

death of his mother and remorselessly kills a native Arab. But, while the characterological affinities between Camus's protagonist and Hage's cannot be overstressed, it is clear that Bassam is a Mersault in reverse—an "undocumented" Arab with a gun strolling the streets of Paris and ready, if pushed a little, to kill a French man. This chapter is not only a response to Camus but also to the roots of the Arab and African diasporic revolt in France's *banlieux*. Throughout, Hage stages the warring psychic habits that continue to mark Bassam's journey in Paris—an ostensibly "mute" city compared to Beirut. Unconsciously, perhaps, Hage's Bassam reminds of Joyce's Stephen Dedalus, or, at least, of his well-wrought adage: silence, exile, and cunning. *De Niro's Game* is a brilliantly crafted novel and Hage is a talented and versatile writer who will certainly raise the threshold of Anglophone Arab-Canadian fiction.

Şeyh Galip

Beauty and Love

Trans. and with an introduction and key by Victoria Rowe Holbrook

New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2005. Pp. 216. \$9.95

Reviewed by Dilek Direnç

An established scholar and valuable interpreter in the field of Islamic literature, Victoria Rowe Holbrook continues to contribute to the field with her recent translation into English from the Ottoman Turkish of Şeyh Galip's *Hüsn ü Aşk*, translated as *Beauty and Love*, an Ottoman Turkish romance widely accepted to be the greatest work of Ottoman literature. In an earlier book, *The Unreadable Shores of Love*, published in 1994 and acclaimed as a landmark in Ottoman and Turkish literary studies, Holbrook has already introduced her readers to the genre of the Ottoman mystic romance and analyzed its poetics. While she explored the genre in this earlier study, she paid considerable attention to Galip's *Beauty and Love*, a masterpiece written within this tradition and completed in 1783. Holbrook's deep interest in the genre in general and in Galip's philosophical allegory in particular culminates in Holbrook's brilliant translation of the work. While her impressive bilingual edition of *Hüsn ü Aşk* (also published in 2005 in the Texts and Translations series of MLA) appeals to an academic audience, this volume *Beauty and Love* is geared toward a wider and more general readership. Holbrook's precise and competent poetic translation lets readers discover and enjoy classical Turkish literature and Islamic mysticism.

In his celebrated work *Beauty and Love*, Şeyh Galip, a well-established late-eighteenth-century poet with strong ties to the Mevlevi dervish order, and later in his life the head of a Mevlevi establishment in Istanbul, both makes use and revises certain elements of the Islamic romance tradition. In this allegorical love story, the girl, Beauty, and the boy, Love, figure not only as two human beings deeply in love but also as representatives of God's qualities. All the characters and places in the story are allegories of the divine. In line with the traditions of

the romance genre, Love has to embark on a difficult journey and face many ordeals on his way. He travels to the Land of the Heart to be able to reunite with his beloved, Beauty. During his journey, however, Love discovers that he has never actually left the Land of the Heart and that Beauty resides in his presence. Thus, in accordance with the ontology of the unity of being, he reaches a higher level of maturity to see that “Love is but Beauty, and Beauty Love” (couplet 2059), for the lovers are “made, as all creatures are, of God’s love” (xiv).

The plot moves swiftly, and the adventurous journey, which is described in a passionate and often humorous tone, in rich imagery, keeps the reader’s attention. The awareness that this journey also takes place in a spiritual realm—that Love is on a mystical path, learning to overcome the bondage of his human qualities—makes the reading of this quest story deeply satisfying. The idea of the unity of being, or divine love, may prove to be enigmatic to a Western reader. As Galip writes, “this mystery rare,” that Love is able to “comprehend” at the end his quest “Is veiled from the hearts of rational men” (couplet 2052). Yet Holbrook’s brief introduction to the text helps to overcome this obstacle.

In spite of its density, Holbrook’s introduction is both engaging and clear. She explains relevant history, philosophy, religion, and literature. She writes briefly about the long literary tradition behind allegorical verse romance, about Galip the poet and Galip the man; about his predecessors, and the texts that prepared the way to *Beauty and Love*; and about Rumi and Ibn Arabi, the two shaping influences upon Ottoman thought and literary tradition, whose work and ideas were essential to a full understanding and appreciation of Galip’s philosophical romance. Her extensive knowledge of Islamic literature and Islamic mysticism revealed in the introduction allows Holbrook to penetrate the text and to prepare the reader for the mystical allegory that follows. The translation is followed by a key, in which Holbrook clarifies certain vocabulary. As she states, she “explicated proper names and italicized items minimally,” only “to the extent necessary to keep them from being an obstacle to understanding” (xvi).

In her “Note on the Translation,” Holbrook provides an excellent introduction to the Aruz meter, which is a quantitative meter native to Arabic and quite alien to English verse, which “has always been accentual” (xxvii). She also explains that she tried “to convey the Aruz meter” in her translation, “convinced that translation of a strange literature (one new to translation) should preserve a degree of strangeness” (xxviii). As she rightly observes, “translation of Aruz verse into English meters can encourage one to forget that one is reading something really not at all like English verse” (xxviii). *Beauty and Love* certainly owes some of its “strange” beauty to Holbrook’s well-calculated decision in terms of meter. In this short section, she also points out some striking features of Galip’s style such as his “excessive metrical license” that distinguished him from the other prominent Ottoman poets, “his extraordinary imagery” of the Indian

style, "his mixing of high and low language, refined and colloquial speech" to produce a "jarring ... effect of juxtaposition" (xxviii).

Beauty and Love is bound to be used in courses on Ottoman and Turkish culture and literature and in the study of Islamic mysticism. Yet Holbrook's translation deserves to reach a wider audience, one that extends beyond a narrow academic readership, especially at a time of heightened interest in Sufism and the renowned mystic poet Mevlana Jelaleddin Rumi.

Zina J. Gimpelevich

Vasil Bykau: His Life and Works

Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005. Xi + 260. \$49.95

Per Anders Rudling

Zina Gimpelevich's recent biography of Vasil Bykau fills a void. As the interest in Belarus increases, so does the need for works on this country's culture, history, language, and literature. This is one of two books on Belarusian topics published by McGill-Queen's University Press in 2005. There are very few academic works on Belarus in English. Therefore this initiative is very timely and contributes to put this often-neglected country on the map. It highlights the fact that Belarus has a literary tradition as old as neighboring Russia and Ukraine.

Of contemporary Belarusian writers, Vasil Bykau (1924–2003) is perhaps the best known. Bykau's uncompromising stance and defiance of dictatorships has been compared to that of Václav Havel and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Gimpelevich's biography of Bykau, the first one in English, traces the life of this extraordinary man from his childhood, through the war-time experiences of his youth, his literary and political career, and his years of exile in Finland, Germany, and Poland. A relentless critic of the Lukashenka regime, Bykau died in exile.

It is a warm and personal portrait, partly based upon open-hearted and personal interviews with Bykau during his exile. Bykau's life is a microcosm of the tragic history of twentieth-century Belarus. Young Vasil started school just as the Soviet campaign of the 1920s to enforce a switch to Belarusian came to an abrupt and violent end. The relatively liberal political atmosphere of the 1920s was replaced by brutal political terror, something Bykau experienced first hand. Bykau remembers the starvation during the brutal collectivization in the early 1930s. His father-in-law was killed during Stalin's Great Terror.

Gimpelevich holds fellow Belarusian Bykau in high regard in a very personal way. She hears in him the voice of a generation of Belarusians that was nearly wiped out by war and political terror. She suggests that the number of