight into the position taken by Camus in his more widely read works. His writing was a reflection and an exploration of the problems of existence, and it sought to initiate a dialogue on the essentials of shared human experience; this made it both deeply personal and profoundly universal.

It is an overstatement to describe Camus' writing as "impenetrable"; nevertheless, in order to penetrate the deeper levels of his work and to exploit style to provide appropriate emphasis in translation, a thorough study of the key elements that comprise Camus' contextual environment would appear to be essential. Let us now examine in detail the elements of both landscape and mindscape that comprise "the Camusian context".

What is the Camusian Context?

"Even a cursory perusal of Camus' total writing discloses the predominance of certain themes. A closer look will reveal that all of them are present in the lyrical essays under study and further, that they remain his preoccupation from the beginning to the end of his career as a writer."¹⁴ Within the entirety of Camus' writing, there are several prevalent and recurring themes which will be designated here as "the Camusian context". And in order to produce a translation of *Noces* which is as insightful and true to the original as possible, both in terms of context and style, the translator must fully comprehend the thrust and significance of those themes in all their complexity to avoid mistranslating or misrepresenting vital elements. Here, the themes have been organized into four broad categories: (i) the Algerian presence; (ii) the influence of Mediterranean culture and the Ancient Greeks; (iii) the belief in the supremacy of nature and the celebration of the physical; and (iv) the "existential" element, including Camus' theories of Lucidity, Absurdity and Revolt. Let us now consider each of these themes in turn and reveal their presence in and impact on the essays "Noces à Tipasa" and "L'été à Alger".

(i) *The Algerian Presence*

"Ce sont souvent des amours secrètes, celles qu'on partage avec une ville" [A, p. 29]. Camus spent the first twenty-seven years of his life in Algiers and for him, it was always much more than just a city. It was a source of passion, the inner kingdom to which his writing constantly referred, and that passion stretched beyond Algiers to encompass all of Algeria: to the east, the inland city of Constantine, near which Camus was born, in the small village of Mondovi, on November 7, 1913; to the west, the port of Oran, which he visited in 1939 and where he lived for a few months in 1941 and 1942; to the south, beyond the mountain ranges, the high deserted plateaux of alfa grass and the interminable Sahara desert; and to the north, miles on end of high rocky cliffs, deep bays, and beaches of the Mediterranean. Around the ports, from early spring until well into the fall, those beaches teemed with the brown bodies of the youth of Algeria, men and women leading the lives of young gods in the clear, warm water and the sun, a tableau which he describes affectionately in "L'été à Alger".¹⁵

Algeria lies at the heart of all of Camus' writing. For him, Algeria was essentially the land of an invincible summer: the sun, the sea, the flowers and the desert composed his inner, passionately cherished landscape which was typified by the landscape of Tipasa, the old Roman city lying to the west of Algiers. There, the pure lines of Mount Chenoua link sea and sky. Silent ruins remind one of Africa's age-old indifference to the fragile empires built upon her soil. The atmosphere is fragrant with the aroma of a thousand Mediterranean plants and, in the lush days of the Algerian springtime, time stands still.¹⁶ "Au printemps, Tipasa est habitée par les dieux et les dieux parlent dans le soleil et l'odeur des absinthes, la mer cuirassée d'argent, le ciel bleu écru, les ruines couvertes de fleurs et la lumière à gros bouillons dans les amas de pierres"

[T, p. 14]. At the heart of Camus' sensitivity, imagination, and thought, at the heart of his work, are the singular beauty of the African coast and the glory of its sun and sea. These he described as none before him. France may have given him her language, but Algeria unmistakably gave that language new inflections, a new brilliance, intensity and starkness which, in themselves, set Camus apart among French writers; his thought and its expression are rooted totally in his Algerian experience.¹⁷

Not only does North Africa furnish the *décor* of the essays in *Noces*, but it also plays a role in all Camus' work, bearing the essential images and symbols that gave this writer his individuality, his own clearly differentiated style. The sun, the sea, the vast expanse of the sky, the dry wind, the clear contours and large dimensions of North Africa that he described so effusively in *Noces* became, to him, a spiritual landscape. When Camus spoke of "Mediterranean" values, it was to this inner landscape that he referred, to the values it embodied for him, to the "joie étrange" [T, p. 20] it meted out to him in his adolescence and young manhood. In its totality, it remained for him the purest symbol of life.¹⁸

"Le plus précieux de son œuvre, en tout cas, semble bien être ce qu'il y a enfermé de sa patrie méditerranéenne, et avant tout algérienne, cet univers sensible qu'il a servi vivant en d'admirables formules, d'un lyrisme sévère et presque abstrait, usant des mots les plus simples, ne cherchant aucun pittoresque, et pourtant si exact, si poignant, que l'être même des images occupe pour toujours notre cœur. Tout est simple et tout désormais nous est présent, parce Camus est un poète."¹⁹

In Algeria, Camus grew up among simple people, many of whom were illiterate, and because he witnessed their enduring dignity through periods of material hardship, hunger and physical suffering, he retained throughout his career a strong sense of empathy for those people

whose lives were consumed by unremitting labour, whose aspirations were rarely fulfilled. He delighted in describing the peculiar temperament, ethics, attitudes, and language of the native Algerians among whom he had grown up, as evidenced by the many anecdotes he relates about them in "L'été à Alger". The primitive mores, elementary moral code, freedom and limitations, humour and idiosyncrasies of the Algerian working class gave him his basic understanding of a humanity untouched by middle-class inhibitions and codes of conduct. He later wrote in his notebooks that it was in that life of poverty, among those humble or vain people, that he surely touched what seemed to be the real meaning of life.²⁰ As Camus details in "L'été à Alger", from the men of Algeria, "ces barbares qui se prélassent sur des plages" [A, p. 45], Camus dared to hope for the emergence of a new culture, lucid and in harmony with nature, which would permit full expression of human dignity. Yet Camus himself, despite being born among these people, differed from them by virtue of his education, his travel, his reading. Much as he admired them, understood them and at certain points shared their life, he was separated from them by the fact of his own reflective mind. The consciousness which prompts him to refer to them as "ce peuple enfant" and "ces barbares" in "L'été à Alger" demonstrates an awareness of his difference from them²¹, and the references he makes in the same essay to such figures as Goethe, Gide and Plotinus emphasize that difference and hold him aloft from his countrymen. Nevertheless, within the geography of Camus' mind, Algeria and the Algerians have a unique place, representing the natural home of the human spirit. *Noces* owes its marked originality to Camus' passionate desire to convey the unique quality of his native country, its men and its landscapes.

Camus' thinking and sensibilities did not evolve in isolation, but against the backdrop of the Algerian landscape, its inhabitants and its cultural milieu. Camus' writing is truly embedded

in the world in which he grew up, and Algeria is significant not only as a setting for much of his writing, including the two essays translated in *Noces*, but also as a cornerstone for his philosophical beliefs. The country and its inhabitants comprised the "landscape" of Camus' contextual environment, and the philosophical convictions that grew directly out of his Algerian experience comprise the "mindscape". In the following three sections, we will investigate those philosophical convictions and give evidence of their presence in *Noces*.

(ii) *Mediterranean Culture and the Ancient Greeks*

Next to North Africa itself, Camus has a particularly strong affinity for Greece, the country where those Mediterranean virtues which he most admired traditionally found their most perfect expression. In the essays under study in *Noces*, Camus reveals his profound interest in Greece by embedding the texts in a lush Mediterranean world whose inhabitants are likened to Greek gods ("... la course des jeunes gens sur les plages de la Méditerranée rejoint les gestes magnifiques des athlètes de Délos ..." [A, p. 33]), by introducing elements of Greek mythology into the narrative (Dionysos, Déméter, la boîte de Pandore), and by incorporating the Hellenistic tenets which he espoused into his writing. It is these tenets - the essential values of Mediterranean culture - and their insertion into the essays of *Noces* that we will explore here.

Camus' admiration for ancient Greece can be traced back to his student days, when he was influenced by the principles of his professor Jean Grenier, an admirer of the Mediterranean culture which was centred in Athens and Rome, but which also encompassed Spain, southern France and northern Africa. The essential values of Mediterranean culture - measure, equilibrium and moderation, harmony of the mind and body with the natural world, and an understanding of

the duality of life - permeated Camus' literary works from the very beginning and ran throughout his writings to the end of his life. In fact, he was about to embark on a kind of personal pilgrimage to Greece when the Second World War broke out, and he ultimately did not get there until after the War ended.²²

A key concept in Greek thought, and one which greatly inspired Camus' thinking and writing, was that of limit or moderation, of "la mesure". "La pensée grecque s'est toujours retranchée sur l'idée de limite. Elle n'a rien poussé à bout, ni le sacré ni la raison, parce qu'elle n'a rien nié, ni le sacré ni la raison. Elle a fait la part de tout, équilibrant l'ombre par la lumière."²³ As a student and admirer of the Greeks who sensed deeply his own affinity for Greek ideals, Camus made frequent allusion to them as observers of "la mesure" whose example our Western civilization has failed to follow. For the Greeks, will was restrained by reason; action was based on pre-existent values and was restricted to precise limits. The idea of limitation governed all areas of Greek thought because it embraced all things, yet permitted none to excess. For Camus, "la mesure" referred to a certain frugality or measured quality of living without excess ("... ces jeunes gens [...] se mettent nus au soleil pour un déjeuner frugal" [A, p. 33]); it was an equilibrium achieved by recognizing limits and accepting restraint within those limits (note the regrettable result of excess when Camus writes: "Il faut sans doute vivre longtemps à Alger pour comprendre ce que peut avoir de desséchant un excès de biens naturels" [A, p. 29], and "Dans cette abondance et cette profusion, la vie prend la courbe des grandes passions, soudaines, exigeantes, généreuses. Elle n'est pas à construire, mais à brûler" [A, p. 39]). Throughout his writing, there is evidence of this propensity for equilibrium and moderation, qualities whose value was instilled in him in his own life by Jean Grenier. Let us make it clear,

however, that Camus' ethic of moderation was by no means an ethic of mediocrity. On the contrary, the moderation that Camus envisioned was one born of lucidity, emphasizing the importance of breaking free from the monotony of habit and living fully for and in the present.

"À partir des notions de mesure et d'équilibre, l'homme perçoit une manière de se tracer un chemin entre les deux absolus que sont Dieu et l'histoire. En d'autres termes, une éthique de la modération et de la mesure ouvre à la possibilité de se diriger en évitant les écueils destructeurs de l'humanité et ainsi fait luire un certain espoir. [...] L'importance que revêt l'équilibre dans la morale de Camus nous permet de comprendre pourquoi [...] la tâche héroïque consiste à bien faire son métier d'homme. La primauté sera donnée à l'honnêteté et au travail accompli généreusement selon ses possibilités plutôt qu'à l'héroïsme spectaculaire."²⁴

In *Noces*, Camus reiterates the simple heroism of living fully while living within the limits of balance and moderation, when he writes: "C'était précisément cela que je ressentais : j'avais bien joué mon rôle. J'avais fait mon métier d'homme et d'avoir connu la joie tout un long jour ne me semblait pas une réussite exceptionnelle, mais l'accomplissement ému d'une condition qui, en certaines circonstances, nous fait un devoir d'être heureux" [T, p. 28].

In his early essays, Camus also repeatedly alluded to the relation of opposition existing between his horror of death and his desire for life ("Tout ici respire l'horreur de mourir dans un pays qui invite à la vie" [A, p. 43]); he searches for a means of reconciliation between these two experiences. This awareness of the sharp duality of life was strongly felt by the Greeks, who devised principles and beliefs to lessen its tragic ambivalence. In an interview, Camus once said: "Greece is shadow and light. We men of the South know perfectly well that the sun has its dark side".²⁵ He added that Greek thought always defined itself by reference to opposing limits and thus incorporated this clear awareness of contrasting extremes into an ideal of moderation which

could include them both and reduce, if not remove, the conflict between them. This Greek attitude surfaces as a continual alternance in Camus' early essays, a sort of search for a mean between desire for life and horror of death, sensual exaltation and severity of mind, lyricism and asceticism.²⁶ The Mediterranean duality at the basis of Camus' thought is evident in *Noces* in the riches of sun and sea which emphasize human poverty, in the joyful indulgence of the senses which makes death more tragic and horrible, and in the flowering of tenderness and desire which uncover the fact of human loneliness. In each instance happiness and suffering intensify one another.

Throughout his lifetime, Camus found fault in facile Christian solutions to universal issues, and came to identify more and more with Greek paganism. This adherence to paganistic beliefs is also evident in *Noces* in the utter physicality and sensuality of both "Noces à Tipasa" and "L'été à Alger". Thus, one motivation for his alliance to paganism was surely the emphasis it placed on physical experience: the sensual, pulsating organism in innocent union with the natural world; the body, a creature of time and place, ever renewed by the cycles of nature, desiring, feeling, moving, growing, aging, and ultimately dying; the body, animated by activity, exhausted by effort, and cleansed by the sea; the body, exalted by beauty and ravaged by time, continually consecrating its sensual union with the earth in a present devoid of any transcendent future. In Tipasa, there is no sense of original sin, no dichotomy between sensual wants and spiritual needs; in Algiers, there is no guilt or shame about nudity, no mystified hope for another life. There is no mystification of reason, only the demand for a lucid perception of the body's place in nature. Camus was not, of course, a pagan Greek. But he shared with the Greeks a sensibility, however transfigured, that we have only the moving present, and it is here that we

must root our being if we are to be nourished and to grow in happiness ("Entre ce ciel et ces visages tournés vers lui, rien où accrocher une mythologie, une littérature, une éthique ou une religion, mais des pierres, la chair, des étoiles et ces vérités que la main peut toucher" [A, p. 45]). The Greeks knew this. They had a vision of life appropriate to their climate: a clear, lucid view of their possibilities for happiness and of the inevitability of death. All was of this world, with the afterlife but a pale replica of this life.²⁷

Camus shared the Greeks' passion for living as well as their sensitivity to human dignity; he felt no need to apologize for his belief that happiness was a legitimate human aspiration ("Devant lui, pourquoi nierais-je la joie de vivre [...] ? Il n'y a pas de honte à être heureux" [T, p. 22]). The essays of *Noces* celebrate the happiness of the youth of Algiers in nature to which he bore witness: "Tout la matinée s'est passée en plongeons, en floraisons de rires parmi les gerbes d'eau, en longues coups de pagaie autour des cargos rouges et noirs..." [A, p. 33]. Likewise, their sunbathing, which continued even in the winter, had no object other than pleasure, and Camus reveals his impatience for those who would force on this pleasure a utilitarian purpose, "les naturistes, ces protestants de chair" [A, p. 33] who have "une systématique du corps qui est aussi exaspérant que celle de l'esprit" [A, p. 33]. A quality of innocence pervades these "joies saines" of the Algerian youth and in it they share a pagan bond with the Greeks. Camus in fact raps the knuckles of Christianity as he applauds the appearance of nude bodies on the beaches. And elsewhere, he likens the youth of Algiers to modern-day Greeks: "la course des jeunes gens sur les plages de la Méditerranée rejoint les gestes des athlètes de Délos" [A, p. 33], and seen from the level of the water against the stark white backdrop of the Arab dwellings, "les corps déroulent une frise cuivrée" [A, p. 33].

From this study, it is clear that Camus identified strongly with the philosophies of the ancient Greeks and the essential values of Mediterranean culture. The essays in *Noces* underscore the Mediterranean values of measure, equilibrium and moderation, harmony of the mind and body with the natural world, and understanding of the duality of life. Because of their distinct presence in *Noces* and their importance to the entirety of Camus' literary works, these concepts must be thoroughly understood in order to perceptively translate the nuance and complexity of Camus' thought.

(iii) *The Supremacy of Nature and the Celebration of the Physical*

Nature's role as poetic muse for Camus is evident throughout both of the essays translated in *Noces*. However, Camus cannot be classified as a "poet of nature" in the Romantic tradition. Roger Quilliot has seized upon the essential quality of the distinction by stressing the strongly physical and "naïve" approach of Camus which is consistent with his emphasis on the concrete:

"Il [the Romantic poet] aime les couleurs exotiques ; il se complaît aussi dans le diaphane qui laisse entrevoir un coin des cieux. L'univers sensuel de Camus, au contraire, est épais et charnu ; il éclate de partout comme un fruit mûr.... L'aventure est à rechercher dans la violence des sensations, dans l'ivresse plus que dans l'enchantement. Camus aborde le monde sensible avec une gourmandise insolente et naïve."²⁸

Any discussion of Camus' relationship with nature must take into account the influence of his birthplace, Algeria. His youth was spent in its sunlight and sea, and he savoured the beauty and opportunities for physical pleasure that they afforded. Cruickshank, writing in 1959, stated: "North Africa was never significantly touched by medieval strictures on physical pleasure

or on sensualism generally, and these ideas have persisted there to a remarkable degree."²⁹ Camus was thus much like a Mediterranean pagan: the sun, the sea, the groves of the North African coast were his gods. He experienced a spirituality in nature rather than in a Christian God who transcended nature; his writings are full of the intensity of the love and awe he felt for his natural surroundings. Camus' glorious experiences in youth kept him in constant direct contact with the natural world, and made him appreciate his own body as a means of rapport with it.³⁰

Nature was, therefore, very early an object of contemplation and admiration for Camus, and evidence of his awareness and sensitivity toward it appears in his earliest essays. However, it is in *Noces* that Camus' attitude toward nature in all its aspects takes its most concentrated and lyrical form. The first sentence of "Noces à Tipasa" embraces many of the elements of the natural world Camus experienced as a youth in Algeria: the sun and the sea, the sky, the stones, the earth and its profusion of flora. Finally, the author himself is present, a natural man attuned to this natural world: "Au printemps, Tipasa est habitée par les dieux et les dieux parlent dans le soleil et l'odeur des absinthes, la mer cuirassée d'argent, le ciel bleu écru, les ruines couvertes de fleurs et la lumière à gros bouillons dans les amas de pierres" [T, p. 14].

The central theme of *Noces* is the harmony of nature and the union of man with the natural world; Camus uses individual elements of nature - the sun, the stones, the sea - to underscore man's rapport with the natural world. The sun and its light and warmth are predominantly beneficent elements symbolizing life and happiness for Camus. "Sous le soleil du matin, un grand bonheur se balance dans l'espace" [T, p. 18], and the young people of Algiers "tous les jours à midi, se mettent nus au soleil" [A, p. 33] simply because "ils sont bien au soleil"

[A, p. 33]. In "Noces à Tipasa", the sun is viewed positively even when it is overpowering because it is a vital force of nature that promotes fecundity. Images of nature's superabundance are numerous in this essay, and the sun's light and warmth are themselves superabundant: "... j'ouvre les yeux et mon cœur à la grandeur insoutenable de ce ciel gorgé de chaleur" [T, p.18]. In Camus' work, the sun is not invariably beneficent; for the most part, when the sun's role is a destructive, malevolent one, it is portrayed as metallic or dense, giving off heat and light that crushes or pierces. However, in the essays under study, Camus stresses only the life-giving and unifying qualities of the Algerian sun which shines down on men and promotes "un grand bonheur" [T, p. 18].³¹

The stone of the mineral world is also a significant part of Camus' natural universe, and it is used to symbolize either neutrality or hostility. In the essays of *Noces*, it is portrayed in its neutral state and evokes the Absurd - the recognition of the indifference and inhumanness of the world (we will study this concept in the next section) - and thus plays a part in the development of the lucidity so essential to the authentic existence³² Camus promulgates. The ruins of Tipasa have a lesson to teach:

"Dans ce mariage des ruines et du printemps, les ruines sont redevenues pierres, et perdant le poli imposé par l'homme, sont rentrées dans la nature. [...] Comme ces hommes que beaucoup de science ramène à Dieu, beaucoup d'années ont ramené les ruines à la maison de leur mère. Aujourd'hui enfin, leur passé les quitte, et rien ne les distrait de cette force qui les ramène au centre des choses qui tombent." [T, p. 16]

Time spent visiting these ruins cannot help but emphasize the very transitoriness of human existence compared to the enduring permanence of nature, the relative unimportance of individual

human action and historical determination. "Mediterranean civilizations exhibit a multi-layered archaeological record of the flourishing and dying of peoples; to examine the vestiges of the Roman, Byzantine and Arab monuments left behind on Algerian soil is to contemplate the levelling power of Time"³³ and the eternal quality of nature over the ephemerality of man's civilization and culture. Through the ruins, Camus underscores the interpenetration of past and present, but makes it clear that "le monde finit toujours par vaincre l'histoire".³⁴

Finally, water - the sea - is seen in *Noces* as a unifying and beneficent natural element, perhaps an extension of the prenatal unity and security of the womb which continues later on an instinctive or intuitive level and becomes associated with what is natural, comforting and loving.³⁵ For Camus, "la mer" often takes on the characteristics of "la mère"; as Morvan Lebesque points out: "... la mère, calme, profonde, impénétrable et silencieuse comme la mer (Camus rapprochera très vite ces deux mots) ...".³⁶ Water is a symbol of happiness and almost invariably, the sea appears as a favourable and supporting force in its rapport with man. For Camus, the act of swimming always held a particular significance and was often a symbol of purification, a ritual that freed the swimmer from the burdens and evils of his daily life.³⁷ The sensuous joy it afforded him was clearly reflected in both of the essays under study: "Il me faut être nu et puis plonger dans la mer, encore tout parfumé des essences de la terre, laver celles-ci dans celle-là et nouer sur ma peau l'étreinte pour laquelle soupirent lèvres à lèvres depuis si longtemps la terre et la mer ..." [T, p.18]; "Toute la matinée s'est passée en plongeons, en floraisons de rires parmi les gerbes d'eau ..." [A, p. 33].

Another element of central importance to the theme of man's rapport with nature is Camus' unequivocal affirmation of the primacy of the physical, highlighted by the sensual

immediacy of the essays in *Noces*. The physical exaltation of *Noces* begins with an intense and colourful evocation of the virtual assault made by the Algerian countryside on the senses. Such is the profusion of the many sensory impressions that even the air is intoxicating, it seems to be filled with "un alcool généreux qui fait vaciller le ciel" [T, p. 16]. Amidst such splendour, the senses are quickened, the blood is stirred and Camus insists that "il n'y a pas de honte à être heureux [...], et j'appelle imbécile celui qui a peur de jouir" [T, p. 22]. Camus feels that he will never be able to have enough contact, or sufficiently close contact, with the natural world. The desire for close and constant intimacy with nature - for the "nuptials" with nature to which the collective title of these essays refers - emerges repeatedly in passages of sensual lyricism. He exults in the sensation of being fashioned by the wind and sun; he feels his blood throb in rhythm to the pulsations of the sun at its zenith.³⁸ To Camus, the body becomes the vehicle through which emotion and thought, in that order, are generated, and it is largely through touch that the writer both interprets and joins the world. He felt that the body had a value all its own, and claimed: "... à vivre ainsi près des corps et par le corps, on s'aperçoit qu'il a ses nuances, sa vie et, pour hasarder un non-sens, une psychologie qui lui est propre" [A, p. 33]. Life is experienced most fully through the senses, through sight and touch, and "À Tipasa, je vois équivalent à je crois, et je ne m'obstine pas à nier ce que ma main peut toucher et mes lèvres caresser" [T, p. 22].

The praise of the world's beauty that is sung in *Noces* is the expression of man's pleasure in it, but that purely physical pleasure also has darker overtones: "Il n'y a rien ici pour qui voudrait apprendre, s'éduquer ou devenir meilleur" [A, p. 29]. Repeatedly, the emphasis of the physical over the spiritual is reiterated in "L'été à Alger" with disturbing results: "Ici, l'intelligence n'a pas de place comme en Italie. Cette race est indifférente à l'esprit. Elle a le

culte et l'admiration du corps" [A, p. 45]; and in the same essay: "Il faut une rare vocation pour être jouisseur. La vie d'un homme s'accomplit sans le secours de son esprit" [A, p. 49]. Clearly, for Camus, the dignity of mankind lay not only in the body but also in the mind, and the mind must not be neglected. Thus Camus' praise of the physical is all the more compelling because the author is lucidly aware of the ephemeral character of sensual pleasures: "Les hommes trouvent ici pendant toute leur jeunesse une vie à la mesure de leur beauté. Et puis après, c'est la descente et l'oubli. Ils ont misé sur la chair, mais ils savaient qu'ils devaient perdre" [A, p. 31]. The beauty of the world and the joys of a healthy body are all to be enjoyed, but with awareness of their brevity. From his experiences in Algeria, Camus observed that youth was spent in a "précipitation à vivre qui touche au gaspillage" [A, p. 39] and that by age thirty, a workingman had exhausted himself. In this environment where the focus was so much upon physical existence, Camus became aware early in his life of the double aspect of this existence, of the duality that was described in the preceding section. Ultimately, to mediate between the needs of the mind and the desires of the body, Camus calls upon his philosophy of measure and equilibrium, emphasizing that:

"pour qui n'a pas payé le tribut qu'il fallait à l'esprit, il s'apercevra vite de la précarité des joies qui prennent leur source avant tout dans le corps. [...] L'important demeure l'équilibre à maintenir entre le corps et l'esprit ; la nature de l'homme revendique le respect pour les deux. On ne sert rien de l'homme si on ne le sert pas tout entier".³⁹

It thus becomes clear that Camus was intensely aware of the impact that nature had on mankind: positive in the gifts of its profound and abundant beauty, neutral in its inhuman permanence and indifference, and negative when too much emphasis was placed on purely

physical and sensual enjoyment of its bounties in neglect of mental and spiritual fulfilment. The profuse natural beauty that is inherent in the Algerian settings of *Noces*, coupled with Camus' keen awareness of the impact and power of nature, influenced the connotative and symbolic elements in his writing. The power and symbolism of this theme must therefore be preserved in translation.

(iv) *Existentialism, Lucidity, Absurdity and Revolt*

It was Camus' curious misfortune that the success of his essays and novels obscured his talent as a thinker, though he integrated his philosophical tenets into all of his works. Camus was one of the most controversial and least understood of contemporary thinkers; he was considered one of the most prophetic, persuasive and moral philosophers of the mid-20th century and he assumed a highly influential role in the thought and letters of contemporary France.⁴⁰ He is identified with the philosophy of existentialism (although whether he was a true proponent of this school is arguable), and he developed and expounded the ideas of lucidity, absurdity and revolt. Understanding Camus as a philosopher brings new insight and awareness to his literary works and is essential to the task of the translator who must grasp the complexity and direction of his inherent philosophy in order to translate perceptively. Let us now consider this philosophical aspect of Camus' writing as it applies to the essays of *Noces*.

From the first moment that Albert Camus came into prominence in France, he was classified as an existentialist philosopher, an allegation which continues to be accepted today despite the fact that during his lifetime, Camus never ceased to deny that he was either an existentialist *or* a philosopher. So *is* Camus an existentialist?

Throughout the history of the development of Western thought, much creative thinking has been existential in its beginnings. The classical philosophers all focussed upon their own personal experiences and sought to understand their world and its history through these immediate experiences. Descartes' famous dictum "I think, therefore I am" is existential in concept (although not existential in its ontological or epistemological development) and it is within this larger definition of the term that Camus' thought may be placed.⁴¹ His "existential" philosophies, reflected in the essays in *Noces* as in all of his writing, include: opposition to a hierarchy of values crowned by God ("La basilique Sainte-Salsa est chrétienne, mais chaque fois qu'on regarde par une ouverture, c'est la mélodie du monde qui parvient jusqu'à nous ..." [T, p. 18], "... ce ciel d'été vidé de tendresse [...] et sur lequel aucune divinité trompeuse n'a tracé les signes de l'espoir ou de la rédemption" [A, p. 45]); the belief that truth and philosophy should come from immediate personal experience ("Il y a un temps pour vivre et un temps pour témoigner de vivre. [...] Vivre Tipasa, témoigner et l'œuvre d'art vient ensuite" [T, p. 24], "... vivre, c'est ne pas se résigner" [A, p. 49]); the recognition of the thesis that man exists *in* the world and is naturally related with it ("... il n'y a pas de quoi être fier. Si, il y a de quoi : ce soleil, cette mer, mon cœur bondissant de jeunesse, mon corps au goût de sel et l'immense décor où la tendresse et la gloire se rencontrent ..." [T, p. 20], "Mer, campagne, silence, parfums de cette terre, je m'emplissais d'une vie odorante et je mordais dans le fruit déjà doré du monde..." [T, p. 28]); and deep concern with the significance of death, its inevitability and finality ("Tout ce qui touche à la mort est ici ridicule ou odieux" [A, p. 41], "Tout ici respire l'horreur de mourir dans un pays qui invite à la vie" [A, p. 43], "J'apprends qu'il n'est pas de bonheur surhumain, pas d'éternité hors de la courbe des journées" [A, p. 47]). Camus, however, did not share the existentialists'

tenet that human existence is void of essence. His entire thought rested on the belief in a nature common to all men and thus a possibility of meaning and value in human existence.

Of primary importance to Camus' philosophical convictions is the concept of lucidity. To be "lucid" is to accept the transience of human existence and the finality of death without the need to hope for an illusory afterlife, and to find meaning and happiness in this life, not mere resignation to it. Camus urges resolute awareness, "lucid attention", to the fact of human mortality while refusing the consolation and solution offered by religion ("Ce qu'il exige, ce sont des âmes clairvoyantes, c'est-à-dire, sans consolation. Il demande qu'on fasse un acte de lucidité comme on fait un acte de foi" [A, p. 29]), and he refutes feelings of both hope and resignation. To him, resignation means relinquishing the here and now in exchange for what he regards as deceptive spiritual values ("Car s'il y a un péché contre la vie, ce n'est peut-être pas tant d'en désespérer que d'espérer une autre vie ..." [A, p. 49]), and of hope he writes: "De la boîte de Pandore où grouillaient les maux de l'humanité, les Grecs firent sortir l'espoir après tous les autres, comme le plus terrible de tous. Je ne connais pas de symbole plus émouvant. Car l'espoir, au contraire de ce qu'on croit, équivaut à la résignation. Et vivre, c'est ne pas se résigner" [A, p. 49]. His refusal to consider the possibility of an afterlife is a lesson Camus learns from the Algerian landscape. He embraces what is present to his senses ("... je vois équivaut à je crois ..." [T, p. 22]) and treats everything else as gratuitous construction: the natural world is beautiful but beyond it, or apart from it, there is no salvation ("Je sais seulement que ce ciel durera plus que moi" [A, p. 47]). And yet, Camus insists that to renounce hope is not necessarily to destroy the possibility of happiness. He considers happiness to be a simple harmony relating the individual to his existence and asserts that happiness will follow from a

relationship in which the individual accepts the eternal antagonism between his desire for life and the inevitability of his death⁴²; life is all the more to be valued in the face of death. Life can thus not only be lived without transcendent appeal, but it can be lived better and more fully on those terms. Lucidity, then, is not an end but a beginning, for a consciousness committed to integrity, to honesty, and to seeking from life its utmost significance.

The concept of lucidity leads quite naturally into a study of the notion of absurdity, another of Camus' central philosophical tenets. The birth of the feeling of absurdity is simple and sudden. In basic terms, absurdity stems from a break in our habitual patterns of activity and assumed meaningfulness, forcing us to stop, reflect and struggle to come to terms with the awareness of no longer being at one with our world. We see an absence of correspondence or congruity between our need for coherence and the incoherence and impartiality of the universe. We are thus compelled to find and rebuild meaningfulness to restore some sense of peace to our conscious life.⁴³ In this awakened, "lucid" state, absurdity is seen as the discovery that we can no longer live for tomorrow and the future. The Absurd is a revolt against "tomorrow" and an attempt to come to terms with the present⁴⁴; it is a moment of lucidity when we become aware of the essential divorce between human nature and the physical world in which it is placed. But lucidity and absurdity together imbue man with the power to defy his fate by finding joy in the world in spite of his inevitable end; in this way, man himself gives his life a nobility and a meaning that is refused by an indifferent universe. That defiance, in essence, is the concept of revolt.

Absurdity is investigated on a personal level in the essays of *Noces*. In the very moment of his enjoyment of the sensual delights of the natural world of Tipasa, Camus is aware of the

tragic implications of that moment, for by definition the intensity of the experience cannot endure ("Hors du soleil, des baisers et des parfums sauvages, tout nous paraît futile" [T, p. 16]). The exaltation of the natural world and the insistence on living in the here and now that are expressed in *Noces* form the core of Camus' response to absurdity. The fleeting pleasure of the warmth of the sun, the joys of swimming, the tranquility of the cool Mediterranean evenings that give man a precious feeling of communion with the world are contrasted with the immortality and indifference of nature ("Tout à l'heure, quand je me jetterai dans les absinthes pour me faire entrer leur parfum dans le corps, j'aurai conscience, contre tous les préjugés, d'accomplir une vérité qui est celle du soleil et sera aussi celle de ma mort" [T, p. 20]). The Algerian summers will succeed one another in an unending procession; and although mankind's enjoyment of these summers may also infinitely endure, the tragic fact remains that each individual's enjoyment is limited in time ("Ses bonheurs ont été brusques et sans merci. De même sa vie. Et l'on comprend alors qu'il soit né de ce pays où tout est donné pour être retiré" [A, p. 39]). The truth of human transience as opposed to the desire for permanence is one of the major philosophical themes underlying *Noces*. *Noces* is Camus' manual of happiness, and the intensity of the physical joy it describes increases the awareness of the absurd⁴⁵: "Tout ce qui exalte la vie, accroît en même temps son absurdité" [A, p. 47].

Camus integrated his philosophy into his literary works and clearly, *Noces* is no exception. His "existentialist" tenets, along with the notions of lucidity, absurdity and revolt, are clearly revealed in the essays under study. Because of their inherent presence in and influence on his writing, these philosophical tenets must be represented accurately in a translation of Camus' work.

The Conundrum of Cultural Items in *Noces*

By studying the range of themes in the preceding section and seeing abundant evidence of their presence in the essays of *Noces*, it has become clear that these essays are infused with references to Camus' very specific cultural and contextual environment, the combination of landscape and mindscape which we referred to earlier as the "Camusian context". One way that the primacy of context and the unique setting are reinforced in *Noces* is through "cultural items". Therefore, in this final section of Theme I, we will consider the case of the cultural items present in the essays under study as well as the issues that they raise in translation. In so doing, we will make reference to the techniques of "exoticizing" and "naturalizing" for handling cultural items.

Any literary work exists and was created within a unique socio-cultural situation in which objects and symbols function in a way that is never exactly the same in any other society or culture. Thus, when translating a text that was written in a cultural environment different from her own, the translator may encounter foreign objects and symbols that she must somehow "shift" into another socio-cultural context. She is thus confronted with a choice. She must decide whether to "exoticize" or to "naturalize": either retain specific elements of the source text's socio-cultural situation, knowing that in the new situation those elements may acquire an exotic aspect not attached to them in their native habitat, or replace the elements by those that she considers to be in some way matching or equivalent in the target situation.⁴⁶ (In some cases, she must also decide whether to "historicize" or to "modernize" the text; however, this is not a concern in the translation of the essays under study.) In general, among contemporary translators of literature, there is a marked tendency towards exoticizing and historicizing the socio-cultural situation⁴⁷; one justification for this is that translators believe that their readers do not want

naturalization. They are plunging into a foreign literature representing a foreign culture exactly for its strangeness; they want to be, so to speak, "exoticized" and the unfamiliarity appeals to them.

The decision of whether to exoticize or naturalize must ultimately be based on the merits of each specific and individual situation. In the translation of *Noces*, exoticizing was typically the technique of choice for handling cultural items; however, in one case, naturalization was applied. Let us now consider these concepts in the context of the essays under study.

(i) "Exoticizing" through Local Colour

From the study of Camusian context that has already been undertaken, it has become clear that Camus' works are grounded in a very unique personal context. As we have seen, one facet of that context is the omnipresence of Algeria: both its landscape and its people. And because of the implicit significance of Algeria to Camus' work (as we said earlier, the narrative cannot be separated from the location -- in fact, in a sense, the narrative *is* the location), it is vital to emphasize the specificity of the locale in the translation. One way of achieving this is through local colour.

Local colour is defined as "the detailed representation [...] of the setting, dialect, customs, dress, and ways of thinking and feeling which are characteristic of a particular region".⁴⁸ In the essays of *Noces*, there are many examples of local colour interwoven throughout the text to underscore the singularity of the setting. These include references to flora (there are a total of 19 references to indigenous flora in "Noces à Tipasa", which makes them significant from a statistical standpoint alone), geographical markers (Chenoua, Tipasa, Alger, Oran, Belcourt, Bab-

el-Oued, la Méditerranée, la plage Padovani), elements of dialect (the interjection of the local term "se taper un bain" and the entirety of the Cagayous footnote in "L'été à Alger") and local mentalities and behaviours (such as those described in the "déjeuner frugal", "le dancing au plage Padovani", "pastilles de menthe" and "code de la rue" sections of "L'été à Alger"). The abundance of local colour in the essays cannot help but accentuate the primacy of the setting, for it is inherent in every element and at every level of the texts.

In a couple of cases, local colour as a means of emphasizing the unique Algerian setting was heightened through exoticization. Exoticization was applied only to those elements whose surrounding context would provide adequate explanation to ensure that the foreign terms would neither confuse the reader nor distract him. Exoticization was achieved by keeping the French names of local landmarks ("place du Gouvernement", "rues de la Marine" and "boulevard Bru") in "Summer in Algiers" and to monetary units ("glasses of icy lemonade, scented with orange blossom, for 5 *sous*" and "bowling, 'club' banquets, three-*franc* movies and local festivals"), also in "Summer in Algiers". By including these exoticized elements, a hint of the cultural flavour of the original was preserved and the singular setting was emphasized once again. And their inclusion should not distress the reader, for the cases where exoticization was applied were carefully selected and, as was mentioned earlier, the reader choosing to plunge into a foreign literature representing a foreign culture will be expecting some degree of strangeness. As they seek to experience something different and exotic, the unfamiliarity appeals to them.

(ii) *A Case for "Naturalization"*

From time to time, a translator may encounter the challenge of a cultural item with no direct

equivalent in her target language. Such items are referred to as "realia"; they are defined as "those words of a national environment that do not exist in other languages because these objects and phenomena do not exist in other countries"⁴⁹ or, more explicitly, as "those words (and word-conjunctions) of a native language which represent the names of objects, concepts, phenomena characteristic of a geographical environment, culture, material existence, or distinctive socio-historical features of a people, nation, country, tribe, and function thereby as bearers of national, local, or historical colour; precise equivalents of these words do not exist in other languages".⁵⁰ In the course of translating *Noces*, one such realium was encountered in the term "boulomanes" in "L'été à Alger" [p. 41]; finding an appropriate means of handling this term proved to be challenging.

Dictionary searches shed some light on the meaning of "boulomanes" ("boules" players), but they produced no equivalent for the term. With no direct translation, I therefore had to translate it using one of the following techniques: borrowing, description, invention, footnoting or adaptation. For reasons of simplicity, clarity and brevity, I chose to adapt the concept to its nearest equivalent in English. A stylistic decision I made to use a parallel structure in my translation to enumerate the dull pastimes for those over thirty meant that I was seeking an equivalent for the term "boules" (the game) rather than "boulomanes" (the players).

Technically speaking, the closest approximation to "boules" was "lawn bowling", a game which is played outside and consists of rolling balls on grass. However, lawn bowling carries with it connotations that are inappropriate to the context of "boules": in Canada, lawn bowling is played primly and politely by primarily wealthy senior citizens in crisply starched white clothing. In Algeria, on the other hand, "boules" is noisily played in the dirt on the streets by

working-class members of lower socio-economic strata. In "L'été à Alger", Camus makes reference to "boules" players to critically symbolize the paucity and ineptitude of the recreation available to those over thirty. The socio-economic and cultural connotations of the term are of greater significance than the technicalities of the game itself. For this reason, "bowling" was considered to be a more appropriate approximation to "boules". Although the technical reality of the game shifts somewhat, the more important social and cultural overtones of the French term are conserved. The referent of the term "boules" was thus naturalized, but the significant symbolic and connotative elements were maintained.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have asserted that every language inherently possesses its own unique socio-cultural context. Since language and culture are inextricably linked, culture and context are essential elements to understand and convey in translation. In the case of literary translation, it becomes even more vital to understand the source text's context and culture, for literary texts are highly subjective and heavily influenced by the author's social, cultural, historical, geographical, political, psychological and philosophical environment, his individual "contextual environment". That environment will ultimately define the content and shape the subtle elements of style that the author exploits in his writing. Thus, if the translator neglects to study the full spectrum of a text's context, and the unique contextual environment of its author, he or she will lack the sensitivity and insight necessary to make informed choices both in terms of content and style and to interpret subjective or connotative elements appropriately.

An attempt was made in this chapter to study and define Camus' contextual environment,

which we referred to as the "Camusian context". Camus' writing is complex both in its network of interrelated themes and in the stylistic devices that Camus employs to punctuate those themes and the convictions that lie at the heart of the essays in *Noces*. A study of Camus' style will be undertaken in the following chapter; in the present chapter, however, the emphasis was placed on uncovering those themes that drive Camus' writing and on revealing their presence in the essays.

A thorough understanding of the themes and their impact on Camus' writing is essential to a sound and intelligent translation of *Noces*. Four fundamental themes were discussed in this chapter. The first theme was the omnipresence of Algeria, both its landscape and its people, which infiltrate every level of Camus' writing and become the cornerstone for all of his beliefs and philosophies; the essays of *Noces* are infused, both explicitly and implicitly, with the Algerian presence. The second theme was Camus' strong affinity for Ancient Greece and the values of Mediterranean culture. From the Greeks, Camus learned to appreciate measure, equilibrium and moderation, harmony of the mind and body with the natural world, and the duality of life. These values are distinctly present and whole-heartedly promoted in *Noces*. The third theme was Camus' deep rapport with nature and his unequivocal affirmation of the primacy of the physical; through the lessons he teaches the reader in *Noces*, he illustrates the impact - positive, neutral and negative - that nature has on mankind. And finally, the fourth theme was Camus' existentialism and described his tenets of lucidity, absurdity and revolt, all of which have been integrated into the essays of *Noces*. The presence of these four themes can unquestionably be felt, either explicitly or implicitly, throughout *Noces*. Thus, in order to produce a translation that can convey all the power and intensity of the original, they must be thoroughly researched

and clearly understood.

NOTES

¹Ke Wen-li, "Translation and Culture with special reference to the translation of *Hong Lou Meng*," Babel 41.1 (1995): 25.

²Wen-li 25.

³S. Ade Ojo, "The Role of the Translator of African Written Literature in Inter-Cultural Consciousness and Relationships," Meta 31.3 (Sept. 1986): 298.

⁴Lauren G. Leighton, Two Worlds, One Art: Literary Translation in Russia and America (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991) 85.

⁵V.N. Komissarov, "Language and Culture in Translation: Competitors or Collaborators?," TTR 4.1 (1991): 33-34.

⁶R. Daniel Shaw, "The Translation Context: Cultural Factors in Translation," Translation Review 23 (1987): 25.

⁷Françoise Wuilmart, « Le traducteur littéraire : un marieur empathique de cultures, » Meta 35.1 (mars 1990) : 22-23.

⁸Daniel Slote, "Comment on Sharma," Meta 39.2 (1994): 313.

⁹José Lenzini, L'Algérie de Camus (Aix-en-Provence : Édisud, 1987) 13.

¹⁰Lenzini 9.

¹¹Lucien Adjadji, Albert Camus : Pages Méditerranéennes (Paris : Didier, 1968) 26.

¹²James W. Woelfel, Camus: A Theological Perspective (New York: Abingdon Press, 1975) 128.

¹³Phillip H. Rhein, Albert Camus (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1969) 15.

¹⁴Marcia Weis, The Lyrical Essays of Albert Camus (Ottawa: Éditions Naaman, 1976) 37.

¹⁵Germaine Brée, Camus (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1964) 12.

¹⁶Brée 13.

¹⁷Brée 13-14.

¹⁸Brée 14.

¹⁹Adjadji 5.

²⁰Brée 13-14.

²¹John Cruickshank, Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt (London: Oxford University Press, 1959) 36.

²²Woelfel 129.

²³Bernard East, Albert Camus ou l'homme à la recherche d'une morale (Montréal : Éditions Bellarmin, 1984) 99.

²⁴East 100.

²⁵Cruickshank 24.

²⁶Cruickshank 24.

²⁷David Sprintzen, Camus: A Critical Examination (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988) 6-7.

²⁸Weis 115.

²⁹Cruickshank 22.

³⁰Weis 51.

³¹Weis 54.

³²Weis 55.

³³David R. Ellison, Understanding Albert Camus (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990) 39.

³⁴Frantz Favre, « Camus et la poétique des ruines, » Albert Camus 13 : études comparatives (Paris : Lettres Modernes, 1989) 113.

³⁵Weis 56.

³⁶Morvan Lebesque, Camus par lui-même (Paris : Éditions du seuil, 1963) 16.

³⁷Brée 18.

³⁸Cruickshank 32.

³⁹East 133.

⁴⁰Thomas Hanna, The Thought and Art of Albert Camus (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1966) vii-ix.

⁴¹Rhein 16.

⁴²Cruickshank 38.

⁴³Sprintzen 11.

⁴⁴Hanna 13-14.

⁴⁵Rhein 20.

⁴⁶James S. Holmes, "Rebuilding the Bridge at Bommel: Notes on the Limits of Translatability," Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988) 48.

⁴⁷Holmes 49.

⁴⁸M. H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981) 98.

⁴⁹Leighton 218.

⁵⁰Leighton 219.

COMMENTARY THEME II

CAMUS' STYLE

CAMUS' STYLE

Style in Literary Translation

Within the field of translatology, translation theorists have long debated the issue of content versus form: whether form can be distinguished from content, whether form itself imparts meaning. Eugene Nida, the theorist of biblical translation, expounds a theory of "equivalent effect" which places great emphasis on conveying content and producing a comparable response in the receptors of a translation while treating form and style as something of an afterthought. However, many other translation theorists, such as Henri Meschonnic, hold contrasting views. They assert that a distinction cannot be made between form and content, that form is not merely ornamental, that the two are interwoven into the fabric of the text and work in tandem to create the unique, complex, multi-layered and multi-dimensional meaning of a given text.

In this chapter, form, or "style", is believed to be inherently meaningful. Unlike the translation of the pragmatic text, which is primarily objective and denotative, the translation of the highly subjective and connotative literary text must convey the content of the text through the style by which the author presents that content: style imparts meaning, adds emphasis and underscores the unity of the message at all levels. Barbara Folkart has written that: "Literature is a highly redundant type of message, saying the same thing simultaneously at many different levels: denotation, connotation, form, rhythms and sounds all converge to form a unified whole. It's the translator's business to recognize, through a close critical reading of the text, the

conceptual and aesthetic unity underlying these diverse manifestations and to see to it that they permeate as many levels of his translation as possible."¹ And Stella Johnson has reiterated: "Literature being a blend of thought and form, a literary translator is expected to take cognizance of the twin nature of the text to be translated. And since form is sometimes meaningful, contrary to the claim that its role is only to provide aesthetic pleasure, it also follows that a literary translator should, in addition to conveying surface meanings, endeavour to highlight ideas embedded in the structure of the original text."² The "twin nature" of the literary text means that language is used not only to inform the reader, as in the pragmatic text, but also to move the reader. The writer creates symbols and images, manipulates rhythm and cadence, makes motivated lexical and structural choices, and exploits the ambiguities inherent in the medium; style thus refers not to a concrete meaning explicitly contained in the words and lines of the writing itself, but to a meaning that flows evocatively and intuitively between the lines. That subtle meaning must be perceived and conveyed in order to maintain the unity and power of the text in translation.

In Chapter I of the commentary, Camus' many complex themes and symbols were described in detail as they applied to the essays of *Noces*. In the present chapter, we shall see how those themes and symbols are reinforced and highlighted through Camus' skilful use of stylistic devices, and how these devices in turn pose a challenge to the translation of the essays.

Camus' Style: Specific Challenges to Translation

Praise of Camus' literary style abounds:

"... Il est probable que dans l'œuvre sombre et pure de Camus se puissent discerner

les principaux traits des lettres françaises de l'avenir. Elle nous offrent la promesse d'une littérature classique, sans illusions, mais pleine de confiance en la grandeur de l'humanité; dure, mais sans violence inutile, passionnée mais retenue... une littérature qui s'efforce de peindre la condition métaphysique de l'homme tout en participant pleinement aux mouvements de la société."³ and,

"... le style de Camus est celui d'un grand écrivain. Le dépouillement et l'élan lyrique, tels sont ses caractéristiques essentielles. Dans ses livres les plus accomplis... ces deux tendances qui peuvent sembler contradictoires donnent naissance à une œuvre classique, où s'équilibrent la volonté d'ordre, d'unité, et la tension intérieure contre laquelle l'écrivain ne cesse de lutter. C'est cette lutte qui donne à ses plus belles pages leur ton particulier : celui d'une voix harmonieuse et crispée, ardente et sobre, douce et révoltée. Voix à laquelle l'œuvre de Camus devra sa vertu la plus durable."⁴

The wealth of literature devoted to the study of Camus' style confirms that art, for Camus, was always essentially a matter of form; the expression of ideas, however abstract or difficult, could never be separated from the form in which they were enveloped.⁵ And while the issues of content versus form and the inherent value of style have already been debated briefly in this chapter, the fact that Camus himself viewed form as an essential element in his writing, inseparable from its content, provides additional justification for a study of his style and the necessity to convey that style in translation.

Camus can be described as a "Class Two" writer; in other words, to Camus, "it is important that the capacity of language be exploited, so that the ambiguities [...] and centrifugal connotations are enjoyed rather than regretted. [...] A Class Two novelist purposely exploits the accidental properties of words."⁶ Indeed Camus makes special use of language which goes far beyond mere communication; the language - its form and shape - is itself expressive. His writing

is richly descriptive and stylistically motivated, and his special awareness of Mediterranean colour and light make his writing seem like "word paintings".

For the translator of Camus' work, the greatest challenge lies in finding the means to exploit the target language in such a way as to produce a translation that is as richly descriptive as Camus' while preserving the special emphases and profound tone of the source text. In this section, we will study some of formal features of *Noces* and consider their implications for the translation of these essays. The features to be discussed include: (i) the essay format, (ii) the narrative voice, (iii) lexical choices, (iv) poetic devices, (v) syntactic and structural choices, and (vi) the lyrical register.

(i) *The Essay Format*

The essay had its beginning in France, receiving its name from Montaigne's great *Essais* of 1580 and, since the sixteenth century, the essay has continued to serve writers in France as a vehicle for the expression of personal opinions or feelings. As for the place of the essay in the twentieth century, the following definition is particularly apt for the present study:

"L'essai est d'abord un totalitarisme. Le sens de la solution du problème est dicté par une conviction intérieure, souvent préconçue ; l'argumentation fait appel tour à tour à la raison, au cœur, à l'imagination ; la composition est souple, parfois irrégulière, avec raccourcis et digressions ; le "tempo" varié ; le style calque un mouvement intérieur et est frappé à l'empreinte personnelle de l'auteur. En bref, quelle que soit sa signification didactique, même et surtout lorsque l'essayiste y attache une importance capitale, l'essai reste œuvre d'art et objet de plaisir, détachable de la démonstration proprement dite."⁷

Thus, for the subjective writer of lyrical tendency, such as Camus, who rejects the constraints of

formally structured poetry, the essay genre seems a particularly happy choice. There have been many definitions of the essay, but most agree on the following three characteristics: it should be relatively brief, of a personal, reflective nature, and written in prose. Within these modest restrictions, it has the virtue of allowing the writer greater freedom than any other genre.⁸

These characteristics made the essay genre a uniquely appropriate medium for Camus. Certainly he stressed the freedom and independence of the writer, and as an artist he was deeply concerned with form, as was pointed out earlier. But above all else, with his pronounced lyrical tendency, Camus simply wrote best in the essay, where he was entirely free to reflect and to speculate, to express his emotions with the greatest degree of spontaneity, to speak in his own voice without the constraints imposed by other forms.⁹ In fact, it is likely that if Camus had never written any fiction or drama, he would still rank among the outstanding authors of the twentieth century solely as a literary essayist. For while his dramatic and novelistic works have their weaknesses or at least limitations as such, one of their strongest redeeming virtues is the exemplary quality of his prose, which is distilled in its purest form in the essays. It is thus noteworthy that Camus' literary career both began and ended with the publication of a volume of essays; for him, it was first and foremost what its etymology suggests: an attempt to express something, a trying out of ideas and forms, an experiment. It was an attempt to record impressions and ideas that could later be used in other works.

The personal essay is clearly the medium in which Camus appears to be the most at home; it is an ideal vehicle for expressing immediate, concrete experience. The material with which he was working at the time that he wrote *Noces* was the very substance of his own life, but it would be an oversimplification to reduce what Camus writes to mere confessional

autobiography. Nonetheless, in these essays, he relaxes and speaks in his own voice of the actual settings and issues in his life. And he reveals the compassion, the warmth of personality and the zest for living, the amused affection for the details of everyday life that he subordinates in his novels and plays. Suspending his usual principle of keeping his private life out of his writing, he comes close to autobiography in talking about the poverty of life in Algiers, the physical and sensual glories of days spent in Tipasa, his compassion for the old people left behind by the young with nothing to think about but death, and his memory of beautiful girls dancing in necklaces of jasmine or flowering yearly on the Algerian beaches.¹⁰

Camus' lyrical essays are also of value for the understanding they give of his other works; the lyrical essays contain all the major themes that were developed over the course of their author's literary production. Camus himself alluded to this fact in his preface to the 1958 reedition of *L'envers et l'endroit*, his earliest collection of essays, when he speaks of "ce long cheminement pour retrouver par les détours de l'art les deux ou trois images simples et grandes sur lesquelles le cœur, une première fois, s'est ouvert".¹¹ And while each of the essays of *Noces* is a meditation complete in itself, together they underscore the current of his central themes and constitute a simple, but sumptuously orchestrated spiritual credo: there is no afterlife; each man's life is an end in itself with no significance in terms of a personal God; we die and our only kingdom is "of this earth". The essay proved to be the best vehicle for such meditation, for it allowed the young author to speak in the first person yet at the same time indirectly through the medium of a chosen style.¹²

From this discussion, it is clear that the essay format was a means of expression favoured by Camus, and one of tremendous import to the whole of his literary work. A translator of

Camus' essays must thus be aware of its special relevance to the author and understand the reasons underlying its relevance, for the essay format will confront her with two distinct challenges.

One of the most important characteristics of the essay is its highly personal nature. As a vehicle for expressing personal opinions and feelings, for spontaneous reflection and speculation in the author's own voice, the essay bears the author's individual stamp - the intimate, first-person narration and constant reference to Camus' personal experiences, ideas and perceptions in *Noces*. This makes it imperative for the translator to have an understanding of the Camusian context - the highly individual landscape and mindscape that comprise the backdrop of these essays. The Camusian context is significant in all of Camus' writings, but especially in these essays which refer so explicitly to his own experiences and his own life. The translator must fully comprehend the powerful symbol of the Algerian setting and the recurring themes that sprang from Camus' Algerian experience in all their complexity in order to avoid mistranslating or misrepresenting vital elements. The essay format reinforces the importance of the setting and highlights Camus' recurring themes; in short, the form inherently emphasizes the content.

A second characteristic which has implications for translation stems from the very etymology of the word essay. An "essay" in the truest sense of the word refers to an attempt to express or convey something to the reader. One of the most powerful means of accomplishing this is to draw the reader in by appealing to his emotions. There is no denying the inherent emotional appeal of the virtual cacophony of colours, flowers, smells, sounds and tastes described in the first three paragraphs of "Noces à Tipasa"; the reader is utterly seduced by the sensory profusion. The translator should strive to reproduce that feeling of sensory profusion in her own

text through motivated lexical choices and lyrical cadence, and the translator who is aware of Camus' affinity for the essay genre will take particular care to maintain the power of Camus writing not only at the denotative level, but at the connotative level as well. Once again, form conveys content.

(ii) The Narrative Voice

The essays of *Noces* fall under the category of the lyrical essay. The concept of lyricism will be described in detail in part (vi) of this section; however, one characteristic feature of the lyrical essay is its personal narrative style, a style clearly exhibited in Camus' *Noces*. The personal narrative style strengthens the affective quality of Camus' writing; what is communicated in these essays appears to be the result of an intensely personal experience. This subjective quality is conveyed in large part through the narrative voice in which these essays are written: the first person.

The narrative point of view forms a crucial guide for the reader's interpretation of the work. In *Noces*, a strong personal coloration emerges from numerous passages; many of the descriptions, anecdotes and illustrations are taken directly from the writer's own experiences. The first-person narration is, therefore, doubly significant in the case of *Noces* because although the thrust of the essays extends far beyond simple autobiography, the people, places and events that are described and the meaning Camus draws from them are, for the most part, autobiographical. Actual experience is related, along with its effects on the writer's sensibility and intellect. Camus himself describes the milieu of his childhood and youth, communicating his reactions to it; Camus himself experiences with all his senses the beauties of Tipasa, savours the flowers and

all of nature's bounty, lives the outdoor life of sun and sea in Algiers to the fullest. The experiences related are intensely personal and owe their emotional impact to physical phenomena - the sun, the sea, the absinthes - that the reader can identify with. In fact, the style of narration creates an almost cinematographic effect, especially in the first three paragraphs of "Noces à Tipasa", as Camus sets the lush scene and leads the reader through it personally. This sense of intimacy shared with the narrator draws the reader into the text and involves him fully in it. Perhaps it was Camus' extensive background in the theatre that taught him the importance of establishing a scene and then drawing the viewer into it. The highly descriptive and physical qualities of the writing serve to enhance the allure of the setting and the intimacy of the relationship with the narrator.

Another trait which underscores the personal and immediate character of the narration in Camus' essays is the almost "conversational" tone which Camus sometimes uses. In some cases, the essays read like "one side of a dialogue, with the other side understood by its effect."¹³ Often in Camus' lyrical essays there is the impression of a spoken phrase, with a listener present and ready to respond. In "L'été à Alger", for example, when describing a twilight in Algiers, he writes: "Quand je suis quelque temps loin de ce pays j'imagine ses crépuscules comme des promesses de bonheur" [A, p. 35]. Further on in the same essay, the impression is reinforced: "Presque aussitôt après, la première étoile apparaît [...]. Et puis, d'un coup, dévorante, la nuit" [A, p. 37]. That sense of immediacy, of speech heard rather than read, derives from several elements that appear with great frequency in Camus' lyrical essays. The voice of the personal "je" speaks now of physical phenomena, and by its very concentration on the physical draws the reader into the framework of a concrete situation beside the narrator. Time as well as space is

involved, and the feeling of being present is enhanced when the narrator begins many of his remarks conversationally with such words as "alors", "quand", "souvent", "et puis", "presque aussitôt après", conveying his movements to his listener. Increasingly involved in his movement, the reader becomes the invisible listener and the personal, emotional tone is further heightened.¹⁴

A final element in the essays of *Noces* which emphasizes the intimate and personal narrative style is Camus' insistent use of the present tense. The present tense reinforces the sense of immediacy, of actions unfolding in the here and now - perhaps an allusion to Camus' existentialist tenets. This special emphasis on the present tense has the effect, once again, of involving the reader profoundly in the narrative at a personal level. The cinematographic analogy applies here as well: the reader sees what the narrator sees and experiences the action with the narrator as it unfolds; in this way, the reader himself becomes a participant in it. The effect is powerful.

From this discussion, it is clear that the first-person narrative voice plays a significant role in establishing the rapport between the narrator and reader of *Noces*. The sense of intimacy and immediacy imparted in the essays by the personal, subjective narrative style and the predominance of the present tense are essential to the fabric of the work as a whole, and must thus be replicated to the greatest degree possible in translation.

The translator must bear two issues in mind in attempting to convey Camus' narrative style. First, as we have seen, the first-person narration adds a personal, intimate tone to the essays; this is reinforced by the fact that much in these texts comes directly from Camus' own personal experience. It thus becomes vital that the translator take extra care to maintain the tone, style and personality of the original, because she is translating not just a text, but a life. *Noces*

is a very personal piece of writing, and the narrative voice wholly supports that characteristic. Here, once again, style inherently highlights and compliments content.

Given the immediacy and subjectivity of the first-person narration in *Noces*, the translator must attempt to "impersonate" the author to maintain that sense of intimacy in the translated texts, and herein lies the second challenge. In this case, the more the translator knows and understands the author, the less risk she runs of altering or distorting the texts. Nevertheless, any translator will interpret a text through her own individual frame of reference, her culture, her preconceptions, and that will unavoidably colour her perception - and translation - of it. As Hana Jechová remarks perceptively:

"Comment l'optique de la représentation littéraire se reflète-t-elle dans la traduction? Sous certains aspects, la traduction est fondée sur l'interprétation. [...] Mais l'interprétation amène toujours une certaine distance entre celui qui perçoit et ce qui doit être perçu. [...] En traduisant, on cherche parfois non seulement à présenter la réalité fictive créée par l'œuvre originale, mais à expliquer son contenu, surtout ce contenu logique et extérieur qui se compose d'événements décrits. En l'expliquant, en l'enrichissant de détails plus précis et plus nombreux, on croit rapprocher l'intrigue décrite du lecteur. C'est pourquoi le traducteur emploie parfois des expressions plus concrètes que l'auteur de l'original, il se sert d'images aux contours nets, il ajoute de nouveaux détails dévoilant la réalité décrite d'une manière plus précise. Mais en voulant se rapprocher du lecteur, il s'éloigne parfois de lui : la représentation littéraire très claire et très précise est froide et le lecteur n'entre pas dans l'atmosphère."¹⁵

Thus in an attempt to interpret the work, to act as a "facilitator" between reader and author, the translator may make changes or extraneous additions to the text. These changes, however, if not made judiciously and in full respect of the author's intentions, could have the deleterious effect

of *increasing* the distance between the reader and author and, ultimately, of alienating the reader. In *Noces*, the narrative style clearly encourages an atmosphere of intimacy and immediacy between reader and author, and the translator must take great care to mediate carefully between source and target text, to maintain the personal tone and style without making unnecessary additions, aiming always for a true representation of the author's context and intentions.

(iii) Lexical Choices

"Dans le contexte littéraire, le mot se teint d'une certaine coloration et sa connotation dans cette sphère particulière est parfois plus importante que son sens premier. Le mot littéraire ou poétique est comparable à une tache de couleur en peinture : un même rouge peut avoir des allures bien différentes selon qu'il est entouré de brun et d'orange, ou de blanc et de jaune, selon qu'il apparaît dans les fameux drapés d'un Van Eyck ou dans un tableau de Matisse."¹⁶

As the painter manipulates colour, so the creative literary artist shapes language to the design of his own individual conceptual, ideological and emotional context. He knows that words are polysemous in nature: they have a first meaning as well as a number of connotative values, which can be activated by the context in which they are placed. Thus, in creating his work, the literary artist exploits, as he fancies, the open-ended process of communication, the manifold potentialities of connotation.

If Camus' style has been celebrated by critics and intellectuals the world over, much of that praise is surely due to Camus' unique exploitation of the multi-dimensional properties of the French language. Camus employs words or expressions that appear, at first glance, to be quite simple; in reality, however, these expressions often carry a special resonance:

"... il ne faut pas prendre l'auteur de *Noces* au pied de la lettre, c'est-à-dire qu'il ne faut pas considérer son vocabulaire comme un répertoire de désignations rigoureuses et rationnelles ; il faut le prendre comme possibilité évocatoire. Les mots camusiens n'ont pas d'arêtes, ils ont un rayonnement. Ils ne sont pas, ils donnent à être [...]"¹⁷

Camus' use of motivated lexical choices can be striking; in many cases, these choices exploit the innate open-endedness and connotative value of language itself and serve to subtly underscore many of the thematic undercurrents that run throughout the whole of Camus' literary production. A simple, "intuitive" translation of a multi-dimensional literary text such as *Noces* will fail to render the full nuance and complexity of the source text and may even result in significant mistranslations or distortions. The translator must rise above the level of individual words and phrases and work from the text as an integrated whole in order to manipulate and exploit the connotative properties of her target language.

In translating *Noces*, I attempted to recapture the connotative complexity of Camus' language by making similarly motivated lexical choices. One example is the translation of the title of the essay "Noces à Tipasa"; the term at issue here is "noces". In the initial drafts of the translation, "noces" was translated by "wedding"; however, it was later modified to "nuptials". The etymology of "wedding" is the same as that of the French term "gage"; along with the primary denotation of a union of two elements, it implies the idea of a contract, a connotation that is not appropriate to the context of these essays. "Nuptials", on the other hand, has the same etymology as "nubile", thus alongside the denotation of a union, the idea of sexual maturity is conveyed which is entirely appropriate to the sensuality of the texts and the implicitly sexual nature of the "*nuptials* of man and earth" described in the last paragraph of "L'été à Alger". My

choice reinforces Camus' theme of the primacy of the physical, the celebration of the sensual life of the body; at a subliminal level, the lexical choice fortifies the overall cohesion of the essays and underscores one of their underlying themes.

A second example that reinforces the sensual undertone of the essays and highlights the primacy of physicality is the use of the term "jouir": "Mais aujourd'hui l'imbécile est roi, et j'appelle imbécile celui qui a peur de *jouir*" [T, p. 22]. In this case, the initial "intuitive" translation saw this term translated as "to enjoy"; however, increased familiarity with and exposure to the Camusian context and the undercurrents of the essays demanded that the translation be changed to: "But today, the imbecile is king, and imbeciles, for me, are those who fear *pleasure*", a lexical choice which conveys explicit overtones of sexual pleasure and satisfaction consistent with the context. This overtone was highlighted lexically once again in the following sentence from "L'été à Alger": "Il est tout entier livré aux yeux et on le connaît dès l'instant où l'on en *jouit*" [A, p. 29], and the sexual connotation was maintained in the English translation, "It reveals itself fully to the eye and yields itself even as one *takes pleasure* from it." And the validity of this insight was echoed later in the same essay in following sentence: "Il faut une rare vocation pour être *un jouisseur*" [A, p. 49], which was rendered in English as "It takes a rare talent to become a *sensualist*", clearly emphasizing the physical, sexual nature of the term.

A third example of motivated lexical choice is the translation of the following sentence taken from "L'été à Alger": "Ce qu'il exige, ce sont des âmes *clairvoyantes*, c'est-à-dire, sans consolation" [A, p. 29]. Because I knew that the concept of lucidity - clearly alluded to here - was central to Camus' existentialist tenets, I took advantage of the opportunity to lexically punctuate this fundamental concept and rendered the following interpretation: "It demands *lucid*

souls, in other words, souls without consolation."

The analogy to painting made earlier is particularly relevant to Camus' writing because his exquisite sensitivity to the evocative power of colour and light makes his essays seem like word paintings. In *Noces*, the beauty and vitality of nature are described in a vocabulary that is violently sensuous in nature: colours, odours and tactile sensations are presented in strongly-rhythmed paragraphs. The unusual vitality in the language of *Noces* stems from the direct elemental quality of the images used and the intensity of the sensuous charge these images carry: "la mer cuirassée d'argent" [T, p. 14], the "odeur volumineuse" of aromatic plants [T, p. 14], the countryside "noire de soleil" [T, p. 14], the "jaune et bleu" world of Tipasa [T, p. 14],¹⁸ and the "alcool généreux" produced by the profusion of colours, odours and light that is virtually intoxicating [T, p. 16]. In answer to an item in a questionnaire that was once sent to him, Camus listed his "ten favourite words" as "the world, suffering, the earth, the mother, men, the desert, honour, misery, summer, the sea".¹⁹ These earthy, elemental terms are already the key words in his first essays, including those of *Noces*.

The richness of Camus' writing challenges the translator. Throughout *Noces*, Camus' lexical choices underscore concepts and ideas that are part of the Camusian context and fundamental to his work. The vigilant translator must learn to identify these subtle clues and exploit her own language to produce a target text with the same complexity and connotative richness, the same highly sensual and physical qualities, as the original.

(iv) Poetic Devices

As we have seen, the essays of *Noces* have a physical and sensual quality which creates an

intense emotional appeal; they teem with an intoxicating profusion of colours, textures, sounds, tastes and smells which are conveyed in a language that is stylistically aggressive and sensually vivid. Along with motivated lexical choices, Camus mobilized poetic devices such as alliteration and assonance²⁰, poetic diction and personification to give the essays of *Noces* their singular depth and resonance. Let us now consider the challenge that these poetic devices pose to the translator and her target text.

Alliteration and assonance are effective devices for emphasizing particular words (to reinforce underlying meaning or to link related words) and imparting a certain rhythm to the sentence. The translator of a text that features these devices must ask herself whether it is necessary or desirable to reproduce these elements. If so, she will quickly realize that the translation problem raised by alliteration and assonance is an obvious one: it may be possible to match the sound in other languages, but not the meaning, or, alternatively, the meaning, but not the sound. The translator will thus have to decide where her priorities lie and develop an overall strategy for translating the text as a whole.

In translating *Noces*, the presence of alliteration and assonance were always duly noted and, where the target language could be manipulated without subjugating the meaning of the text, these devices were replicated. For example, in the essay "L'été à Alger", the following excerpt illustrates the use of alliteration: "Après leur cri, le silence retombe sous le soleil ..." [A, p. 35], and the alliteration was maintained, even amplified, in the translation: "After their calls fade, silence settles soonce again over the sunny square ...". Similarly, the alliteration of "Ces barbares qui se prélassent sur des plages, ..." [A, p. 45] was maintained and amplified in its translation: "... those barbarians basking on the beaches ...". In some cases, however, the alliteration of the

original text could not be replicated in the translation due simply to the limitations of the target language. In such cases, the translator should strive to maintain the integrity of the content, and compensate by thoughtfully applying this linguistic device elsewhere in the translation. This was the strategy adopted here. In cases such as "Ce sont souvent des amours secretes, celles qu'on partage avec une ville" [A, p. 29] and "La vie d'un homme s'accomplit sans le secours de son esprit, avec ses reculs et ses avances, à la fois sa solitude et ses presences" [A, p. 49], the basic limitations of the English language prevented replication of the alliteration; however, these losses were compensated for elsewhere in the translation where no alliteration had been used in the source text, as in "... the orange canoe full of brown bodies brings us back at breakneck speed" and "A small colony of crimson clouds ...", both from "Summer in Algiers". Sometimes, stylistic devices defy immediate replication; however, through compensation, the overall richness and complexity of the textual fabric is retained in the translation even though some of Camus' original emphasis is displaced.

Another device employed by Camus in *Noces* is poetic diction. "A style of writing is apt to be called poetic when it exhibits a fairly dense concentration of illocutionary power in relatively few words or stanzas. [...] Alliteration is one hallmark of poetic diction, as are hallowed words or [...] words always identified as belonging to a more elevated level of language."²¹ Poetic diction calls for highly motivated choices on the part of the translator - in part, to underscore elements of the Camusian context, as was seen earlier - but mostly to maintain the tone and intensity of the original.

"Intense" is an apt description for the essays of *Noces*. They fairly teem with an intoxicating profusion of sensory and tactile descriptions conveyed in language that is stylistically

aggressive and sensually vivid and that has a profound emotional impact on the reader. The translator must render these descriptions at the same level of intensity or incur regrettable losses in her translation. Such was the case in an early draft of my translation: a lack of regard for Camus' poetic diction had the effect of banalizing many evocative descriptions and dulling the impact of the writing considerably. The following examples, taken from "Noces à Tipasa", demonstrate the disparity between banalized undertranslation and powerful poetic diction: "la mer cuirassée d'argent" [T, p. 14] was initially translated as "the silver sparkle of the sea" and later revised to "the silver armour of the sea"; "odeur volumineuse" [T, p. 14] was initially translated as "heady fragrance" and later revised to "voluminous odour"; "soupir odorant et âcre" [T, p. 14] was initially translated as "sweetly pungent smell" and later revised to "pungent and acrid breath"; "grand libertinage" [T, p. 16] was initially translated as "sweet freedom" and later revised to "sweeping debauchery". Clearly, the initial translations appear weak, watered down and unimaginative in comparison to their more evocative revised counterparts; had they remained in the translation, the text would have lost much of its vividness and intensity as well as its overall textual cohesiveness. The essays of *Noces* hang together well because form and content are interwoven and integral to one another. Disregard on the part of the translator for the stylistic element of poetic diction would ultimately have damaged the text as a whole: both its complex content and its rich style.

A final poetic device which Camus employs frequently in the essays of *Noces* is personification. In both "Noces à Tipasa" and "L'été à Alger", the Algerian landscape appears to be not merely a backdrop for the writing, but essentially a protagonist in the narrative. Camus' use of personification may be a stylistic strategy that subtly reinforces the centrality and the

singularity of Algeria and all that it represents in the Camusian context. Examples of personification abound: the sea and "le sourire de ses dents éclatantes" [T, p. 16], the geraniums which "versent leur sang ..." [T, p. 16], the stones of the ruins which are described as "filles prodigues" [T, p. 16] and are welcomed with flowers upon their return to "la maison de leur mère" [T, p. 16], the blossoms of a pomegranate tree are "clos et côtelés comme de petits poings fermés" [T, p. 24], "la terre soupirait lentement" [T, p. 28], and the smile of the Algerians is a "sourire complice" turned toward the "sourire éclatant de ses ciels" [T, p. 28].²² Like poetic diction, personification adds subtle emphasis to the content and context of the writing as well as stylistic texture and depth.

Some critics have perceived more than simple personification in Camus' style, reading spiritual or transcendent values into his writing. Other scholars, however, have cautioned bluntly against ascribing spiritual values to these essays. For example, John Cruickshank has asserted that:

"Camus' view of the Algerian landscape is essentially unsentimental and unspiritual despite the lyrical vocabulary by which he often describes it. [...] Camus does not [...] make mountains and fields assume some life of the spirit. This remains true even when he allows himself to slip into the poetic language of identification. What gives him satisfaction is not spiritualization of the landscape but a feeling of correspondence between this landscape and his own mood. [...] Camus is at pains to emphasize the strictly physical reality of natural objects and of his own presence in nature. The searing beauty of Algeria teaches no lessons. It offers rich indulgence to the senses but has nothing to give those who seek from it food for the soul or comfort for the mind."²³

Nonetheless, as we can see in the examples above, Camus' descriptions of the Algerian landscape

clearly involve personification. The translator must strive to impart a similar sense of personification to the target text in order to reinforce the centrality of the Algerian presence and maintain the tone, evocativeness and cohesiveness of the original.

Like the painter with his palette of colourful possibilities, Camus clearly exploits the multi-dimensional properties of the French language. In some cases, his seemingly simple lexical choices underscore the recurring themes of the Camusian context; in other cases, his richly resonant depictions of the profuse beauty of the Algerian landscape incorporate poetic devices such as alliteration and assonance, poetic diction and personification. Camus' writing is vivid throughout, and the translator must try to impart the same qualities to the target text.

(v) Syntactic and Structural Choices

As we have seen, in creating a literary work, an author plays on both the explicit denotative value and the implicit connotative value of language. But this subtle manipulation of language does not stop at the lexical level: it often extends to the syntactic and structural level as well. "La phrase d'auteur est souvent une composition presque musicale dans laquelle le rythme et la sonorité jouent un rôle essentiel. Cette phrase s'inscrit à son tour dans le contexte plus vaste du paragraphe et du chapitre, eux aussi minutieusement agencés pour produire ou renforcer tel ou tel effet, créer telle ou telle ambiance, refléter tel ou tel point de vue."²⁴ Thus, the translator must take care to replicate, where possible, the author's syntactic and structural choices, for these, too, convey meaning and contribute to the overall cohesion of the source text. As Lauren Leighton has put it:

"For obvious reasons, the exact reproduction of foreign syntax in all its specific

features is impossible; it is impossible to conceive of an exact copy of the phraseology of another language because each language has its own syntax. But in cases where the syntax of the original text employs repetition, parallelisms, anaphora or symmetrical verbal constructions which facilitate the organization of a marked poetic or prose rhythm and can easily be conveyed by available means in the target language, the reproduction of these syntactic forms in a translation into another language is obligatory. It does not follow from this, however, that the syntax of, say, an English translation should sound un-English. [...] A good translator will not surrender to the influence of foreign expressions which are alien to the rules of his own language: he will make every effort to ensure that each translated sentence sounds appropriate by adhering to the logic and the aesthetics of his own language."²⁵

Camus' syntax and structure appear to be a highly motivated expression of critical elements of the Camusian context. Features such as extraordinary line length, rhythmic interplay of short and long phrases, parallel structure, oblique or fragmented phrasing, even the shape and pattern of individual phrases illustrate Camus' richly inspired style. Thus wherever possible, in the translation of the two essays from *Noces*, the original syntax and structure were reproduced to maintain the artistry and intensity of the original.

There were, however, features of Camus' syntactic and structural style in *Noces* that presented considerable challenges. In these cases, specific strategies were implemented in the translation and the syntactic and structural patterns of the original had to be abandoned. For although it is important to respect the structure of the source text, that structure must not be strictly adhered to if it runs contrary to the "genius" and aesthetics of the target language. The concept of "exoticizing" in a translated text can be effective if it is done at the level of the socio-cultural situation, as we saw in the examples cited at the end of in Chapter I; however,

exoticizing in the linguistic sense, by compulsively retaining syntactic elements of the original text, can produce an translation whose syntax is not only awkward or distracting, but even completely unreadable and therefore, completely undesirable. Let us now examine those syntactic and structural features in *Noces* that posed a challenge to its translation, and consider the strategies implemented for handling those features.

One of the most frequently recurring, and consistently confounding, syntactic elements in *Noces* is the recourse to phrasal structures built around the pronoun "on", which has no single grammatical or stylistic equivalent in English. "On" appears in the essay "Noces à Tipasa" 15 times, and in the essay "L'été à Alger" some 52 times, which makes it a significant factor from a statistical standpoint alone.

The indeterminate nature of "on" may typically be translated by a passive verbal structure in English. However, in a text such as *Noces*, which so greatly emphasizes the immediacy of experience in the here and now, frequent and repetitive passive structures in the English translation would surely have detracted from the power of the narrative. Passive structures were, indeed, used in the translations, as in the following examples; however, their use was kept to a minimum: "Ce qu'*on peut aimer* à Alger, c'est ce dont tout le monde vit ..." ⇒ "What is *most loved* about Algiers is what sustains everyone ..." [A, p. 29]; "Dans les rues de la Marine, [...], *on peut le mesurer* au mélodieux bourdonnement des mouches ..." ⇒ "In the rues de la Marine, [...], *the silence can be measured* by the melodious buzzing of the flies ..." [A, p. 35]; "Quand le soleil a disparu, *on les relève*" ⇒ "Once the sun has set, *they are raised*" [A, p. 37]; "À Belcourt, *on a vu des mariages se conclure* ainsi ..." ⇒ "In Belcourt, *marriages have been sealed* this way ..." [A, p. 39]. Interestingly, in virtually every case, despite the use of the passive

structure, the content of the phrase becomes more concrete and explicit in translation.

In an effort to avoid translating "on" by the passive, the translator may seek to replace the indeterminate "on" with a more specific and direct subject in her translation. One common means of translating "on" is by using "one" in English when referring broadly to a generic subject; however, as there is a stiffness and an awkward formality about "one", its use was also kept to a minimum, as in the following examples: "À Paris, *on peut avoir la nostalgie d'espace et de battements d'ailes*" ⇒ "In Paris, *one can yearn* for space and for the fluttering of wings" [A, p. 29]; "Il demande qu'*on fasse un acte de lucidité comme on fait un acte de foi*" ⇒ "It asks that *one profess* lucidity as *one would profess* faith" [A, p. 29].

In many cases, instead of using the awkward and generic "one" in the translated texts, an attempt was made to identify and introduce a specific and concrete subject to the phrase, such as "they", "the young men", "you", "a boy", "people" and "we". Such a change makes the translated text far more concrete and explicitly referential, and the English text thus reads more "familiarily", as is evident in the following examples: "À Alger, *on ne dit pas « prendre un bain », mais « se taper un bain »*. [...] *On se baigne dans le port et l'on va se reposer sur des bouées. Quand on passe près d'une bouée où se trouve déjà une jolie fille, on crie aux camarades ...*" ⇒ "In Algiers, *they don't speak of 'going for a swim', but of 'having themselves a good swim'*. [...] *The young men go swimming in the port then stretch out on the buoys. When they swim past a buoy with a pretty girl on it, they shout to their friends ...*" [A, p. 31]; "Non que ces hommes manquent de principes. *On a sa morale, et bien particulière. On ne « manque » pas à sa mère. On fait respecter sa femme dans les rues. On a des égards pour la femme enceinte. On ne tombe pas à deux sur un adversaire ...*" ⇒ "Not that these men lack principles. *They have their*

morality, and a very precise one, at that. *They* are never disrespectful to their mothers. *They* see to it that their wives are treated respectfully in public. *They* show consideration towards pregnant women. *They* don't gang up against an adversary ..." [A, p. 41]; "Tout ce qu'on fait ici marque le dégoût de la stabilité et l'insouciance de l'avenir. On se dépêche de vivre ..." ⇒ "Everything *they* do in Algiers demonstrates their distaste for stability and their lack of regard for the future. *They're* in a hurry to live ..." [A, p. 45].

One final means of handling the recurring challenge of translating "on" was to circumvent the problem altogether by changing the structure of the target phrase, as in the following examples: "Quand on est au niveau de l'eau, [...], les corps déroulent une frise cuivrée" ⇒ "Down by the water, the bodies form a bronze frieze ..." [A, p. 33]; "Et, à mesure qu'on avance dans le mois d'août et que le soleil grandit ..." ⇒ "And, as the month of August advances and the sun intensifies ..." [A, p. 33]; "... la première étoile apparaît qu'on voyait se former et se durcir dans l'épaisseur du ciel" ⇒ "... the first star appears, taking shape and crystallizing in the depths of the sky" [A, p. 37]; "... feinte sinistre par quoi on prête un corps et des désirs à ce qui au mieux est un liquide noir" ⇒ "... sinister stratagem attributing a body and desires to what is, at best, a black liquid" [A, p. 43]. In all of these cases, the change to the structure of the target phrase had the effect of making the translation more specific, more explicit and more concrete, and therefore more appropriately idiomatic for the English language.

Another feature that presented a challenge to the translation of *Noces* was the sometimes "hermetic" style in which the essays were written. "The lyrical essays have the expository form of tightly knotted prose poems, challenging the reader with complex extended figures of speech, obliquely expressed themes, elliptical jumps in narration and thought, and cryptic motifs that

reveal their meaning bit by bit as they recur with variations from essay to essay".²⁶ Indeed, without sufficient prior knowledge of the Camusian context, the essays were initially difficult to penetrate and decipher; in its first drafts, the translation of *Noces* revealed marked misapprehensions and mistranslations. Familiarity with Camus' fundamental themes and concepts helped clarify the writing considerably, but an appreciation for his characteristic "tightly-knotted" and "hermetic" style also brought new insight into the translation: within individual paragraphs and within the text as a whole, everything seems to inter-relate. One of the keys to understanding these essays thus came from the realization that subtle textual links within the essays themselves provided structural clues that helped to make the texts discernable. To translate the texts effectively, therefore, it was essential to consider each essay as a system, to see it as a whole comprised of integrated parts, rather than focussing on the individual component parts, for these often became clear only when seen within the broader framework of the text as a whole. Evidence of the subtle cohesion that these textual links provided can be seen in the following examples: the sentence fragment "Cette nuance seulement : la couleur" [A, p. 33], seemed at first glance strangely cryptic and elliptical, but the remainder of the paragraph and the two references to "les peaux" made it clear that it referred to the ever-deepening tan of the Algerians' skins, a symbolic result of man's interaction with nature; the repetitive, parallel structure of the rhetorical questions "Comment alors ne pas s'identifier à ce dialogue de la pierre et de la chair à la mesure du soleil et des saisons?" [A, p. 33] and "...comment n'être pas sûr que je mène à travers les eaux lisses une fauve cargaison de dieux ..." [A, p. 35] within the same paragraph lent structural cohesion and subtle emphasis to Camus' theme of the primacy of nature and the need to actively experience it; the richly ironic effect of juxtaposing "Goethe en mourant

appelle la lumière et c'est un mot historique" and "À Belcourt et à Bab-el-Oued, les vieillards assis au fond des cafés écoutent les vantardises de jeunes gens à cheveux plaqués" [A, p. 31] to underscore Camus' disapproval of the Algerians' worship of youth and disdain of aging; the extraordinary cohesion imparted to the text by intertextual links such as "... l'été nous tend déjà en contraste ses autres richesses : je veux dire ses *silences* et son ennui. Ces *silences* n'ont pas tout la même qualité, [...]. Il y a *le silence* de midi sur la place du Gouvernement. [...] Il y a *le silence* de la sieste. [...] Ailleurs, dans les cafés maures de la Kasbah, c'est le corps qui est *silencieux*, [...]. Mais il y a surtout *le silence* des soirs d'été." [A, p. 35]. It is vital that the translator detect these subtle intertextual links and reproduce them wherever possible in the target text in order to maintain as much of the original's structural integrity as possible.

Linguistically, English and French differ in many ways. One feature which underscores their divergent natures is the prevalence in French of an abstract aspect where English typically favours a concrete aspect. This linguistic feature, which was given thorough treatment in the theories of Vinay and Darbelnet, is clearly borne out in Camus' writing. He sometimes employed abstract structures in *Noces* to give special emphasis - in the examples below, the abstract structures stand in stark contrast to the immediacy of their surrounding text and highlight the importance of Camus' desire for "noces" between man and his environment. Unfortunately, the abstract structures could not be idiomatically replicated in an English translation. Thus, in these cases, I altered the structure to render it more concrete in the target language, but I worked carefully to maintain any special tone or emphasis that was present in the source text. The following examples demonstrate Camus' use of deverbals and how this type of construction was effectively altered in translation to ring true to the English ear and sensibility: "Entré dans l'eau,

c'est *le saisissement*, *la montée* d'une glu froide et opaque, puis *le plongeon* dans le bourdonnement des oreilles, le nez coulant et la bouche amère -- *la nage*, les bras vernis d'eau sortis de la mer pour se dorer dans le soleil et rabattus dans une torsion de tous les muscles; *la course de l'eau* sur mon corps, *cette possession tumultueuse* de l'onde par mes jambes -- et *l'absence* d'horizon." ⇒ "In the water, *I feel* a sudden chill, *I rise up* through a cold, cloudy glue, then *dive*, my ears buzzing, nose running, mouth bitter -- and *swim*, my arms glistened with water leave the sea to bronze in the sun then re-enter with a twisting of their muscles; *the water flows* over my body, *my legs tumultuously take possession* of the sea -- and the horizon *disappears*." [T, p. 20]; "Toute la matinée s'est passée *en plongeons*, *en floraisons de rires* parmi des gerbes d'eau, *en longs coups de pagaie* autour des cargos rouges et noirs ..." ⇒ "We spend the entire morning *diving*, *laughter blossoming* amidst the sprays of water, *paddling with long strokes* around the red and black cargo ships ..." [A, p. 33]. In the first example, Camus made the French text more abstract by completely doing away with the standard subject-verb structure and replacing it with a nominal equivalent; this structure, however, proved to be more of a distraction than an innovation when used in English, and the standard subject-verb formula was reinstated in the translation. In the second example, the passive verbal structure is replaced with an active one, and the almost clumsy form that would result from a literal translation is replaced by simpler and less static present participles. The end result of these substantial changes is a target text that is more concrete, and thus satisfies the expectations of the English reader.

The Camusian sentence is a carefully crafted entity; often, its implicit structure carries as much meaning as its explicit content. One frequently recurring sentential feature in Camus' style is the "maxim phrase", a brief, symmetrical invention that conveys the impact and significance

of a philosophical assertion, and is thus well-suited to the intrinsic philosophical thrust of Camus' writing. "Une phrase-maxime, enfin, très frappante : dans les *Carnets* déjà, Camus cède au goût de l'aphorisme. Ces formules se développent ensuite sous forme de phrases courtes, bâties selon une symétrie, vraie ou fausse."²⁷ Examples of these muscular, proverb-like sentences abound in both "Noces à Tipasa" and "L'été à Alger", including the following: "Étreindre un corps de femme, c'est aussi retenir contre soi cette joie étrange qui descend du ciel vers la mer" [T, p. 20]; "Il n'y a pas de honte à être heureux" [T, p. 22]; "Il y a un temps pour vivre et un temps pour témoigner de vivre. Il y a aussi un temps pour créer, ce qui est moins naturel" [T, p. 24]; "... il y a une systématique du corps qui est aussi exaspérante que celle de l'esprit" [A, p. 33]; "Le signe de la jeunesse, c'est peut-être une vocation pour les bonheurs faciles. Mais surtout, c'est une précipitation à vivre qui touche au gaspillage" [A, p. 39]; "Le contraire d'un peuple civilisé, c'est un peuple créateur" [A, p. 45]; "Car l'espoir, au contraire de ce qu'on croit, équivaut à la résignation. Et vivre, c'est ne pas se résigner" [A, p. 49].

These maxim phrases present a challenge to the translator. First, the translator must learn to detect their unusual structure: the maxim phrases often stand out because of their pointed brevity in comparison to the more elongated, lyrical style of the surrounding text, and they are notable for their characteristic symmetry or parallelism. The translator should reproduce these structural qualities in her translation whenever they are appropriate to the target reader's sensibility. Second, the translator must appreciate the role that these maxim phrases play within the context of the essays as a whole: they are a favoured vehicle that Camus used to highlight elements of his recurring themes. They are vital to maintaining the overall textual and thematic cohesion of the essays, and must be given due representation in translation. The following

translations of the examples given above demonstrate an attempt to retain as much of the structure and emphasis of the originals as possible: "To hold a woman's body is to hold in one's arms the strange joy that falls from the sky to the sea" [T, p. 21]; "There is no shame in being happy" [T, p. 23]; "There is a time to live and a time to bear witness to life. There is also a time to create, which is less natural" [T, p. 25]; "... the theology of the body is every bit as exasperating as that of the spirit" [A, p. 34]; "The hallmark of youth is perhaps its magnificent capacity for simple pleasures. Above all, its almost wasteful impatience to live" [A, p. 40]; "The opposite of a civilized people is a creative one" [A, p. 46]; "For hope, contrary to popular belief, is tantamount to resignation. And to live is to refuse to be resigned" [A, p. 50].

A final point of syntactic interest is Camus' use of tense in the essays. In part (ii) of this section, Camus' use of the first-person narrative voice was discussed and the immediacy of the narration was seen to be heightened by the prevalence of the present tense throughout the essays. Thus while the present tense predominates in these essays, there is, interestingly, a small amount of slippage in Camus' use of tense, a certain temporal fluidity between the present and the past, as is evidenced by the following example: "Enfoncé parmi les odeurs sauvages et les concerts d'insectes somnolents, j'*ouvre* les yeux et mon cœur à la grandeur insoutenable de ce ciel gorgé de chaleur. Ce n'*est* pas si facile de devenir ce qu'on *est*, de retrouver sa mesure profonde. Mais à regarder l'échine solide du Chenoua, mon cœur *se calmait* d'une étrange certitude. J'*apprenais* à respirer, je *m'intégrais* et je *m'accomplissais*. Je *gravissais* l'un après l'autre des coteaux ..." [T, p. 18]. During such brief slips into the past, the reader gets the impression that the narrator has become so involved in what he is describing that he has gone off on a tangent, fallen into a reflective or recollective state in which he is reliving a certain experience and considering its

impact or relevance to him. In this way, the narrative seems to follow thought in real time, with its inevitable tangents and digressions.

This temporal fluidity underscores the overall structure of the essays to a certain degree. "The essays have been constructed on a balancing of the particular (the events related by the narrator, the anecdotal content of his activity) and the universal (the moral reflections made by the narrator once the related events have been examined for their deep significance)".²⁸ The subtle temporal fluidity may, at first, baffle the translator, but as these tangents do serve to keep the reader involved in the text (both in the narrator's actions and in his reflections on those actions as they evolve), it is vital that they be respected in translation. In English, however, this fluidity of tense sometimes needs to be mediated somewhat in order not to clash with the reader's sense of logic. The following example illustrates one method I used in translation to mediate Camus' temporal fluidity: "Shortly before noon, we *came back* through the ruins to a little café in the port. What a refreshing change they *were*, to my head resounding with the sun's cymbals and the colours, the shadow-filled room and the tall glass of icy green mint! Outside, the sea and the road scorched with dust. Sitting at the table, I *try* to hold within my fluttering eyelids the multicoloured dazzle of the sky white with heat. Faces drenched with sweat, but bodies cool in our light clothes, we all *luxuriate* in the happy lethargy of a day of nuptials with the world" [T, p. 23]. In this example, the verb was deleted from the underlined sentence in order to create a sentence fragment that could "buffer" the transition from the past tense used in the first two sentences to the present time-frame of the last two sentences. In some cases, no strategy was required to mediate the temporal fluidity, but it was a distinct and innovative element in Camus' style and, therefore, an element worth carefully reproducing in the translation of *Noces*.

Camus, like any creative literary writer, made highly motivated syntactic and structural choices to emphasize and exploit both the explicit denotative value and the implicit connotative value of language. It is therefore vital that the translator of his texts take care to detect the subtle structural component of his writing and to replicate it where possible, for it, too, conveys meaning and contributes to the overall cohesion of the text.

(vi) The Lyrical Register

In reading the essays of Albert Camus' *Noces*, one cannot help but notice their rhythms, the melodious quality of the language, the almost musical quality of the writing, its emotive and subjective content.

The term "lyricism" is usually applied to poetry - a brief, unified expression of emotion in language as melodious as possible.²⁹ *Noces* is, in fact, the most lyrical of all of Camus' writing, and the terms employed by various critics and scholars in referring to it reflect widespread appreciation of its musical quality. "Roger Quillot calls it 'un long cri d'amour'; Germaine Brée likens its vocabulary to the 'lyrical language of the ode or hymn'; John Cruickshank describes it as 'a remarkably sustained paean of praise to immediate physical existence'; Robert de Luppé, who has stated that 'la poésie est au commencement et à la fin de l'œuvre de Camus,' repeatedly uses the words 'poète' and 'poésie' when writing of *Noces*."³⁰

In part, Camus achieves the sense of lyricism in *Noces* by relating his experiences in an intensely personal manner through intimate first-person narration and highly evocative vocabulary. He appeals first to the reader's instincts; the experiences are conveyed through an emotional charge that passes from writer to reader rather than through a process of reason. Camus appeals

to emotion and, in turn, produces it in the reader through a sense of shared experience. However, the sense of lyricism in *Noces* is most fully achieved through the special rhythm and musicality discernible in these essays. That musical quality, and the challenge it presents to translation, will be studied in this section.

"Melody, a singing line, has always been essential to the lyric and the lyrical poem as we know them."³¹ In lyrical writing, the complete meaning of the text is communicated to a great degree by *how* the writer says what he is saying, an aspect that obviously proves challenging to translation; the lyrical effect can be destroyed if the words or the order of the words is changed. However, lyricism is not, in fact, a quality confined only to specific formalized structures. It does not depend necessarily on a particular meter and rhyme, but on a broader "poetic" use of language over and above simple meter and rhyme.³²

In *Noces*, Camus uses poetic language to create the inner harmony of "singing lines" which move the reader as much by their beauty as by the feelings and thoughts they seek to express. One Camusian scholar has described Camus' lyricism as "le style de l'allégresse" and goes on to explain that "l'immense adoration de Camus pour l'univers méditerranéen, pour l'Algérie de son enfance s'exprime dans une forme passionnée, en un crescendo de joie et d'allégresse où la musique de la phrase accompagne la montée du sentiment qui envahit tout l'être."³³ An example of this "crescendo" style might be the following: "... il n'y a pas de quoi être fier. Si, il y a de quoi : ce soleil, cette mer, mon cœur bondissant de jeunesse, mon corps au goût de sel et l'immense décor où la tendresse et la gloire se rencontrent dans le jaune et le bleu" [T, p. 20]. Camus favoured such sentence structures in *Noces*, "large, s'ouvrant en vagues déferlantes pour exprimer la joie, la passion, l'allégresse."³⁴ He also used repetitive and parallel

structures to create rhythm, as in the following example: "Que d'heures passées à écraser les absinthes, à caresser les ruines, à tenter d'accorder ma respiration aux soupirs tumultueux du monde!" [T, p. 16], which has not only a parallel construction, but the sense of musical crescendo described above. Elsewhere, the movement and cadence are among the most admirable characteristics of Camus' lyrical essays, and in some instances, the rhythm encompasses a group of sentences whose varying lengths and cadences correspond to the total movement of the passage.³⁵ The following examples convey this sense of structural movement that echoes the situational movement: "Au sortir du tumulte des parfums et du soleil, dans l'air maintenant rafraîchi par le soir, l'esprit s'y calmait, le corps détendu goûtait le silence intérieur qui naît de l'amour satisfait. Je m'étais assis sur un banc. Je regardais la campagne s'arrondir avec le jour. J'étais repu." [T, p. 24], and "Tout un petit peuple de nuages rouges s'étire jusqu'à se résorber dans l'air. Presque aussitôt après, la première étoile apparaît qu'on voyait se former et se durcir dans l'épaisseur du ciel. Et puis, d'un coup, dévorante, la nuit" [A, p. 37]. Clearly, the essays of *Noces* demonstrate every characteristic - emotion, subjectivity, musicality - implied by the term "lyrical"; they might well be referred to as "poésie en prose".

Good writing is informed from within by rhythms which stem in part from the speech rhythms and word length proper to the language in which it is written. It is one of the most difficult, yet most essential, tasks of the translator to capture that inner rhythm and transpose it into the "appropriate" rhythm in the target language. For languages, even such closely related languages as English and French, work along different lines. Thus the challenge to the translator of essays as musically and rhythmically motivated as *Noces* is to endeavour to penetrate the work, experience it to the core of its music, to the marrow of its sounds, then strive to recreate

it as a score in the target language.

There simply are no hard and fast rules that the translator may follow in order to recreate the music of a text in another language. Before undertaking the translation, she should determine for herself precisely what the author's style is, including his sense of rhythm. The translator might find it helpful to read the author aloud in order to better detect the tempo and cadence of the artistic prose and reproduce its music; she will surely find that an instinct for rhythm, a musical instinct, will be indispensable in dealing with rhythmic prose. But above all, the translator must have an appreciation for the impact that rhythm and musicality can have within a work and upon its reader:

"Sound patterns, the sounds of words in poetry, act upon our emotions more sharply than any other phenomenon. These are not simply musical sounds which agitate us. These are the sounds of words, and words are bearers of ideas, images, conceptions, feelings. [...] They join together into a complex echoing, their sounds mingle them in some mysterious fashion, they create complex networks of semantic and emotional associations for us."³⁶

With this in mind, the translator should formulate strategies appropriate to the individual case before her and attempt to maintain the verbal music of the original, transposed where necessary to suit the aesthetics of her target readers. What follows are the translations of the examples given above as illustrations; ideally, much of their subtle rhythm and lyricism has been preserved: "... there is nothing to be proud of. And yet, there is: this sun, this sea, my heart leaping with youth, my body tasting of salt and the vast setting where tenderness and glory merge in the yellow and the blue" [T, p. 21]; "How many hours have I spent crushing the absinthes, caressing the ruins, trying to synchronize my breathing with the tumultuous sighs of the world!"

[T, p. 17]; "Leaving the tumult of sun and fragrances, in the air now cool with the evening, my mind quieted, my body relaxed and savoured the inner silence that comes when love has been satisfied. I was sitting on a bench. I watched the countryside filling out with the day. I was sated" [T, p. 25]; "A small colony of crimson clouds stretches itself thin until resorbed into the air. Almost immediately afterward, the first star appears, taking shape and crystallizing in the depths of the sky. And then, in one sudden and all-consuming moment, it is night" [A, p. 38].

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, it has been asserted that form, or style, should not be distinguished from content. More than merely ornamental, form is deemed to be inherently meaningful and interwoven along with content into the fabric of a text to create a unique, complex, multi-layered and multi-dimensional meaning within that text. This is especially true in the context of the highly-subjective and connotative literary text, where style imparts meaning, adds emphasis and underscores the cohesiveness of the message at all levels. The writer of the literary text creates symbols and images, manipulates rhythm and cadence, makes motivated lexical and structural choices, and exploits the ambiguities inherent in the medium. All of these elements must thus be maintained and conveyed by the translator in order to maintain the cohesion and power of the original text in translation.

In the essays of *Noces*, it is clear that Camus makes skilful use of a variety of stylistic devices in order to reinforce and highlight the themes and symbols of what has been described in Chapter I as the Camusian context. His choice of the essay as literary vehicle, his use of first-person narration, his highly-motivated lexical choices and richly descriptive poetic devices, his

thoughtful and innovative manipulation of French syntax and structure, and his finely-tuned rhythm and lyricism all demonstrate that Camus' use of language extends far beyond mere communication; the very form and shape of his language is expressive.

Because of the centrality of the stylistic elements to the overall cohesion and impact of the essays of *Noces*, these elements must be reproduced in translation wherever possible or subtly modified in those cases where they run contrary to the genius and aesthetics of the target language. The translator must exploit her own language to produce a translation that is as richly descriptive as the original while preserving its special emphases and profound tone. This is a delicate balancing act and a considerable challenge, but it proves a worthwhile pursuit when the finished translation is found to reveal the same subtle artistry as the original.

NOTES

¹Barbara Folkart, "Translation as Literary Criticism," Meta 27.3 (Sept. 1982): 254.

²Stella M.A. Johnson, "Translation In Africa: A Literary Perspective," Meta 34.4 (Dec. 1989): 703.

³Œuvres complètes d'Albert Camus (Paris : Aux éditions du club de l'honnête homme, 1983) 13.

⁴Marcia Weis, The Lyrical Essays of Albert Camus (Ottawa: Éditions Naaman, 1976) 38.

⁵David R. Ellison, Understanding Albert Camus (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990) 17.

⁶Jeffrey S. Moore, "On Anglicizing the Imaginative World of Boris Vian: The Problem of Wordplay," (Diss., University of Ottawa, 1982): 4-5.

⁷Weis 33.

⁸Weis 30.

⁹Weis 35.

¹⁰Donald Lazere, The Unique Creation of Albert Camus (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973) 117-118.

¹¹Weis 35.

¹²Germaine Brée, Camus (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1964) 88.

¹³Weis 24.

¹⁴Weis 24-25.

¹⁵Hana Jechová, « La perspective de la représentation littéraire et le problème de la traduction, » The Nature of Translation: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation (Bratislava: Publishing House of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 1970) : 50-51.

¹⁶Françoise Wuilmart, « Le traducteur littéraire : un marieur empathique de cultures, » Meta 35.1 (mars 1990) : 237.

¹⁷Lilliam Hernández, « Vers un poétique de *Noces*, » Albert Camus 1980 (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1980) : 142.

¹⁸Brée 83-84.

¹⁹Camus' ten favourite words were quoted in English in Brée 86.

²⁰"Alliteration is the repetition of speech sounds in a sequence of nearby words; the term is usually applied only to consonants, and especially when the recurrent sound occurs in a conspicuous position at the beginning of a word or of a stressed syllable within a word. [...] Assonance is the repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds - especially in stressed syllables - in a sequence of nearby words." M. H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981) 7.

²¹André Lefevere, Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1992) 50.

²²Weis 120.

²³John Cruickshank, Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt (London: Oxford University Press, 1959) 33.

²⁴Wuilmart 237.

²⁵Lauren G. Leighton, The Art of Translation: Kornei Chukovsky's *A High Art* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984) 154.

²⁶Lazere 120-121.

²⁷André Meunier, « Approches de l'art camusien, » Albert Camus 2 : langue et langage (Paris: Revue des lettres modernes, 1969) : 31.

²⁸Ellison 21.

²⁹Weis 19.

³⁰Weis 115.

³¹Weis 25.

³²Weis 25-26.

³³Lucien Adjadji, Albert Camus : Pages Méditerranéennes (Paris : Didier, 1968) 28.

³⁴Adjaji 28.

³⁵Weis 27.

³⁶Leighton 148.

COMMENTARY THEME III

***PARLEZ-VOUS LE CAGAYOUS?:
THE CHALLENGE OF CAMUS' VERNACULAR***

PARLEZ-VOUS LE CAGAYOUS?: THE CHALLENGE OF CAMUS' VERNACULAR

Vernacular: An Overview

What is a "vernacular"? A vernacular may be defined in a number of ways, but it can generally be taken to mean a "substandard" variety of language that serves as a marker of class, regional or age-group affiliation and that includes such speech-oriented lexical and grammatical features as colloquial formulas and epithets, slang, obscenities, and other vulgarisms, and certain kinds of allusive or elliptical morphological and syntactic arrangements.¹ From this definition, one can deduce that a vernacular is linked to a specific time, place, social class, level of education or cultural condition; it is an extreme form of language that stretches the concept of translation equivalence. In fact, many translators argue that it is impossible to convey such richly connotative language to readers for the very reason that a vernacular (and its sister manifestations, dialect and colloquial speech) is the most native, the most peculiar, the most untranslatable property of any language. No matter how close two languages might be, no matter what their linguistic and cultural affinities, one language does not possess the lexical means to take possession of the distinctive properties of the other.² And while the adjectives "impossible" and "untranslatable" may seem unnecessarily harsh, in fact, the phenomena of vernacular, dialect and colloquial speech have posed persistent, recurring and confounding challenges to translation, challenges that appear to have no hard and fast solutions.

Vernaculars may play a significant role within a literary text. The most conspicuous

purpose for their presence is to add local colour to the text, but they may also be incorporated to develop and expand the scope of characterization. Instead of a descriptive characterization, for example, in which the author tells the reader how the character speaks, looks and thinks, the reader himself perceives characterization through the spoken word, a much more expressive medium. And from a stylistic standpoint, a vernacular can underscore the historical and social dimensions of the source text, its inescapable location in a particular time and place, and the author's response to and manipulation of that fact. A literary text is inevitably related to culture and history not only at the contextual and thematic levels, but also at the levels of lexicon, grammar and syntax.³ For these reasons, the approach taken in this paper is that the translator, mindful of the inextricable bond that exists between content and form, must realize that it is her responsibility, when an author has deviated from standard literary language and incorporated elements of vernacular, to observe as closely as possible the author's means of expression, to consider the effect that his strategies had on the native reader of the text, and to strive to achieve a similar effect on the foreign reader of the translated text.

Not all translators, however, would agree with this approach. In general, translators seem to be divided between those who believe that they should attempt to convey vernacular which is, after all, a literary fact of life, and those who believe that any attempt to translate vernacular will result in certain failure. Nevertheless, despite widespread reluctance to confront vernacular, several methods for dealing with it in translation have been discussed, applied, and either rejected or partly approved. Let us now consider those methods in turn.

One of the most well-known methods for handling vernacular in translation has been to substitute in the translation a target language vernacular judged to be equivalent in terms of time,

place and cultural-historical associations to the vernacular of the original. However, the translator must bear in mind that many local vernaculars, for all their temporary vitality, become rapidly outdated. And the majority of modern translators concur that the "dialect-for-dialect" method has proven to be an unworkable solution to the problem simply because equivalents in terms of time, place and cultural-historical associations typically do not and cannot exist in other languages. Many readers are familiar with translations like those of the Russian classics in which Chekhov's clerks speak with a Cockney accent; taken out of its native context, the substitute vernacular seems preposterous. Simply stated, then, vernaculars belonging to different languages share few similarities of mutual experience. Different strata of society express themselves in different idioms, and this holds true both within a single culture and across distant national boundaries.⁴ Viktor Khinkis, a highly-regarded translator of such vernacular-rich authors as John Updike and William Faulkner, has stated succinctly that "colloquial speech ... is inseparably linked with the distinctive qualities of an environment, and the environments of different peoples (even of such peoples as close as the Russians and Ukrainians) are in many ways distinct."⁵ Thus, the translation of vernacular using vernacular is typically unconvincing and unsuccessful.

Another method devised to handle vernacular in translation is that of "blandscrip". Translators resorting to blandscrip replace vernacular with normal human speech, making little or no attempt to indicate that the language of the original featured marked departures from the norm, no matter how sharp those departures may have been. By using blandscrip, the translator demonstrates her belief that vernacular cannot be conveyed in another language and that the attempt should not even be made. The primary criticism of this method is that although blandscrip is an honest confession of an inability to deal with a difficult problem, it ultimately

demonstrates a disrespect for language and a lack of professional care.⁶ Translators must not forget that translation is a creative act; while there is no single satisfactory solution to the problem of conveying vernacular, the phenomenon must still be confronted, and translators must therefore call upon all their creative resources to do the best they can with it. As Russian poet Nikolay Zabolotsky has observed, "blandscrip is our personal enemy. Blandscrip bespeaks an indifference of the heart and a disdain for the reader."⁷

A third method for grappling with the vexing problem of vernacular in translation is called "protocol translation" or "distillation translation". Using protocol translation, the translator explains what is taking place in the text: a character did this, then went there, then said that. An obvious and unfortunate result of this device is that a single word or phrase can be transformed into laboriously prolix syntax. And the translator who uses this device seems to assume that the reader cannot divine for himself the meaning of an unusual native expression, or cannot appreciate the distinctive linguistic peculiarities of another culture.⁸ The translator must bear in mind that vernacular can give pause even to the native reader of the original text, so she should take care not to mediate too much on behalf of the target text reader and ultimately distort or dilute the effect of the original.

A fourth and final method of handling vernacular in translation is that of "signal translation". The signal translation is an attempt to indicate to the reader of the translation that the language is unusual, without attempting to recreate its full flavour. This method was used successfully by Russian translator Samuil Marshak in his translations of Robert Burns. Realizing that any attempt to systematically reproduce Burns' eighteenth-century Scottish vernacular would lead to a morass of eccentric colloquial speech, Marshak chose instead to "signal" to his Russian

readers that Burns' language was strange, outdated, yet marvellously rich in syntax and lexicon by using a careful blend of eighteenth-century Russian archaisms, words of Old Slavic origin, and Russian folk expressions. The challenge to Marshak was to produce something that was distinctly different without using a clearly recognizable native dialect, inventing a preposterous new language or developing an obtrusive new style. And through "signal translation", Marshak was able to successfully convey the different meanings of the phrases and to indicate to his readers that the original language was a departure from the norm.⁹ This fourth method was ultimately the one put to use in translating the Cagayous footnote in *Noces*.

No translator can claim to have solved the problem of conveying vernacular, but a few general guidelines can be drawn from the discussion of the methods described above. First, the translator should be sensible and compromise imaginatively, as elsewhere in literary translation. She must always be sensitive to word-usage and consider words and word associations carefully. She should seek neutral ground between the equally unconvincing extremes of blandscript and "dialect for dialect". She should use moderation because "the use of colloquial speech demands caution. Colloquial speech is a weapon that cuts both ways so sharply that in those instances where it is impossible to find a fully adequate equivalent it is sometimes better to make the text a bit less colloquial than to overdo it."¹⁰ And in the end, she should rely on her own instinct and judgement based on her interaction with the source text, on inner conviction, on intuition, and on examples taken from her own creative practice.

The problem of conveying vernacular in translation is vexing and no clear-cut solutions have yet been identified. Nevertheless, two tentative conclusions do appear to present themselves. First, any attempt to convey vernacular in its entirety, systematically, seems doomed

to failure and absurdity. Second, to their chagrin, the only key that translators have found to successfully convey vernacular in translation is the translator herself - her taste, tact, instinct, talent, judgement and, especially, her sense of moderation.

Cagayous Vernacular: An Overview

"Cagayous" is a form of French vernacular that takes its name from the literary character "Cagayous", the swaggering, plebeian protagonist of a series of picaresque novels written exclusively in a unique Algerian dialect during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Auguste Robinet, who took the pen name "Musette". Dictionary and encyclopedia entries for the term "Cagayous" are rare, but the *Nouvelle Encyclopédie du Monde* contains the following definition: "type de gavroche de l'Afrique du Nord, ayant donné naissance à toute une littérature populaire écrite dans une langue particulière, mélange de diverses langues méditerranéennes."¹¹

Indeed, the adventures of Cagayous were wildly popular amongst Algerian readers, but what made them truly remarkable was the vernacular in which they were written; it represented a marked departure from standard literary language, yet perfectly suited to the nature and context of the novels. Algerian writer Gabriel Audisio explains that:

"... c'est son langage qui constitue la plus notable originalité de Cagayous. Or, à l'inverse du personnage, son parler n'est pas une invention de l'auteur. Musette l'a déclaré lui-même : « Je n'ai pas improvisé une langue spéciale, a-t-il écrit en 1924, une langue de pure fantaisie... Avant de m'aventurer dans cette rocaïlle accidentée, j'ai dû, tout d'abord, fixer les grandes lignes d'une syntaxe, assez obscure d'ailleurs, qu'un glossaire devait compléter... Je laisse aux étymologistes le soin d'en rechercher les origines... »".¹²

The vernacular spoken by Musette's character Cagayous was no mere invention; it was, in fact, the very patois (or "patouète", as one would say in Cagayous) spoken by Albert Camus' Algerian compatriots, a unique blending of Mediterranean languages including Spanish, Italian, Provençal and Arabic. It is important to note that:

"... la langue de Cagayous n'est pas un sabir. Le sabir, c'est le « petit-nègre » ; c'est le langage des indigènes de nos colonies qui s'efforcent maladroitement à parler notre idiome. Rien de commun. [...] À côté du « français naturel », langue savante et officielle, il est le langage courant du peuple bigarré des néo-français. Aussi bien présente-t-il cette différence avec les autres dialectes de la Méditerranée occidentale, qu'il les mélange tous, en y ajoutant une forte dose d'arabe."¹³

In fact, the constitution of Cagayous vernacular reveals the influences of the diverse colonizing powers within Algeria; there is clearly a French presence, but there is undeniably a perceptible undercurrent of Spanish, Italian and Arabic. Algiers, which is situated in the middle of the country, symbolically demonstrates the integration of these diverse national influences as they lie side-by-side in neighbouring quarters - Bab-el-Oued is primarily Spanish, the Marina is predominantly Italian, and the Casbah is essentially Arabic - and fuse in such common areas as the Place du Gouvernement, the "place du cheval" and at the foot of the statue of the Duc d'Orléans. Thus, Cagayous presents a fascinating study for linguists:

"Le cagayous tel que nous le voyons, c'est le moment critique du « passage », de la mue ; c'est un témoignage vivant de la transmutation en train de se faire, une sorte de filme parlant linguistique [...]. On songe [...] à la mue du français aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles, à son enrichissement par des emprunts étrangers au XVI^e. En vérité cela jette une lumière sur la manière dont notre langue s'est détachée du latin, et non seulement la nôtre, mais le provençal, l'espagnole, le catalan ; ou

peut-être assiste-t-on au phénomène inverse : après avoir divergé, les langues romanes reviennent ici se confondre."¹⁴

One characteristic of Cagayous which makes it truly distinctive is its "spoken" nature: it is a language intended not to be written, but to be spoken aloud. The style of Cagayous exhibits all the classic features of a spoken language: it is concrete, direct, immediate, vigorously imaged, "avec des ellipses puissantes, des raccourcis qui traduisent le besoin d'aller vite, de faire une économie de vocables".¹⁵ Cagayous also reveals grammatical errors and anomalies, malapropisms, obscure references and usages. But what is not explicitly expressed through language is compensated for through gesture; in fact, without signs and gesticulation, it might prove challenging to understand Cagayous. In light of this, many authors who use Cagayous vernacular in their writing sometimes annotate the text with gesticular indications in parenthesis to avoid confusion on the part of the reader. An unusual device, surely, but a justifiable one.

There are many specific features and characteristics that make Cagayous vernacular distinctive from standard French. Undoubtedly, the spoken material of Cagayous is rooted in the French language, but from a lexical standpoint, it is colourfully transformed by foreign language borrowings, altered words, changes to standard meanings, and unique idiomatic expressions; grammatically, it features unusual, and sometimes intentionally incorrect, usage of articles, adjectives, pronouns, verbs and prepositions; and syntactically, it demonstrates an utter lack of regard for agreement of verb tense sequences, gender and number of nouns and verbs, and for phrasal word order. Let us now consider each of these features in a little more detail.

Lexically, Cagayous is rich, due in large part to its extensive borrowing of foreign words and expressions. It is not difficult to trace the roots of these lexical borrowings: the diverse

nature of the colonization of Algeria described above makes the source of the many Spanish, Italian, Maltese, Arabic and Provençal words self-evident. In some cases, the borrowed words are simply transcribed in Cagayous: "*bacora*", which means "figue-fleur" is a direct transcription of the Valencian word "*bacora*" (Valencian is a Spanish dialect); "*batel*", which means "gratuit" is a direct transcription of the Arabic word "*batel*". In other cases, the borrowed words are adapted somewhat in their passage to Cagayous. The following example demonstrates how a single word in Cagayous can be formed by a range of Mediterranean influences: the Cagayous term "*scaragole*" is the product of "*escargol*" in old French and "*escargot*" in modern French, of "*caragol*" in Catalan (another Spanish dialect) and Valencian, of "*caracol*" in Spanish, and of "*caragaulo*" in Languedoc (which developed into modern Provençal). In other cases, the borrowed words are assimilated into and virtually "consumed" by Cagayous, as in the following examples: "*goulper*", which means "frapper", comes from the Spanish word "*golpear*"; and "*chandific*", which means "*ça m'est égal*", comes from the Arabic words "*ouach andi fik*". Some expressions in Cagayous are formed by combining two different foreign elements, as in these examples: "*mezzo-mitche*", which means "*à moitié*" and is the product of Italian and Catalan; and "*besoin-basta*", which means "*il suffit*" and is the product of French and Spanish. Finally, interjections and expletives truly exemplify the wealth of foreign borrowings in Cagayous. Every people, and thus every language, has profane expressions and Cagayous, with its fondness for profanities and curses, seems to have incorporated all of them: from Arabic, it has borrowed "*Aouah!*", "*Zob!*", "*Zid!*" and "*Tchaf!*"; from Italian, it has borrowed "*Atsol!*", "*Maladetta!*" and "*Vergogna!*"; and from Spanish, it has borrowed "*Vinga!*" and "*Mécago!*". If nothing else, Cagayous is certainly a colourful language!

Another interesting lexical feature of Cagayous is the deviation from standard French that it exhibits in changes made to individual words. The reasons for these lexical alterations are diverse: some are abbreviated forms of a standard term, some are attempts at auditory transcription and some are the product of phonetic confusion. There are many examples of Cagayous' abbreviated form, such as "*oilà*" for "*voilà*", "*çuilà*" for "*celui-là*", "*vec*" for "*avec*", and "*core*" for "*encore*". In contrast, Cagayous sometimes demonstrates additions to or duplication of elements within a word, such as "*çuilà-là*", "*achez*" for "*chez*" and, most notably, "*aujourd'aujourd'hui*". Auditory transcriptions are another cause for the lexical alterations of standard French evidenced in Cagayous, and the following are examples of this phenomenon: "*domoizan*" is the attempted transcription of "*donne-moi-z'en*", and "*Bablouette*" is the transcription of "*Bab-el-Oued*". Finally, phonetic confusion generates a number of lexical alterations to standard French in Cagayous; these alterations are typified by displacement of certain letters for others, as in these examples: "*soigir*" for "*choisir*", "*sanche*" for "*chance*", "*canlidat*" for "*candidat*", "*seurement*" for "*seulement*" and "*daisser*" for "*laisser*". The Cagayous author must attempt to render what is essentially a spoken language in writing, thus it is likely that many of the lexical alterations described above are the result of an orthographic system that is inconsistent and arbitrary - in other words, questionable at best.

Yet another lexical feature that makes Cagayous vernacular interesting and distinct from standard French is the change in meaning that many standard French words take on in Cagayous, likely a result of the influence of the many foreign languages that converge in Algeria. Examples of this phenomenon include the following: "*pourquoi*" is used to mean "*parce que*" due to the influence of the Spanish "*porqué*"; "*tenir*" is used to mean "*avoir*" due to the influence of the

Spanish "tener"; and "*sortir*" is used to mean "acquérir" due to the influence of the Spanish "sorteo". Such changes in the meaning of standard French words are encountered with such frequency in Cagayous speech that the French tourist wandering the streets of Algeria in the twenties, thirties and forties might have found communication surprisingly difficult.

A final interesting lexical feature in Cagayous is its unusual idiomatic expression. As in any spoken language, Cagayous has many unique expressions, although it is virtually impossible to trace the origin of these phrases. The following are but a few colourful examples of Cagayous expressions: "*à la baballah*" means "n'importe comment"; "*changer l'eau des olives*" means "uriner", but is used in reference to men only; "*les sept figures par terre*" means "cartes sur table"; and "*la rue de pain*" means "le tube digestif". Lexically, Cagayous is unique and colourful; for the reader's interest, a brief glossary of Cagayous terms can be found in Appendix A of this paper.

Lexical items are not the only linguistic element to undergo alteration in Cagayous; many grammatical features of standard French are also used (or misused) distinctively in this vernacular. For example, Cagayous puts the article to use in an innovative way: it applies the definite article in those places where the indefinite article would typically be used in standard French. For example, when one is afraid, "ce n'est pas *une* peur quelconque mais *la* peur : il tient *la* peur." Similarly, "on ne fait pas *du* potin, mais *le* potin", "on ne donne pas *un* renseignement, mais *le* renseignement". In addition, no contraction is generally made between the preposition "à" and the definite article in Cagayous, leading to constructions such as "*je vais à le restaurant*" instead of "je vais au restaurant", "*j'ai une cravate à le cou*" instead of "j'ai une cravate au cou" and "*je l'ai dit à les femmes*" instead of "je l'ai dit aux femmes". This practice

is surely the result of the influence of Spanish forms such as "a los", "a las", "de lo" and "a lo".

Pronouns are also used distinctively in Cagayous. For example, in the third person, the personal pronoun is typically repeated before a verb whose subject is preceded by a possessive pronoun, as in "*mon père il a dit*"; the personal pronoun "moi" is always given precedence over personal pronouns, as in "*moi et lui*"; and in the second person, "tu" is used generally as "on", perhaps in an effort to keep the language as concrete as possible. The most striking use seems to be that of "que", which in Cagayous, plays multiple roles, as in the following examples: "*un bateau que les enfants s'amuse*" and "*un enfant que je connais son frère*". It is used in place of *avec lequel* and *dont*, as in the examples above, as well as *où*, *sur quoi*, *tel que*, *par où* and *quel*; in short, it is a catch-all, and this generalized use is undoubtedly influenced by the Spanish "que", which serves as a relative (que) and an interrogative pronoun (qué), an exclamatory and interrogative adjective, and even as a conjunction with the same meaning as that of the French "car".

Verbs, too, undergo certain changes in Cagayous usage. For example, in Cagayous speech, as in all meridional dialects, many verbs become pronominal, as in *se prendre*, *se penser*, *se manger*, *se chier*; this demonstrates an intent to closely relate actions directly to the person performing them, to keep the language immediate and concrete. And Cagayous shows the clear influence of Spanish syntactic rules in that many of its transitive verbs are constructed using the preposition "à" when the object is a person, as in *voir à quelqu'un*, *entendre à quelqu'un*, *tuer à quelqu'un*; this construction is syntactically incorrect in standard French.

The syntax of the Cagayous sentence - its word order and the relationship of the words to one another - presents a final point of interest. One of the most significant distinctions

between French and Cagayous is the latter's use of inverted word order. Since approximately the eighteenth century, the French language has demonstrated a distaste for inversion, and yet, in Cagayous, inversions are used frequently and strikingly. Typically, the complement of the principal word is featured at the beginning of the phrase or sentence; combined with the Algerians' enthusiastic intonation, the words are imbued with movement and energy, they are surprisingly emphatic, as in the following examples: "*fou je suis*", "*rien j'ai trouvé*", "*plein du monde la maison elle était*", "*fortune je fais*", "*une il n'en reste*", "*honte j'ai de sortir*". This inverted style of phrasing is perhaps another way by which Francophone Algerians emphasized the concrete, direct and immediate aspect of their vernacular.

No discussion of Cagayous syntax would be complete without mention of the relationships that exist between words - and the utter lack of regard in Cagayous for standard agreement within verb tense sequences and between gender and number of nouns and verbs. The concept of verb tense agreement is virtually non-existent in Cagayous; the indicative is the favoured mode and the present the favoured tense, and they are used consistently in place of the subjunctive, the future and the conditional. Perhaps the Algerians' drive to maintain a sense of immediacy and movement in their language underlies this marked tendency. A similar lack of regard is demonstrated in agreements between gender and number of nouns and verbs: in Cagayous, one does not hesitate to use a singular verb form following a plural subject, as in "*celles qui s'en va*" or "*ils font semblant qui comprend pas*". Perhaps, once again, this is an effort to retain the sense of immediacy in the language; or perhaps, it is a simple oversight. In either case, it is an interesting distinguishing feature which adds colour and even humour to the Cagayous vernacular.

On Translating the Cagayous Vernacular in *Noces*

We have seen that the translation of a vernacular poses a distinct challenge to the translator, who must first acquire a thorough understanding of the role it plays within her text, and a comprehensive knowledge of its lexical and grammatical features, in order not to distort or neglect its subtler properties. The translator must then choose an appropriate strategy, whether it be a "dialect for dialect" substitution, blandscript, protocol translation, signal translation, or a blending of these methods appropriate to the individual text.

Once she embarks upon the actual translation, the translator must remain mindful of the way vernacular manifests the inextricable link between context and style: it is a linguistic phenomenon that exists only within a limited contextual situation (time, place, social or cultural condition), and that singular contextual situation gives it unique and inimitable lexical and grammatical features. Let us now apply these preparatory steps, and examine the significance of context and style, to the translation of the Cagayous vernacular found in *Noces*.

(i) Preparation

Camus used Cagayous vernacular sparingly in *Noces*; it is found only in the second footnote of the essay "L'été à Alger", and comprises just a few paragraphs. Within the overall context of the essays, however, despite its brevity, it plays a number of roles. It adds local colour to the essay, reinforcing the uniqueness and singularity of the location. But its primary purpose is to underscore the particular historical and social dimensions of the Algerian setting in the source text and to expand the characterization of the Algerian people. In "L'été à Alger", Camus attempted to paint a portrait of the Algerians amongst whom he grew up, and although he felt

true affection for them and delighted in their elementary moral code and idiosyncracies, he was also critical of them and of their society in which youth and beauty were worshipped to such an extent that the mind and the spirit were often neglected. By including the Cagayous footnote, he allowed the Algerian people to speak in their own voice, demonstrate their particular form of morality, and allow the reader to draw his own conclusions.

As quantitatively limited as it is, the Cagayous vernacular nonetheless plays an important qualitative role in *Noces* as a vehicle for Camus' critique of the morality and mentality of his compatriots, and this fact made the selection of a translation strategy somewhat simpler. In this instance, the vernacular is not mere ornamentation, it wields considerable semantic and symbolic power. Thus its effect should be maintained to the greatest degree possible. For this reason, "blandscript" was ruled out: to lose the marked features and style of the original would be to lose the rationale for including the footnote. Admittedly, all the subtleties and complexities of Cagayous vernacular and the social and cultural context that it symbolizes could not be reproduced exactly, but a strategy could be devised to introduce marked linguistic features carrying comparable connotative values to create a similar effect in the target text.

Of the strategies remaining to achieve this effect, "protocol translation" was quickly discarded for the simple reason that its use would likely result in a clumsy and laborious text that would in no way convey either the flavour or the social and cultural implications of the original. And the "dialect-for-dialect" method was also abandoned for fear that the use of a "substitute" vernacular from some corner of the English-speaking world would either transmit erroneous connotations in terms of social and cultural implications or simply sound preposterous, like a caricature, and completely undermine the semantic and symbolic power of the Cagayous (if such

a "substitute" vernacular were even to exist in the first place). Ultimately, the translation strategy that was chosen was "signal translation", a method which would not rely on any formal, previously-existing dialect nor claim to recreate the full flavour of the original, but which would employ marked lexical and grammatical elements that would serve to indicate, or "signal", that the language used in the original was not standard French. With judicious preparation, it was hoped that the translation might even convey some of the contextually connotative value of the original as well.

We have seen that Cagayous is a unique blending of Mediterranean languages including Spanish, Italian, Provençal and Arabic. As a spoken language, it exhibits all of the classic features of the spoken tradition: it is concrete, direct and immediate; it reveals grammatical errors, malapropisms, obscure references and unusual usages. Lexically, while Cagayous is undoubtedly rooted in French, it acquires colour from foreign borrowings, altered words, changes to standard meanings and idiomatic expressions; morphologically, it features unusual usage of articles, adjectives, pronouns, verbs and prepositions; and syntactically, it demonstrates non-standard agreement of verb tense sequences, gender and number of nouns and verbs, and an inclination for inverted phrasal word order. Foreknowledge of these unique features and foundations of Cagayous will help to ensure that the translator does not distort or neglect its subtler properties.

The preparatory work is now complete, and the translator is ready to attempt to translate the vernacular. She must bear in mind that vernacular is a microcosmic example of the inextricable link between context and style, a link that can be expressed only through a network of unique lexical and grammatical features. Let us now take a look at the context and style of

the Cagayous footnote in *Noces* and examine their treatment in translation.

(ii) Context

The key to understanding the importance of Camus' Cagayous footnote lies in the knowledge of its social and cultural context, and in Camus' justification for including it. In "L'été à Alger", Camus attempted to describe in considerable detail the singularity of the Algerian environment in which he grew up, and he used the Cagayous footnote to underscore the particular historical and social dimensions of the Algerian setting and to enhance the characterization of his fellow Algerians. Throughout the essay, he writes affectionately, but sometimes critically, of the mentality and morality of these people. But by including the Cagayous footnote, he allowed the Algerian people (men, of course) to speak in their own voice and to demonstrate their unique system of morality themselves. The vernacular is a "langage du peuple" and its is imbued both implicitly and explicitly with the peculiar mentality and morality of the Algerian "code de la rue": "la langue qu'est le français d'Algérie, s'articule, pour une bonne part, autour d'un système de valeurs sous-jacent. Or, la morale méditerranéenne impose d'abord et avant tout de sauver l'honneur ...".¹⁶ Cagayous vernacular is the voice of Algerian morality, a typically Mediterranean morality which places great emphasis on such concepts as chivalry towards women and honour among men. In fact, in "L'été à Alger", Camus himself summarizes the fundamentals of this morality:

"On a sa morale, et bien particulière. On ne « manque » pas à sa mère. On fait respecter sa femme dans les rues. On a des égards pour la femme enceinte. On ne tombe pas à deux sur un adversaire, parce que « ça fait vilain ». Pour qui n'observe pas ces commandements élémentaires, « il n'est pas un homme »,

l'affaire est réglée" [A, p. 41].

Familiarity with these basic tenets of Algerian morality are essential to the translator of the Cagayous footnote, as they are subtly present in the narrative and misapprehension of them could lead to mistranslations or distortions. The basic premise, the social fact, that underlies the scenario described in the footnote is based on the "code de la rue" concept of defending one's honour that is unique to this Algerian context. In the footnote, "l'autre" clearly did or said something to "Coco" which offended him (perhaps an insult to his wife or mother) and put his honour in question, and Coco thus felt it necessary to defend his honour in the appropriate local manner - through a physical contest. But even more interesting in terms of the "code de la rue" context are the descriptions of how the fight unfolded; at first glance, they seem innocuous, but familiarity with local mores and customs reveals that they convey considerably more information and distinct judgements on the actions of the participants. For example, the narrator states that "Coco, rien qu'un, y lui a donné -- pas deux, un", thereby emphasizing Coco's attempt to "fight fair", to hit his adversary only once and allow him to hit back. And when "l'autre" falls to the ground, Coco does not hit him, for that, too, would be unfair and dishonourable. When the brawl begins, the narrator sees three men heading to fight with Coco; as it is generally believed in this setting that honourable men do not "gang up" against an adversary (because « ça fait vilain »), the narrator clearly wants the reader to perceive these men as contemptible - in other words « ce ne sont pas des hommes ». And the narrator is also quick to point out that he is willing to come to the assistance and defence of a comrade ("mon frère") when he threatens one of the three men heading over to fight with Coco; once again, he emphasizes his own display of honour. Finally, the brawl ends and the narrator and his comrades Coco and Lucien are taken away in

handcuffs. Twice he repeats the sense of shame that he felt as he was led away in chains, shame that resulted from not being able to defend himself and his honour to the appropriate end due to the interference of the police. (The authorities do not appear to be held in high regard in this milieu based on this comment that Camus makes earlier in "L'été à Alger": "J'ai toujours vu autour de moi les visages s'apitoyer sur le passage d'un homme encadré d'agents. Et, avant de savoir si l'homme avait volé, était parricide ou simplement non-conformiste : « Le pauvre », disait-on, ou encore, avec une nuance d'admiration : « Celui-là, c'est un pirate.»" [A, p. 41].) Nevertheless, the story of the fight draws to a satisfying conclusion when the three comrades have their sense of pride and honour restored by Lucien's father, who reassures them that they behaved appropriately and honourably. This is the subtle subtext that underlies the Cagayous footnote; it demonstrates typical local morality expressed in typical local language. Camus clearly sees the limits of the characteristic Algerian mentality and behaviour described in the footnote, but he craftily allows his compatriots to make his point for him. With the full weight and import of the footnote's context now clear in her mind, the translator may consider the stylistic features that underscore that context in the original, and the linguistic and stylistic strategies that she may use to portray that context in her translation.

(iii) Style

The subtleties and complexities of the Algerian "code de la rue" find coherent expression in the Cagayous vernacular used in the footnote. The vernacular features many peculiar linguistic elements that reflect these Algerians' moral beliefs and their socio-economic status. Unfortunately, in translating the Cagayous footnote, some of the implicit judgements regarding

chivalry and honour are lost on an English-speaking audience whose culture does not have a comparable value system; the reader of the translated text will likely perceive only those judgements outlined explicitly, such as the importance of treating women with respect and the honour in fighting fairly. However, the socio-economic status and level of education of those Algerians who comply with the "code de la rue" and speak Cagayous can be correlated with those of some members of the English audience's society. Thus, the translator may incorporate linguistic features - marked lexical and grammatical elements - into the translation that will play up these shared attributes and convey, if not the full scope, then at least a hint, of the unique Algerian mentality and society. Admittedly, the full flavour of the Cagayous footnote cannot be conveyed, but at least the reader will perceive, through the marked difference in language used in the translation of the footnote, that those who speak this language are members of a distinct social group and that the language by which they express themselves shows a pronounced departure from the norm. Let us first consider the linguistic and stylistic features that distinguish the Cagayous vernacular in the original text; then, we will look at the comparable features that were used to distinguish the language, and therefore, the context, of the translation.

In an earlier section of this chapter, considerable attention was given to the features of Cagayous vernacular; Camus put many of these unique features to use in his footnote. A key characteristic of Cagayous is its distinctive spoken nature; this is imparted in the footnote in a number of ways. Camus incorporates many elisions and elliptical phrases which impart a sense of movement and immediacy to the language. The most common example of elision is "y", which is often used as a substitute for "il", as in "Alors Coco y s'avance et y lui dit", "Coco, rien qu'un, y lui a donné" and "Y nous ont mis les chaînes", or to linguistically economize in the

expression "il y a", as in "Qu'est-ce qu'y a?" and "Y en a un qui s'est avancé à Coco". The excerpts "j'te choppe le 6-35" and "t'y mangeras des coups" are also proof of use of elision. Elliptical phrases that convey a sense of movement and spoken linguistic economy can be found in examples such as "Y en a un qui s'est avancé à Coco, *deux, trois*" and "*Qui, ton frère?*". The phrase "*et avec la tête : « Bom, bom »*" demonstrates typical conversational ellipsis as well as an implied sense of accompanying gesticulation. Finally, the frequently used "*alors*" and the "*dis*" that appears twice in the recounting of the story serve as a sort of conversational link between narrator and listener, and reinforces the spoken nature of the text.

Another key characteristic of Cagayous is its rich lexicon, and this lexical wealth is demonstrated in the Cagayous footnote in *Noces*. The diverse nature of the colonization of Algeria brought with it many lexical borrowings, and we see one example of a borrowing in the footnote: "c'était *scouza*". *Scouza* is derived from the Italian term *scusa*, which means "excuser", but the idiomatic expression "c'est *scouza*" means "c'est pour rire, ce n'est pas sérieux, c'est un prétexte".¹⁷

Cagayous also features alterations of standard French terms; one example revealed in the footnote is "*darrière*", which is the product of a widely-attested phonetic mechanism. It is also interesting to note that the Cagayous orthographic system is generally acknowledged as inconsistent, and this is supported by the fact that "derrière", spelled correctly, appears only fifteen words before "darrière".

In Cagayous, some standard French words take on new or different meanings; an example of this characteristic can be found in their use of the term "*donner*". While the standard French denotation of this verb is "to give", in Cagayous, "donner" is synonymous with "frapper"; it is

frequently used in the expression "donner des coups", although whenever one reads that "on donne à quelqu'un", those who speak Cagayous implicitly understand that what "on donne" is "des coups".

Finally, like all languages, dialects and vernaculars, Cagayous has its share of idiomatic expressions; an example of such an expression found in the footnote is "*manger des coups*". This expression is a translation and an adaptation of the Arabic expression "kla la esa", and it means "montrer les dents à quelqu'un et le frapper".¹⁸ It is interesting to note that the Cagayous vernacular features a particularly broad range of terms for describing fights, kicks and punches. Like the Inuit and the many terms they have to designate snow, perhaps the marked prevalence of "streetfighting terminology" linguistically underscores the cultural importance of fighting and defending one's honour in the Cagayous context. For interest (and for amusement), a brief glossary of Cagayous "streetfighting terminology" is included in Appendix A of this paper; for added linguistic interest, the definitions to the terms contained in the glossary are written in Cagayous.

Cagayous vernacular is also distinctively different from standard French in its grammatical features, and three of these peculiar features are demonstrated in the Cagayous footnote in *Noces*. In the footnote, the personal pronoun is used in a redundant manner, creating a duplication that would be considered incorrect in standard French. In several sentences, a personal pronoun redundantly follows a clearly indicated subject of the verb, as in the following examples: "*Coco y (il) s'avance et y (il) lui dit*", "*L'autre il a pas mis la main*", "*La bagarre, elle a commencé*", "*Les agents y (ils) sont venus*", and "*le père à Lucien y (il) nous a dit*". This redundant use of the personal pronoun may be an attempt by the Algerians to keep Cagayous vernacular as clearly

referential and concrete as possible; it may also underscore the spoken nature of Cagayous, as personal pronouns are frequently repeated in other languages (including English) in informal narrative or verbal communication.

A second grammatical feature of Cagayous that is illustrated in the footnote is the anomalous construction of negative phrases. The standard French construction of a negative phrases is typically "ne...pas"; however, the examples drawn from the footnote indicate that the "ne" is frequently omitted: "L'autre *il a pas mis* la main" and "Si *c'est pas mon frère*, c'est comme mon frère". Once again, this faulty construction replicates the patterns of conversational speech, in which the "ne" is often elliptically omitted, and reinforces the predominantly spoken nature of Cagayous.

A third and final grammatical feature of Cagayous that was found in the footnote was the non-standard use of a preposition. The last sentence of the footnote reads: "Mais après, le père à Lucien y nous a dit..."; the narrator has replaced the standard preposition for indicating possession, "de", with "à". This deviant usage does not represent a general disregard for observing and following rules of grammar; rather, it represents a grammatical system that differs from that of standard French.

Finally, Cagayous demonstrates marked differences from standard French in its syntactic structures and relations. Two very distinctive syntactic features were illustrated in the Cagayous footnote in *Noces*: the inversion of standard phrasal word order and the incorrect agreement of subject and corresponding verb. Standard French has, for over a century, demonstrated a distinct distaste for inversion, and yet in Cagayous, inversions are used frequently. The footnote is no exception to the rule; it features several examples of the tendency in Cagayous towards inverted

word order, as in the following examples: "*À moi tu vas donner des coups?*", "*« Oua, oua », qu'y faisait*" and "*La honte à la figure, j'avais*". It is most likely that the use of this inverted style of phrasing is another way for Cagayous speakers to emphasize the concrete, direct and immediate aspect of their vernacular.

And lastly, the Cagayous footnote illustrates non-standard agreement of noun and corresponding verb. An example of this feature is the following: "*Je vas te donner des coups*"; in this example, we see the use of a personal pronoun in the first-person singular with an auxiliary verb conjugated in the second-person singular. The simple explanation for this usage is that Cagayous morphology differs from that of standard French.

Clearly, the Cagayous footnote demonstrates many of the characteristics of that vernacular. Given the highly inventive style of Cagayous, it would be very difficult to replicate its unusual features one-to-one; the result of such an undertaking might be a translation that is awkward at best and preposterous at worst. Thus the strategy I used in the footnote to "*L'été à Alger*" was that of "signal translation". I did not attempt to reproduce the full flavour and exact linguistic features of the original; rather, through use of unconventional but semantically motivated lexical choices and syntax in the target text, I tried to characterize the footnote's author linguistically in terms of socio-economic status and level of education, characteristics that the English reader could identify with and relate to some degree to his own culture and society. Let us now examine the linguistic and stylistic features used to distinguish the language, and therefore, the context, of the translation.

In the translation, the general tone of the footnote's narrator is that of a member of a lower socio-economic stratum with little formal education. His overall attitude and demeanour is that

of a young street "tough", and this is reflected in his language, which is peppered with slang words, street language, elisions, contractions and grammatical errors. These marked features clearly convey a social rank comparable to that held by the narrator in the original. It might be stretching the point to claim that the street tough in the translation may belong to a gang and therefore share many of the same principles of allegiance and honour as those of the Algerians in the original, but the parallel, though weak, does exist. Let us now consider the lexical and grammatical features in the translation which serve as the cornerstone for the characterization of the "street tough".

Lexically, the translation of the Cagayous footnote is marked in several ways to suggest the character of the narrator. The narrator demonstrates a distinct propensity for slang, but the slang words that he uses were chosen with care. Many slang words are transient by nature, passing quickly in and out of use because much of their linguistic effect is dependent on their sense of novelty; an effort was thus made in the translation to select slang words and expressions that have endured and become part of an accepted slang lexicon so that the translation would not acquire unwanted temporal limitations or connotations. Examples of the slang used in the translation are the following: "Coco comes up to this *guy*", "I'm gonna *rough y'up* some", "I'll *work y'over* real good", "Coco *slugs* him once", "So I *popped him one*", "Then the *cops* came" and "They *cuffed* us, right?". Others lexical choices reinforce the informal and conversational tone of the footnote. The following examples underscore the sense of informality: "So Coco comes up to this guy and *goes ...*", "The guy *goes ...*", "*What's up?*", "he was just *foolin' around*", "Lucien's *pop*, he says"; and these examples reinforce the conversational tone: the repeated use of the conversational link "so", as in "*So* Coco comes up [...]. *So* Coco goes [...]. *So* he reaches

back [...]. *So* Coco goes to him [...]. *So* the guy doesn't lay a hand [...]. *So* everybody comes out [...]. *So* I says to one of 'em [...]. *So* I popped him one", the conversational pause exemplified by "So he reaches back to, *like*, grab his piece", the narrator's pauses for affirmation from the listener demonstrated in "They cuffed us, *right*?" and " ... there's all these guys and girls, *right*?", and the elliptical conversational style and implied accompanying gesticulation of "I took his head and went '*Bam, bam*'". And one lexical choice was made to particularly underscore the narrator's background through use of "street language"; it is contained in the following example: "So he reaches back to, like, grab his *piece*". In this context, "piece" is an element of "street language" or "gang slang" meaning "gun".

Another feature in the translation of the footnote that underscored the "street tough" character of the narrator was the repeated use of elisions and contractions; these also serve to reinforce the informality and spoken nature that was peculiar to the Cagayous of the original footnote. Examples of these elisions and contractions include the following: "I'm gonna rough y'up some", "You're *gonna* rough me up?", "he was just *foolin'* around", "don't you go *reachin'* for *nothin'*", "I'll work y'over", "*layin'* on the ground *goin'*" and "I says to one of 'em".

A final feature in the translation of the footnote that reinforces the background and disposition of the narrator was the incorporation of grammatical errors into his speech, such as "*Don't* you go reachin' for *nothin'*" and "I'll work you over *real good*". These are errors commonly committed by those with little education, or in an informal, conversational setting such as that of the footnote.

Another grammatical error that is made by the narrator is the incorrect application of verb tenses and agreements; there are two examples of this inaccuracy in the translation of the

footnote. The first example is the following: "So *I says* to one of 'em", which in fact reveals two distinct errors. The first is an error of tense. The verb "says" is conjugated in the present, yet the narrator is recounting a sequence of events that took place in the past. This sort of inconsistency in the use of tense is a characteristic feature of Cagayous, and its tendency to favour the use of the present, even when inappropriate, likely stems from a desire to retain a sense of movement and immediacy in the language. The second error in this example is one of subject-verb concordance. If the present tense were, indeed, the correct tense for this situation, the first-person singular subject "I" would "say", not "says". Such an error may reflect a simple lack of knowledge of correct grammar due, perhaps, to insufficient schooling, but it is also a mark of informal, conversational speech. The second example which demonstrates an incorrect application of tense is "Yous guys *done* the right thing". In this case, the speaker (Lucien's father) is attempting to use a past tense, but rather than use the standard morphology "did", as in "you guys *did* the right thing", he has instead used the deviant "done". On top of the errors of tense committed, Lucien's father has also incorrectly pluralized the subject "you" (referring collectively to the narrator, Coco and Lucien) as "*yous*". Such a mistake might, once again, simply represent a slang or informal conversational usage, but it typically indicates the speaker's insufficient level of education, and this is likely the case here.

Any attempt to translate a vernacular poses a considerable challenge to the translator, and the Cagayous footnote in *Noces* was certainly a case in point. However, while the attempt made here was surely an imperfect one, the careful consideration given to the specific context of Cagayous and to the peculiar linguistic and stylistic features that reinforce that context did allow it a limited degree of success. Surely the full flavour of the original was not conveyed in the

translation; however, through its motivated use of lexical and syntactic features, it explicitly demonstrated a distinct use of language and thus implicitly suggested the unique socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the context in which that language is embedded.

Concluding Remarks

A vernacular is a phenomenon of time, place, social class, level of education and cultural condition; as has been illustrated in this chapter, it is an extreme form of language that poses a considerable challenge to the translator. Considerable, but not insurmountable. For although many translators argue that it is impossible to convey such richly connotative language in translation because vernacular comprises the most native, the most peculiar and thus, the most "untranslatable" properties of language, the evidence given in this chapter proves that vernacular is a phenomenon that is neither "impossible to convey" nor "untranslatable". In part, the key is to select a translation strategy that is appropriate to the specific text in translation, and always, to display moderation. But for the most part, the key is to be ever mindful of the specific context and unique stylistic elements that are inherent to the given vernacular, for a vernacular manifests the inextricable link between context and style: it is a linguistic phenomenon that exists only within a limited contextual situation, and that contextual situation gives it unique and inimitable lexical and grammatical features. For this reason, while translating the Cagayous footnote in *Noces*, I gave careful consideration to the specific context of Cagayous and to the unique linguistic and stylistic features that reinforced that context. All of the rich connotations inherent in the original were not conveyed in the translation. However, the explicitly distinct use of language in the translation implicitly suggests the unique socio-economic and cultural

characteristics of the context in which that language is embedded thus, in that way, the translation can be considered a success.

NOTES

¹Judson Rosengrant, "Toads in the Garden: On Translating Vernacular Style in Eduard Limonov," Translation Review 38/39 (1992): 16.

²Lauren G. Leighton, Two Worlds, One Art: Literary Translation in Russia and America (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991) 207-208.

³Rosengrant 16.

⁴Leighton 211.

⁵Leighton 211.

⁶Leighton 212.

⁷Leighton 212.

⁸Leighton 212.

⁹Leighton 213.

¹⁰Leighton 214.

¹¹« Cagayous, » Nouvelle Encyclopédie du Monde, éd. 1962, III : 882.

¹²Auguste Robinet, Cagayous, ses meilleures histoires par Musette avec une introduction, des notes et un lexique par Gabriel Audisio (Paris : Gallimard, 1931) 17.

¹³Robinet 19.

¹⁴Robinet 21-22.

¹⁵Robinet 22.

¹⁶Pierre Mannoni, Les Français d'Algérie : Vie, Moeurs, Mentalités (Paris : Éditions Harmattan, 1993) 20.

¹⁷André Lanly, Le français d'Afrique du Nord ; étude linguistique (Paris : Bordas, 1970) 161.

¹⁸Roland Bacri, Le roro, dictionnaire patouète de la langue pied-noir, étymologique, analogique, didactique, sémantique et tout (Paris : Denoël, 1969) 76.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

As complex and challenging as it may be, literary translation affords the translator countless opportunities to confront cultural and linguistic phenomena and to reflect on her practice. This thesis has been a case in point.

In preparing the translations and commentary, I used a bottom-up approach in which my source text served as the foundation. *Noces*, a set of four lyrical essays written by Albert Camus, consists of a series of meditations on the ancient and enduring problems of human existence and individual transience set against the lushness of the Algerian landscape. The essays that were translated for the purposes of this thesis were the first and third in the set: "Noces à Tipasa" and "L'été à Alger".

The three chapters of commentary that followed sprang directly from my immediate contact with the source text. They treated the aspects of *Noces* that made translation particularly challenging: (i) understanding the complex themes and symbols that underlie the essays, and (ii) conveying those themes and symbols using target-language devices that would reflect Camus' style and be appropriate to the context.

Since language and culture are inextricably linked, culture and context must be conveyed in translation. In the case of literary translation, it is even more essential to understand the context and culture of the source text because literature is subjective and, therefore, heavily influenced by its author's individual position within that culture. The literary translator must thus

familiarize herself with her author's "contextual environment" in order to have the sensitivity and insight necessary to make informed choices in terms of content and style during the translation.

The first chapter of the commentary represented my effort to familiarize myself with Camus' contextual environment, which I called the "Camusian context". In it, I studied four recurring themes which I found essential to understanding and translating Camus' writing. The first theme was the omnipresence of Algeria, both its landscape and its people; it infiltrates every level of Camus' writing and become the cornerstone for all of his beliefs and philosophies. The second was Camus' strong affinity for Ancient Greece and the values of Mediterranean culture, values which are distinctly present and promoted in *Noces*. The third was Camus' deep rapport with nature and his affirmation of the primacy of physicality. And the fourth was Camus' existentialism, including his tenets of lucidity, absurdity and revolt, all of which were integrated into *Noces*.

The second chapter of the commentary was an outgrowth of the first; it analyzed the subtle stylistic devices that Camus employs to highlight the themes and symbols of the Camusian context. Several of the formal features of *Noces* were studied, including Camus' choice of the essay as literary vehicle, his use of first-person narration, his highly-motivated lexical choices and richly descriptive poetic devices, his thoughtful and innovative manipulation of French syntax and structure, and his finely-tuned rhythm and lyricism. These features were found to impart meaning, add emphasis and contribute to the cohesiveness of Camus' message at all levels; they clearly demonstrated that Camus' use of language extends far beyond mere communication.

The concept that underlay the commentary in this thesis was that content and form are inseparable in a literary text such as *Noces*, and that both must, therefore, be fully represented

in translation for both contribute to the meaning of the text. The third chapter of the commentary illustrated that partnership of context and style with an in-depth study of the Cagayous vernacular used in the second footnote of "L'été à Alger".

As I defined it in this thesis, vernacular is an extreme form of language; it challenges the very concept of translation equivalence because it represents the most uniquely untranslatable property of a language. It demonstrates the link between context and style because it is a linguistic phenomenon that exists only within a limited contextual situation (time, place, social or cultural condition), and that singular contextual situation gives it inimitable lexical and grammatical features. The difficulties I encountered in translating the Cagayous vernacular served to reinforce my contention that context and style (of content and form) work together to generate meaning within a given text.

Noces is a text whose powerful message, and whose beauty and lyricism, were an inspiration to me as translator; in my translations, I attempted to reproduce something of Camus' artistry. The task proved challenging, but nonetheless rewarding for it afforded me the opportunity to learn from practical experience, to confront cultural and linguistic phenomena, to reflect on fundamental aspects of translation and, especially, to expose the utter centrality of conveying both context and style, two sides of the same coin that work together in a literary text to create its complex, multi-layered and multi-dimensional meaning.

APPENDIX A:

***PETIT GLOSSAIRE À L'USAGE DES NON-INITIÉS
AU LANGAGE DE CAGAYOUS***

PETIT GLOSSAIRE À L'USAGE DES NON-INITIÉS AU LANGAGE DE CAGAYOUS

Arranger la cravate^{1*}	C'est quand quelqu'un y manque de tenue alors on lui tombe sur le paletot.
Aubergine (monter l')	Donner un coup dans la figure à quelqu'un qu'une tuméfaction violacée elle lui vient.
Baroud	Bataille rangée ou dérangée (à la guerre comme à la guerre) où on a ou on n'a pas le combat dans l'oeil.
Baroufa	C'est une grande bagarre, ça vient de <i>baruffa</i> en italien. Dans une baroufa comme y faut, on s'arrange la cravate, on se dobze la carabasse, on se monte l'aubergine, on se monte un oeil, on se donne bien bien, on se jongle, on se mange des coups : botchas, calbotes, castagnes, coups de tête empoisonnées, etc.
Botcha	Coup. À prendre que dans le sens fort.
Calbote	L'étymologie vient de l'italien <i>colpetto</i> que c'est une petite gifle, un tape de rien.
Castagne (prendre à la)	Une castagne, c'est un coup pas terrible terrible qu'on tombe raide mais pas un coup pour rien quand même.
Coup de tête empoisonné	Coup de tête qu'on donne (ou qu'on reçoit, des fois) dans le plexus solaire (pas lunaire) que les sangs y vous tournent, vous devenez vert, rouge, jaune, comme si de la strychnine

ou un aute poison y vous restait sur l'estomac.

Dobzer la carabasse

Dobzer, c'est frapper très fort en arabe. *Carabasse*, c'est tête en patouète, que ça vient de *calebaza* qu'en espagnol c'est citrouille. Dobzer la carabasse, vous voyez c'que ça veut dire.

Donner

Verbe actif comme tout qu'on l'utilise pour *frapper*. Quand il donne à quelqu'un, c'est toujours des coups.

Donner-lui sa mère²

À l'insulte, s'ajouter des coups. Se dit souvent au cours de « donades » ou bagarres organisées.

Gambette (faire une)

De l'italien *bambàta*, cette expression elle consiste à mettre votre pied en travers de la jambe de l'aute, exprès pour qu'y tombe de croc-en-jambe.

Jongler

Taper sur quelqu'un très fort comme si on se le soulevait de terre exprès pour que quand y retombe, paf! on se le renvoie en l'air et ainsi de suite.

Manger des coups

C'est montrer les dents à quelqu'un et le frapper, le frapper jusqu'à qu'y soit plus dans son assiette.

Monter un oeil

Action, paf! qu'on en met plein la vue à quelqu'un que son oeil y devient tout gonflé de l'ecchymose.

Rabia	Colère que les yeux y vous sortent de partout mais qu'après, on s'emporte pas plus mal.
Taper	C'est frapper.
Taquet	Un coup qu'on donne pour attaquer.

NOTES

¹Roland Bacri, Le roro, dictionnaire patouète de langue pied-noir, étymologique, analogique, didactique, sémantique et tout (Paris : Éditions Denoël, 1969) 20.

²José Lenzini, L'Algérie de Camus (Aix-en-Provence : Édisud, 1987) Glossaire.

*With the exception of "**Donner-lui sa mère**"², all terms and definitions in this glossary were taken in full from Roland Bacri's Cagayous dictionary, Le roro, cited above.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- ABRAMS, M. H. A Glossary of Literary Terms. 4th Edition. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981.
- ADJADJI, Lucien. Albert Camus : Pages Méditerranéennes. Paris : Didier, 1968.
- "Algeria." The New Encyclopædia Britannica. 1990 ed.
- "Algiers." The New Encyclopædia Britannica. 1990 ed.
- ALTANO, W. Brian. "Translating dialect literature: the paradigm of Carlo Emilio Gadda." Babel 34.3 (1988): 152-156.
- AMOIA, Alba. Albert Camus. New York: Continuum, 1989.
- BACRI, Roland. Le roro, dictionnaire pataouète de la langue pied-noir, étymologique, analogique, didactique, sémantique et tout. Paris : Denoël, 1969.
- BRÉE, Germaine. Camus. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1964.
- BURR, Elizabeth, trans. The Chiron Dictionary of Greek & Roman Mythology. Wilmette, Illinois: Chiron Publications, 1994.
- CAMUS, Albert. Noces suivi de L'été. Paris : Gallimard, 1959.
- « Cagayous. » Nouvelle Encyclopédie du Monde. éd. 1962.
- CLASON, W. E., ed. Elsevier's Dictionary of Wild and Cultivated Plants. New York: Elsevier, 1989.
- CORDES, Alfred. The Descent of the Doves: Camus's Journey to the Spirit. Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1980.
- CRUICKSHANK, John. Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- D'ALMEIDA, Irène Assiba. "Literary Translation: The Experience of Translating Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* into French." Meta 27.3 (Sept. 1982): 286-294.

- EAST, Bernard. Albert Camus ou l'homme à la recherche d'une morale. Montréal : Éditions Bellarmin, 1984.
- ELLISON, David R. Understanding Albert Camus. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990.
- FAVRE, Frantz. « Camus et la poétique des ruines. » Albert Camus 13 : études comparatives. Ed. Raymond Gay-Crosier. Paris : Lettres Modernes, 1989. 105-116.
- FOLKART, Barbara. "Translation as Literary Criticism." Meta 27.3 (Sept. 1982): 241-256.
- FRIEDENTHAL, Richard. Goethe: His Life and Times. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1965.
- GADOUREK, Carina. Les innocents et les coupables: Essai d'exégèse de l'oeuvre d'Albert Camus. The Hague : Mouton & Co., 1963.
- "Gide, André." The New Encyclopædia Britannica. 1984 ed.
- Le Grand Dictionnaire Larousse Français-Anglais/Anglais-Français. Paris : Larousse, 1993.
- GRANT, Michael, and John HAZEL. Gods and Mortals in Classical Mythology. Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1973.
- HANNA, Thomas. The Thought and Art of Albert Camus. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1966.
- HERNÁNDEZ, Lilliam. « Vers une poétique de *Noces*. » Albert Camus 1980. Second International Conference, The University of Florida, Gainesville, February 21-23, 1980. Ed. Raymond Gay-Crosier. Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1980. 142-149.
- HOLMES, James S. Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies. Introd. Raymond van den Broeck. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988.
- JECHOVÁ, Hana. «La perspective de la représentation littéraire et le problème de la traduction.» The Nature of Translation: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation. Ed. James S. Holmes. Bratislava: Publishing House of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 1970. 43-57.
- JOHNSON, Stella M. A. "Translation in Africa: A Literary Perspective." Meta 34.4 (Dec. 1989): 703-710.

KOMISSAROV, V. N. "Language and Culture in Translation: Competitors or Collaborators?" TTR 4.1 (1991): 33-47.

LANLY, André. Le français d'Afrique du Nord ; étude linguistique. Paris : Bordas, 1970.

LAZERE, Donald. The Unique Creation of Albert Camus. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.

LEBESQUE, Morvan. Camus par lui-même. Paris : Éditions du seuil, 1963.

LEFEVERE, André. Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1992.

LEIGHTON, Lauren G., ed. and trans. The Art of Translation: Kornei Chukovsky's *A High Art*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984.

LEIGHTON, Lauren G. Two Worlds, One Art: Literary Translation in Russia and America. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991.

LENZINI, José. L'Algérie de Camus. Aix-en-Provence : Édisud, 1987.

LOTFIPOUR-SAEDI, K. "Analysing Literary Discourse: Implications for Literary Translation." Meta 37.2 (June 1992): 193-203.

MANNONI, Pierre. Les Français d'Algérie : Vie, Moeurs, Mentalités. Paris : Éditions Harmattan, 1993.

MEUNIER, André. « Approches de l'art camusien. » Albert Camus 2 : langue et langage. Ed. Brian T. Fitch. Paris : Revue des lettres modernes, 1969. 9-33.

MOORE, Jeffrey S. "On Anglicizing the Imaginative World of Boris Vian: The Problem of Wordplay." Diss. University of Ottawa, 1982.

OJO, S. Ade. "The Role of the Translator of African Written Literature in Inter-Cultural Consciousness and Relationships." Meta 31.3 (Sept. 1986): 291-299.

Œuvres complètes d'Albert Camus. Paris : Aux éditions du club de l'honnête homme, 1983.

PÉREZ, Mariá Calzada. "Translators in Wonderland: A Study of the Tempo-cultural Aspects of Alice in Wonderland." Babel 41.2 (1995): 86-109.

"Platonism and Neoplatonism." The New Encyclopædia Britannica. 1984 ed.

- "Plotinus." The New Encyclopædia Britannica. 1984 ed.
- RHEIN, Phillip H. Albert Camus. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1969.
- ROBERT, Paul. Le Grand Robert de la langue française. 2^e éd. Paris : Le Robert, 1985.
- ROBINET, Auguste. Cagayous, ses meilleures histoires par Musette avec une introduction, des notes et un lexique par Gabriel Audisio. Paris : Gallimard, 1931.
- ROSENGRANT, Judson. "Toads in the Garden: On Translating Vernacular Style in Eduard Limonov." Translation Review (The University of Texas at Dallas) 38/39 (1992): 16-19.
- SHAW, R. Daniel. "The Translation Context: Cultural Factors in Translation." Translation Review (The University of Texas at Dallas) 23 (1987): 25-29.
- SIMON, Pierre-Henri, et al. Camus. Paris : Libraries Hachette, 1971.
- SLOBODNÍK, Dušan. « Remarques sur la traduction des dialectes. » The Nature of Translation: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation. Ed. James S. Holmes. Bratislava: Publishing House of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 1970. 139 - 143.
- SLOTE, Daniel. "Comment on Sharma." Meta 39.2 (June 1994): 313-315.
- SOLOMON, Robert C. Introducing the Existentialists. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981.
- SPRINTZEN, David. Camus: A Critical Examination. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.
- "Tipasa." The New Encyclopædia Britannica. 1990 ed.
- TRIPP, Edward. Crowell's Handbook of Classical Mythology. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970.
- VERSTEGEN, Peter. "Some Critical Notes on Holmes' Cross." Translation Studies: The State of the Art. Proceedings of the First James S. Holmes Symposium on Translation Studies. Ed. Kitty M. van Leuven-Zwart and Ton Naaijens. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1990. 49-54.
- VINAY, Jean-Paul, et Jean DARBELNET. Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais. Saint-Laurent, Québec : Éditions Beauchemin, 1977.

- WEIS, Marcia. The Lyrical Essays of Albert Camus. Ottawa: Éditions Naaman, 1976.
- WEN-LI, Ke. "Translation and culture with special reference to the translation of *Hong Lou Meng*." Babel 41.1 (1995): 24-34.
- WOELFEL, James W. Camus: A Theological Perspective. New York: Abingdon Press, 1975.
- WUILMART, Françoise. « Le traducteur littéraire : un marieur empathique de cultures. » Meta 35. 1 (mars 1990) : 236-242.