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Some artists have a presence that appears to both transcend and pervade their work, and there is, in Yeats's words, "no way to distinguish the dancer from the dance" (p. 57). In this book, Francis Mus explores the personas of an artist whose "oeuvre is haunted by unreliable narrators" (p. 1). Who is the Leonard Cohen that keeps drawing new generations to his art?

Mus's book is a study of Cohen's oeuvre, including paratextual material. In order to shed light on the relationship between the artist and his personas, his work and his audience, Mus relies on both the critical reception of Cohen and a huge number of Cohen interviews, as well as several biographies and documentaries. At the core of the project is how communication is not a "mere transfer of meaning" (p. 80) and how sense-making is a part of a larger process, connected to dialogue, imagery and images, symbols and metaphor, and intertextuality. The book can be seen as a comprehensive reception study, drawing on perspectives from literary criticism, translation studies and other disciplines.

The book is a translation of an expanded version of Mus's lauded 2015 Dutch-language Cohen publication. The updated version includes the 2016 album *You want it darker* and the posthumous poetry collection *The Flame*. It is organized into six thematic chapters, five of which explore the different masks or demons/*daimons* of Cohen – "Image" addresses the poser, "Artistry" the writer and singer, "Alienation" the stranger and the confidant, "Religion" the worshipper, prophet and priest, and "Power" the powerful and powerless. The final chapter, "Encounter", explores the notion that "Cohen's artistic practice can be read as an ongoing attempt to forge interpersonal contact" (p. 19). Interspersed between these chapters there are three intermezzos diving deeper into specific works or themes in Cohen's works: a case study of an unpublished short story; the translation and international reception of *Beautiful Losers*; and the theme of longing and loss.

While it may appear to be on the fringes of translation studies, translation is a constant presence in the book. There are themes and passages that intersect with translation in most sections, and some address topics at the core of translation studies.

Mus points to the great contrast between Cohen's position in the Canadian literary system and in European literary systems, where Cohen remained a singer first and a writer second. While his recognition as a singer prompted translations of his literary works, these translations remained curiosities; an acquired taste for those with a special interest in Cohen. The discussion of the translation and reception of *Beautiful Losers* highlights the novel's situatedness within a Canadian intertext, bound to the evolution of a national literature and to the historical, ideological and linguistic roots of Canadian culture, which was often ignored in the discourse surrounding the translation of the book. *Beautiful Losers* takes place in a multicultural space, where English has dual functions: as the language of colonialization by the Catholic church (p. 138) and as a symbol of the breakdown of communication, reflected in the novel's experimental syntax and lexical choices. This section includes a discussion of translatability, in which Mus questions the significance of linguistic referentiality in the translation of the text and suggests that there are bigger issues at stake than retaining or recreating language relations, in a work that perhaps ultimately seeks to dismantle language.

In “Image”, Mus details Cohen’s visual expressions, in his album art, projected images in portraits, and book illustrations. The most conspicuous image related to Cohen’s musical career is possibly that of Cohen’s face, with its very distinct lines, often accentuated, which graces all his recordings up to *The Future* in 1992.

The second chapter, “Artistry”, discusses the relationship between the artist, the work and the audience. Mus shows how the interplay between musical and vocal arrangements, instrumentation, voice, body and image influences the authenticity and credibility of Cohen as a performer. The intricacy of voice, narrative and perspective in Cohen’s texts is showcased in brief analyses of Cohen’s literary work, and Mus highlights the dialogical nature of many of the song lyrics, especially seen in the use of personal pronouns, where perspective, point of address and reference may change many times during a text, not only making the text open for interpretation but also drawing the listener into the dialogue between the *I* and *you* and *she/he*.

The theme of alienation is found in many aspects of Cohen’s work. Mus argues that Cohen often operated on the fringes of both musical and literary traditions, and that this resulted in new spaces being created from unconventional combinations of musical, spiritual and poetic traditions. He often positioned himself as the stranger and cultivated this artistic persona (p. 87). The stranger’s gaze may give new insights – “the best insider is an outsider” (p. 97). Mus shows how Cohen’s literary work, especially in its early phase, is more geographically and culturally situated than his song lyrics and how the general tone is raised to a more abstract level in his music, allowing for a greater space for the listener and adding to the “relationship between singer and audience” (p. 95). This duality is also seen in the French and Québécois parallel translations of *Book of Longing*, where the French paratext emphasizes the universal nature and global appeal of Cohen’s work, in contrast to the Québécois version, which is less concerned with situating Cohen on the global map.

In “Religion”, Mus observes that in Cohen, sexuality and spirituality are intertwined, and that there is a “conflation of the deified woman and the deity portrayed as a woman” (p. 150), something which contributes to the ambiguity so often present in his lyrics. Topics that are pursued at greater length in Mus’s book are related to the rife use of religious references, in the form of symbols, allegories, metaphors and genres, and Mus shows how Cohen implements Jewish (e.g., in “Who by Fire”) and Buddhist (e.g., in “Ballad of the Absent Mare”) rituals in his work. He convincingly argues how the use of religion in Cohen helps create “a sense of connection with something higher or deeper” (p. 171).

Mus highlights how themes related to power and power relations abound in Cohen’s oeuvre, both as a performer and a lyricist – in the tension between vulnerability and authority, loss and longing, love and dependence, which are captured in the description of specific situations and in interactions during performances, with backing singers, with fellow musicians and others. Throughout the book, Mus describes an evolution in Cohen’s representation of himself from a “(powerful) leader to a (humble) believer” (p. 175) – an almost paradoxical change, noting that the hunger for power appears to wane with increasing success – perhaps because success and reassurance from the audience is secured.

The demons of Leonard Cohen is a notable reception study of Cohen’s entire work, including his poetry and literary writings and their translations, his songs and music, his imagery and book and album art. Due to the scope and number of topics covered, some of the analyses included, though perceptive and well-founded, are more sweeping in nature and would have

benefited from a more extensive treatment. A lot of attention is given to interviews with Cohen and biographical information drawn from documentaries, as well as biographies and conversations with people who knew Cohen. And at times, it almost appears that Mus has access to Cohen's feelings and perceptions.

The forte of Mus's book lies in how the focus firmly remains on analyses and criticisms of the works, while also keeping tabs on the shifty narrator, the representation of the artist and his demons. It will prove to be highly valuable companion to any academic project on Cohen. Mus does a very fine job of writing a scholarly book that is nevertheless accessible to a general audience, and – with the aid of translator Laura Vroomen – in a style and a language that is pleasant and highly readable.

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