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Marseille and the Mediterranean in the Writings of Yoko Tawada and Tahar Ben Jelloun

Abstract: This article explores the literary tradition of Marseille as a cosmopolitan and multilingual port city through intertextual analysis. It challenges the often-attributed construction of the city as primarily the site of detective stories in the tradition of film noir and instead argues for a comparative approach based on contemporary literary texts from Yoko Tawada and Tahar Ben Jelloun. The article shows how these writers use Marseille as a figuration of translation, memory, and nostalgia, evoking references to Joseph Roth, Walter Benjamin, Charles Baudelaire, and Albert Camus. By focusing on metaphors such as the ruin, the article highlights the importance of memory and nostalgia in Marseille's literary biography and its historical connectedness to Mediterranean history.

1 Marseille as Mediterranean Port City

In this article, I will explore a literary tradition that situates Marseille as a Mediterranean port city representing cosmopolitism, the migration experience, and multilingualism. The literary history of Marseille is rarely situated in this context – rather, the image of a port city saturated with high criminality is cultivated; a phenomenon stemming from many literary and cinematic examples of detective stories associated with the port city. Indeed, a large number of literary and cultural studies focus on this side of Marseille, represented by authors such as Jean-Claude Izzo (see for instance Kalt 2018). However, relying on detailed readings and intertextual analysis, I will compare two authors as well as several literary sources from the twentieth century that stress the cosmopolitan nature of Marseille and its embeddedness in the Mediterranean.[1] By choosing the contemporary writer Yoko Tawada (*1960) and Tahar Ben Jelloun (*1947), the focus of the paper can be easily discerned: in the realm of Literary Studies, both authors represent a transnational approach to literature, opting for diversity and a non-binary per-

1 In an introduction to Mediterranean discourses in literature and film, the editors of the present volume state that the recourse to intertextuality in a "high degree" is typical for Mediterranean discourses in modernity (cf. Arend et al. 2010, 10).

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spective on culture. Both authors have dedicated texts to Marseille, each of which stresses the cosmopolitan nature of this Mediterranean metropolis.

Port cities have always held a privileged position in the Mediterranean.[2] Their cosmopolitan nature does not only apply to Marseille but to many Mediterranean cities; it might even be considered a universal feature of port metropoles (cf. Angiolini 1994, 45, 48). The oldest city of France, Marseille, reached its glory after the Suez Canal opened in 1869 and became the most important Mediterranean metropole in the nineteenth century (cf. Kalt 2018, 106). It is worth noting that Marseille also influenced German literature in the 1920s and 1930s, which can be seen as indicating the importance of the port as a point of departure and escape from Europe (cf. Wilhelmer 2015, 179, 311). Authors such as Joseph Roth, Walter Benjamin, and Siegfried Kracauer have depicted the city in various feuilletons. Kracauer, for instance, described the dynamic nature of Marseille by using the imagery of blood circulation, thereby stressing the intensity and importance of the port for the city supplying it with its lifeblood: "Der unausgesetzte Kreislauf der Reisenden, die täglich landen und abfahren, durchblutet die Stadt" (Kracauer 2011, 199).[3] The dynamics of coming and going shape Marseille. This flow has also been described by the Uruguay-born French poet Jules Supervielle in 1927, who dedicated a poem to Marseille in the tradition of expressionist urban poetry. In the last stances, Supervielle depicts Marseille as an allegory using the following words: "Ô toi toujours en partance / Et qui ne peux t'en aller, / À cause de toutes ces ancres qui te mordillent sous la / mer" (Supervielle 1996, 141).[4] Decades later, another writer arrived in Marseille and once again regarded the city in relation to its cosmopolitan tradition.

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2 In his biography of the Mediterranean, David Abulafia (2014) stresses the importance of port cities in the Mediterranean, such as Alexandria, Amalfi, Salonika, Jaffa, Tel Aviv, amongst many others. Those cities play a crucial role for the depiction of the five phases of Mediterranean civilization in *The Great Sea.* In April 2017, I organized a workshop with my former colleague Moritz Rauchhaus on port cities at the department of Romance Studies at Humboldt University, Berlin ("Verdichtung der Welt im Sprachraum des Hafens. Die kleinen Formen des Maritimen"). I thank all participants for their contributions, which helped us to conceptualize the importance of port cities from a global and comparative perspective and inspired the present paper.

3 My translation: "The incessant circulation of travelers, that land every day and depart, supplies the city with blood." In the present article, I will quote from the original in the main body and include my own translations in the footnotes. For more literary references on Marseille see Edeling (2012). Edeling (2012, 263) also stresses in this article the importance of Marseille as a cosmopolitan place.

4 My translation: "Oh you, always about to leave / And who cannot leave / Due to all the anchors that bite you beneath the / sea."

2 Yoko Tawada: Translating Marseille

The works of the German-Japanese author Yoko Tawada are a favored subject of studies on literary multilingualism. Tawada's short story *Die Zweischalige*, meaning: *The Two-Shelled*, published in her collection *Überseezungen*, follows the protagonist on her travels around the world, which also lead her to Marseille. The title of the collection, first published in 2002, challenges translators: on the one hand it sounds like 'Übersetzungen', meaning 'translations', but through the shift from 't' to 'e' the word also reads as 'over-the-sea-tongues'; I would propose the translation: Transtongues.[5]

The wordplay alludes to both the protagonist's travels between continents (Europe, America, Africa) and between languages. One stop on these travels is Marseille, a city in which the narrator visits a translation workshop and feels at ease, due to the fact that she does not feel foreign there: "Man merkt sofort, dass die Augen der Hafenstadt Marseille schon seit Jahrhunderten jeden Tag fremde Gesichter gesehen haben" (Tawada 2010, 36).[6] The cosmopolitan character of Marseille, allegorized by Tawada and Supervielle, is also emphasized using references to Japanese sources and travelers. Marseille apparently occupies a privileged position in Japan's relationship to Europe, since, as the narrator in Tawada's story tells us: "[…] Marseille war meistens die erste europäische Stadt, die man betrat"[7] (Tawada 2010, 39). The author depicts Marseille as a gateway to Europe, referencing Japanese travelogues in general and the writing of the Japanese author and traveler Tôson Shimazaki, who arrived in the port city in 1918, specifically. The perspective on the Mediterranean is therefore expanded to include the point of view of non-European, Japanese travelers.

It is worth noting that this story – like all short stories and essays featured in *Überseezungen* – is especially concerned with the dimension and potential of translation. Throughout the collection Tawada likens language to water.[8] The metaphor permits the author to express an ambivalence toward the universal potential of language while still stressing the specificity of each language. For example, in the following quote, the 'shore' symbolizes both another language and the crossing of the sea as acts of translation: "Wie lange braucht aber ein Gedicht, bis es das

5 For another interpretation of the title see Kraenzle (2005, n.p.).

6 My translation: "You instantly feel that the eyes of the port city Marseille have become accustomed to seeing foreign faces for centuries."

7 My translation: "…. Marseille was mostly the first European city to enter."

8 See for instance the short stories "Eine leere Flasche" oder "Die Ohrenzeugin" (Tawada 2010, 54, 98).

Ufer einer anderen Sprache erreicht?" (Tawada 2010, 40).[9] For Tawada, the cosmopolitan character of Marseille, referenced by the narrator when entering the port, is thus also reflected in the dimension of translation, not just in the faces of the inhabitants she sees:

> Vielleicht ist jedes Gesicht vergleichbar mit einem Hafen, dachte ich mir, als ich abends allein in einem Café am Wasser saß. Und wenn jedes Gesicht eine Art Hafen ist, kann man nicht alles aufzählen, was dort schon angekommen ist, und alles, was dort noch ankommen wird.[10] (Tawada 2010, 41)

As stated above, representations of Marseille are prevalent in modern German literature. The cosmopolitan nature of the city, for instance, was also mentioned by Joseph Roth in a small 1925 feuilleton article, in which he commented on Marseille. Both Tawada and Roth reflect on various belongings sticking to the face or feet of the inhabitants and travelers:

> Marseille ist das Tor der Welt, Marseille ist die Schwelle der Völker. Marseille ist Orient und Okzident. [...] Das ist nicht mehr Frankreich. Das ist Europa, Asien, Afrika, Amerika. [...] Jeder trägt seine Heimat an der Sohle und führt an seinem Fuß die Heimat nach Marseille. (Roth 1994, 497–499, cf. Wilhelmer 2015, 178)[11]

Referencing back to the title of Tawada's short story, the noun *Die Zweischalige* refers to the structure of a shell which consists of two halves. The word is unusual and is commonly only used in the context of construction. However, it goes hand in hand with the abundance of maritime images the reader encounters in the short story and can be traced back to the structure of the narration, which is clearly divided into two parts; the present article mainly concentrates on the part relating to the travelogue to Marseille.[12] The other half narrates a curious captivity story, in which the narrator does not seem human and may actually be a mermaid.[13] She is

9 My translation: "But how long does it take a poem to arrive at the shore of another language?"
10 My translation: "Perhaps every face is comparable to a port, I thought, when I was sitting in the evening in a café by the water. And if every face is a kind of port, you cannot list, what has arrived and what still will arrive."
11 My translation: "Marseille is the gate to the world, Marseille is the threshold of the people. Marseille is Orient and Occident. [...] It is no longer France. It is Europe, Asia, Africa, America. [...] Everyone carries their home on the sole of the shoe and on their feet, they carry their home to Marseille."
12 For further information on the divided structure and another interpretation of the short story see Genz (2010, 480).
13 It is likely that Yoko Tawada uses Christian Andersen's fairytale *The Little Mermaid* as an intertext. In this sense, it is striking that the tongue – the most important metaphor and motif in

taken prisoner by a couple, although the reasons are unknown. The title, I would argue, describes the city of Marseille, the real protagonist of the story. The feminine noun alludes to the tradition of addressing cities as female allegories. Furthermore, the dual structure relates to the unity of sea, port, and the city of Marseille, which at the same time reflects the nature of translation, the duality of source language and target language.

The significance of the tongue also develops another dynamic, connecting Tawada's reference to Marseille with Walter Benjamin's famous depiction of the city. The image of the mouth is prominently used by Tawada and Benjamin, the latter allegorizing Marseille as "gelbes, angestocktes Seehundsgebiß" (Benjamin 1981, 359), thus as "yellow, chipped set of teeth from harbor seal". Both Benjamin and Tawada connect the city of Marseille to the aesthetic emotion of disgust. Disgust is another feature commonly attributed to the so-called *cité phocéenne*, which became the epicenter of a bubonic plague outbreak in 1720 (cf. Kalt 2018, 102–103). Tawada references Marseille as a cosmopolitan port city, regarding it through the perspective of a narrator that – just as herself – identifies as German and Japanese and thus sees the city through the eyes of a multilingual and multicultural traveler.[14]

3 Tahar Ben Jelloun: "Mediterranean Nostalgia"

This cosmopolitan depiction of Marseille leads me to the core focus of this article: Tahar Ben Jelloun's poetic documentation *Marseille: comme un matin d'insomnie*, *Marseille: like a morning of insomnia*, which in its texts and images depicts a moment of transformation and destruction in Marseille.[15] Although this poorly known text by Ben Jelloun inscribes itself in a literary tradition of Marseille, it paints a critical picture of both the port city itself as well as the treatment of its multicultural population. In 1983 and 1984, the central neighborhood of Marseille 'Porte d'Aix', named after the triumphal arch in the quarter, suffered massive destruction and gentrifying transformations. As a result, the people of Porte d'Aix, mostly mi-

Überseezungen – also plays an important role in Andersens' fairy tale, given that the little mermaid loses her tongue and therefore her capacity to speak, cf. Andersen (1949, 137).

14 The narrator reflects on her life in Hamburg and states that she arrived in Europe through Moscow. For the autobiographic dimension of the short story see Kraenzle (2005).

15 In December 2018, I held an unpublished presentation on Tahar Ben Jelloun and Marseille at Haifa University as part of the workshop on port cities: "Global History, Literature and Culture". I especially thank Susanne Zepp, Natasha Gordinsky, and Claudia Olk for the opportunity to join the workshop and their comments on my presentation.

grants and laborers, could no longer afford their homes.[16] Together with photographer Thierry Ibert, Ben Jelloun documented these changes in his book of poetry *Marseille: comme un matin d'insomnie.* Ben Jelloun constructs a literary image of Marseille based on the history of its port and the migrant experience.

Marseille has a long history of migration, which took different shapes during the twentieth century. Before World War I, many Italians had come to Marseille. They were then followed by Spanish, exiled Russians, Greeks, and Assyro-Chaldeans, amongst other groups (cf. Témime 1985, 40–42). During the Second World War, the port city of Marseille also welcomed numerous political and Jewish refugees, who either stayed in the city or passed through it to continue their escape (cf. Témime 1985, 43). A new phase of migration started in the 1960s and 1970s, when many Algerians arrived in Marseille, constituting from then one the biggest immigrant group (cf. Témime 1985, 44). Long before the increased political presence of right-wing nationalist politics in the 1980s, Marseille had become a place of racist violence in the 1970s. Publishing a poetic documentation in precisely this moment of France's history amounted to a statement in this debate and an engagement in favor of the migrant community.

After the preface, Ben Jelloun includes a small and very dense article in *Marseille: comme un matin d'insomnie*, which he calls *Marseille est une énigme*, *Marseille is an enigma.* In this short article, the writer proceeds to think about Marseille and its tangled history of cultural mixture and immigration. Marseille is described through many textual images and several small scenes. In this sense, the reader can perceive the repetition of the phrase "Marseille est…", meaning: "Marseille is…"; Marseille is depicted as a riddle, as a house, as a migraine, as a palace. Furthermore, the small scenes feature numerous figures moving through and interacting with the city. A horse entering and leaving the scene, a spider, a painter, the wind, Maghrebian people sitting in a café, a cat, bulldozers. The scenes described are shaped by constant movement, transition, and displacement. These movements are also reflected in the presence of migration in Marseille:

> Etre à ce point bousculée par des mains, des regards et des songes venus du Sud, fait de la ville un malentendu. […] Calme et sereine, la mer assiste – en toute impunité – au déménagement des hommes. […] L'exode. L'exil et le labeur. […] Les langues parlées mais pas entendues. […] Un café où tout est faux rassemble des Maghrébins gris […] (Ben Jelloun 1986, n.p.)[17]

16 Those historical contexts are reflected in the paratexts of the poetic documentation.

17 My translation: "Being to this point shaken by hands, gazes and dreams coming from the South, the city becomes a misunderstanding. […] Calm and serene, the sea assists – with total impunity – the move of the people. […] The exodus. The exile and the labor. […] The spoken but not heard languages. […] A café, where everything is artificial, gathers grey Maghrebians […]."

Marseille seems to be an allegory of migration; the city is described as a constantly moving and transforming entity. It is characterized as an enigma and thus as something that must be read and deciphered like a text. In conclusion, Marseille is not only addressed in its referential meaning, but also as an allegory. In the last line, my interpretation is almost explicitly articulated: "Marseille n'est plus là. Elle a changé de pays." (Ben Jelloun 1986, n.p.)[18]

The article cited above alludes to Marseille through substantives such as madness, cages, ennui, tiredness, a cemetery, blood, disquiet, bewilderment, debris, death. The image Ben Jelloun constructs of Marseille is thus profoundly melancholic. The prominent use of the "ruin" – not only in the preface cited earlier, but throughout all thirty poems – also indicates the importance of a literary and "historical emotion" (Boym 2001, xvi): nostalgia.[19] This characteristic can be considered in dialogue with another poet of the Mediterranean, Albert Camus, who also created a melancholic and nostalgic scene where his narrator returns to both the ruins of the past Mediterranean and his past life. While melancholia, according to Boym "[...] confines itself to the planes of individual consciousness, nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory" (Boym 2001, xvi). Boym's *Future of Nostalgia* also helps us to understand that Ben Jelloun is concerned with "reflective nostalgia", a nostalgia that "thrives in *algia*, the longing itself" and on the "ambivalences of human longing and belonging" (Boym 2001, xviii).[20] Returning shortly to Tawada, it appears that nostalgia also shapes her depiction of Marseille. Her narrator does not only look back to the historical arrival of Japanese travelers in Marseille, but also alludes to Tawada's own past: her arrival in Europa with the nostalgic image of the Trans-Siberian Railway that she took from Japan (cf. Tawada 2010, 39). Coming back to Ben Jelloun: in his preface, the author exposes the context of his poems, which also stresses the importance of nostalgia:

> Voici donc des poèmes en préface à un constat: le travail de l'œil pendant que les bulldozers avancent à Marseille, dans le quartier de la Porte d'Aix, sur des vieilles habitations, des lieux pour le sommeil noir, des lieux pour l'attente où tout est fissuré, les murs et les visages, les rues et les mémoires. Heureusement que des enfants, échappés à ces ruines, se moquent de

18 My translation: "Marseille is not there anymore. She changed her country."

19 See for the concept of "Mediterranean nostalgia" Winkler (2010, 222–223).

20 On the other hand, there is restorative nostalgia, which Boym associates with the "recent national and religious revivals", which construct two core plots: "the return to origins and the conspiracy" (Boym 2001, xviii).

> tout. Leur avenir est là mais il ne veut rient devoir à ceux qui sont venus de l'autre côté de la Méditerranée. (Ben Jelloun 1986, n.p.)[21]

The destruction of the neighborhood Porte d'Aix goes hand in hand with the destruction of memories. The metaphor of the ruin stands for the state of the neighborhood and its people, between destruction and construction, between past, present, and future.[22] The ruin is evoked twice in the preface, since Ben Jelloun (1986, n.p.) also describes that his poetic work is searching for something that cannot be seen in the "les ruines d'un paysage", meaning "ruins of a landscape".

It might be worth noting that the metaphor of the ruin is also used prominently by Camus.[23] In his essay *Retour à Tipasa,* meaning: *Return to Tipasa*, one can detect the use of the ruin metaphor to describe the Algerian city of Tipasa, which the narrator revisits:

> Quinze ans après, je retrouvais mes ruines, à quelques pas des premières vagues, je suivais les rues de la cité oubliée à travers des champs couverts d'arbres amers, et, sur les coteaux qui dominent la baie, je caressais encore les colonnes couleur de pain. Mais les ruines étaient maintenant entourées de barbelés et l'on ne pouvait y pénétrer que par les seuils autorisés. Il était interdit aussi, pour des raisons que, paraît-il, la morale approuve, de s'y promener la nuit; le jour, on y rencontrait un gardien assermenté. Par hasard sans doute, ce matin-là, il pleuvait sur toute l'étendue des ruines. (Camus 1965, 870)[24]

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21 My translation: "Here they are, poems preceding a report: the work of the eye while the bulldozers approach Marseille, in the quarter of Porte d'Aix, above old dwellings, places for black sleep and for waiting where everything is cracked – walls, faces, streets, and the memories. Fortunately, the children, having escaped from those ruins, mock everything. Their future is there, yet doesn't want to be connected to those who came from the other side of the Mediterranean."

22 Ruins play a significant role in Boym's *The Future of Nostalgia*, which analyzes architectural proof of nostalgia such as the Kunsthaus Tacheles in Berlin. In her reflection on ruins Boym also alludes to Walter Benjamin's famous comment on ruins. She states: "In them all the contradictions of the epochs of transition are frozen in a standstill dialectic; they are allegories of transient times." (Boym 2001, 208) See for additional comments on the ruin Boym (2001, 136, 204–209).

23 For additional information on Camus' Mediterranean poetics see Lekatsas (2014). In her contribution, Lekatsas (2014, 126, 138, 143) also comments on the "Mediterranean cosmopolitism" of Camus, Cavafy, and Chahine.

24 My translation: "Fifteen years later, I rediscovered my ruins, a few steps behind the first waves, I followed the streets of the forgotten city, through fields covered by bitter trees, and above the hills ruling the bay, I caressed once again the bread-colored pillars. But now the ruins were encircled in barbed wire, and one could only enter through authorized thresholds. It was also forbidden, for reasons that, it seemed, morality approved of, to walk there at night; during the day one could find there a sworn guard. By chance, without doubt, it rained this morning on the entire expanse of ruins."

For Camus, the ruins refer to the historical Roman ruins located in Tipasa, but, at the same time, the metaphorical ruins of the Mediterranean past and the memories of the narrator are also implied. Contemplating the ruins, the narrator evokes nostalgic and melancholic memories from his childhood and reflects on the Second World War. The barbed wire symbolizes the rule of Nazi Germany and its violence. Tipasa is furthermore described as a place where "le souvenir lui-même s'estompait" (Camus 1965, 870), where "memory itself thus fades away". The landscape, shaped by ruins, therefore corresponds to the narrator's own inner landscape as well as to the cultural and historical landscape of the Mediterranean.

This entanglement of memory, history, past, and present, symbolized by the ruins, can also be found in Ben Jelloun's preface.[25] Alluding to "those who came from the other side of the Mediterranean", the writer refers to France's and especially Marseille's history of migration, as evident in one of the thirty poems of *Marseille: comme un matin d'insomnie:*[26]

Ainsi la ville se retire derrière le port
s'érige en ruines
pour effacer la trace
et oublier les chemins des visages
    travaillés par la fièvre
Elle fait le propre dans son corps gras
ferme les puits et éteint les miracles.
Chaque rue est une forêt ancienne
Chaque mur est une fissure dans le temps
Marseille n'est plus un port
    ni une foire foraine
Ce n'est plus une place pour les soirs d'été
C'est une ombre épaisse et sans faste
    où l'étranger exile l'étranger (Ben Jelloun 1986, n.p.)[27]

25 For additional information on the metaphoric dimension of the ruin that precisely derives from its shifting between present and past, see Waldow (2012).

26 None of the poems have titles.

27 My translation:

"Thus, the city withdraws behind the port
rises in ruins
to erase the trace
and to forget the paths of the faces
    worked by fever
She makes her own in her fat body
closes the wells and extinguishes the miracles.
Every street is an old forest
Every wall is a crack in time

The poem is shaped by many references to the past: the track, the ruin, the path, the old forest, and the crack in time. It focuses on the changes of the cities, and repeats twice, "Marseille n'est plus un port [...] ce n'est plus une place", the very formulation used in the foreword, stressing a nostalgic longing for the former Marseille. The changes in the city have a referential meaning, evoking the already mentioned transformation of Marseille in 1983 and 1984, but also pointing towards the literary tradition of Paris.

Poems about Marseille often refer to Paris, a city which has a much larger tradition of literary imagination.[28] In this way, Ben Jelloun's poem can be interpreted as an intertextual allusion to Charles Baudelaire's collection, *Les Fleurs du Mal* [*Flowers of Evil*], first published in 1857. In the famous poem *Le Cygne* [*The Swan*], Baudelaire describes a flaneur who is crossing the Place du Carrousel and lamenting the changes of the city that resulted from the work of the architect and city planner Baron Hausmann.[29] Those changes radically modernized Paris in the nineteenth century, outfitting the city with broad boulevards to make the city suitable for its growing population. In *Le Cygne*, the transformation of the city is deeply linked to memory, melancholy, and nostalgia. The Baudelairian flaneur exclaims: "Le vieux Paris n'est plus, la forme d'une ville / Change plus vite, hélas! que le cœur d'un mortel" (Baudelaire 1975, LXXXIX/85).[30] Ben Jelloun uses almost the exact same words as Baudelaire – "Paris n'est plus" / "Marseille n'est plus" – and, like his 19th century predecessor, laments through nostalgic and melancholic images the urban transformation. In another stanza, the Baudelairean flaneur cries out: "Paris change! mais rien de ma mélancolie / N'a bougé! palais neufs, échafaudages, blocs, / Vieux faubourgs, tout pour moi devient allégorie, / Et mes

Marseille is not a port any more
neither is it a traveling carnival
It is not a place for summer nights anymore
It is a thickened shadow without splendor
where the foreign exiles the foreigner."

28 Marseille positions itself since the beginning of the nineteenth century against Paris (cf. Edeling 2012, 264).

29 The transformation of Paris and the repercussions for Baudelaire's lyric have been analyzed extensively in research. Karlheinz Stierle, for instance, analyzes the poem *Le Cygne* in relation to the modulations of Paris during Napoleon III. In his analysis, he emphasizes the importance of memory and focuses on melancholy (cf. Stierle 1998, 852–883).

30 My translation: "The old Paris is not anymore, the form of a city / changes faster, alas, than the mortal's heart."

chers souvenirs sont plus lourds que des rocs" (Baudelaire 1975, LXXXIX/86).[31] These verses further underline the importance of melancholy that results from the changing metropole.[32] The intertextual dialogue of Baudelaire and Ben Jelloun confirms that the destruction and changes of Marseille are linked to the cultural concept of melancholy and, above all, nostalgia.

Ben Jelloun's poem is a critique. Marseille seems to be actively trying to erase and forget the traces of the past. Throughout the poem, Ben Jelloun describes Marseille through negations: "Marseille n'est plus." The only affirmation can be found in the last two stanzas: "C'est une ombre épaisse et sans faste / où l'étranger exile l'étranger". Ben Jelloun's poem ends with the foreign country exiling the foreigner. That said, *l'étranger* means both 'foreigner' and 'foreign country' in French and thus, the translation loses the ambivalence of the original. Using the word *étranger*, Ben Jelloun refers again to Camus, stressing the status of the people who migrated to France and are considered foreign. In doing so, Marseille becomes a shadow, and thus something separated and estranged from itself.

The comparison of Yoko Tawada and Tahar Ben Jelloun shows that not only the history of the Mediterranean but also its literary traditions are connected – transcending time, space, and languages. However, Ben Jelloun exposes a pessimistic point of view on Marseille's future in his literary text and dwells on nostalgic images of the port city. This shift can also be connected to the changed status of the Mediterranean: in his biography of the Mediterranean, Abulafia analyzes the history of the Mediterranean – from 22000 BC to the present. The port city of Alexandria especially strikes him as an example of a multicultural space that was, however, destroyed during World War II and its aftermath (cf. Abulafia 2014, 589). Abulafia relies on nostalgic images to describe the change of Alexandria and other Mediterranean port cities, such as the old cemetery of the Egyptian metropole: "The city reconstituted itself as a massive Muslim Arab city, but its economy nose-dived. Something remains of the old Alexandria, but mainly in the form of cemeteries – of Greeks, Catholics, Jews and Copts." (Abulafia 2014, 600) If the author of *The Great Sea* is right and one of the core elements of the Mediterranean has been lost, the true Mediterranean might only continue to live on in its literary works. Their readers, however, are left with nostalgic images and memories of the cosmopolitan past of the Mediterranean port cities.

31 My translation: "Paris changes! But nothing of my melancholy / has moved! new palaces, scaffoldings, blocks / old suburbs, everything turns to allegory for me / And my dear memories are heavier than rocks."

32 Baudelaire is referenced in *The Future of Nostalgia*, see Boym (2001, 21).

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