Adaptation of Literary Works in Susan Howe's *The Liberties* and *Pythagorean Silence*

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Abstract

Susan Howe, American poet, has adapted and appropriated some canonical texts and characters in her writings, and these texts inspired her to write in a way that suits the modern/postmodern readers. Doing so, Howe tried to give importance to adaptations as works that have their own originality and uniqueness through her own manipulation and modification.

Adaptation is a term used by critics in the late twentieth century to refer to the process of making a work of art on the basis of a preexisting one, it has a wide range of connotations like imitation, copying, borrowing , appropriation, intertextuality, etc. Howe is very much preoccupied with the texts of the past which contain voices that are marginalized especially women, she gave

withdrawnness which is constructed around the relationship involving Jonathan Swift and Esther Johnson, a major one addressee in Swift's ***Journal to Stella***. The second one is ***Pythagorean Silence*** which contains references and allusions to Ovid as well as Shakespeare and it predominantly tackles the perception of transmutation.

الخلاصة

سوزان هاو هي كاتبة أميركية قامت بأقلمة بعض الاعمال والشخصيات الاساسية في كتاباتها وهذه النصوص الهمتها لتكتب بطريقة تناسب القارئ في عصر ما بعد الحداثة . وبالقيام بذلك حاولت هاو ان تعطي اهمية للاقلمات كأعمال لها تميزها وأصالتها من خلال التلاعب بها وتعديلها لها.

الاقلمة هو مصطلح أستخدم من قبل النقاد في أواخر القرن العشرين للإشارة الى عملية صنع عمل فني على اساس عمل فني موجود مسبقاً، وهذا المصطلح له مدى واسع من الدلالات كالتقليد والنسخ ، والاستعارة ، التخصيص و التناص الخ..... هاو مهووسة جداً بنصوص الماضي التي تحتوي على اصوات مهمشة وخصوصاً النساء . هي أعطتها قيمة من خلال اقلمة وتخصيص تلك النصوص.

البحث الحالي هو عن الاقلمة في قصائد مختاره من المجموعة الشعرية المكتوبة في الثمانينيات بعنوان أوربا الآمال . القصيدة الاولى هي *الحريات* .هذه القصيدة هي حول ارتباط هاو مع ايرلندا على احد المستويات. على مستوى أخر ، تستخدم شخصية سوفت كشعار للقانون الابوي .هي ايضاً تستخدم المنفى والغربة اللذان يتمحوران حول العلاقة التي تضم جوانا ثان سوفت واستر

them value through adapting and appropriating those texts.

The present paper is about selected poems from Howe's 1980s anthology entitled *The Europe of Trusts*. The first poem is ***The Liberties.*** This poem is about Howe's correlation with Ireland on one level. At another level, it uses the character of Swift as an emblem of paternally coded law. It is also about exile and

جونسن المخاطب الاساسي في *صحيفه الى ستيلى* .القصدة الثانية هي *صمت فيثاغوري* والتي تحتوي على أشارات وتلميحات لأوفد وشيكسبير. وتتناول في الغالب مفهوم التحويل .

Introduction

The term adaptation is generally used in physiology to mean a sense of an organ's adjusting to varying conditions or in biology to mean the species' mutation in coping with changing circumstances as part of the evolutionary process. Thus, whether in art, physiology or biology, adaptation does not bear the hallmark of originality, but of mutation and permutation of an already existing original. (Slethaug 16)

The vocabulary of adaptation is highly liable: Adrian Poole has made a list of terms including " stealing, appropriating, inheriting, assimilating, being influenced, inspired, dependent, indebted, haunted, possessed … homage, mimicry, travesty, echo, allusion, and intertextuality" (Cited in Sanders 3). It can also mean "variation, version, interpretation, imitation, proximation, supplement, increment, improvisation, prequel, sequel, continuation, afterlife, addition, paratext, hypertext, palimpsest, graft, rewriting, reworking, refashioning, revision and re-evaluation" (Sanders 3). There are other terms that are applicable to adaptation, words that have a variety of periphrastic meanings. Some of these terms are: recycling, remaking, retelling, rewriting, borrowing, metamorphosis. These terms masquerade the notion of devotedness and faithfulness to the original (Verrone 30).

Adaptation as a literary imitation is treated by Ben Johnson to mean a rightful appropriation of the words of an earlier author. If the imitation implies a critical stance, it will be considered parody (Burrow 270).

Many recent poetic palimpsests are indebted to

Hilda Doolittle who used the term as a trope for the project of the woman poet writing through a patriarchal cultural history to recover traces of elided female myths and signs (Vanderborg 62).

For Linda Hutcheon adaptations should be studied alongside their source text, because they are, in Hutcheon's apt words "delibrate, announced, and extended revisitations of prior works" (Hutcheon.xiv).

Classical as well as Renaissance considerations of imitation divided into three basic categories. The first, delineates imitation as following a model as accurately as probable. A second as well as a greatly more dominant approach portrays it as a venture to reproduce a model precisely however to change that model in a manner suited to the imitator's personality as well as situation. The third approach to imitation defined it as an endeavor to compete with as well as exceed a model rather than simply altering it. The last two emphasize the writers ability to transform and recontextualize in order to bring new perspectives became prevalent recently(Howard 72).

The Romantic poets criticized the idea that poetry is imitation and replaced it with a notion of poetry as spontaneous creation . Edward Young sneered at "that meddling ape imitation. Thus the emphasis on originality was the Romantics aim (Hirsch 140).

T. S. Eliot, a representative of the modernist writers has written an influential essay entitled "Tradition and Individual Talent" in which he questioned the priority given to originality over adaptation. For him, there is "No poet, no artist, of any art, has his meaning alone" (Eliot 38). He is not advocating blind adherence to precursor texts. His notion of the "individual talent" was that a new material is created upon the surface and foundation of the literary past. (Sanders 8)

In his latest book *Original Copy,* Robert McFarlane investigates the nineteenth century's irrecoverable association with thoughts of novelty that unavoidably, though not always openly, remarks on the nature of genuineness of creation. As McFarlane remarks, "from the late 1850s onwards unoriginality came increasingly to be discerned as an authentic form of creativity"(Cited in Llewellyn and Heilmann 216). The nature of the aesthetic as replica, the copy as well as the inauthenticity inherent within its status as an art work is thus an obsession inherited from the Victorians themselves (Llewellyn and Heilmann 216).

As time passes, acknowledging the weight of history is important to direct the artist's choice of structure, line length, pattern and rhythm. To express his personal vision, a poet must reject or readapt and modify certain forms to formulate his ideas. Dissatisfaction with tradition can be an inspiration for new innovations. The history of poetry appears to be a kind of dialogue as certain forms are waived, then rewritten and reappropriated to be suitable for the new context. New ideas cannot be made to fit familiar forms. The application of the rules of writing represented a constraint on writers in modern times (Lawton 25).

In arts, appropriation means the practice of borrowing or adopting which is a way of viewing the original work in a new and different way, and one that also allows us to see the original as a basic text on which to build the new one (Verrone 34).

Adaptation and appropriation are definitely included within the execution of textual echo and allusion, but this does not make a parallel to the fragmentary bricolage of quotation more generally perceived as the operative mode of intertextuality. In French, bricolageis the term for "do-it-yourself", this term helps to explain its application in literary context to those texts that assemble a range of

quotations, allusions and citations from existent works of art. A parallel form in art is the creation of collage by assembling found items to create a new artistic object. This intended reassembling of shards to form a new whole is an active element most of the postmodernist writings (Sanders 4).

Adaptation has from its beginning been considered an intertextual phenomenon. MikailBakhtin and Roland Barthes are the forefathers who accompany Julia Krestiva in formulating the term ”intertextuality” in 1966. Intertextuality leaves notions of the original and godlike authorial control (Cutchins et al. np). Instead, It makes the radical suggestion to consider texts as:

> An intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point(a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings , that of the writer, the addressee (or the character) and the contemporary or earlier cultural context(Krestiva 36).

Howe takes a specific text or a collection of related texts to be the basis for her poems. She depends on the texts of the past for example, *Hinge Picture* is dependent on Edward Gibbon’s *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Secret History of the Dividing Line* on William Byrd’s *Histories*, the Cordelia section of *The Liberties* on William Shakespeare’s *King Lear, Thorow* on different writings of Henry David Thoreau (Joyce 26). In most of these poem , she makes a direct quotation as in *Cabbage Gardens*, the poem reacts to the challenge explicit or implicit in the quotation, she played with the notion that the history of civilization is marked by the cultivation of the cabbage. Such a work is redacting. While in other poems she makes unacknowledged quotations .

She has taken a phrase from Ralph Waldo Emerson on the subject of citation which designates the scope to which Howe is committed to this technique (Joyce 26) "Every book is a quotation ; and every house is a quotation out of all forests and mines and stone quarries; and every man is a quotation from all his ancestors" (Howe, *The Midnight* 116).

Howe reacts to preexisting texts or merges them into her work. This appropriation allows both Howe's voice and the voice of the earlier writer to be heard (Kimmelman 224).

The Liberties

This poem is about expatriation and withdrawnness. It revolves around Jonathan Swift's relationship with Stella (Esther Johnson) who is the major addressee in Swift's *Journal to Stella*. This relationship concerns Howe's relationship with Ireland through her mother at one level. At another level, Swift's figure is used as an icon of a paternally encrypted rule. Howe interweaves into the verse strands of *King Lear*, fairy tales and myth (Montgomery 4).

The structure of poem is similar to most of the poems in *The Europe of Trusts* anthology in its tripartite form, but it also has several subsections: section one contains three parts , section two is a drama in seven parts each part is associated with a day of the week, section three is a series of visibly oriented poems. The layout of the poem is heterogeneous and there are no single lines or couplets similar to the most of the poems in *The Europe of Trusts*. The organization of many poems is in a bird-like form, with word-grids, there is a relativity in the arrangement of the sections, for example, an unorganized first section is followed by a greatly ordered part, and then again by more typographically disoriented section. The title of the poem is about the captivation of liberty which she highlights in her writings, but more tangibly it

denotes a district located west of St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. It was called like that in the medieval time because it was one of many areas not subject to the rule of either the Crown or the city authorities. "God's Spies", is clearly set in that cathedral. Moreover, there are many reference to Viking Dublin the Liberties district was built on the site of an earlier Viking settlement (Montgomery 4-5).

In " Their/ Book of Stella", Stella is first related to Ireland by means of frivolous detail in the "Journal to Stella" which Howe has used as an opening section to the poem:

> As for Patrick's bird,
> he brought him for
> his tameness, and
> now he is grown the
> wildest I ever saw.
> His wings have been
> quilled thrice and
> are now up again.
> He will be able to
> fly after us to
> Ireland, if he be
> willing – Yes, Mrs.
> Stella… (Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 150).

The themes of flying, migration, liberty and captivity in this epigraph will develop throughout the poem. Swift's travelling with Stella to and from between London and Ireland is equivalent **,** but different from, her forever elimination from England (Montgomery 7).

"Their/ Book of Stella" is similar to Samuel Beckett's more linguistically experimental later prose. The first citation from the first words of "Their/ Book of Stella" are comparable to the second, which are from the opening of Beckett's *Lessness:*

> Dilapidation at
> erected original
> Irish granite
> south was added
> Effected
> attempted wintering
> Struck the bays
> walls mathematic
> Cal indicating
> perfect choir
> System
> measuring from breach to

Floor to roof
the place tendered
Ancient famous
Latin
[…]
Antepedes the door opened em
Braced appeased
An ancient cliff or
cleft the
Ende recoiled attempted
(Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 159)

Ruins true refugee long last towards which so many false time out of mind.

All sides endlessness earth sky as one no stir. Gray face to pale blue little

Body heart beating only upright. Blacked out fallen open four walls over

Backwards true refugee issueless (Beckett, np).

Both texts clearly foreground a tension between the material and abstract. Both writers (Howe and Beckett) are concerned with exploring the relationship between language and meaning in fiction. The "facts" which Beckett attributed to *Lessness* " ruins, exposure, wilderness, mindlessness, past and future tenses denied and affirmed" associates Beckettian tension between affirmation and negation with a desolation that appears to unsettle the possibility for such distinction. The text's evocation of this realm is clearly not mimetic (Buning et al 241-242).

Like *Lessness*, "Their/ Book of Stella" introduces depictions of the material world with words that call more attention to themselves as objects than as signifiers. In both texts the spacing of the short words evokes, and fractures, the sense of edifice that they are interested in. The caesura in the middle of the words "em-braced" and "to-wards" suggest not only an obvious ambiguity (embraced becomes "braced" implying a rather sharp affection, towards becomes "wards" implying a very claustrophobic attention) but also necessitates a focus on the "artifice" of the text's own construction. In an irony that is significant for both writers, a rather fraught sense of freedom emerges from this suggestion of artifice. The constitution of

this freedom itself plays upon the tension between the abstract and the material. The refugee of a physical construction is denied Beckett's gray- faced protagonist in this passage. The "endlessness" of the "fallen open four walls" suggests a sense of excited possibility, one that is only sharpened by the dizzying potential that the aural impression of the "four walls over/ backwards" (Beckett np) resonates with the danger of "falling over/ backwards" (np). "The true refugee" it seems, exists only in the "ruins" that are both inner and outer, and it is here that the subject in the text is positioned (Buning et al 241-242).

Howe's poem is more explicit about the loaded meanings of the destruction. The building is sacred, and the "breach" more carefully measured. The sense of liberty obtained from this ruin is also dependent on the tension between the abstract and the real. In the last lines of the passage from Howe's poem, the outside world is welcomed into the desolate holiness of the building. The door opens to embosom and placate the "ancient cliff or cleft", an external space that can be either stalwart bulk or rent absence. The metaphysical arousal that both writers has explored in their contemplation of the relationship between the linguistic and the physical is not, however, always directly analogous (Marsh 242).

The Liberties is about women's place within a ridiculous world of dourness and loss. Howe has taken two women to show women's "liquidation", Esther Johnson and Lear's Cordelia. Johnson has been "liquidated" by absolute disregard. Although Jonathan Swift's letters to her were all kept, hers to him were not, "the real plot was invisible" (Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 168). Howe sketches Stella's "portrait" by quoting the confused description of Stella (Easther Johnson) "was plump(some), extremely thing (Other). Sickly in her childhood, she grew into

perfect health (Swift)". (Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 152). Cordelia is also incapable of using language deceptively to convey the lies which Lear wanted to hear. She prefers silence, as emblematically many women have to do. These examples demonstrate how women are captivated in a world which silences them through obliteration. Howe tries to search and find a redemptive vision, an alternative vision. (Bleakley 18-19) as she stated " poetry is redemption from pessimism" (Howe, *The Midnight* 138).

Howe hopes to recapture and give voice to the silences. She does not intend to confine female figures in any soundless pre-Oedipal amorphous moment, but allow language itself to resound on multiple planes, sometimes even back to the deep level of semiotic knowing, this is a participation in a "redemptive vision". Howe's feminism is complex and different from Alicia Ostriker who represented the essentialist feminism and from other critics like Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar and Elaine Showalter who were also influenced by this model of women's writing who maintain that there is such a thing as a gender-based difference. In other words, Howe's writing does not follow the politically correct model of women's writing that pursues the existence of an essential self which, through strife, finds itself and startsto speak. Her writing is avant-garde and experimental in ways that are uncomfortable for feminists (Bleakley 21-22).

Through attention to gaps, rupture and oppressive orders and continuities, ,one may begin to address the challenge which Howe faces: "How do I, choosing passages from the code of others in order to participate in the universal theme of Language, pull SHE… From all the myriad symbols and sightings of HE" (Howe, *My Emily Dickinson* 18). Howe's interaction with tradition is different, she wanted to move beyond that, "What is the end of this logic"(17). *The Liberties*

explores how women have been written into and out of history. Howe has written about Stella in the first section "Journal to Stella" as a woman having the available choices, she may use her power for escape, for self-liberation, for succumbing or duteous attachment. In received history, Stella has come to be known for the last of these, her soul's attachment to Swift. But that view appears "false" in the way that Perry Miller's history is falsely incomplete. Howe played with a few of the documents (the archival bits that serve as "flags charts maps// to be read by guesswork through [meaning "via" and/ or "seeing past"] obliteration" (Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 76). The word "GUIDE" in the line "My early and my only GUIDE" evokes Stella's tribute to Swift (Keller 215-216).

Because of the little information that is available about Stella, Howe has merged Jonson's supposed experience with what is known about other women. Thus Howe has invented a character called "SHE" who dressed like men, a common strategy for women who have sought power or freedom of movement similar to men's. Such disguising brings to mind Swift's inclination to acclaim Stella for her manly traits, for her distinction from the typically female in "To Stella, Visiting Me in my Sickness" Swift claimed that Prometheus stole for her "The Fire that forms a manly Soul" (Swift, 684), which he then molded "with Female Clay" Swift commends her as one who never " affected Fears" or "fainting spells" (684). There are other battle standards appear like spears and shields. Howe perhaps evokes Ireland's legendary warrior queens such as Queen Medb as rhyming figures for Stella, but unlike Medb's, the journey Stella undertakes is partly into written expression, and her success is hardly eligible, both by line breakup "mad/e" which alludes to the threat of madness to maids who dare verbal making and by the line "how far I writ// I/

can// not/ see// days trifled away" (Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 164). Stella's sight is known to have been frail. But the difficulty the would-be woman writer has in seeing her life as productive is not a consequence of poor eyesight (Keller 216-217).

Throughout the text the dominance of visible space represents the surrounds of women's history that remains blank, unspoken, unspeakable, or irretrievable. The speaker of the poem felt hopeless of finding Stella with such incomplete descriptions the line " O ciders of Eve, what is my quest?" (Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 166) or perhaps she fears she has lost sight of her pursuit and that either the search for Stella itself or her methods of conducting it are off the mark. As if there is no way out, the next page finds her turning back to the landscape and to the androcentric history of Ireland. Here "native traditions still flit" . Clearly, more information is available about male heroism "he was born/ kingly descent/ made great progress/ in learning" (Howe, The Europe of Trusts 167) and about (men's material rebellions against colonizing restraint than about women's struggle for liberty. And in contrast to women's, men's madness is taken for valor, even invulnerability "John the Mad or Furious, fought like a true Berserker" (82). The boundaries defining what constitutes transgression or crossing, whether of national boundaries and seas or mental states, are radically unstable and gender-inflicted. The madly brave soldier may with " a LEAP" become the violent suitor/rapist (Keller 217-218)." the pursuer/ stained mantle" (168) in mad pursuit of his female prey.

This image of the violent hunt returns the focus to Stella's history: "**SHE DIED OF SHAME** / This is certain/That is mist/ I cannot hold" (168). " I cannot hold" may suggest either the speaker's grasp on women's truth slips, or that she cannot remain focused on men's

history ("that" as opposed to the "this" of women's history). Howe remained committed to relaying women's power and agency that historical record and false "wisdom" have denied. She insists that numerous women, even if equipped only with "broken Oar or spar" in fact rowed as supposedly, they never did, with amazing strength:

Whomsoever
Even the least
Rowed as never women rowed
Rowed as never women rowed
through the whole history of her story
through pain and peril
the shores rang.
(168)

Howe the writer is surely among those propelling themselves through "the whole history" of Stella's story and her own. (Keller 218)

Pythagorean Silence

The title of the this poem instantly puts the reader in the context of a classical past (or present). The pre-Socratic philosopher Pythagoras of Samos boomed in the late 6th century B.C, considered as the first Greek to call himself "philosopher". In this poem a Pythagorean silence has two senses, on one hand it is the silence of historical origins of the philosophical thought in the west, the silence that whelms access to a time before the beginning of recorded history. On the other hand a Pythagorean silence is a silence in the sense that one knows little with confidence about this philosopher's life or teachings because none of his written works remains**.** What is known about him comes vicariously through its reception in the Platonist and Neo-Platonist traditions on which his thoughts came to be so greatly redounded. It is the silence of texts that are put under the devouring force of a history that leaves only fragments, anecdotes and fables, traces without presence (Pfaff 138-139).

Pythagorean Silence consists of three parts: "Pearle Harbor," "Pythagorean Silence" and an untitled part.

Howe has written a message to Ron Silliman, an American poet, that underlies some of the differences between the works of Howe and her peers in the 1980s , Howe was distrustful and to some extent antagonistic to much of the "language writing" from the beginning. In the letter she commented on her being a lyric writer and her belief in what she terms the strength of **"**Mystery in poetry,". She has also stated that her commitment to the past is so profound. She has also chosen a clearly acknowledged example:

> Unlike you I think
> Shakespeare IS a GREAT writer. Yes-I will use that terrible word GREAT. I know all the problems of that word too- because it has particularly shut women out, but I think too that the enigma of power, that includes the idea –great- is as puzzling as the structure of the atom (Cited in Montgomery 56).

This mazy "enigma of power" in Howe's writing, has a connection with the writings of her predecessors and also with the role of the woman writer. *Pythagorean Silence* draws substantially on motifs from the literature of the Renaissance. Howe made an adaptation of the notion of metamorphosis via Ovid's text. In this poem she wanted to exhibit late 20th century anxieties about identity and authority (Montgomery 56).

"Pearle Harbor" is the first section of the poem. It develops around an incident in the poet's memory of childhood visit with her father to the zoo in Buffalo, New York, on December, the day that Pearle harbor was bombed. This section is a meditation or brooding on this experience (Taggart 115). Here, the historical focus is World War and especially its effect on

Howe, her mother, and the culture at large. Howe's father Mark De Wolfe Howe enlisted in the United States army. The central motif is loss, and the poem searches for "survivors" and lost voices lurking in a tapestry of textual, cultural, and historical points of reference "voices I am following" Howe explains, "lead me to the margins" (Howe, *The Birth-Mark: Unsettling the Wilderness in American Literary History*np). The pattern of the poem is elegiac and follows any trace of the marginalized and lost: "My mind's eye elegiac Meditation/ embracing something/ some history of Materialism"(Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 71). The search is textual, and the poem pursues passages as they open:

A sentence or character
suddenly
steps out to seek
truth fails
falls
into a stream of ink
sequence
trails off . (Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 36)

Any sentence or character is worthy of deep and sustained rumination since it marks some human voice. (Haralson 310)

The various facets of loss are presented as a silence, absence, deprivation, violence, war, mystery, poverty, and truth throughout this section and the other sections. In each section there are literary, historical, philosophical or biblical figures. "Pearle Harbor" employs the biblical figures of Herod who " has all of the little children murdered" (Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 11) and "Rachel weeping for her children"(11) to signify the dimensions of grief and murder in war. The dominant tone of 'Pearle Harbor" is grief, the "cry [that]/ silences/ whole/ vocabularies/ of names/ for/ things" (22). That cry gestures to Rachel as well as to Howe and her mother and the collective loss of their children, father, husband. The poetic technique of the poem creates a palimpsest of literary, historical and personal that details grief and how that grief obliterates language and

signifies loss and silence (Haralson 310).

"Pythagorean Silence" is a lengthy, contemplative poem and it contains so many of illusions to pre-Socratic philosophy and Renaissance thought and literature. It is first published in 1982 and it appears in Howe's 1990 collection *The Europe of Trusts* immediately after "Leaves". By depending on Shakespeare and Ovid, Howe stressed the notion of metamorphosis. Howe's has given weight due to borders and boundaries develops to be centered around the boundary between being and non being and death (Montgomery 56).

Montgomery's interpretation of *Pythagorean Silence* is initiated around the transformative metaphysics. The poem opens with a reference Ovid's Daphne and her turning into a tree, in an attempt to escape from Appolo's sentimental intentions:

We that were wood
When that a wide wood was
In a physical Universe playing with
Words
Bark be my limbs my hair be leaf
Bride be my bow my lyre my quiver (Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 17).

The word "wood", in old Latin and Irish languages means "possessed by the devil", "poet or seer", or "going beyond all reasonable bounds". For Howe, Daphne's turning into a laurel tree, into another shape is the prison which allows the role of the poet to see this transformation as something beautiful, while Shakespeare or Dante put their characters in an infernal-like situation. Daphne is not confined, she is a "bride". This transformation is related to other transformations later on , it is a Pythagorean transformation, a metempsychosis, the soul passes from one material host to another. This could be interpreted as an equivalent to the method of poetic construction, an edition of writing which amount to a

constant recasting of the text of the past. In Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid, the soul is described as the wax, its shape is changing. In Howe's work metamorphosis is a passing through a sense of stillness that keeps the "spirit" within the "physical Universe", her account of Daphne's transformation is not so far from the subject of vehemence in her writings during the 1980s, where the poet is in a position to glorify the achievements of the great warriors. In "Bark be my limbs my hair be leaf" the interlocutor is both Howe and Daphne. Furthermore , there is a change in the subsequent line "bride be my bow my lyre my quiver". The speaker here, according to Golding's translation is Appolo speaking to Daphne in describing how she will decorate his head, his "harpe" and his quiver and those of the winners (Montgomery 618).

The lines in *Pythagorean Silence* symbolize a compound, semi-ironic appropriation of Ovid's statement of Daphne's metamorphosis that is immediately "married to the danger and turning and singing it, playing it" (Cited in Montgomery 62). Here Daphne not Appolo becomes the figure of the poet. Daphne is no longer afraid and weak. Howe's lines " Bark be my limbs my hair be leaf…" demonstrates her poetry's inclination concurrently to occupy as well as to question the discourses in which her poetry is structured. Her relationship with power or "danger" is frequently colored by this alliance with authority that "turns to play it" (Montgomery 62-63).

In *Pythagorean Silence* there are certain lines cited from Shakespeare, particularly *Hamlet.*The most important of these passages are two mentions of Ophelia. Ophelia is a maiden who goes through a "poetic metamorphosis". Gertrude's narration of Ophelia's death is close to the metaphor " mermaid- like". This metamorphosis also, has reflections for poetic language.

The initial appearance goes as follows:

Their words are weeds
wrapped around my head
Roses are withered- it
grows rigidly dark
Body and soul
(Howe, *The Europe of Trusts*,32)

The first lines revises Gertrude's description of Ophelia's demise and identifies Ophelia with one of the poem's speakers. The "weeds" around her head improve the image of Daphne and the " my hair be leaf" (17) of the poem's epigraph. The meeting of material as well as lyric responsibilities represented by Daphne's laurels becomes Ophelia's "coronet" of "weeds" and her "weedy trophies" , silent in death. The two women pursue similar ways as they pass out of humanity and into silence. The "weeds" echoing "words" stand for a deathly counterpart to the laurels of the victors. However, out of that silence comes another poetry that acknowledges the irrecoverable experience of history's victims. The poem is immediately lines up with the feminine shadowy side of the Pythagorean antithesis and at the same time criticizes the confines that vindicate dualism of this type. *Pythagorean Silence* exemplifies an endeavor to express from the position of Ophelia and Daphne, a position which is not "rigidly dark" (Montgomery 64-65).

In the incident of Ophelia's death, Howe emphasizes on the transition, on metamorphosis itself, the line between being and non-being with the possibility for poetic speech. Through her passing into death, Ophelia nearly metamorphosis into a siren, or a living being "native" to water. This is also a transformation. The loss of Ophelia's "coronet" and the clothes that are "spread wide" intensify the force of fertility associations and draw the motif of child birth to run against that of the passage from life to death (Montgomery64-65).

The other mention is found in the following lines:

Lost

To grief How lust
(these were the ghost's words) crawls
Between heaven and earth
Dust is birth
of earth we make loam substance
and strange shadows
but I am reaching the end Sky
melts away into sand
sand into sound. (Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 42-43)

The main phrase in theses is "crawls/ between heaven and earth" which comes from Hamlet's speech to Ophelia "what do such fellow as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all, believe none of us. Go thy way to a nunnery. Where is your father?"(Shakespeare, *Hamlet* np) the "arrant knaves" do the creeping for Hamlet. In Howe's poem the "arrant knaves" are mixed with "lust" drawing on the ghost's " won to his shameful lust"(Shakespeare, *Hamlet* np). Here also, Howe concentrates on the passageway between life as well as afterlife as well as relating poetry's subjoining of religious experience to the productive moment in death.(Montgomery 67) The lines "sky/melts away into sand//sand into sound"by relating the resonance of poetry to "Dust is birth/ of earth we make loam substance/and strange shadows"(Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* 42) which is an adaptation of "Alexander died, Alexander was buried Alexander returneth to dust, and dust is earth" (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* np) in Shakespeare's play .

The word "substance// and strange shadows" is derived from sonnet 53 "what is your substance". Here Howe used a clipped citation to emphasize

the substantiality which Hamlet emphasized with his "dust is earth" in opposition to the flimsy ghost which affected his thoughts. Howe imitates Hamlet's words with her Sky-sand metamorphosis and proposes "But I am reaching the end" that the expression of poetic language, resonating ambiguously with the shadow of ancient prejudice, is established in her intensification of death as well as renewal, if there are no personal ghosts, there would be no *Hamlet.* She played with the word "earth" transforming it to "birth"(67). Through her passing into death, Ophelia almost metamorphosis into a siren, or a creature "native" to water. This is also a transformation. Ophelia's loss of her "coronet" and the clothes that are "spread wide" empower the force of fertility associations and draw the motif of child birth to run against that of the passage from life to death (Montgomery 65).

This poem is about metamorphosis. Howe has used very famous stories from mythology and renaissance literature to give another dimension to metamorphosis. It is not an end or escape, but a new beginning and birth. Daphne's and Ophelia's transformations are not meant to prison them, but to liberate them from the male dominance.

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