The Acute of the Present

Paul Celan's Shakespeare Translations

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Translating a Contemporary Diction

According to scholarship, Celan began studying English in 1944 solely in order to be able to read Shakespeare in the original. Later, in a 20 August 1965 letter to his wife, he writes: "pour moi, il n'y rien de plus beau et de plus grand que Shakespeare" ("for me, there is nothing more beautiful and bigger than Shakespeare"; Celan and Celan-Lestrange 288).[1] The confession about Shakespeare is surprising at first sight for a poet who has lived entirely between the languages of German and French. No French-speaking author of the modern age like Rimbaud or Apollinaire, no Russian author of the twentieth century like Mandelstam, no early model like Rilke: it is Shakespeare who embodies for Celan the epitome of beauty and greatness. He thus undoubtedly occupies an exceptional position in Celan's work. The relationship between Celan and Shakespeare seems to be a special one, one that—unlike, for example, the case of the epoch-making adaptation of Rimbaud's *Bateau ivre* and Valéry's *La jeune parque* in the 1960s—initially seems to have little to do with Celan's own poetic work.

At second glance, however, the situation is more complex. Shakespeare then assumes a greater, exemplary significance in Celan's work. This applies first of all to the translations that culminate in the 1967 publication, by Insel-

1 All citations from Celan's letters and from scholarship will be translated into English. Celan's translations, however, will not be retranslated into English, given that this would contradict the specific aesthetic and diction the following article explores. Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English—whether of Celan or others—are my own.)

Verlag, of twenty-one selected sonnets by the Elizabethan poet. These sonnets would accompany Celan's work for more than twenty years.

Celan's translations move between two different points of reference. On the one hand, there is the translation by the poet and private scholar Gottlob Regis, from the first half of the nineteenth century, to which Celan expressly refers; on the other hand, there is Stefan George's translation, from which Celan distances himself just as decisively. Celan's own concern has been made clear precisely against the background of Regis's achievement and the critical setting aside of George's preciosity in translation: "Mir ging es beim Übersetzen vor allem auch um eine natürlichere—also ungezwungene, ungestelzte—und, wenn ich so sagen darf, heutigere Diktion. An mehreren Stellen werden Sie Assonanzen begegnen; dazu hat sich seinerzeit auch Regis verstehen müssen" ("In translation, I was primarily concerned with a more natural—an informal, not artificial—and, if I am allowed to say so, more contemporary diction. In different instances, you will encounter assonances; Regis also had to deal with them in his own time"; Gellhaus 417). In claiming to translate Shakespeare into a "more contemporary diction," Celan makes it clear that he is concerned less with placing Shakespeare in a historical context than with establishing a relationship to his own present precisely in its historical distance from the subject matter. Therein lies the experimental character of his translation.

The Shakespeare translation therefore inscribes itself at the same time in Celan's own lyrical production during the 1960s. Celan kept track of the precise dates at which he translated each sonnet. Two translations appeared in *Neue Rundschau* as early as 1960, eighteen were performed by Celan on NDR (Northern German Broadcasting) for Shakespeare's four-hundredth birthday in 1964, and the whole of the twenty-one sonnets was published in 1967. Celan first translated sonnet 90, followed shortly thereafter in February 1960 by sonnet 137, the final poem of his selection; finally, at the suggestion of his friend, the author Franz Wurm, he translated sonnet 107, which thus assumes special significance.

The fact that Celan increased the number of sonnets that he translated for the final publication to twenty-one is thus not solely due to Wurm's suggestion. It becomes clear that Celan, in selecting twenty-one from the 154 sonnets published by Shakespeare, is creating a cycle of his own precisely in view of the "more contemporary diction" for which he is striving. Celan's translation can be read as a poetic engagement with Shakespeare's work, which at the same time establishes a constellation with his own work.

In this context, the translation of the sonnets appears not only as a testimony to Celan's poetic encounter with Shakespeare and the English language in the context of proximity and strangeness, but also as part of his own work history. In this way, however, the translation enters into a particular historical constellation. Historically, the translation of Shakespeare coincides with the disastrous consequences for Celan of the Goll Affair, in which he was accused of plagiarizing Yvan Goll's oeuvre. In terms of his own work, the translation coincides with the publication of the volume *Atemwende*, of which Celan writes to his wife Gisèle Lestrange on 8 March 1967, despite the adverse circumstances: "C'est vraiment ce que j'ai écrit de plus dense jusqu'ici, de plus ample aussi" ("It is really the most dense and also the most ample of what I have written so far"; Celan and Celan-Lestrange 502).

In this context, what Celan's poems and translations during the late 1960s accomplish is the constantly renewed attempt to make the time that is sedimented in them speak. In this sense, Martin von Koppenfels speaks of the poem as a time capsule, especially with regard to translations: "Gedichte sind Zeitkapseln. Mittels Metren und Klangfiguren bilden sie eine Membran um die Zeiterfahrung eines Moments, die sonst verloren wäre" ("Poems are time capsules. Through meters and sound figures they form a membrane around the experience of time in a single moment, which otherwise would be lost"; xxxii–xxxiii). Celan's poems as well as his translations are to be understood in this sense as a form of inherently rhythmical and musical language, as noted by the poet Thomas Kling, who spoke of "ein rhythmisches, verkürztes, klangvoll-musikalisches Sprechen über Welt, in das grundsätzlich alle Sprachlagen geschichtet sein können" ("a rhythmical, abbreviated, sonorous-musical way of speaking about the world, in which, generally, all forms of language can be embedded"; 329).

The poem as "Zeitkapsel" ("time capsule"; Koppenfels xxxii) and *Sprachspeicher* ("language-memory"; Kling 329)—this is all the more true for Celan's Shakespeare translation, as well as for his own poetry, since the guiding themes of Shakespeare's sonnets are time, transience, and age, but also the beauty that grows out of the poem as a flower of the word. In the context of Celan's poetry during the 1960s, time means the experience of destruction, pain, and separation, but also their poetic processing in the poem as a crystalline structure that defies the transience of beauty—experiences that he was able to read from Shakespeare's sonnets and to transfer into the more contemporary diction of his own time. The confrontation with Shakespeare is special not only because it occupied Celan for so long, but also because in the

translation of the Elizabethan poet, who seems so historically as well as poetically distant, Celan's own present simultaneously opens up. In this context, Celan's very own version of Shakespeare will be discussed as an experimental form of translating. Experimentation characterizes the way Celan explores time, historical alterity, language, and rhythm.

Shakespeare's *Eingedenken*

Celan's translation of Shakespeare has presented researchers with a challenge. Compared to Rimbaud's *Bateau ivre* and Valéry's *La jeune parque*, it is singular, dedicated to a different time and a different language. At first, there seems to be a difference between Shakespeare and Celan, as Annette Simonis has pointed out. She suggests that the difference between the language of middle and late Celan and the language of Shakespeare's sonnets is extremely striking. On the one hand, there is Celan preferring an elliptical language and short verses; on the other hand, there is the long structure of the Shakespearean verses, which are also discursive and argumentative (162). Simonis also remarks that another divergence between Shakespeare and Celan lies in the Elizabethan predilection for dense metaphors and wordy poetry (162).

As Simonis remarks, Celan's hostility to metaphor, like his elliptical technique of representation, is at first glance opposed to Shakespeare's creative art of language. How the two come together—the inventive creator of language Shakespeare and the poet Celan, who tends toward muteness—seems a mystery.

Uncertainty reigns already in the question of the selection of the sonnets, as suggested by Leonard Olschner. At first sight, he points out, it might not be comprehensible why Celan chose those twenty-one poems among the 154 sonnets (211). However, the reason becomes clearer when one comes to realize that around half of the poems revolve around memory and questions of *eingedenken*, time, and durability (211).

Certainly, the reference to memory meets an essential trait of Celan's Shakespeare translations. However, it applies to the entire work and can thus hardly serve to grasp the special position of the sonnets in comparison to the poems.

In view of the offer Shakespeare's poems make to the reader, the answer with regard to the specific genre of the sonnet is therefore initially simpler. For the theme of Shakespeare's sonnets is, unsurprisingly and above all, love.

Love, and the question of the relationship between beauty and transience, is the guiding theme of the poems, and this is also true, under altered auspices, for Celan, especially in the context of the constellation that the letters, translations, and poems form for him.

Sommer *war*

Celan's Shakespearean translations set their own accent. Thus, Szondi has already drawn attention to the importance of the moments of caesura, paronomasia, and repetition, which are also present in Celan's lyrical work, in order to characterize Celan's own ductus of translation precisely in contrast to the English original:

> Nicht der Verzicht auf die überlieferten rhetorischen Figuren unterscheidet also Celans Übertragung vom Original, sondern die veränderten Voraussetzungen, die andere Art des Meinens, die seiner Sprachverwendung im allgemeinen und seinem Gebrauch rhetorischer Figuren im bewondered immer schon vorausliegt, wiewohl sie erst aus der Performanz, aus dem Text, erschlossen werden kann. (Szondi 331)

Celan did not renounce the passed on rhetorical figures in his translation. The difference towards the original rather lies in the changed assumption, the divergent way of meaning, which precedes his usage of language in general and his use of rhetorical figures specifically, although this can only be apprehended in the performance of the text.

The different kind of meaning Szondi speaks of results from the historical distance to the object, which at the same time leads to the fact that Celan's own poetry and the reference to his own present are repeatedly inscribed in the translation.

What this means for the rhythmic orientation of Celan's translation in the proper sense has been worked out by Lengeler. He too emphasizes above all the differences between Shakespeare and Celan. Three individual procedures, he says, determine Celan's diction, namely hendiadys, postponing the adjective, and hyperbaton (134). The result of this rhythmic series amounts to a dissolution of Shakespeare's form. As Lengeler points out, the rhythm of Shakespeare is "zerhackt" ("chopped up"; 134).

Celan, however, is closer to Shakespeare than Lengeler would have us believe. As much as he seems to adapt Shakespeare's rhythm to his own on the formal level, Celan remains faithful to the theme of the sonnets. This is already evident in the translations of the first five poems, which are the ones attributed to the so-called "procreation Sonnets," the first seventeen poems of the cycle, which deal with Shakespeare's call for the procreation of offspring. If it is already clear in Shakespeare's "procreation sonnets" that procreation alone can save us from the impending decay of beauty, then it becomes apparent in the translation, moreover, that Celan attaches a possibly even greater significance to the theme of time and transience. To the wish that "beauty's rose might never die," as it says in the first sonnet, Celan translates the genitive into the nominative "die Rose Schönheit soll nicht sterben" and thus further reinforces the equation of rose and beauty (Celan/Shakespeare 317). And, to the threat of "time decease," the translation reacts with a reference to temporality that is clearer than in the original. Celan calls the rose "die gezeitigte" and thus makes it the object of a transience to which it helplessly falls prey (317).

Against this background, the introductory alliteration "Was west" (317) is not only an expression of the possession of beauty, but also already a reference to decay, which is then explicitly addressed at the end of the fourth sonnet: "Die Schönheit, ungenutzt: mit dir mußt du sie verwesen. / Doch nutzt du sie, sie wird, was bleibt, verwesen" (323). The rhyme with the identical words plays with the double meaning of *verwesen*, as "to administer" and as "to perish." It thus not only introduces a legal component that is constantly present in Shakespeare's poems and is directed in the "procreation sonnets" to the question of the order of last will and inheritance, but also underscores the importance of time and transience for the central theme of love and beauty: "die eigne Knospe ist dein Grab" (317), it says, in reference to the rose beauty invoked in the first sonnet.

Thus, at the same time, an autobiographical experience inscribes itself in the poem. When the second sonnet begins with "forty winters" and Celan translates "Wenn vierzig Winter deine Stirn umdrängen" (319), it becomes clear that in the translation, which is dated 5 February 1961, the "you" is Celan himself, who was forty years old at the time. The question that Shakespeare poses with regard to afterlife in the heir relates Celan's adaptation in more than one sense to that of his own afterlife as poet and father:

Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
Of his self-love to stop posterity?

Liebst du dich so? Das Grab so? Sollt
dir dies: dein eigen Ende sein, genügen? (320–21)

In Shakespeare, self-love stands against posterity, against afterlife in the legally legitimized heir. In the early 1960s, Celan increasingly posed the question of posterity in the context of his own poetry being threatened by slander, a plague of its very own order. The plague to which Shakespeare alludes (in poems written during the time of the plague) is, for Celan, the annihilation of his own name triggered by the Goll Affair (Wiedemann). In the translations, Celan consistently addresses this time as one of eclipse, while asking if summer has already begun: "Ist Sommer? Sommer *war*. Schon führt die Zeit / den Wintern und Verfinstrungen entgegen" (325). In the translation of the fifth sonnet, Celan takes up the antithesis between summer blossom and winter torpor that was introduced by Shakespeare and consistently relates it to the rose beauty alluded to at the outset (324–25). That summer is irretrievably lost and now the "hideous winter" reigns, the translation accepts as the new reality: "Sommer *war*." Not unlike Hölderlin's *Hälfte des Lebens*, poetry has settled into the time of winter: "Doch so, als Geist, gestaltlos, aufbewahrt, / west sie, die Blume, weiter, winterhart" (325). The question of the flower's essence resumes the beginning and responds in the alliteration of "weiter, winterhart" to the transience that threatens beauty and that the poem seeks to absorb. The first five poems thus form an internal cycle that revolves entirely around the being and passing of beauty, whereby beauty is associated not only with love, but, as a flower, also with the written word.

Infamous Translations

In Shakespeare's sonnets, as in Celan's translation, the topics of time, transience, and melancholy correspond to one another: that of love as a "fool," as "Narr." "So true a fool is love that in your will, / Though you do anything, he thinks no ill," from Shakespeare, is translated by Celan to "Solch treuer Narr ist Liebe: nimmer sieht / sie Arg in deinem Tun—was auch geschieht" (330–31). Celan takes over the common constriction of love and foolishness from Shakespeare and at the same time surpasses it by translating the "error" that justifies the foolish judgment as delusion: "So ich dies hier als Wahn erwiesen seh, / so schrieb ich nie und keiner liebte je" (353) is his translation of the conclusion of sonnet 116. He also translates the "madding fever" from sonnet 119 as "dies

Fieber, wahnhaft, das da brennt und trennt!" (354–55). The last poem of the cycle, which Celan translates, once again takes up the topic of foolish love, which can be heightened to the point of madness:

CXXXVII
Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,
That they behold, and see not what they see?
They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
Yet what the best is take the worst to be.

If eyes corrupt by over-partial looks
Be anchor'd in the bay where all men ride,
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forgèd hooks
Whereto the judgement of my heart is tied?

Why should my heart think that a several plot
Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?
Or mine eyes, seeing this, say this is not,
To put fair truth upon so foul a face?

In things right true my heart and eyes have err'd,
And to this false plague are they now transferr'd.

CXXXVII
Narrsts Aug mir, Blindling Liebe, fort und fort!
Es schaut, nimmt war—sieht nicht, was es gewahrt,
erkennt die Schönheit, sieht der Schönheit Ort,
siehts Beste—hälts für dessen Widerpart.

Verschautes Aug, solls nun vor Anker gehen
in jener Bucht, wo festmacht alle Welt:
mußt, Liebe, Trug zum Haken schmieden, den
das Herz fühlt, wenn es Herzensurteil fällt?

Kanns dies sein eigen nennen, da es sah:
Allmend ist diese Flur und nimmer sein?
Mein Aug, dies schaudernd, sagts, dies sei nicht da?
Läßt wahr sein, schön, und weiß: es ist gemein?

Mein Herz, mein Aug: verirrt im Wahren, beide,
und heimgesucht nun von dem Lügen-Leide. (356–57)

The "blind fool," which Regis had translated as "töricht blinder Wicht" (141) and George as "blinder narr" (219), is translated by Celan, in a further nominalization, as "Blindling Liebe." He takes up and at the same time alters the Petrarchist metaphoric of seeing that informs Shakespeare's poem. Where the blindness of love clouds sight in Shakespeare, Celan refers to the heart and the eye as instances of the True, whose judgment is misled. Vision, which is actually directed at the beautiful, recognizes only its "Widerpart," in this case not the true and the beautiful, but the mean. When Celan takes up Shakespeare's "common place" with "gemein," he alludes not only to the widespread, but beyond that to the infamous defamation that happened to him. When the translation concludes by juxtaposing the true and the "Lügen-Leide," thus turning Shakespeare's "false plague" anew—Regis had spoken of "ekler pest" (141), and George had addressed "die falsche seuche" (219)—it becomes clear that the visitation of which the last verse speaks is one that not only quotes Shakespeare, but also concerns Celan's own present.

It is thus hard to overlook that the legal context, which is already invoked in Shakespeare, moves in Celan's work in the direction of the connection between infamy and slander: "Nicht an dir liegts, daß sie dich schmähen und schmähen: / kaum zeigt sich Reines, schon wirds schlechtgemacht" (Celan/Shakespeare 337), it says in sonnet 70, and sonnet 71 also ends with a reference to the "verhöhnen" to which Celan finds himself exposed (339). What is at stake is fame, and what threatens it is envy: "Dies ist dein Ruhm, der so wie keiner klare,— / den Mund der Neider schließt auch er nicht zu" (337).

The blindness of love, which Shakespeare places at the center of his poems, is thus transferred by Celan to the blindness of contemporaries, who are unable to distinguish the true from the mean in his own case. To be sure, there is hope that the error surrounding the status of his poetry will ultimately be resolved: "Du, müßtest du nicht so: beargwöhnt, sein, / im Reich der Herzen herrschtest du allein" (337). As has been shown, however, the hope was in vain. Even the heart-language of poetry could not put a stop to the infamous defilement.

Legal Dimensions

Against this background, the last of Celan's transcribed poems takes on a special significance. Written on 29 November and 21 December 1966, it is based on a suggestion by Franz Wurm, which Celan was initially not sure he could follow: "Das Sonett CVII lese ich wieder und wieder—wer weiß ob ich es übersetzen kann" ("I am reading and rereading sonnet CVII—who knows if I will be able to translate it"; Celan and Wurm 47). Well, he could:

CVII
Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Suspos'd as forfeit to a cónfin'd doom.

The mortal moon hath her eclipse endur'd,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.

Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh; and Death to me subscribes,
Since spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme
Whil e he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:

And thou in this shalt find thy monument
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

CVII
Nicht Angst, mir eigen, nicht der weltenweiten
Wahrträume Sinn für Dinge, die da kommen, kann
bemessen meiner Liebe Fristen oder Zeiten,
entgrenzt und unverwirkt ist sie, in niemands Bann.

Der Mond, der sterbliche, verschattete: er blinkt!
Augurenwort, die war Augurenspott beschieden.
Das Schwankende von einst? Gekrönt und unbedingt.
Und mit dem alterslosen Ölzweig kommt der Frieden.

Umbalsamt, meine Liebe, bist du, bist umtaut
von frischer Zeit—kein Tod, dich fortzuschwemmen.
Ich lebe, ihm zum Trotz, im Reim, den ich gebaut,
derweil er dumpfen grollt und sprachelosen Stämmen.

Und du: in diesem hier, da steht es noch, dein Bild,
wenn Gräbererz verwittert und Tyrannenschild. (Celan/Shakespeare 348–49)

Within Shakespeare's poems, sonnet 107 occupies a special place. It addresses the transition of the throne from Elizabeth I to James I, which took place from March to April of 1603 and was significant for Shakespeare in that his early patron, the Earl of Southampton, was released by the new ruler after being imprisoned in the Tower for rebelling against the queen (Duncan-Jones 21). The new political order thus affected Shakespeare quite directly. In the sonnet, therefore, Elizabeth is also addressed as a "mortal moon," the new age as one of peace, a "peace […] of endless age," before the final quartet makes the transition from the passing of the throne to the permanence of love, which defies death in the linguistic representation in the poem. In the concluding invocation of "monument," the sonnet triumphs over the political rule of tyranny tied to time in "this poor rhyme," in whose seemingly small power, borne by a rhetorical gesture of modesty, life is suspended in its temporal conditionality. The sonnet breathes the spirit of new freedom that the reign of James I makes the poet expect and, at the same time, the spirit of confidence in his own artistry in happier times.

Celan detaches the poem from its concrete historical references in order to set his own accents within the framework of more contemporary diction. What thus moves to the center is "true love," which in Shakespeare is already invoked in the first quartet and which Celan now celebrates as an expression of self-imposed sovereignty in the language of the poem: "entgrenzt und unverwirkt ist sie, in niemands Bann."

It is true that Celan retains the rhyme scheme that combines the cross-rhyme of the quartets with the concluding couplet rhyme, as he does in all the translations of the sonnets. But it is striking how freely he deals with the question of versification, especially in the first stanza, and how he changes the rhythm of Shakespeare's sonnet by breaking up the original's carefully set end of verse with enjambments: the first verse takes up the alliteration of "wide world" but distributes it even more intensely, over the first two verses, in the "weltenweiten Wahrträume"; the second and third verses are also connected

via a line break. This changes the rhythmic weighting of the individual verses. While Celan connects one pair of verses to another pair to form a quartet, thereby giving rise to a fluid structure in which three verses merge into one another, the last verse stands out: "entgrenzt und unverwirkt ist sie, in niemands Bann." The rhythmic freedom Celan takes from Shakespeare isolates the last verse and thus gives it greater weight: the dissolution of love, which the translation addresses, is also accomplished by the poem on the formal level by releasing the sonnet from the spell of fixed form.

The very first verse thus not only confirms the tendency toward parallelization that Lengeler has already emphasized: "Nicht Angst, mir eigen, nicht der weltenweiten / Wahrträume." At the same time, the liquefaction—not chopping—of syntax, which through enjambment and alliteration reinforces the intrinsic value of language, reveals itself as a defense against fear, which wants to place love under "niemands Bann." Against this background, the spell, which Celan places at the end of the first quartet as a translation of the "doom" of which Shakespeare speaks, can be understood, like the latter, not only as a fateful doom, but also as an act of outlawry from which the poem liberates itself.

With the ironic parallel setting of "Augurenwort" and "Augurenspott," which in Shakespeare was directly related to the coronation of the new ruler, the second stanza takes up the prospect of a dissolution of boundaries brought about by love. The flashing of the moon, which in Shakespeare can be read as an "eclipse" and thus as the long-awaited end of Elizabeth's reign, is reinterpreted by the transcription as a sign of a pacification that would no longer be subject to the changing of the times. Around the final verse of the second quartet, a discussion between Klaus Reichert and Paul Celan has unfolded, which once again confirms how serious Celan was about distancing himself from George. Reichert had sent George's translation to Celan, and Celan replied to him:

> Zu CVII: Denkbar wäre: 'Den alterslosen Ölzweig ruft nun aus der Friede.' Aber das hiesse, obgleich bei 'proclaims' sozusagen nächstliegend, den Georgeschen Fund übernehmen und das Füllsel- 'nun'. Bleiben wir bei der ersten Fassung; sie hat, kompensatorisch, den Vorteil der einfachen Diktion. (Celan and Reichert 71)

Concerning CVII: Conceivable would be: 'Den alterlosen Ölzweig ruft nun aus der Friede.' But this would mean—even though in the case of 'proclaims' it is, so to say, the most obvious choice—adopting George's finding and the filler word

'nun'. Let's stay with the first draft; it has, from a compensatory point of view, the advantage of simple diction.

It is not the transformation of the olive to the palm tree that bothers Celan in George's translation, but the translation of "proclaim," which in Shakespeare again indicates a legal dimension, as "ausrufen," which awakens unpleasant associations, not least in view of Germany's political history. Celan does not mention Regis's alternative "Und Friedens Ölzweig lächeln ew'gem Bunde" (111) as a means of legitimizing his adherence to an "einfache Diktion," a simpler diction. He avoids the attribute of eternality and translates "olives of endless age," in a more literal manner than Regis or George does, as "alterslosen Ölzweig." Celan thus translates Shakespeare's dominant legal question about the legitimacy of the new rule into a Hebrew Bible scenario: the olive branch and peace refer to the covenant between God and Noah after the survived Flood, thus sending a sign of hope.

Balm, which in Shakespeare is usually associated with the anointing of a monarch, points in a similar direction, but in Celan's "Umbalsamt, meine Liebe, bist du, umtaut / von frischer Zeit" it takes on a different meaning that points in the direction of the ritual anointing of death. The renewed enjambment indicates the movement that resists death, which, unlike in Shakespeare, is related not to the self but to love. The conclusion of the second verse, "kein Tod, dich fortzuschwemmen," takes up the metaphor of water, which peace and the olive branch already suggested in the context of the Hebrew Bible. Against this background, the phrase "meine Liebe" can be understood, as in many of Celan's poems, not solely in the erotic sense, but also as a remembrance of the dear dead whose ashes were transported from the rivers to the sea.

Thus, the I shows itself, to advantage, less as a loving than as a poet: "Ich lebe, ihm zum Trotz, im Reim, den ich gebaut / derweil er dumpfen grollt und sprachelosen Stämmen." The appeal to rhyme, which Celan strips of the addition of the poor—Regis had formulated it differently, "Ich leb' in armen Reimen ihm zum Neid, / Wenn er sprachlosen, dunklen Herden grollt" (111), while George had formulated it "Da trotz ihm mein arm lied mir dauer leiht … / Er schlage menschen dumpf und ohne sprach!" (204)—is an act of poetic self-assertion that Celan shares with Shakespeare and yet accentuates differently: The poet's language is resistance to death and a weapon against the speechlessness of those whom adaptation grasps as a dull rumble under the archaic image of the tribes.

Against this background, the conclusion completes the act of poetic self-assertion by placing the image of true love erected in the poem above that of political domination: "Und du: in diesem hier, da steht es noch, dein Bild, / wenn Gräbererz verwittert und Tyrannenschild." Regis, from whom Celan takes the speech of the "Tyrannenschilde," had spoken of the "Denkmal" (111), and George had spoken of the "gedächtnismal. / Wenn herrscher-reif verfiel und gruft von stahl" (204). The association with the memorial, which seems to fit so well with the function of the dirge in Celan's poems, is manifestly refused by him. The conclusion programmatically opposes the transience of political tyranny with "dein Bild," the image of a love that, not subject to any spell, can unfold freely. Not unlike the letters and poems from the same period, the translation, invoking Shakespeare, creates the image of a resistance to time motivated by love that outlasts threatening decay.

What Celan's translation thus accomplishes, in its explicit invocation of *einfache Diktion*, is a translation of Shakespeare into his own time. What he retains is the connotation of beauty and transience attached to love; what he changes are the historical contexts in which the images are integrated. If in Shakespeare they refer to the transition of political rule in early-sixteenth-century England, Celan carries in the contexts that define his own time. These include not only the ostracism invoked by the banishment and ridicule to which Celan was subjected in the 1960s, but also a belief in the power of the poetic language of the heart, a language of love, to defy attack and opposition. Where Shakespeare already speaks beyond Elizabeth's epoch and proclaims peace and freedom, Celan speaks on his side of hostilities as of madness, but answers to those aggressions through poetic means and rhythm. In Celan's case, the multi-stellar nature of poetic expression therefore also applies to the translations and the time stored in them, in the turn that programmatically concludes the volume of *Atemwende*: "Licht war. Rettung" (107).

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