

Candles in Babylon: Denise Levertov's Spiritual Journey

Asst. Prof. Dr. Nadia Ali Ismael
College of Languages/University of Baghdad/Iraq
nadeaali@colang.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Received: 10/4/2022

Accepted: 22/5/2022

Published: 15/12/2022

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.36473/ujhss.v61i4.1954>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Abstract

Through all her work, Denise Levertov's (1917–1997) penchant for describing religious issues is evident. Various religious images punctuate her work, an indication of either her deep conviction of the existence of a supreme deity, or just a mere description of the wonders of the metaphysical world. But even though her works are punctuated with these religious emblems, *Candles of Babylon* seems to have taken a new trajectory. There is an admission to the effect that she is on a spiritual odyssey; she gives a clear description of how she makes this journey. Like John Bunyan's *Pilgrims' Progress* (1678), she described her transition from a cosmetic believer into a profound spiritual understanding. Levertov's spiritual journey shall be discussed in detail through her own lenses in her poems. The paper attempts to discuss her experiences of transformation through her spiritual experiences and how these have been captured in her poems. The research paper will attempt to discuss how she uses various literary devices to package her odyssey and how these have worked together to help the readers get a picture of her transition through life.

Keywords: Babylon, Candles, Denise, Journey, Levertov

Introduction

A lengthy poem called "Mass on the Day of St. Thomas Didymus" occurs at the end of Denise's twelfth collection of poetry, *Candles in Babylon*, published in 2008. Levertov's effort to edify a congregation is not very noteworthy in and of itself (Kumar, 2020). Levertov has used religious forms and ideas throughout her poetry career for her own goals. In the process of creating something entirely different from what started as yet another, albeit more elaborate, appropriation, something else emerged. In an interview with Levertov (1985), she stated: "Initially, I wanted to see what I could do with the forms that had been so nourishing as a framework for musicians for so many years and that had been such a basis for poets for so many centuries. In order to avoid this, it began out as an agnostic mass. While I was in the middle of writing it, I moved someplace else" (Hallisey, 1982). ' She returned to the Christian faith that she had practiced as a youngster. As Hallisey notes in her essay "Invocations," although this Christianity

is "unorthodox, it is nonetheless Christian unorthodoxy," Denise's poetry has been more defined by an intense, mostly spiritual Christian concentration since that unexpected transformation (Hallisey, 1982). In hindsight, Levertov's work is theologically rich. Her ancestors were Jewish and Christian, and she is glad for the benefits of having "Illustrious Ancestors." Her father, Paul Levertoff, a devout Jew, determined that Jesus was the anticipated Messiah while studying the New Testament. After moving to England, he became an Anglican priest. [New and Selected Essays 258] "My father's Hasidic background, his devotion to Jewish and Christian studies, and his intensity and eloquence as a preacher were entrenched in my cells." Beatrice Spooner-Jones, her mother, was Welsh. Her spiritual presence infuses many of her works. The poems about her mother's sickness and death in Mexico are her favorites in *Life in the Forest* (1975). Like practically all of her writing, these poems depict her most constant theme: acceptance of mystery.

The Spiritual Journey in *Candles in Babylon*

Many of Levertov's readers are aware that her family history is filled with religious personalities, which she is proud of. According to the Library of Congress, her mother's uncle was "a well-known Congregational preacher"; her father was a distinguished theological scholar and Anglican priest (Herrera, 2020). Many of her remarks on her youth are intensely religious should come as no surprise.

Who are you? and how did you become what you are?' are questions which, when I try to answer them honestly, increase my awareness of how strong... were inherited tendencies and the influence of the cultural milieu... of my own family. My father's Hasidic ancestry, his being steeped in Jewish and Christian scholarship and mysticism, his enthusiasm, and eloquence as a preacher were factors built into my cells even though I rarely paid conscious heed to what, as a child, I mostly found were parts of the embarrassing adult world, and which during my adolescence I rejected as restrictive. (Hallisey, 1982).

To Levertov, the candle is an emblem of light that shines to show the way or direction. Levertov not only uses the concept of the candle to highlight transformation that comes when light illuminates the soul. But while the candle is considered to be an emblem of the word of God which shines upon the soul, Levertov uses Babylon to depict the state of darkness in her poems. To her, the candle that lights in Babylon is a depiction of the illumination of the dark heart. It is an emblem of the new light that an individual finds upon stumbling on salvation. To her, Babylon is a depiction of a lost, sinful heart that has not experienced the redemption power of salvation. But other than using Babylon as imagery for the darkened heart, Levertov is equally using it to denote a general state of darkness and sinfulness. To her, any society where the radiation of salvation has not been accepted is a dark society and this is evident through the work.

To the reader, the foundation of her spiritual journey is evident in her family tree. One would want to ask the relevance of many of her admissions in the poems about her family tree and how these have helped to model her spiritual journey. From a

very critical viewpoint, the history of her family helps the reader to form an image of the beginning of her journey in Christendom. To him who would want to integrate how the transition began, Levertov gives a very open response – family. Her family is considered to be the rock onto which her spiritual life began. It is evident, looking at how she packages her work in the poem, that her family, and their commitment left an indelible imprint on her spiritual development. She corroborates this in her admission: “The church services I attended were, despite the frequent childish embarrassment I've mentioned and my teenage doubts...” (Hallisey, 1982).

From her arguments about her progression in the faith, one would get the sense that this form of development is what catapulted into the realm of Christendom further. When she observed that it is during her childhood that the seed of transformation was implanted, she is merely affirming her earlier argument that transformation begins from somewhere. While it may be considered to be a spontaneous occurrence there is a locus onto which human transformation begins. To some, the family influence is the epicenter of transformation, to some; it is a direct interaction with God such as the case of Saul of Tarsus. In her nostalgic renditions of her childhood songs, Levertov is further informing the general audience that her spiritual began from family influence.

The attempts by the poet to paint to the reader that the spiritual journey is a progression is aided by how she develops her transition in the poems. For example, she gives the story of how she began integrating religious components observed from the family traditions into her own life. With time, she is moving from being a child whose religious principles are faced by the family into a mature believer whose eyes are beginning to see for himself, the issues of faith. This transition is evident throughout the *Candles* and it is quite an important motif in the description of her spiritual journey. To the critical reader, Levertov's assertions are but an admission of the baby steps made during the faith journey. At one point, the impression given in the poems is to the effect that her concept of Christianity in childhood had matured when she grew up. To the reader, this is an admission of progress. It is an admission of the spiritual maturity that the poet has experienced over time in her life. She moves from a neophyte, feeding off her family influence as a believer, but matured into a toddler who is able to grasp a few issues here and there about the Christian journey and perceive issues on her own about her faith. Notably, while the firm belief of one's parents finds an instant resonance in gospel music of the 1980s, the simple combination of spiritual concepts as well as personalities with creative production and inventive delight laid seeds that would grow and yield fruit more than two decades later."

It is easy to assume that the pilgrim's journey is a straight path. This is not always the truth at all as evidenced in the poems of Levertov. Various commentators have affirmed that at one point, her cynicism about faith set in and seems to have emasculated her into a non-believer. In “The Sense of Pilgrimage,” a poem in *Candles in Babylon*, the cynic Levertov is painted to the readers. As if admitting that the faith motivation as a factor in her poetry was diluted, she states: “Williams Carlos Williams became the most powerful influence on my poetry, and

at that time... I took as influence from Williams nothing of the profound mythic element we find..." (Levertov, 1982).

The concept of Christian journey as a struggle is evident through the works of Levertov. She punctuates the Christian walk to a journey of self-realization. In the process, one must come to the beach of cynicism. For a believer, there is need to watch out that one is not washed in the shore of cynicism because it surely comes. Her spiritual life seems to have taken some form of a beating that she does not disclose in the poems even though there is evidence that she lost her grip on the faith at one time. To the reader, this is a moment of reflection that at one time, the brighter flame of faith goes dimmer, and when it gets dimmer, the pilgrim has to trim the lamp in order to remain firm in the faith.

The second poem in the anthology, "In Obedience," also connects to childhood, but differently. The poem is inspired by a letter from the poet's mother, not by an epiphany shared with her, but by the poet's father's approaching death, which is the source of the poem's inspiration (Gordon, 2019). As the adult daughter cries, she recalls "the lines from Bunyan that had most clearly lingered with [her] from childhood: 'And Mr. Despondency's daughter Muchafraid / walked across the river singing.'" Much afraid can sing in such a scenario, so too can Levertov face her father's approaching "through the river" passage with courage: "[she] will dance/ simply for joy/while [he] lies[s] dying," she declares in the song. Indeed, her father "up from his bed shortly before his death to do the Hasidic dance of appreciation," as it turns out, "just before his death to express his gratitude" (Herrera, 2020). Gradually, the mature poet learns new and robust ways to depend on her spiritual base, which she shares with her children.

This kind of access is the underlying idea of the poem "Illustrious Ancestors." Moreover, it is at this point that Levertov does something that will become increasingly frequent and crucial in the coming years. He draws an analogy between a religious person, function, or notion and its literary equivalent (Long, 2021). In this poem, she draws a parallel between the features of her two most remarkable elders -Schneour Zalman, the "Rav/of Northern White Russia," an individual who despite himself learned the "language of birds," and "Angel Jones of Mold, whose meditations / were sewn into coats and britches"-and her poetic practice.

Well, I would like to make,
thinking some line still taut between me and them,
poems direct as what the birds said,
hard as a floor, sound as a bench,
mysterious as the silence when the tailor
would pause with his needle in the air (Levertov, 2001).

Without a doubt, the desire conveyed by these lines moves us away from the world of the sonnet as intense experience symbolization and into the arena of lyrical discourse as encouraged, sacramental, and enabling us to achieve a greater realism. Certainly, a motion like this, one that begins with Williams' precise particulars but swiftly transcends them in scope and significance, would describe Levertov's individual separate "advance" outside the Williams lyric. "With Eyes in

the Back of Our Heads (CEP)," which was released in 1960, is considered a transitional work in this regard (Long, 2021). Despite the fact that neither its focus nor tone differ much from that of its predecessor, it positively confirms several previously noted achievements. For example, the poem "Notes of a Scale" concludes with a statement from Martin Buber's "*Tales of the Hasidim: The Early Masters*", that is used to demonstrate the essence of artistic expression. It is certain that, over time, the relevance of the Hasidic component in Levertov's contextual has grown and become more apparent, influencing her artistic approach and her vision of reality in general.

A return to Mexico for the poet in "Xochipilli," in which she participates in a creative discussion with the pre-Columbian god of spring, is the poem's focus. However, even outside of Mexican settings, the words "god" and "goddess" are starting to appear more often, especially in connection with art (Herrera, 2020). As a result, "The Goddess" is particularly intriguing in this regard because the goddess in question is a "mouse-like figure," and thus serves as an initial instance of a notion that will soon play a central role in Levertov's aesthetic rational pieces: the reality of a very distinct power of "inspiration" that single-handedly creates true poetry conceivable." In summation, the relevance of mystery, or some other numinous quality, develops throughout "With Eyes in the Back of Our Heads", and the poet herself seems to be pleased with this growth throughout the book (Gordon, 2019).

In "The Instant" and "Illustrious Ancestors," we witnessed the way Levertov started to exceed the depiction of intense sumptuous details to indicate the inaugural of a realism outside them. In addition, her mystic grandparents' enthused language and comprehensive dream guided her own life's ambitions (Long, 2021). As a result, poetry as a medium for revelation or epiphany becomes the norm rather than the exception throughout the first part of the 1960s. Ascending on a "stone Jacob's Ladder," a "staircase of sharp/angles, solidly constructed," to "Kingdoms of Heaven" that are all round us, "the poem ascends" to "Kingdoms of Heaven" that are all around us (see also "The Jacob's Ladder" and "Kingdoms of Heaven"). As the introductory piece, "A Common Ground," says, "to stand on common ground/ here and there rough with stones" is to "stand on common ground."

Not 'common speech' a dead level

but the uncommon speech of paradise, tongue in which oracles
speak to beggars and pilgrims (Levertov, 1982).

Such a sensation of "paradise"—of the holy and mystical just beyond every day—arises essentially from Levertov's sudden interest in Hasidic texts and teachings, an interest that, as observed, had been increasing for some years." As a result of the release of *Jacob's Ladder*, Levertov's reputation as a "religious" poet receives a significant boost. We read *The Jacob's Ladder* because it is not only the author's most overtly religious work before her conversion to Christianity, but it is also an essential component of a larger whole, marking the beginning of a period of intense interior spirituality for herself (Herrera, 2020). A confluence of Proto Religious impulses, which were briefly discussed in the preceding section,

occurred during this period. Simultaneously, the poet begins to create an aesthetic for her prose creations heavily affected by religion.

In actuality, the idea of Jacob's ladder is first marked JL ii with orientation to Rabbi Moshe of Kobryn's teachings, and we may best understand multiple significant themes of this period concerning both obvious and understood Hasidic views (Drexel, 2019). This is true not merely of the immense "jubilation" or joy that permeates the poem but also the poet's persistence on the "metaphysical" requirement of absolute genuineness.

As a slogan to "The Part," a poem advising "Homer da Vinci," a "sad everyman," to exist, to envision to the maximum, Levertov refers to Rabbi Judah Loew: "Every person completes the universe in some particular fashion." He undermines the plan of all creation if he does not do his function." In other words, our responsibility to acknowledge our own exclusive uniqueness is connected with the universe's "pattern" or logic. "The strawness of straw, the humanness of the human, is their divinity; in that intensity resides the 'divine spark,' Hasidic tradition teaches us hides in all created things," states Hasidic legend (Drexel, 2019).

As a consequence, the most distinctive poetry of the time-"a language / exceeding itself to be itself" ("A Common Ground" iii)-can be understood to be grounded in a mystical authority. The only way to release what is into that essence is its *raison d'être* is to be, to see, and capture most fully. Such poetry is "holy" by definition, as it perpetually exposes whatever divinity resides in things (Long, 2021). Given this, it is no wonder that the poet has misappropriated phrases such as "psalm," "prayer," as well as "matins," and scriptural figures, scriptural language, and other pious links, to support her in her goal during this historical period.

So, how can one explain the essential spirituality that underpins and, to a significant extent, characterizes this period's poetry? It certainly does not have anything to do with the convention, as it freely draws from Judaism, Christianity, and any other mystical societies that are accessible. As Denise puts it, based on her Jewish-Christian background,

Though this is my particular combination of cultural influences, it is typical in some degree of the eclecticism of twentieth-century poetry, in which figures from all manner of pantheons... may enter and act without conflict: for the modern poet is not infrequently a syncretist. It is rare for him to subscribe to a single orthodoxy. (Gordon, 2019).

It is also apparent that her poetry has had a significant impact on the globe. When it comes to "the Lord," Levertov writes in "O Taste and See" that "the Lord" appears to be whatsoever fully engages one's imaginings, and hence whatever is "with us adequately" in the world. It would seem that such a conception of God would place it not just in the objects of this universe, as does pantheism, and in humans' personal experiences in particular. In the sonnet "Earth Psalm," the Earth's opinion appears to make this kind of allusion (Kumar, 2020). Man, as the poet, indeed draws the "worship" of the Earth because he is the one who most clearly feels and shows what it is to be a deity who has speech.

As Levertov points out in her essays of the 1960s, it is precisely this assumption that underlay many of her most persistent attempts to characterize what

a poet does and what a poem is. One of the more successful of these efforts is included in the essay "Origins of a Poem":

The poet, when he is writing-is a priest; the poem is a temple; epiphanies and communion take place within it. The communion is triple: between the maker and the needer within the poet, between the maker and the needer outside him... and between the human and the divine in both poet and reader. By divine, I mean something beyond the making and the needing elements... When the poet converses with this god he has summoned into manifestation, he reveals to others the possibility of their dialogue with the god in themselves. (Gordon, 2019).

The poet as the priest is both a model of human behavior and a primary technique of aiding non-poets in experiencing the most basic type of connection via and through his poetry. The idea of a poem as an epiphany, which is acknowledged with Levertov's development beyond the shorter Williams poem, denotes more than simply the "content" of a particular poem. It also relates to the overarching objective of poetry, which is to deliver a sanctuary, or a "temple," for the godly to show itself on Earth. In truth, "the greatest poetry" is an "incarnation" of "the finest poetry" (Markle, 2020). The occurrence occurs when "thoughts and sentiments remain unsaid until they become Word, till they become Flesh" (Markle, 2020).

Throughout this period, Levertov makes several references to the notion of incarnation. Her use of what is, after all, Christianity's dominant mystery to define and clarify the type of poetry has several significant ramifications. In particular, Even in today's "confusion of [a] relativistic society," with no universal religious views, her practice raises poetry to a quasi-religious status. "The church aims to keep open communication between man and God," she +continues, elaborating on the comment made by Gordon (2019).

Below this the poet [i.e., Levertov herself] has written, "For church read poet. For God read man and his imagination, man and his senses, man and man, man and nature-well, maybe "god," then, or "the gods. (Drexel, 2019).

This is due to the same reason that religion is the most acceptable paradigm for debating the function of the poet; the poetic facility—the resourcefulness—directly pitches itself as the greatest appropriate modern parallel to the concept of "God." Whether or not Levertov agrees with Théophile Gautier's statement that "the gods die every day/, but sovereign poems go on alive" ("Art," CEP), she now sees poetry as addressing many of the human needs that have traditionally been associated with religion. "The gods die every day/, but sovereign poems go on alive," she says (Markle, 2020). Even though she will carefully limit her claims for the holiness of art in the future years, a sense of art's essential unity with religion will continue to be important to her style from this point on.

Nevertheless, no matter how vital poems may be as a vehicle and personification of that involvement, it appears strong that Levertov never planned to decrease divinity, in any sense, to a merely functional aspect of that experience, as some critics have suggested. Although individual poems like "Earth Psalm" have profound implications, during most of the time's style and poetry, there is a tangible, if diffuse and indeterminate, a sense that something happens "beyond both

the making and the needing elements [in a poem], [something] vast, irreducible, a spirit summoned by the exercise of needing and making" (Markle, 2020). She also makes the case, as she does in a subsequent section, that

I cannot bring myself to believe that the goods originate in the mind of man and are merely his way of coping with natural forces or abstract ideas by giving them semihuman personalities and stories. When a man describes the gods, he indeed only approximates and therefore distorts the reality he intuits, but I fail to see the logic of assuming that, consequently, they do not exist. (Levertov, 2001).

The divine cannot—and must not—be reduced to a simple function of human activity in its entire existence. While "exercises of wanting and creating," such as poetry, bring the divine into our experience and thereby "make" its meaning human, the divine cannot—and must not—be abridged to a simple purpose of human doings in its entire existence. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of both notions in this distinction (Markle, 2020). As Rabbi Moshe explains in his story of Jacob's ladder, "our actions do not cause the forces that visit us," even if "even the ascension and descent of the angels [may] depend on [our] works" (L motto). Putting such a strong emphasis on the importance of human effort while yet acknowledging the existence of a realm outside of human creation and control would be foundational to Levertov's final vision of Christianity in the future.

Whether or not Levertov had a precise "old joy" in mind when she put down these lines in "Come into Animal Presence," her poetry from the early 1960s harkens back to a visionary intensity that was central to her childhood recollections of the Russian countryside. Her childhood experiences and family members started to reappear in her poetry in the late 1950s, as we've previously observed in her past work (Herrera, 2020). When she uses The Jacob's Ladder, the door swings open entirely, and her mind begins to fill with names, places, situations, and characters from her past. In the very dynamic "A Map of the Western Part of the County of Essex in England," which starts with "Something lost for twenty years...I am Essex-born," a series of renowned English place names tumbling down the page is followed by the words "I am Essex-born." It's as if she's suddenly regained all of the wonder, thrill, and intensity of her childhood—as if she's been transported back to "a site of birth" for the first time (Markle, 2020).

In a prose memory that was initially written in 1964 but only studied and released in the 1980s, Levertov defines how, as a 16-year-old, her "Muse" abetted her recognize the idiocy of devoting any more time to dance and assisted her return to her true ability: poetry.

Only a month or two before, I had written sadly to my closest friend saying I felt I'd lost the intensity of sight, the passion for looking at the world, I'd had as a child. Now I realized I was taking in with restored vision all that I had thought was lost to me. (Levertov, 1982).

It's hardly surprising that Levertov wrote this memory in 1964 since it was precisely around this time that she realized the inevitability of her fate for the first time. Her entire recovery of her childhood and full awareness of her destiny is

intertwined experiences, just as the youngster's retrieval of the concentration she had felt as a kid and her reappearance to her genuine calling were. Also, the power of a muse is linked to the breakthrough in both situations.

Candles in Babylon concludes with a piece whose last portion nicely encapsulates this paradox:

We know so much of daily bread,
of every thread of lovingly knit compassion;
garments of love clothe us, we rest
our heads upon darkness; when we wake
sapphire transparency calls forth our song.
And this is the very world, the same, the world
of vicious power, of the massacre.
Our song is a bird that wants to sing as it flies, to
be the wings of praise, but doubt
binds tight its wire to hold down
flightbones, choke back a breath.
We know no synthesis" (Levertov, 1982).

For the most part, however, this is the same issue that poets have portrayed in poems like "Life at War" (SD), except that now that the war has ended, the poet's imagination is presented with a kind of permanent halt. "A question the poet raises in the "Benedictus" of her "Mass on the Feast of St. Thomas Didymus" is, "Is the word /audible under or above the enormous /uproar of malevolence?" Even though the "Mass" was initially intended to be an "agnostic" experiment in terms of form, it is considered to be a product of the "Age of Terror." In contrast to the categorical assertion, "We know of no synthesis," the question posed in the "Mass" holds up greater hope for future research. In reality, we are on the verge of a sea change in the way things are done. For the simple reason that it is during the "Mass," in the words of the poet, that she "move[s] somewhere," that she first enters the domain of specifically Christian reasoning. When Levertov first came up with the concept for the "Mass," she was thinking of something different. She observes:

Even when I undertook this experiment a couple of years later, I still considered myself an agnostic. I thought of the poem as "an agnostic Mass,"... basing each part on what seemed its primal character,... each a personal, secular meditation. But a few months later, when I had arrived at the Agnus Dei, I discovered myself to be in a different relationship to the material and to the liturgical form from that in which I had begun. The experience of writing the poem that long swims through waters of unknown depth-had also been a conversion process, if you will (Levertov, 2001).

Therefore, in "Agnus Dei," one can see, for the first time, Levertov's imagination expanding and transcending the difficulty that had tormented it for so long. A Spirit that subsumes and leads her own is now prepared to receive the contradiction of a world distinguished by mind-blowing brutality and beautiful

elegance, an oxymoron she cannot determine but which urgently calls for some form of synthesis vision to be offered. Belief—however shaky or fleeting—now emerges as the "inspired" imagination's final extension. The poet has arrived at a place where "all things are possible" once more, thanks to a convergence of profound need and gathered strength (Hallisey, 1982).

Conclusion

The salient theme emergent in her description of his spiritual journey is the conflicts associated with this progress. There is evidence in the study to affirm that the Christian life is a journey of constant struggles. While from a humanistic point of view, these struggles can be discouraging, there is a sense of victory that comes when patients is applied. Through this analysis, there is evidence that the journey of faith is not an event in itself, but rather, a journey of several miles and yet, the means justifies the end. To the pilgrim in this journey of faith, there is evidence that victory shall come, but before then, the journey of faith is a walk of constant struggles. He concludes his theme, albeit in a very hopeful manner: "Our song is a bird that wants to sing as it flies, to be the wings of praise, but doubt binds tight its wire to hold down flight bones, choke back a breath. " to the pilgrim, it is forward always, the option of turning back is not in existence.

The other salient conclusion in this analysis is that the spiritual work is laced with loads of challenges. At one point, just when Levertov thinks she has made a step, she seems to fall again. She gets into some form of spiritual lethargy then wakes up again. This finding basically means that through the spiritual journey, one is almost assured of the pits. Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of an individual to rise up again and continue with the journey.

Levertov also gives us the idea that the journey of faith can be ignited from family background. She gives an elaboration of how her family shaped her earlier concept of faith and belief. With time though, these have become crystallized as she grows up, leading to more and more maturity in spiritual issues. Levertov develops this idea very clearly observing how much she has come to understand her faith through the sand prints of life,

References

- Drexel, J. G. (2019). *Reconfiguring Self, World, and Word: Modernist Poetic Epiphanies in Eliot, Williams, Levertov, and Revell* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). <https://search.proquest.com/openview/2cb68aa2c912ccefcbbdae0749ebc7bc/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- Gordon, M. (2019). Denise Levertov. "this need to dance/this need to kneel": *Denise Levertov and the Poetics of Faith*, 96. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=b1b7DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA96&dq=Denise+levertov+&ots=8jN4-8Ud3J&sig=owi4cUAVld0_uqwOrkZb2HLJ2KU
- Hallisey, J. F. (1982). Denise Levertov's "Illustrious Ancestors": The Hassidic Influence. *Melus*, 9(4), 5-11. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/467606>

- Herrera, J. M. R. (2020). A "Chosen" P [o] et among [Hu] mans: Denise Levertov's Pig Dreams Read as a Matrifocal Allegory. *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 39(1), 85-104. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/757243/summary>
- Kumar, M. (2020) A Study of Mysticism: Neo-Paganism, Buddhism And Christianity. <http://tlhjournal.com/uploads/products/22.mohit-kumar-article.pdf>
- Levertov, D. (1982). *Candles in Babylon* (Vol. 533). New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation.
- Levertov, D. (2001). *Poems 1972-1982* (Vol. 913). New Directions Publishing. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=5wPj5fKfV7cC&oi=fnd&pg=PA75&dq=Denise+levertov+candles+in+babylon&ots=bc3ZJsLyrI&sig=T_ehjzWJ6ImmVHxAjPA11BT1KF8
- Long, S. (2021). Poetic Exercises: An Exploration of the Influence of The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius on the Writing of Poetry. <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/127008>
- Markle, J. R. (2020). Holding Fast to Being Possible: Teaching as an Interpretive Practice. *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics*, 1-6. <https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/jah/article/view/70417>
- Prostko, L. (2021). *Twentieth-Century Feminine Visionary Poetics: Vulnerable Visions of Survival and Healing*. State University of New York at Albany. <https://search.proquest.com/openview/ae4a06164a0a001be55b82c1c9d6a2d2/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>

شموع في بابل : رحلة دنيس لفرتوف الروحية

ا.م.د. نادية علي اسماعيل

كلية اللغات /جامعة بغداد/ العراق

nadeaali@colang.uobaghdad.edu.iq

النشر: 2022/12/15

القبول: 2022/5/22

التقديم: 2022/4/10

الملخص

تظهر اعمال دنيس لفرتوف (1923-1997) ميلها بوضوح الى وصف القضايا الدينية، إذ تشير الصور الدينية في اعمالها اما الى قناعة عميقة بوجود اله، او انه مجرد وصف لعجائب عالم ماوراء الطبيعة، بالرغم من ان اعمالها تحوي الكثير من الشعارات الدينية الا ان مجموعتها الشعرية "شموع في بابل" اخذت مسار اخر. حيث انها تعطي وصف و اضح الى الطريقة التي اتبعتها الشاعرة في رحلها الروحية الطويلة والتي تشبه رحلة الشاعر جون بنيان في "رحلة الحاج" (1678) في وصفها لمرحلة الانتقال من الايمان الشكلي الى الفهم الروحي العميق. يناقش البحث تجارب التحول لدنيس لفرتوف من خلال تجاربها الروحية وكيف تمكنت من خلال عدستها ان تعكس رؤيتها في قصائدها باستخدام اساليب شعرية مختلفة تنقل صورة تحولها في الحياة الى القاريء .

الكلمات المفتاحية: بابل, دنيس, رحلة, , شموع, لفرتوف