



臺北
表演
藝術
中心

TAIPEI
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

— 2026 臺北藝術節 —

《孤身》

Wajdi Mouawad

Seuls

瓦吉·穆阿瓦



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演出日期 / 時間
Date / Time

2026.10.3 Sat. 14:30
2026.10.4 Sun. 14:30

演出場地
Venue

臺北表演藝術中心 球劇場
Globe Playhouse,
Taipei Performing Arts Center

演出注意事項
Notice

- ◎ 節目全長約 120 分鐘，無中場休息，遲到及中途離席的觀眾，須依工作人員引導等候入場。
- ◎ 法文發音，中、英字幕。
- ◎ 建議 14 歲以上觀眾欣賞。
- ◎ 演出部分含成人議題、不雅用語、暴力、部分裸露與巨大聲響，請留意並斟酌入場。
- ◎ 演前導聆：10/3 (Sat.) 13:50、10/4 (Sun.) 13:50，演出前 40 分鐘於 2 樓太陽廳東南角進行。
- ◎ **120 mins, no intermission.**
- ◎ **In French with Chinese and English subtitles.**
- ◎ **Suggested Age 14+ years old.**
- ◎ **The performance contains nudity, strong language, violence, loud sound effects, and sexual content. Please consider these factors before attending.**
- ◎ **Latecomers and re-entry subject to discretion.**
- ◎ **Pre-performance talk: 40 minutes before each performance at the TPAC 2F Sun Hall.**

節目介紹

★奧斯卡提名電影《烈火焚身》原著劇作家瓦吉·穆阿瓦，帶著自編導自演的最私人獨角戲，在大舞台上向觀眾毫無保留地展露自我。

★瓦吉·穆阿瓦獨自一人就突破了戲劇的界限。——瑞士廣播電視
“En solo, Wajdi Mouawad expose les limites du théâtre.”
Radio télévision suisse

★超越傳統戲劇嚴格框架，《孤身》交織文本、演技、影音與震撼的肉體表演，化身極具創意的感官宣言。

■「我多麼希望不再說『我』，不再管任何事。我多麼希望有人能替我說『他』。」
這是八歲的瓦吉·穆阿瓦在離開戰火中的黎巴嫩前夜寫下的自白。
三十年後，這句話成為《孤身》的起點。

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哈萬（Harwan）是一名在蒙特婁求學的黎巴嫩裔博士生，正卡在學位的最後一哩路。他的論文題目是《羅伯·勒帕吉獨奏劇中的框架作為身分空間》。一個聽來冷僻的學術命題，實則是他自身的鏡像：被多重身分切割、被框架撕裂的破碎自我。他與父親早已疏離，母語阿拉伯語也正一字一字從口中流失。

當話語不再可能，身體與顏色接管了表達。他取出畫筆、傾倒大量彩色顏料，將自己與整座舞台同時化為一張巨大的畫布，宛如一場「重新學會說話」與「重新活過」的儀式。



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節目介紹

■ 首部集編劇、導演、獨自演出於一身的作品

《孤身》是穆阿瓦首部集編劇、導演、獨自演出於一身的作品，也是他《家庭系列》(Cycle domestique) 的開卷之作。劇名 Seuls 在法語中是「孤獨」的複數形——獨自一人的舞台上，從來不只有一個人。

文字、影像、錄音、現場繪畫，多重書寫形式同步並行，相互呼應也相互撕裂。穆阿瓦從林布蘭特名畫《浪子回頭》取得靈感，將一個無法歸鄉的兒子喚回舞台中央。

■ 藉由作品照應出一面鏡子，而鏡子中的人，是你自己。

當身分、家鄉、歸屬這些詞語在當代越發難以指認，當我們或多或少都活在某種精神的離散之中，《孤身》提供的不是答案，而是一面鏡子。鏡中那個在顏料裡赤身而立的男人，是哈萬，是穆阿瓦，也可能是你自己。



主創者介紹

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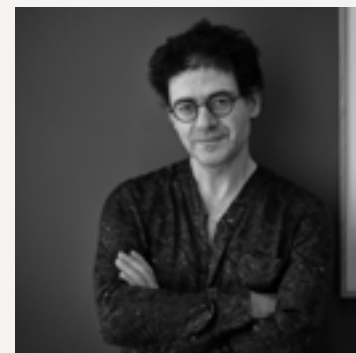
瓦吉·穆阿瓦 | 劇作家、導演、演員 / 法國

1968 年生於黎巴嫩，童年因內戰流亡巴黎，少年時隨家人移居加拿大魁北克，後返法國定居。著作逾四十部、劇作二十三部，作品譯為二十餘種語言，巡演五大洲。

其代表作《血誓四部曲》，以強烈的敘事結構與詩性語言，探討戰爭創傷、家族記憶與身分認同。《海之邊》為該系列開篇之作。系列第二部《烈火焚身》(Incendies) 後由丹尼·維勒納夫 (Denis Villeneuve) 改編為電影，入圍奧斯卡最佳外語片，使其作品獲得更廣泛關注。

其書寫深植於家族記憶、戰爭創傷與身分認同，融合古典悲劇的力量、美國電影的情節推進、法國劇場的语言密度與魁北克的敘事美學、魔幻寫實與時空跳接的手法，將私密創傷轉化為時代史詩。

2009 年擔任亞維農藝術節首席藝術家，推出長達 11 小時的《血誓四部曲》(Le Sang des promesses)；2016 年起接任法國國家柯林劇院 (La Colline — théâtre national) 藝術總監至 2026 年。曾獲加拿大總督最佳戲劇文學獎 (2000、2016)、法國藝術與文學騎士勳章 (2002)、法蘭西學院戲劇大獎 (2009)、德國斯圖加特國家劇院歐洲戲劇獎 (2021) 等殊榮。2025 年於法蘭西公學院 (Collège de France) 開設八堂課「書寫的動詞」，從「在」、「看」、「顫抖」一路講到「死亡」，拆解寫作作為存有方式的意義。



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演出製作團隊

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“文本、導演與演藝” | Wajdi Mouawad

戲劇顧問 | Charlotte Farcet

導演助理 | Vanessa Bonnet

舞台技術統籌 | Guillaume Lepert

舞台技術 | Eric Morel

燈光技術 | Gilles Thomain

聲音技術 | Annabelle Maillard

字幕操作 | Uli Menke

製作總監 | Solenn Réto

服裝設計 | Isabelle Larivière

聲音設計 | Michel Maurer

原創音樂 | Michael Jon Fink

特別感謝 | 

延伸閱讀

創傷、安魂與回家：瓦吉·穆阿瓦其人其作

撰文 / 黃楷君

責任編輯 / 黃曦

核稿編輯 / 黃曦

寡言的母親死後留下遺囑，要求雙胞胎子女去尋找他們素未謀面的父親和哥哥，姊弟倆為此前往陌生的異國，踏上母親的故土……長年斷聯的父親突然傳來死訊，兒子毅然決定帶著遺體回鄉安葬，為近乎陌生的父親尋覓墓地……

以斷裂與告別為始的故事，出自劇作家瓦吉·穆阿瓦（Wajdi Mouawad）之筆。在他的作品中，死亡往往並非終點，而是另一段故事的序章。這似乎也反映著瓦吉的真實人生，他的年少時期，曾經歷一次重大的告別。

1975 年，黎巴嫩內戰爆發。這場內戰始於黎巴嫩基督教徒和穆斯林之間的分歧。一戰後，法國統治加深不同宗派間的對立。1948 年，以色列建國導致大量巴勒斯坦難民流入；1970 年代，黎巴嫩更成為巴勒斯坦組織對抗以色列的基地，這些歷史發展讓黎巴嫩基督教徒和穆斯林之間的衝突愈演愈烈，逐漸染上代理人戰爭的色彩。當時，基督教徒大多隸屬於支持以色列的親西方陣營，穆斯林和左翼分子則是支持親蘇聯的阿拉伯國家陣營。1975 年 4 月，隸屬基督教馬龍派（Maronites）的黎巴嫩長槍黨（Kataeb Party）聲稱，為了報復黎巴嫩首都貝魯特（Beirut）東部教堂遇襲，遂攻擊一輛滿載巴勒斯坦人的公車，車上三十名乘客全數罹難，內戰就此引爆。

1978 年，戰爭沒有落幕的跡象。為躲避戰亂，年僅十歲的瓦吉不得不和童年的故鄉告別，和家人逃亡至巴黎。他在少年時期移居加拿大魁北克（Québec），就讀戲劇學校，並在加拿大戲劇圈嶄露頭角。瓦吉目前定居法國，是當代法語劇場極具國際影響力的劇作家、導演和演員。在不同文化間遊走和流動的經驗，讓離散、創傷和認同，成為瓦吉劇作的重要命題。

在代表作「血誓四部曲」（Le Sang des promesses）中，最為人所知的是曾改編成電影的二部曲《烈火焚身》（Incendies，2010），講述一對雙胞胎姊弟在母親死後，逐步揭開母親生前傷痛過往的經過。一部曲《海之邊》（Littoral，1999），則描述一名男子帶著父親的遺體，在父親的故鄉尋找安葬地，並在旅途中遇見一群同樣失去至親、無依無靠的年輕人。《孤身》（Seuls，2016）為瓦吉的另一部代表作，全劇由他一人自編自導自演，也是最貼近他個人生命經歷的一部作品，在加拿大求學的黎巴嫩裔博士生，為著論文絞盡腦汁的同時，也回望過去、梳理自身，訴說起當前生命與童年故鄉之間、與父親之間的斷裂狀態。

延伸閱讀

離散創傷與安魂旅程

瓦吉的劇作經常圍繞創傷議題。他曾表示，背負創傷的人往往是無感的，就像「背著一個空背包，每天都有人投一顆小石頭進去，小到你根本無法察覺。日復一日，最終背包變得非常沉重，你卻毫無知覺。有天發生了某件事，你得以卸下背包……你突然感到身輕如燕，接著卻又有人把背包放回你肩上，那一刻你才意識到自己背負著多少東西。」也許所有創傷都不容易立即辨認，代際創傷尤其如此。許多像瓦吉這樣，在幼年逃離故土的難民或難民後代，對戰亂的記憶泰半零碎而模糊，或甚未曾親身經歷，但戰爭的創傷，仍然在他們的成長過程中，透過父母輩傳遞給他們。

《烈火焚身》的雙胞胎姊弟在異國揭開母親的秘密後，才明白母親為何總沉默不語。《海之邊》的主角威弗里德（Wilfrid）踏上父親的故土後，才看見那片被戰火摧殘的土地，與長期缺席的父親身後的累累傷痕。《孤身》的主角哈萬（Harwan）爬梳童年記憶，回想起父親流亡海外後，曾表示為了孩子的未來犧牲自己的人生，於是感到怨悔。這些母親和父親，因為背負沉重創傷而失語或缺席，和子女的關係疏離又彆扭，於是孩子不知不覺也背起名為創傷的背包。

當前現身於公領域的難民或移民後代，通常來自重視民族歷史文化，並具民族認同感的家庭。這些後代對於自己未曾造訪的「故鄉」有一定程度的認識，儘管可能帶有美化的濾鏡，但仍是某種深刻的情感連結，支撐著他們從事倡議行動，為自己的故鄉發聲和爭取權利。

不過，瓦吉筆下的故事，描述的卻是另一種較難為公眾所見的難民移民後代樣貌。他們的長輩，因為不願回憶過去的悲痛經歷，鮮少向晚輩提及故鄉的往事。這些後代在異地出生長大，相對容易融入當地的主流社會，同時也逐漸失去說母語的能力，和「故鄉」日益疏離，「返鄉」變得更遙不可及。

然而，離散的傷痛不會因為長時間擱置就淡去，家族中勢必有人得去面對，和處理前人的創傷，才可能真正與創傷和解。《烈火焚身》的雙胞胎姊弟和《海之邊》的威弗里德，都在父母逝世後，被一股冥冥之中的力量推著上路。儘管他們一開始可能並未察覺，但他們還是受到創傷的召喚，於是展開安魂之旅。

創傷蹲踞在遠方的國度，等待著他們發現、聆聽、哀悼和紀念。當旅程來到尾聲，死者的靈魂終能安息，生者的靈魂終得平靜。

瓦吉曾說，戲劇作品能夠讓個人和集體的創傷浮現，讓人看見自己內心隱藏的傷痛。而瓦吉用故事告訴我們，看見了，就有療傷的希望。

延伸閱讀

「回家」的多義性

「返鄉」是一件五味雜陳的事。「故鄉」本應是離鄉之人魂牽夢縈的地方，但對瓦吉筆下的角色來說，故鄉因為他們早已習慣的異地生活而愈發陌生，卻又因為家族和童年連結而備感親近。

返鄉，意味著重新面對家族創傷和錯綜複雜的記憶，過程往往令人痛苦不安、百感交集。他們與故鄉的關係，難以用三言兩語道盡。

也許這才是故鄉的真實樣貌，畢竟世上難有純然美好之地。那麼，對這些難以返鄉的人來說，歸屬究竟在何方？有些人選擇返鄉，重新和故鄉建立關係。有些人選擇擁抱長年生活的他方，切割遠離自己的原生文化，融入主流社會。

然而，瓦吉的作品告訴我們，這也許不是二選一的單選題，甚至可以有第三種答案。

在《孤身》中，他獨自一人站在台上，交疊呈現錄音、照片、影像、繪畫等多種文本，與他人、與自己的對話交錯其中，打造屬於他自己的一方天地。在這個空間裡，他維繫著與外界的各種連結，但又不受他人眼光影響，獨自盡情揮灑。

「回家」的意義不再只是選擇要歸返某處，更可以主動創造選項，創造讓自己能夠自在伸展的歸屬之地。認同是多選題，可以屬於某一方，也可以不屬於任何一方。

瓦吉以劇作和表演面對觀眾，同時也在面對自我，面對自己生命中的種種經歷和養分。他在舞臺上擁抱複雜多重的認同，創造出自己的「家」，而正是因為這種難以定義的特質，這個「家」有了普世性，所有人都能在其中看見部分的自己。



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延伸閱讀

瓦吉·穆阿瓦：在烈火焚身後，於向陽處刻下我的名字

撰文 / 蔡若君
責任編輯 / 黃曦
核稿編輯 / 黃曦

編按：命運如同烈火，他選擇在餘燼中拾起筆，為流落世界各地的離散者書寫。曾執導《沙丘》（Dune，2021；Dune: Part Two，2024）、《異星入境》（Arrival，2016）等作的國際名導丹尼·維勒納夫（Denis Villeneuve），其一生的轉折之作《烈火焚身》（Incendies，2010），正是改編自當代劇作家瓦吉·穆阿瓦（Wajdi Mouawad）的同名舞台劇。瓦吉的童年因內戰被迫離散，而歷史的失語與流亡的孤獨，成為形塑其創作的殘酷養分。

而 2026 臺北藝術節亦邀請瓦吉·穆阿瓦，帶來敘述斷裂歷史、集體創傷的《海之邊》（Littoral，1999），與自編自導自演、揉合多重感官體驗的《孤身》（Seuls，2016），本文深入剖析瓦吉·穆阿瓦的流亡路徑，從面向家國創傷的「血誓四部曲」（Le Sang des promesses）至直面自我的「家庭系列」，如何在壁壘分明的世界中跨越血統與仇恨的邊界。

《烈火焚身》：於向陽處刻下我的名字

「當誓言得以遵守，緘默不復存在，屆時可將石頭放我墳上，於向陽處刻下我的名字。」——《烈火焚身》（Incendies，2010）母親納娃的遺言。

儘管丹尼·維勒納夫（Denis Villeneuve）近年以《銀翼殺手 2049》（Blade Runner 2049，2017）、《沙丘》（Dune，2021；Dune: Part Two，2024）系列等科幻／史詩電影，橫掃多項奧斯卡大獎，此前更以《怒火邊界》（Sicario，2015）、《異星入境》（Arrival，2016）分別闖入坎城影展主競賽單元、威尼斯影展主競賽單元。然而，被他視為「改變我一生的電影」，並將其推向國際舞台的作品，實為 2011 年帶領他首次登上奧斯卡的「加拿大戰爭電影」（此為維基百科針對此作之敘述）《烈火焚身》——一部宛如《伊底帕斯王》（Oedipus the King，約於西元前 427 年）般的索福克里斯（Sophocles）式悲劇。

延伸閱讀

丹尼·維勒納夫曾說，這部電影與巴勒斯坦的苦難直接相關，因片中的玻璃窗上，短暫地出現了巴勒斯坦之字樣。可實際上，電影架空於虛構時空，致使戰爭有機會被賦予不直接指涉特定對象的，相對普世的樣態。然而，若是仔細分析其中的地景、建築、語言等元素，觀眾仍能意識到，《烈火焚身》影射的是自 1975 年起，黎巴嫩爆發的十五年內戰。

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2010 年，電影甫上映時，的確有部分電影評論，對此作模糊現實時空的選擇略有微詞。不過，這或許也是丹尼·維勒納夫「忠於原作」的決定。電影劇本改編自出生於黎巴嫩的法語作家瓦吉·穆阿瓦（Wajdi Mouawad），於 2003 年所創作之同名舞台劇。經由前綴的「黎巴嫩裔、法國籍、法語為主」，我們便能隱晦地感知，名字背後的「流亡」。

於瓦吉·穆阿瓦的原劇作中，納娃（Nawal）是這麼說的：「我的墳前不要立任何石碑，我的名字不要刻在任何地方，不遵守誓言的人沒有碑文。有一個誓言沒被遵守。保持沉默的人沒有碑文。曾保持沉默。不要石碑，不要刻在石碑上的名字，不要在缺失的石碑上為缺失的名字而刻的碑文。不要名字。」

納娃的遺言，是瓦吉·穆阿瓦自身經歷的投射。他曾說：「我來自一段不為人知的歷史，不是因為難以講述，而是因為它拒絕被講述。我來自一種不願講述自身歷史、只想保持驕傲的文化，即便它擁有確鑿的證據和痕跡。我來自一種拒絕正視自身無法引以為傲之物的文化，這種現實造就了一種精神分裂，一種瘋狂。在這種對痕跡的執著中，也蘊藏著巨大的憤怒，一種怨恨——無論如何，它都源自於此。」

虛構，或說「隱身」，是由於一股長久的（被）沉默。

這篇文章的主角是瓦吉·穆阿瓦。在正式介紹這位於歐美劇場／藝術界聞名遐邇的劇作家／導演／演員之前，容我先對發生於 1975 年至 1990 年的「黎巴嫩內戰」（Lebanese Civil War）歷史稍作敘述。因其作品，皆是對這場戰爭難以明言、卻又無法迴避的產物。因此，唯有望向歷史，才能真正讀懂瓦吉作品裡的殘酷。

延伸閱讀

位於地中海沿岸的黎巴嫩，因其特殊的地理位置，成為扼守歐亞非的戰略要道。自古以來，這片土地便匯集多元化的民族和教派，在二戰前為法屬敘利亞託管地，後於 1943 年獨立建國。建國之初，基督教（馬龍派為主）、伊斯蘭教（遜尼派、什葉派）、德魯茲教派各自分得部分政治權力，因故達成相對平衡、穩定的政經局勢。然而，在以色列獨立建國，並與巴勒斯坦搶佔領土，十餘萬的巴勒斯坦難民湧入黎巴嫩，而這也被視為打破黎巴嫩情勢的關鍵。

黎巴嫩乃至中東地區複雜交織的地緣政治，實在難以於此篇文章裡完整敘述。化約言之，由馬龍派基督教（Maronite Christian）主導的政府系統，當屬西方列強陣營；泛阿拉伯社群（伊斯蘭穆斯林）及左翼團體，則為與蘇聯結盟的阿拉伯國家陣營。當多為伊斯蘭教的巴勒斯坦人遷徙至黎巴嫩，某程度上的壯大了當地的伊斯蘭社群，進而導致以宗教分屬的各派勢力關係愈發緊張，更引發了地方上的「軍備競賽」。兩方衝突於 1975 年 4 月 13 日，因首都貝魯特（Beirut）發生「巴勒斯坦巴士遭槍擊事件」，遂開啟黎巴嫩長達十五年的內戰。

《孤身》：想像一個沒有離散的日子

十五年的戰火，致使數十萬人遇難受害，近百萬人流離失所。人們幾經遷徙，或者流亡他鄉，而未滿十歲的瓦吉·穆阿瓦，便在 1978 年和家人離開黎巴嫩，「逃離」了故鄉。他們先是逃往法國、待了五年左右，後因簽證遭拒而移居至加拿大魁北克（Québec），於魁北克生活二十多年之久。魁北克是瓦吉·穆阿瓦創作的起點，其後之創作與生活則紮根於法國，並於 2016 年起接任法國國家柯林劇院（Théâtre national de la Colline）藝術總監，直至今年卸任。

黎巴嫩、法國、加拿大、法國，標誌著瓦吉·穆阿瓦的流亡路徑，他始終活在一個名為「流亡」的國度。他說，所有黎巴嫩人，都有兩位母親。第二位母親如同親生母親——將他們帶到這個「世界」上——那就是戰爭。

戰爭使黎巴嫩人換了國家，換了語言，換了另一齣人生劇本。於自編自導自演的劇作《孤身》（Seuls, 2016）裡，他說：「如果我們沒有離開黎巴嫩，我會變成什麼樣子？」

他記得戰爭前的童年生活，猶如燦爛千陽般奪目，抬頭可見湛藍的天空，腳踩長滿無花果樹的草叢。與戰爭交錯的三年，他不記得他們說「戰爭」，而是「它要爆炸了」，他和朋友將轟炸聲當作「遊戲」：今天的砲彈是 255 型，還是 244 型？

延伸閱讀

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然而，關於那場戰爭，「沉默」一直存於瓦吉·穆阿瓦的家中。沒有人願意向他解釋，究竟發生了什麼，他僅能透過閱讀歷史學家的著作，來了解這段歷史。他將其形容為「極其可恥的戰爭」：父親殺害兒子，兒子殺害兄弟，兒子強暴母親——「陌生人不得不告訴我，我自己的故事。」

不過，時間並未抹除他的感受——時間無法撫平一切，時間其實是釀造者。而流亡既是摧毀，亦是拯救，這使瓦吉擺脫了黎巴嫩內戰的仇恨循環。因為在流亡時，他成了他者，成了他所憎恨的、不理解的陌生人。

《孤身》是瓦吉·穆阿瓦「家庭系列 (Cycle domestique)」之首作，法文劇名「Seuls」，可譯為孤獨的人、寂寞的人。主角哈萬 (Harwan)，瓦吉·穆阿瓦本人，即為孤獨、寂寞的總和。「Seuls」的複數形，既是孤身一人，亦為孤身一群人——那從來不是一個人的流亡，而是一代人乃至數代人的離散。

此劇作由瓦吉·穆阿瓦一人獨演全場，講述於蒙特婁 (Montréal) 攻讀博士的哈萬，面對寫論文的焦慮之際，與向來關係疏離的「沉默」的父親，展開一場撕裂傷疤，從而得以直面自我的辯證。那道他向父親提出的質問：「如果我們沒有離開『黎巴嫩』，我會變成什麼樣子？」下一句是：「我不會在這裡。我現在會說阿拉伯語。」

當中出現了「黎巴嫩」，演繹哈萬的瓦吉·穆阿瓦，還說了一些阿拉伯語。這在他前期的創作裡，實屬罕見。在《烈火焚身》沒有，《烈火焚身》前一劇作《海之邊》(Littoral, 1999) 也沒有。沒有黎巴嫩，沒有巴勒斯坦。沒有基督教和穆斯林。故土和戰爭，以「被隱身」的形式「現形」：《孤身》的哈萬難以融入陌生的他鄉，他不屬於這裡，也不屬於那裡；《海之邊》威弗里德 (Wilfrid) 揹著父親的遺體，漂泊於名為「故鄉」的故鄉；《烈火焚身》納娃不要石碑和碑文，不要名字，不要記憶，不要存在。

延伸閱讀

《海之邊》：我從何方所來

《海之邊》和《烈火焚身》同為「血誓四部曲」（Le Sang des promesses）之前二作，其後則依序為《森林》（Forêts）和《天空》（Cielos）。故事中皆有一道以血為諾的誓言，「血之誓言」更可視為違背諾言所致的血流成河，亦可作為誓言永存的新鮮血珀。

《烈火焚身》的納娃留下遺言，令雙胞胎兒女重返故鄉，完成那道未完成的誓言，因此揭開隱秘而殘酷的過去；《海之邊》同樣起於「死亡」，一縷和故鄉血脈相連，無法斬斷的魂魄，使威弗里德揹起魂魄——父親的遺體，也為著自身幽靈般的存在，踏上尋找靈魂安放之所在的歸途。

那些踏上旅途的人們，興許一路結識同因戰爭、流離失所的親密陌生人，一行人皆困囿於同樣的噩夢，被迫沉默的噩夢。

瓦吉·穆阿瓦的劇作裡，經常有一位「沉默者」——對「那場」戰爭閉口不言之人。《孤身》哈萬的父親，《海之邊》威弗里德的父親，《烈火焚身》的母親納娃。瓦吉的童年，便是困囿於沉默中，沉默使他失語，因而無力指認傷口：該如何指出「那場」戰爭？我又從何方而來？可曾經的感受是如此鮮活，如此震耳欲聾，如此美好又如此絕望，所以「它」——黎巴嫩內戰——怎麼可能不存在？於是，他持續寫作，以寫作抵抗沉默，抵抗歷史記憶的消融，抵抗戰爭對未來的自己，永無寧日的割裂。但是，抵抗戰火。持續發生於故土的戰火。

「當我開始創作『血之誓言』時，我意識到沒有人願意談論那場（黎巴嫩的）戰爭。我也處於那種狀態：無法提及它。不提及它，它就變得無法被提及，這也象徵著一種失憶。但我絕不能繼續沉浸在這種失憶之中。」

對故鄉的「隱身」，大致於「家庭系列」第二部《Sœurs》（直譯為《姐妹》）發生轉變。在創作《海之邊》、《烈火焚身》時，瓦吉意識到歐洲歷史之所以能夠被指認，是因為歐洲（人）擁有嘗試「處理歷史」（Transitional Justice，亦即「轉型正義」）的過程，如納粹德國戰敗後的紐倫堡大審判（Nuremberg Trials）。因為，唯有正視歷史、打破沉默，使加害者與受害者望向彼此的暴行與傷口，才有終止仇恨循環的可能。

延伸閱讀

終止仇恨循環，可以說是瓦吉·穆阿瓦創作思維的核心，或者說是初心。「血誓四部曲」當然以此為母題，而丹尼·維勒納夫的電影《烈火焚身》，亦未脫離其本意。故事中，納娃出身自馬龍派基督教家族，卻愛上與其族群水火不容的穆斯林，宛如《羅密歐與茱麗葉》（Romeo and Juliet, 1597）的設定，也在瓦吉另一劇作《眾鳥》（Tous des oiseaux, 2018）再現。後者之設計更為複雜，描述德裔猶太科學家伊坦（Eitan）和阿拉伯裔、摩洛哥籍美國研究生瓦希達（Wahida）之間的愛情，全劇由德語、英語、希伯來語和阿拉伯語交織而成。

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瓦吉·穆阿瓦深受希臘悲劇作家影響，他以悲劇控訴悲劇——那場被他視為極其可恥的黎巴嫩內戰，並指認「血統」作為一切悲劇的根源，是戰火皆起於非我族類。也因此，他一再地經由跨越血統的桎梏，象徵斬斷種族主義（Racism）的人道精神，更以角色揭示受害者亦是加害者的荒謬處境，從而嘗試淡化邊界，以此拓寬掙脫集體仇恨的可能。

不過，瓦吉·穆阿瓦也多次因著反戰、反仇恨的中心思想，而招致爭議。如 2022 年，《眾鳥》遭控反猶太主義，故中止於德國的演出計畫；2024 年，原定於黎巴嫩上演劇作《Wedding Day at the Cro-Magnons》（此作仍未有正式中文譯名，直譯為「克羅馬農人的婚禮」），卻又因《眾鳥》被指控為「親以色列」而最終暫停出演。

世界一邊說他反猶太，一邊說他親猶太——瓦吉·穆阿瓦應該感到很孤獨吧——他猶如哈萬，孤身一人，處身於兩極分化的世界，選擇了一條鮮有人跡之道，只是投射距離，彷彿沒有批判，只為展示——展示戰爭的殘酷，醜惡，令人們得以歸返，尋回早已失去的本能，以及曾經作為孩童之時，對世界敞開心扉的本能。

「那份魅力不只屬於孩子，也屬於我們成年人。生活不能是這樣的：經歷苦難然後習以為常？不得不面對無止盡的無聊？我不知道別人是怎麼撐過來的，因為我做不到。」——《孤身》哈萬。

哈萬以「想像社會學」的概念，探討劇作家羅伯·勒帕吉（Robert Lepage）的獨角劇表演：經由投影螢幕佈景，挑戰時間、空間既有定律，使角色自一個時代、一個地點瞬間置換，體驗墜落。這便是哈萬置身之「孤身」——瓦吉·穆阿瓦處身的「世界」。

延伸閱讀

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當身體 / 身分被空間 / 世界撕裂，又該如何辨認「我」是誰？因此，哈萬質問著「假如沒有離開黎巴嫩」，迷戀那齣未能被實現的人生劇本，卻也使過去，扼殺了未來的可能。然而，在論文結論中，哈萬終尋得將其撕裂的「世界」，所存在的悖論本質：限制與可能性並非二元對立，那片「空間」，便是一切可能性的所在，一切夢想的所在——

有限屬於無限，
極限蘊含無限，
邊界帶來開放，
以及通往不可思議之境的里程碑。
晦澀消失，
表面顯露出深度，
在那裡，靈魂不再壓抑自己，
而是向著一個空間敞開，
在那裡，身體終於獲得自由。

擁抱限制，終獲自由。如同現實人生，跨越邊界，帶來新生。靈魂與肉體，理性與感性，男人和女人，種族和種族，不被置於壁壘分明之僵化地界。瓦吉·穆阿瓦，早已經由哈萬，回應了這個世界。

Introduction

“I wish I no longer had to say ‘I.’ I wish I could cease to care for all things. I wish someone else could say ‘he’ for me.”

At the age of eight, on the eve of his exodus from a civil war-torn Lebanon, Wajdi Mouawad sowed these words into the silence of his room. Thirty years later, they have sprouted into *Seuls*.

Harwan, a Lebanese doctoral student in Montréal, finds himself stranded in the final stretches of his degree. His niche dissertation, *Frames as Spaces of Identity in the Solo Performances of Robert Lepage*, is a clinical mirror of his own fractured existence. Caught between conflicting cultures and torn by the very frameworks meant to define him, Harwan watches as his estrangement from his father deepens and his mother tongue, Arabic, dissolves word by word.

When language can no longer function, body and color seize the stage. A brush in hand and paint hemorrhaging the space, Harwan transfigures both himself and the theatre into a vast, visceral canvas, commencing a ritual of unlearning silence to rediscover the syntax of living.

Seuls marks a definitive milestone: Mouawad’s first work as sole author, director, and performer, inaugurating his acclaimed *Cycle Domestique*. In French, the title *Seuls* is a pluralized solitude—an acknowledgment that the man alone on stage is never truly solitary. Through a polyphonic layering of text, video, recorded echoes, and live painting, the work shifts restlessly between forms of expression. Drawing inspiration from Rembrandt’s *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, Mouawad summons the child perpetually unable to find his way home.

In an era where home and belonging have become fugitive concepts, and the sense of internal exile is a universal condition, *Seuls* offers no easy solace. The man standing naked amidst the paint is Harwan. He is Mouawad. He is the reflection of any one of us.

Artist

Playwright, Director, Actor: Wajdi Mouawad, France

Wajdi Mouawad is a playwright, director, actor, and the preeminent force in contemporary Francophone theatre. Born in Lebanon, 1968, his portfolio traces a trajectory of exile from Beirut to Paris and then Québec. Having over forty publications translated into twenty languages, his voice has become a definitive bridge between Mediterranean history and Western avant-garde theatre.



©Simon Gosselin

Mouawad's reputation is anchored in his tetralogy, *Le Sang des promesses*, an epic exploration of ancestral trauma and identity scarred by war. While *Littoral* (*Tideline*) serves as the cycle's haunting genesis, its successor, *Scorched* (*Incendies*), reached global acclaim through Denis Villeneuve's Oscar-nominated cinematic adaptation.

Rooted in the triptych of ancestral memory, war, and identity, Mouawad's writing transmutes private trauma into modern epics, often fusing the gravitas of Greek tragedy and French linguistic density with the cinematic momentum and magical realism of Québécois aesthetics.

In 2009, Mouawad served as the Associate Artist of the Festival d'Avignon, premiering his monumental eleven-hour marathon, *Le Sang des promesses*. Since 2016, he has presided as the Artistic Director of France's La Colline – théâtre national. His career is marked by the highest honors, including the Grand Prix du Théâtre de l'Académie Française and the European Drama Award. In 2025, he was appointed to the Collège de France to deliver his landmark lecture series, "Writing verbs"—an ontological deconstruction of the creative act as a fundamental mode of existence, and a metaphysical trajectory through the verbs to be, to see, to tremble, and ultimately, to die.

Production Team

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“Text, direction and interpretation”: Wajdi Mouawad
Dramaturge: Charlotte Farcet
Director Assistant: Vanessa Bonnet
Stage Manager: Guillaume Lepert
Stage Technician: Eric Morel
Light Technician: Gilles Thomain
Sound Technician: Annabelle Maillard
Surtitles Operator: Uli Menke
Production director: Solenn Réto
Costume design: Isabelle Larivière
Sound design: Michel Maurer
original music: Michael Jon Fink

Special Thanks: 

Further Reading

Trauma, Healing, and Homecoming: Wajdi Mouawad and His Works

Writer / Huang, Kai Chun

Editor / Huang, Sea

Their taciturn mother leaves a will, instructing the twins to seek out the father and elder brother they have never met. The siblings travel to a foreign land they have never known, setting foot in their mother's homeland for the first time. ...After years of losing touch, a son suddenly receives news of his father's death. He resolutely decides to take his father's body back to his homeland for burial, setting out to find a final resting place for a father who is almost a stranger to him...

These stories, which begin with rupture and farewell, come from Wajdi Mouawad. In his works, death is often not an ending, but the opening chapter of another story. This seems to echo Mouawad's own life. In his youth, he experienced a profound farewell of his own.

In 1975, the Lebanese Civil War broke out. It stemmed from deep divisions between Lebanese Christians and Muslims. Following World War I, French rule had intensified tensions among the country's various religious sects. The establishment of Israel in 1948 led to a massive influx of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon. By the 1970s, Lebanon had also become a base for Palestinian organizations fighting against Israel. These historical developments further intensified tensions between Lebanese Christians and Muslims, and the conflict increasingly took on the character of a proxy war. At the time, Christians largely belonged to the pro-Western, pro-Israel camp, while Muslims and leftists generally aligned themselves with the pro-Soviet Arab states.

In April 1975, the Lebanese Kataeb Party, a Maronite Christian faction, claimed to be retaliating for an attack on a church in eastern Beirut. Its members attacked a bus carrying Palestinians, killing all thirty passengers on board and triggering the outbreak of the civil war.

Further Reading

By 1978, the war showed no sign of ending. To escape the conflict, ten-year-old Wajdi was forced to bid farewell to his childhood homeland and flee to Paris with his family. As a teenager, he moved to Québec, Canada, where he studied at a drama school and began to make a name for himself in the Canadian theatre scene. Wajdi now lives in France and is one of the most internationally influential playwrights, directors, and actors in contemporary French-language theatre. His experience of moving between and navigating different cultures has made diaspora, trauma, and identity central concerns in his theatrical work.

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Among his best-known works is the four-part cycle *Le Sang des promesses*. The second installment, *Incendies* (2010), which was later adapted into a film, is perhaps the best known. It follows a pair of twins who, after their mother's death, gradually uncover the painful secrets of her past. The first installment, *Littoral* (1999), tells of a man who carries his father's body back to his father's homeland in search of a place to bury him, encountering along the way a group of young people who, like him, have lost those closest to them and have nowhere to turn. Another of Wajdi's major works, *Seuls* (2016), was written, directed, and performed entirely by him. The work most closely reflects his own life experience: its protagonist, Harwan, a Lebanese-Canadian doctoral student in Canada, struggles with his dissertation while looking back on his past and reckoning with the rupture between his present life, his childhood homeland, and his father.

Diasporic trauma and journey of healing

Wajdi's work frequently revolves around trauma. He once described those who carry trauma as being numb to its weight, comparing it to "carrying an empty backpack into which someone drops a small stone every day—so small that you barely notice it. Day after day, the backpack grows heavier, yet you remain unaware. Then one day, something happens and you are able to take the backpack off... You suddenly feel as light as a feather, only for someone to put the backpack back on your shoulders. It is only then that you realize how much you have been carrying."

Further Reading

Perhaps all trauma is difficult to recognize at first, and intergenerational trauma even more so. Many refugees and children of refugees who fled their homelands in childhood, like Wajdi, carry only fragmented and hazy memories of war—or may never have experienced the conflict firsthand at all. Yet the trauma of war can still be passed down from one generation to the next through their parents.

In *Incendies*, the twins only begin to understand their mother's silence after uncovering the secrets she kept in a foreign land. In *Littoral*, Wilfrid arrives in his father's homeland and comes face to face with a land scarred by war, as well as the deep wounds left in the wake of his father's long absence. In *Seuls*, Harwan sifts through his childhood memories, recalling how his father, after going into exile abroad, had said that he had sacrificed his own life for the sake of his children's future, leaving mixed feelings of resentment and regret.

These mothers and fathers, rendered speechless or absent by the weight of their trauma, find themselves in distant and uneasy relationships with their children. And so, without realizing it, their children too take up the backpack of trauma.

Today, the descendants of refugees and immigrants who have a public voice often come from families that place great value on their national history and culture and have a strong sense of national identity. They tend to have some knowledge of a "homeland" they have never visited. Even if that image is filtered through a romanticized lens, it can still form a profound emotional bond—one that sustains their advocacy, giving them the impetus to speak for their homeland and fight for its rights. Yet the stories Wajdi tells portray another kind of refugee or immigrant descendant, one that is less visible to the public. Their elders, unwilling to revisit the painful experiences of the past, rarely speak to the younger generation about their homeland. Born and raised elsewhere, these descendants may find it relatively easy to assimilate into the mainstream society around them. At the same time, they gradually lose the ability to speak their mother tongue and grow increasingly distant from their "homeland," making the prospect of returning ever more remote.

Further Reading

Yet the pain of diaspora does not simply fade because it has been left untouched for a long time. Someone in the family must eventually confront and work through the trauma of those who came before in order to truly come to terms with it. In both *Incendies* and *Littoral*, the twins and Wilfrid are propelled onto their journeys by an unseen force following the deaths of their parents. They may not recognize it at first, but they are nevertheless answering a call from the trauma, embarking on a journey to lay the dead to rest.

Trauma crouches in a distant land, waiting for them to uncover it, listen to it, mourn it, and remember it. When the journey finally comes to an end, the souls of the dead can at last find rest, and the living can finally find peace.

Wajdi has said that theatre can bring personal and collective trauma to the surface, allowing us to see the wounds hidden within ourselves. Through his stories, he reminds us that once a wound has been seen, there is hope for healing.

The many meanings of “homecoming”

“Returning to the homeland” is a deeply complicated experience. A “homeland” should, in theory, be the place that those who have left behind yearn for most deeply. Yet for Wajdi’s characters, the homeland becomes increasingly unfamiliar as they grow accustomed to life elsewhere, even as family and childhood ties make it feel intimately close.

Returning to the homeland means confronting family trauma and tangled memories all over again, a process that can be painful, unsettling, and emotionally overwhelming. Their relationship with the homeland is far too complicated to be summed up in a few words.

Perhaps this is what a homeland truly looks like. After all, there are few places in this world that are purely beautiful. So, for those who can no longer easily return, where does a sense of belonging lie? Some choose to return and rebuild their relationship with their homeland. Others choose to embrace the place where they have spent many years, severing ties with their inherited culture and assimilating into mainstream society.

Further Reading

Yet Wajdi's work tells us that perhaps this is not a binary, either-or choice. There may even be a third answer.

In *Seuls*, he stands alone on stage, layering recordings, photographs, video, paintings, and other forms of text, while weaving together conversations with others and with himself to create a world of his own. Within this space, he maintains his connections with the outside world while remaining free from the gaze of others, expressing himself fully.

"Homecoming" is no longer simply a matter of choosing whether to return somewhere. It can also mean actively creating new possibilities—a place of belonging where one can move freely and fully be oneself. Identity is a multiple-choice question: one can belong to one side, or choose not to belong to any side at all.

Through his plays and performances, Wajdi faces his audience while also confronting himself—his own experiences and everything that has shaped his life. On stage, he embraces the complexity and multiplicity of identity, creating a "home" of his own. And precisely because this "home" resists easy definition, it takes on a universal quality, allowing everyone to recognize a part of themselves within it.

Further Reading

Incendies: Engrave My Name in the Sun

Wajdi Mouawad

Writer / Tsai, Ruo-Chun

Editor / Huang, Sea

"When the vow is kept and the silence broken, then a stone may be laid upon my grave, and my name engraved there, in the sun." — the dying words of the protagonist's mother Nawal, in *Incendies* (2010).

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In recent years, Denis Villeneuve has swept the Academy Awards with science-fiction and epic films such as *Blade Runner 2049* (2017) and the *Dune* saga (*Dune*, 2021; *Dune: Part Two*, 2024), having earlier broken into the main competition at Cannes with *Sicario* (2015) and at Venice with *Arrival* (2016). And yet the film that changed his life and carried him onto the international stage, was his debut at the Oscars in 2011: the "Canadian war film" (as Wikipedia describes it) *Incendies*, a Sophoclean tragedy in the manner of *Oedipus the King* (c. 427 BCE).

For Villeneuve, the film links directly to the suffering of Palestine, with the word "Palestine" appearing fleetingly on a pane of glass within it. In reality, however, the film is set in an alternate timeline, which allows its war to take on a relatively universal cast, one that points at no specific ethnicity. Even so, a close reading of its landscapes, its architecture, its languages, and other such elements allows the viewer to recognize that *Incendies* alludes to the fifteen-year civil war that erupted in Lebanon, 1975.

When the film was first released in 2010, critics noticed its choice to blur real time and place. Yet this may equally have been Villeneuve's way of remaining "faithful to the source." The screenplay is adapted from the 2003 stage play of the same name by Wajdi Mouawad, a Lebanese-born, Canadian, Francophone writer. In those very qualifiers, "Lebanese-born, Canadian, primarily French-speaking," we can obliquely sense the exile that lies behind the name.

Further Reading

In Mouawad's original play, Nawal speaks thus: *"Stand no stone before my grave, carve my name nowhere; vow-breakers have no epitaph. A vow was not kept. The silent have no epitaph. There was silence. No stone, no name carved upon a stone, no epitaph carved for an absent name upon an absent stone. No name."*

Nawal's dying words are a projection of Wajdi Mouawad's own experience. He once said, "I come from an unspoken history; not because it is hard to tell, but because it refuses to be told. I come from a culture that will not tell its own history and wishes only to keep its pride, even when it holds incontrovertible proof and traces of that history. I come from a culture that refuses to face what it cannot take pride in, and this reality has bred a kind of schizophrenia, a kind of madness. Within this fixation on the traces there also lies an immense anger, a resentment that, whatever else may be said, springs from precisely this source.

Fiction, or call it "disappearance," arises from a long-standing silence, willingly or imposed.

The subject of this essay is Wajdi Mouawad. Before formally introducing this playwright, director, and actor, so renowned across the theatre and art worlds of Europe and America, one must learn a brief account of the "Lebanese Civil War" that unfolded from 1975 to 1990. For his works are all the product of that war; something unspeakable and unavoidable. Only by turning toward that history, then, can we truly read the cruelty that runs through Wajdi's work.

Lebanon, on the shores of the Mediterranean, has by virtue of its singular geography long served as a strategic passage commanding the meeting point of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Since ancient times this land has gathered a diversity of peoples and religions. Before World War II, it was part of the French Mandate for Syria, and later gained independence to become a state in 1943. At its founding, Christians (chiefly the Maronites), Muslims (Sunni and Shia), and the Druze each received a share of political power, and by this arrangement the country arrived at a relatively balanced and stable political and economic order. Yet with the establishment of Israel and the ensuing contest with the Palestinians over territory, more than a hundred thousand Palestinian refugees poured into Lebanon, an influx widely regarded as the pivotal factor that upset the Lebanese equilibrium.

Further Reading

The intricately interwoven geopolitics of Lebanon, and of the Middle East more broadly, cannot be fully set out within this essay. To put it in reduced terms: the governing system, led by the Maronite Christians, belonged to the camp of the Western powers, while the pan-Arab community (the Muslims) and the leftist factions aligned with the bloc of Arab states allied to the Soviet Union. As the Muslim Palestinians migrated into Lebanon, they strengthened the local Muslim community, which in turn drew the various religiously defined factions into ever-greater tension and set off a civil arms race. On 13 April 1975, conflict between the two sides erupted in the capital, Beirut, with the Ain al-Rummaneh Bus Massacre—the prologue to Lebanon's fifteen-year civil war.

Seuls: Imagining a Day Without Diaspora

Fifteen years of turmoil left hundreds of thousands dead or wounded and nearly a million displaced. People moved from one place to another or fled into exile; and Wajdi Mouawad, not yet ten years old, left Lebanon with his family in 1978, fleeing his homeland. They escaped first to France, where they stayed some five years. When their visa expired, they emigrated to Québec, Canada, where they would live for more than two decades. Mouawad's creative life seeded in Québec, which later took root in France. From 2016 he served as artistic director of France's Théâtre national de la Colline, stepping down until only this year.

Lebanon, France, Canada, France, this itinerary marks Mouawad's path of exile. He has lived, from first to last, in a country named "exile." He says that every Lebanese has two mothers: the second mother, like their first who bore them, brings them into this "world"—and her name is *War*.

War forced the Lebanese to adopt different nationalities, languages, and another script for life. In *Seuls* (2016), a piece he wrote, directed, and performed himself, he asks: *"If we had never left Lebanon, what would I have become?"*

He recalls his childhood that came before the war as something dazzling, radiant as a thousand splendid suns: lift your head and there was the deep blue sky; underfoot, thickets of trees overgrown with figs. For the three years that overlapped with war in his childhood, he does not remember anyone saying "war." They said, "It's about to go off." He and his friends turned the shelling into a game: Was today's shell a 255 or a 244?

Further Reading

And yet, concerning that war, a "silence" persisted within the Mouawad household. No one was willing to explain to him what had happened; he could come to understand this chapter only through the works of historians. He has described it as "an utterly shameful war": fathers killing sons, sons killing brothers, sons raping mothers—"strangers had to tell me my own story."

Time, however, did not efface what he felt. For him, time does not smooth; instead, time brews. Exile is at once destruction and deliverance: it freed Mouawad from hatred; for in exile he became the other, the stranger he had hated and failed to understand.

Seuls is the first work in Mouawad's "domestic cycle" (*Cycle domestique*); its French title, *Seuls*, may be rendered as "the solitary ones," "the lonely ones." The protagonist, Harwan (Mouawad himself) is the very sum of solitude and loneliness. The plural form of *Seuls* is at once one person alone and a group of people alone: this was never one man's exile, but the diaspora for generations to come.

Performed in full by Mouawad alone, the piece follows Harwan, a doctoral student in Montréal who, gripped by the anxiety of writing his thesis, enters into a dialectic with his ever-distant, silent father. Their debate tears open old scars and, by doing so, compels him to face himself at last. The question he puts to his father, "If we had never left Lebanon, what would I have become?" is followed by "I wouldn't be here. I would be speaking Arabic."

Here "Lebanon" appears, and Mouawad, playing Harwan, even speaks some Arabic, a rare occurrence in his earlier works. Arabic is not heard in *Incendies*, nor in its predecessor, *Littoral* (1999). No Lebanon, Palestine, nor Christianity and Islam has ever appeared thus far. Homeland and war are presented precisely through "vanishing": the Harwan of *Seuls* is unable to fold himself into the strange foreign land, he belongs neither here nor there; the Wilfrid of *Littoral* bears his father's corpse on his back, adrift across a homeland called simply "homeland"; the Nawal of *Incendies* wants no stone, no epitaph, no name, no memory, and no existence.

Further Reading

Littoral: Whence Have I Come

Littoral and *Incendies* are the first two works of the tetralogy "The Blood of Promises" (*Le Sang des promesses*), followed in turn by *Forests* (*Forêts*) and *Heavens* (*Ciels*). In each, a vow is sworn in blood; and this "blood of promises" may be read as the rivers of blood that flow from a promise betrayed, or equally as the fresh amber of blood in which a vow is kept forever.

The Nawal of *Incendies* leaves dying words that send her twin son and daughter back to their homeland to fulfill an unfinished vow, and so to unseal a hidden and cruel past. *Littoral*, too, begins with a "death": a soul bound by blood to the homeland, a spirit that cannot be severed, sends Wilfrid shouldering his father's corpse and spirit. For the sake of his own ghost-like existence, he sets out on a journey home in search of a place to lay a soul to rest.

Those who set out on the journey may encounter strangers uprooted by the same war, a band of travellers hemmed in by the same nightmare of an imposed silence.

In Mouawad's plays there is often a "silent one," someone who will not speak of "that" war, like the father of Harwan in *Seuls*, the father of Wilfrid in *Littoral*, the mother Nawal in *Incendies*. Mouawad's own childhood was hemmed in by silence, and silence robbed him of speech and so left him unable to identify the wound: how can he point to "that" war? And whence had I come? Yet what he had once felt was so vivid, so deafening, so beautiful and so desperate; how could "it," the Lebanese Civil War, possibly not exist? Thus, he goes on writing to resist silence, to resist the dissolving of history and memory, to resist the war's endless rending of the self he would become; and above all, to resist the fires of war, the fires that go on burning, still, in the homeland.

"When I began writing 'The Blood of Promises,' I realized that no one was willing to speak of that war [in Lebanon]. I was also in that state. When you do not mention it, it becomes unmentionable, and this signifies a kind of amnesia. But I could not go on immersed in that amnesia."

Further Reading

The "vanishing" state of the homeland shifts with the second work of his "domestic cycle," *Sœurs* (literally, "Sisters"). In creating *Littoral* and *Incendies*, Mouawad came to see that European history can be named because Europe, or rather Europeans, attempt to "reckon with history" (transitional justice), as in the Nuremberg Trials that followed Nazi Germany's defeat. For only by confronting history and breaking the silence, by making perpetrator and victim look upon each other's atrocities and wounds, does any possibility arise to end the cycle of hatred.

Ending the cycle of hatred is the founding motif behind Mouawad's creative thought. "The Blood of Promises" naturally adopts this, and Villeneuve's film *Incendies* does not depart from that original intent either. In the story, Nawal comes from a Maronite Christian family yet falls in love with a Muslim from a community at odds with her own, a premise found in *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), and one that recurs in another of Mouawad's plays, *Tous des oiseaux* (2018; "Birds of a Kind"). The latter's design is more intricate still, depicting the love between Eitan, a German Jewish scientist, and Wahida, an Arab American graduate student of Moroccan origin. The whole play is interwoven by German, English, Hebrew, and Arabic.

Mouawad is deeply marked by the tragedians of ancient Greece. Accusing tragedy by means of tragedy, he regards the Lebanese Civil War to be utterly shameful, adding that blood lineage is the root of every tragedy, since the fires of war are kindled by those deemed outsiders. Therefore, by losing the shackles of bloodline, he figures a humane spirit that would sever racism at the root. Through his characters he lays bare the absurd condition in which the victim is also the perpetrator, blurring the borders, widening the chance to break free from collective hatred.

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Wajdi is like Harwan: solitary, a single figure set within a polarized world, having chosen a path few have trodden and only projecting factual display across a distance, offering no judgment. Exhibiting the cruelty of war and its ugliness, Mouawad wishes that people might return and recover an instinct long since lost: the nature we had as children, when our hearts lay open to the world.

“That characteristic belongs not only to children but to us grown-ups too. Surely life cannot be like this: suffering and then growing used to it. Must we face boredom without end? I don't know how others get through it, because I can't.” —Harwan, in *Seuls*.

Harwan, by way of a concept he calls the “sociology of imagination,” examines the solo performances of the playwright Robert Lepage: how, through projection-screen scenography, Lepage challenges the settled laws of time and space, so that a character is displaced in an instant from one era, one place, to another. This is the falling “aloneness” in which Harwan is suspended; the “world” in which Mouawad himself is too suspended.

When body and identity is torn apart by space and world, how can we recognize the self? Hence, Harwan asks what he would have been “had he never left Lebanon,” enthralled by the script that was never realized, yet in this the past strangled the possibility of the future.

In the end, however, in the conclusion of his thesis, Harwan arrives at the paradox at the heart of the “world” that had torn him apart: limits and possibilities are not binary oppositions; that “space” is where all possibility resides, where every dream flourishes—

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The finite belongs to the infinite,
the limit holds the infinite within,
the border brings an opening,
and a milestone on the road to the unimaginable.
The obscure dissolves,
the surface gives up its depths,
and there the soul no longer represses itself
but opens toward a space
where the body, at last, is free.

To embrace limitation is to arrive at freedom. As in life itself, to cross the border is to be born anew. Soul and flesh, reason and feeling, man and woman, one person and another, none set within some rigid, sharply partitioned borders. Wajdi Mouawad, through Harwan, has long since answered the world.

共同主辦
Co-organizer



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