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TIME AND TRANSLATIONAL IDENTITIES IN WILSON HARRIS'S THE TREE OF THE SUN

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Abstract: *Identity constitutes a key concept in twentieth-century and contemporary Caribbean literature; the notion of an exchange or translation of identity manifests a cultural necessity to overcome barriers, such as those separating racial and ethnic groups, economic classes, language differences, sexual and gender roles, or a sense of exile and marginality. In broad terms, these de facto and imagined crossings of barriers express Caribbean writers' desire to go beyond the impasse of the present: to redefine identity, reinterpret history, and put forth a new vision of human relationships. In *The Tree of the Sun* (1978) Harris uses myth and the metaphor of life writing as frameworks for time travel; the novel's protagonist, Da Silva da Silva, a painter of historical and mythic scenes and a biographer of the deceased former residents of his London flat, imaginatively enters into others' lives, crossing the barriers separating the living and the dead and bringing together Old World and New.*