

ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

ON THE LIMINAL STATUS OF THE STUDENT OF HASKALAH
LITERATURE: YEHUDA FRIEDLANDER'S RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

Tova Cohen

I suggest that there is nothing accidental about Friedlander's research focus on the Haskalah period. Its roots are to be found in the particular nature of the writing of Hebrew literature of that period. Haskalah literature was located on the cultural "borderland" between traditional religious Judaism and contemporary European literature. The intermediary location of maskilic writing brought into being a unique "minor literature," created when a marginalized minority composes works in the language of the cultural majority. Scholars wishing to interpret their writings and unravel their complexities are required to possess special skills.

Friedlander's uniqueness lies in his ability to trace the maskilic liminal position, and to fathom and interpret its codes. This ability can be traced to the uniqueness of his own special intellectual biography, which sites him at the intersection of two languages, which compete with each other for a majority position in Friedlander's own consciousness and in that of his community. To my mind, this explains both why Friedlander is attracted to maskilic texts and his extraordinary ability to interpret them.

MAPU AND YAVETZ IN ERETZ-ISRAEL:
ON IDENTIFYING POETICAL AMBIGUOUSNESS

Yaffah Berlovitz

Most scholars dealing with Zeev Yavetz's Eretz-Israel Stories (late nineteenth century) read them as little idylls (F. Lachover, S. Streit). There are, however, those who question Yavetz for this idealization, even accusing him of falsifying reality and deceiving his readers (Y.H. Brenner, S.Y. Agnon). R. Wallenrod went even further, and claimed that Yavetz could well have written these stories in his native Lithuania like Abraham Mapu, who never visited Israel yet succeeded in writing beautiful biblical novels of striking sensitivity and imagination.

I challenge these statements in this paper, and offer a re-reading of the corpus as: (a) travel literature of the Eretz-Israeli time and space; and (b) a consequence of Yavetz's historiosophic and poetic theory. In other words, Yavetz's travel literature is a persistent struggle against the foreign, "chaotic" reality here, which the author signifies and chronicles, at the same time, aiming to organize this "chaos" to fit "our cosmos" (following M. Eliade): a familiar, organized cosmos in this case, the world of Zionist settlement.

The dialectic tension between "chaos" and "our cosmos" is fundamental and predominant in Yavetz's historiosophic and poetic theory. Reading the stories in view of this dialectic principle disciplines the alternative Eretz-Israeli "truth" according to Yavetz; this "truth" contributes not only to stratifying the historical narrative of the "modern return of Zion," but also to the renewal of a Hebrew poetics that should bring about the birth of the new local narrative.

THE RISE OF THE HEBREW NOVEL:
THE PROBLEM OF CLOSURE IN THE WORKS OF
S.Y. ABRAMOVITCH

Michal Arbell

The article explores the cultural context framing the appropriation of the European novel by Hebrew literature at the time of the Haskalah. It examines both the diverse factors that favored this import and the fundamental difficulties that attended the incorporation of the forms, themes, and values embedded in this foreign genre.

The literary engagements with these difficulties are explored in the writings of the first two novelists of Hebrew Literature: Abraham Mapu and S.Y. Abramovitch, focusing especially on the latter. The article presents readings from Abramovitch's novels *Ha'avot ve'habanim* (*Fathers and Sons*), *Sefer ha'kabtsanim* (*The Book of Paupers*), *Ba'emek ha'bcha* (*The Valley of Tears*) and *Masa'ot binyamin ha'shlishi* (*The Travels of Benjamin the Third*).

BETWEEN RACHEL (MORPURGO) AND RACHEL (BLUVSTEIN):
THE ABSENCE OF WOMEN'S POETRY IN THE SECOND HALF
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Hamutal Tsamir

This paper examines the unimpressive female presence in the Hebrew literature of the second half of the nineteenth century, which mainly included only letters written by women to authors and periodicals and, from the 1880s, four poems and two stories. My premise is that, since women's entrance into the realm of Hebrew was enabled by national ideology, and since the relationship of this ideology toward women was inherently Janus-faced, the meaning of women's

reading in Hebrew, and especially *writing* Hebrew, was also therefore twofold. At the same time that it was seen as “progressive” emancipation, it was also conditioned by the limits of nationalism as a new form of patriarchy, designed to “bring the women back home” in order to restore men’s power, authority, and control over them. These limits are translated into a bourgeois-patriarchal division between the private “feminine” sphere and the public “masculine” one. In my reading of the women’s letters to the periodicals of the 1960s-’80s, I show that these letters themselves reveal the complex process by which these women construct this division and, eventually, identify with “interiority.” Therefore, it is in these letters that we can trace the paradoxical process of their (self-)“silencing.”

THE POINT ON TOP OF THE YOD BY Y.L. GORDON:
A POEM COMPOSED ON THE VERGE OF A NEW ERA

Ziva Shamir

Yehuda Leib Gordon, the most prominent Hebrew writer of the nineteenth century, began composing his well-known poem, *The Point on Top of the Yod*, in 1876, at the end of the Age of Enlightenment. However, he resumed the composition of this poem not before 1884, after the 1881 pogroms that swept through southwestern Imperial Russia (present-day Ukraine and Poland), in wake of the rumors of Jewish responsibility in the assassination of Tsar Alexander II). These pogroms, which were instigated by the authorities, opened a new chapter in the history of Russian Jewry, as even the most devout Maskilim understood that Russia was no longer their motherland. These pogroms prompted the mass emigration of Jews from the Russian Empire, including the first group of *Biluim* – the pioneers of the First Aliya.

Hebrew literature, too, consequently began a new era, in

which national rather than universal ideas and ideals predominated. Gordon's poem, *The Point on Top of the Yod*, which reflected in part the old ethical and aesthetic values of the Haskalah, which firmly believed in the integration of the Jews in Europe, was completed after these standards had become obsolete and redundant.

This article describes the hybrid nature of this great literary work, which is manifest on many textual levels. It traces a large number of allusions to the last chapters of the Pentateuch – the Torah, the most holy of the sacred writings of Judaism – which are intended to hint at the beginning of a new era in the history of the Jewish people. At the end of the Book of Deuteronomy (*Devarim*), Moses is allowed to see the Promised Land from a mountain. Knowing that he is nearing the end of his life, he appoints Joshua as his successor, bequeathing to him the mantle of leadership. Symbolically, this was also the case with Y.L. Gordon, who appointed the Hibbat Zion poet Dolitzky as his heir, ignoring a young poet – Haim Nachman Bialik – who published his first poem in the same issue of *Pardes* – the Zionist periodical where the repentant Gordon published his final poem.

ALLEGORIES OF SANCTITY:
JEWS AND MODERNISM IN GERMANY

Galili Shahar

This article examines the question of Modernism and German-Jewish thought and literature at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the fields of modernist art and literature, Jewish authors redefined concepts of identity and discussed meanings of tradition. Using techniques of fragmentation and strategies of irony, the authors assembled motifs and quotations, and transformed figures from theological systems in order to construct a montage of a

new Jewish tradition. The modernist literature of German Jews can, therefore, be read as a movement of avant-garde, in which theological themes and forms were transformed into works of art, and reshaped as allegories of sanctity. The article focuses on the writings of Else Lasker-Schüler, Franz Wefel, Franz Rosenzweig and Walter Benjamin, all of whom contributed to the creation of a critical interpretation of religious experience, and to the establishment of a productive dialogue in the world of modern Judaism.

NAZISM AND MUSICAL BIOGRAPHIES:
THOMAS MANN AND GÜNTER GRASS

Michal Ben-Horin

This essay explores the way German writers deal with the problem of presenting the Nazi past by shaping “musical biographies.” It focuses on two novels, written by Thomas Mann and Günter Grass, who employed means of musico-logical discourse and musical traditions to develop new modes of poetic documentation. Thomas Mann’s *Doctor Faustus* (*Doktor Faustus*, 1947) rewrites German history up to the catastrophe of World War II. Influenced by the thought of Nietzsche and Adorno, and inspired by the music of Wagner and Schoenberg, Mann tells the life story of a modernist composer, whose innovative creation reflects the rise of National Socialism. This novel presents a critical reading of the history of music that hints at Mann’s attempt to translate the humanist worldview into a future politics. However, bound by his own views, Mann seems to confirm the traditions that enabled the aggressive exclusion of the Other. Günter Grass’s *The Tin Drum* (*Die Blechtrommel*, 1959) is a fictitious autobiography of another musician – a drummer. In shaping a carnivalesque worldview by pushing musical imagery *ad absurdum*, and in combining different

styles – from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony to jazz rhythms and American pop hits – Grass calls into question hegemonic discourses on mourning and suffering, memory and trauma in Germany. Grass’s early fiction, which points to the power of deceptive appearances and manipulative illusions – as in the “Economic Miracle” and “Zero Hour” – reveals and resonates with that which is silenced in his 2006 autobiography.

The novels of Mann and Grass embody a unique “encounter,” which also challenges the boundaries between literature, music, and historiography. They demonstrate a poetics that bears witness and at the same time reflects its own limits in responding to the horrific past.

THE METAPHOR OF THE EMPTY PLACE IN YEHUDIT
HENDEL’S WORK: FROM MY FRIEND B.’S SOLEMN
FEAST TO *THE EMPTY PLACE*

Rella Kushelevsky

This article examines continuity and change in Yehudit Hendel’s work as portrayed in her last collection, *The Empty Place*, originating from the metaphor of the “empty place” already featured in the story “My Friend B.’s Solemn Feast.” Through this metaphor, the two works represent different perceptions of death. In one, death embodies cycles of emptiness and fullness, of absence and presence, of death and rebirth that are realized in transition ceremonies. From this viewpoint, “My Friend B.’s Solemn Feast,” in the *Small Change* collection, brings together the unique imagination of the creative artist and archaic cultural paradigms in a way that has not so far been addressed. *The Empty Place*, in contrast, brings together the viewpoints of the character that carries within itself the presence of the absent dead, and the narrator, who is witness to the wretched death of this

character and its fall into a void, behind which there is nothing. The result is complex – the maturity of a late work of an author who, while embracing the presence of the one absent, already looks clearly at a death that has no presence at all.

WALKING THE INNER STREETS: *EPHRAIM* BY YOEL HOFFMANN

Nili Gold

This article examines Hoffmann's groundbreaking book *Ephraim*, and seeks to put this semi-confessional work in the context of Hoffmann's oeuvre to date. "Yoel Hoffmann" appears in the book as a narrator-hero who speaks in the first person, side by side with the protagonist, Ephraim.

In addition to Hoffmann's familiar serial numbered paragraphs, *Ephraim* is dominated by a parallel organizational system, in which time is the master: the calendar and the clock. The paragraphs of *Ephraim* document Yoel Hoffmann's journey toward the end of the millennium. Despite everything that separates the creative work of Hoffmann from that of his contemporary, A.B. Yehoshua, the question of monogamy is central to both men in the hours of the dangerous passage from one millennium to the next. The book documents *Ephraim* leaving his wife, and the temporal setting endows it with a cosmic dimension that undermines the notion of abandonment as an arbitrary act. At the heart of *Ephraim*'s almost plot-less narrative is the discontent of a middle-aged man with his wife of over twenty years, Yosefa. *Ephraim*'s physical move (from Tel Aviv to Haifa) mirrors an emotional one (leaving his marriage to seek another woman).

This article also explores a narrative nucleus in Ulysses that has the power to illuminate the motivating force behind *Ephraim*. Hoffmann mentions James Joyce's name only once,

but this allusion is key to the understanding of *Ephraim*. Like *Ulysses*, *Ephraim* accumulates concrete, seemingly marginal and often epicurean details, which are carefully orchestrated by the author, who converts them into loaded symbols. In addition, *The Odyssey* makes an appearance in *Ephraim* as well as in *Ulysses* through an allusion to Yosefa as Penelope. Underneath his deference to Western sensibilities, however, Hoffman remains true to his idiosyncratic artistic path: Japanese aesthetics and Buddhist thought.

At the same time, despite its almost complete omission of the period's regional woes, the Israeli setting is tangible in *Ephraim*, as the Irish is in *Ulysses*. Bloom's physical wanderings through Dublin correlate with his mental journeys through the "inner streets" of his mind, an association that is also present in Hoffmann's work. Haifa, like Dublin, serves as a reflection of the hero's psyche. It is no coincidence that Ephraim meets the "other woman" in Freud Street, named after the father of psychoanalytic theory.

Ephraim is Hoffmann's most Israeli book, in part because the action takes place in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Acre, and the names of the characters are all Hebrew. Further, the text conducts an active dialogue with the various books of the Hebrew Bible, alludes to the Kabbalah, and flirts with the giants of Modern Hebrew literature. Twentieth century writers like Brenner, Agnon, Bialik, Zach, and Pagis are all invited to *Ephraim*'s literary gathering.

Ultimately, *Ephraim*, like *Christ of Fish*, is Hoffmann's homage to a beloved woman after parting from her. This book is Hoffmann's offering to the wife of his youth, who followed him into the wilderness, was then abandoned, and now sits alone.

ON MEANING – AN INTRODUCTION TO FRENCH SEMIOTICS
Followed by a Translation of A.-J. Greimas’s Foreword
to his *On Meaning II (Du sens II)* [Paris: Seuil, 1983]

Lilach Nethanel

In the Foreword to his book, *On Meaning* (Paris, 1983), Greimas presents the main perspectives of French Semiotics. As a signification theory, semiotics queries the assumption of the generative forming of meaning and its different forms of manifestation in any given text. This Foreword presents an epistemological discussion of two different methods of analyzing meaning and its formation in texts.

The first method discussed is “narrative semiotics,” a method that has served semiotics from its outset. It argues that the pragmatic dimension of a text should serve as the basic structure of meaning. The second method, “modal semiotics,” is one that Greimas wishes to explore in the present book. It refers to the pre-pragmatic dimension, the emotive and cognitive component that precedes the act, as the center of the generative process of meaning.

The presentation of these two methods, in the broad epistemological context of “continuity” versus “change,” reveals some aspects of the historical struggle of French semiotics to achieve its goal of theoretical validity in an atmosphere of changing modes of reflection, from the structural era and toward the end of the twentieth century.

HOW DO THE WHEELS OF POETIC JUSTICE TURN?

Ruth Lorand

In her famous work, *Poetic Justice*, Martha Nussbaum argues that novels, more than any other literary form, may affect moral sensitivity and contribute to a better juristic system. I examine

those elements that Nussbaum identifies in novels and regards as essential for moral sensitivity. These elements – individuality, emotions, and imagination – contrast with the traditional conception of rationality, which endorses generalities, calculations, and factual considerations.

While it is true that individuality, emotional approach, and imagination can be found in any novel to various degrees, I argue that these qualities are not exclusive to novels and can be found in any work of art. Moreover, the impact of such elements on the reader is not necessarily the one that Nussbaum presents, and the role that these elements play in novels does not qualify them to set ideals for juristic thinking. Characters in a novel are a case in point: though individual characters are never presented as being equally significant in a novel, people in court should be treated equally regardless of the interest they evoke.

THE RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JUSTICE
AND IDENTITY

Yedidia Z. Stern

Israelis lay upon the judicial system the burden of deliberating the deep cultural and social disputes that divide society. Discourse between the religious and the secular, Jews and Arabs, the rich and the poor - which should ordinarily take place in the public and political arenas - is increasingly being transferred to the judicial arena, where it is managed in normative language in an effort to achieve resolution. The supposition that law – as a social tool for achieving justice - is capable of producing optimal responses to complex realities and that it holds within it the potential to achieve a “correct” and “professional” solution to domestic and social ills has given rise to increasing reliance upon the courts to direct public discourse. In the following essay, I wish to

challenge this assumption and present, from a jurist's point of view, three doubts stemming from the reciprocal relationship between justice and identity.

First, if one's concept of justice depends on one's identity, the meaning and weight which must be accorded to the law currently in effect is called into question. The law is the product of a majority decision in the legislative branch and, therefore, it expresses the interests and values that arise when balancing the preferences of some of the major groups within society – but not of all of them. Should we view the outcome of this decision – making process as the exclusive source of what is appropriate, correct, and just for a given society? **Second**, even if we accept the legislative branch as the exclusive source of norms, the question arises as to whether it is reasonable to aspire to the establishment of one law that is equally applicable to all. An alternative suggestion has been proposed to develop judicial pluralism, which supports the establishment of several concurrent normative systems within the same political framework that would allow each identity group to choose the system it will obey in light of the concept of justice that it applies. **Third**, the interpreters of the law – the judges – do not lack identity. How does the personal identity of a judge and the collective identity of judges, as a group, affect their performance as they turn the mills of justice?

We will address the effect of the reciprocal relationship between justice and identity on the origins of norms, the substance of norms and the interpretation of norms. These effects exist in any society, but carry special weight in a society with multiple identities that clash powerfully in the public arena. However, although Israeli society definitely fits this characterization, our normative discourse tends to obscure the important ramifications of the reciprocal relationship between identity and justice. The object of this essay, therefore, is not to offer solutions, but rather to present the very doubts themselves.

WRITING AS JUDGMENT AND THE JUDGMENT OF WRITING

Ruth Reichelberg

This article traces the way in which Kafka searches for spiritual redemption through his creative writing. The creative process is seen as a kind of death experience, an experience which the author must control, in order to achieve his creation and reach his death as well. In other words, he must write in order to be prepared to die and he must die in order to be able to write. He derives his creative force from a preliminary relationship with death. The verdict for writing is cruel and merciless, as writing is a means of reaching life. This is an absolute judgment that cannot be escaped and must be accepted from the outset. The writer is not required to justify the moment of his death, but rather the moment of his birth. The demands of the soul are absolute. Through writing it will or will not be created, but it is this same soul that makes the decision.

POETIC JUSTICE: PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST
AS A VICTIM OF HIS ART

On *Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann
and *Aggadat Hasofer* by S. Y. Agnon

Gershon Shaked

In two novellas, *Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann and *Aggadat Hasofer* by S. Y. Agnon, both authors are revealed as the existential and spiritual epitome of their generation. They identify with the portrait of their heroes and they explain the choice of the artist as a replacement for the philosopher, the king and the political leader. They describe the creative process and the relationship between desire and creativity in their heroes, and the relationship between the

mission, undertaking and course of the artist's life, and his death.

The existential condition of the artist in the works of Mann and Agnon is a model for the state of living of the individual in the world, and the strongest expression of the condition of the solitary man in a mass society. The conflict between repression and the forces opposing it are characteristic of these two authors despite the distance between them. Each of these authors describes this conflict in the perspective of his own culture and society, and they both study art itself from viewpoints influenced by their own metaphorical world. However, we find in each of these authors the tortured self-awareness of artists typical of an entire generation. Death is justified poetically, because the heroes, in their lives, chose art over life.

BORGES AND WITTGENSTEIN: ASPECT-CHANGE
NARRATIVES AND REVOLVING SYSTEMS OF JUSTICE

Shlomy Mualem

The focal point of this essay is Borges's story "Emma Zunz," which was published in the book *The Aleph* (1949). The crux of this story is two alternative and distinctive narratives that are explicitly co-constructed based on the same factual infrastructure: the narrative of the protagonist's rape, in which the murder that she commits is seen as an act of self defense, and the narrative of the protagonist's perfectly planned revenge for her father's murder. The theoretical, ethical, and literary aspects of this phenomenon will be illuminated in two stages using Wittgenstein's philosophy.

In the first stage, I will discuss the relationship between facts and ethical values in light of Wittgenstein's early philosophy. In the second stage, I will clarify the phenomenon of the juxtaposition of alternative narratives using Wittgen-

stein's notion of "aspect change" (*Aspektwechsel*), which is presented in the second part of his *Philosophical Investigations*. Finally, this comparison will serve as a basis for interpreting the entire Borgesian story in terms of revolving systems of justice – the human and the divine.

(IMAGINATION): POETIC JUSTICE IN THE SERVICE OF
MONARCHY – ON KING ARTHUR LEGENDS AS A POLITICAL
TOOL IN THE PLANTAGENET AND TUDOR DYNASTIES

Danielle Gurevitch

From the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth's writings (twelfth century) to the present, the period of Arthur's legendary monarchy is viewed as England's "Golden Age," a period of well-being, peace, brotherhood, and divine justice. Under the rule of law and order introduced by the popular king, hatred, rivalry, and wars between monarchs and landowners gave way to growth and prosperity. The profile of this powerful king is etched in the English collective memory – King Arthur's exploits and the knights of his court have been transformed into a source of national pride. This paper suggests the conception of poetic justice used as a political tool, signifying a bond between the legendary king's image, and its contribution in strengthening the status of four kings of England, fathers and sons, as the image of God on earth, and, therefore, as representatives of divine justice: Henry II Plantagenet, his son King Richard the Lionheart, and King Henry VII Tudor and his son Henry VIII.