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CENTER FOR INTERDICIPLINARY STUDY OF MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS (CISMOR)
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DOSHISHA UNIVERSITY

第 9 回CISMORユダヤ学会議
The 9th CISMOR Annual Conference on Jewish Studies

Judaism and Japanese Culture: Studies in Honor of Yoel Hoffmann
ユダヤ教と日本文化：ヨエル・ホフマン記念特集

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Preface

The Ninth Annual CISMOR Conference on Jewish Studies was held during the peak of Kyoto's beautiful autumn season, on November 27-28, 2016. This time round we had the honor of welcoming to Doshisha University a particularly large number of distinguished scholars from abroad as well as many from Japan, all of whom – apart from taking a very active part in the conference – were able to enjoy the striking autumn colors for which Kyoto and this season are famous.

This year's conference was dedicated mainly to the work of the Israeli scholar, translator and author Yoel Hoffmann, whose work bridges East and West. Holding such a conference in Kyoto, the city where he enjoyed several productive years of study and writing, was due to the initiative of Dr. Rachel Albek-Gidron of Bar-Ilan University, who came to Kyoto earlier in search of Hoffmann's footprints. We at Doshisha University picked up the challenge, and together were able to invite scholars with a specific interest in Hoffmann's work and adjacent fields including philosophy, literature, translation and the on-going exchange between Jewish and Japanese cultures. We were therefore able to cover a variety of topics and hold some very lively debates during the extensive two days of the conference.

This current volume includes the majority of the papers read at the conference, which are presented here after having been edited for publication by their respective authors and undergone a thorough editorial process. The volume opens with a concise biography and bibliography of Yoel Hoffmann by the editors, followed by a short memoir of his life in Kyoto by Mariko Tsujita, who was one of his hosts at the time.

The keynote speaker at the conference was Prof. Yigal Schwartz of Ben Gurion University, the long-time editor of Hoffmann's literary output; his paper opens Part I of this volume, which focuses on Hoffmann's original prose work. Schwartz suggests viewing Hoffmann's entire opus "as a series of post-apocalyptic poems that rely massively on autobiographical material", and he goes on to examine his writing from generic, thematic and historical viewpoints. This is followed by the University of Pennsylvania's Prof. Nili Scharf Gold's paper, in which she reads Hoffmann's book *Curriculum Vitae* as a key to his earlier writing, including his translation of Japanese "death poems", as well as to his life. Third and final in this section is the paper by Dr. Rachel Albek-Gidron who examines "the empty space, the silence, the caesura" in Hoffmann's printed texts, suggesting that it holds the essence of what he wishes to express.

The discussion along the elusive borderline between literature and philosophy continues in Part II. Prof. Iddo Landau of the University of Haifa argues that Hoffmann's novel *The Heart is Katmandu* offers a "non-perfectionist" view on the question of the meaning of life, finding that the book "avers that there is much value also in the small, ordinary things in life". In the other paper of this section Prof. Masato Goda of Meiji University takes Hoffmann's *Japanese Death Poems* as a starting point for studying views of life and death in the works of Japanese and Western philosophers.

Part III is dedicated to questions of translation, acknowledging Hoffmann's important achievements in introducing Japanese and Chinese poetry and thought to western readers. Dr. Doron B. Cohen of Doshisha University examines Hoffmann's three volumes of poetry translations,

pointing out particularly his original way of translating Japanese haiku into Hebrew. Janine Beichman, Professor Emerita of Daito Bunka University, follows with a close study of *Japanese Death Poems*, tracking the book's sources and exposing Hoffmann's creative method of translating poetry. Lastly in this part, Dr. Lihi Yariv-Laor of the Hebrew University looks at Hoffmann's dynamic shifts between "East" and "West", and closely scrutinizes some examples from Chinese translations of the Hebrew Bible as a case study.

The two final parts of this volume deal less with Yoel Hoffmann and more with the interface between Japanese and Jewish (or Israeli) cultures. In Part IV, Prof. Takafumi Akimoto of Konan University examines questions of translation and culture through the case of Israeli author Etgar Keret's book *The Seven Good Years*, which was originally published in English, and the issues relating to its translation into Japanese. Dr. Kazue Hosoda of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies examines in her paper several aspects of the reception of Hebrew and Arabic literature in Japanese translation. Prof. Yoshimi Miyake of Akita University offers a study comparing Israeli and Japanese ways of communication through the examination of "cultural key terms" that have to do with the way politeness is understood.

Finally, Part V includes two papers that revert to the Jewish cultural past but offer thoughts relevant to the present. Prof. Hiroshi Ichikawa of Tokyo University exposes moral ideas as expressed in the Talmud, compares them with Japanese Zen Buddhist moral values, and wonders whether Jewish wisdom could be integrated into Japanese culture through education, as was once Buddhist thought. Prof. Yu Takeuchi of Kumamoto University studies the occurrences of "righteous foreigners" in the Hebrew Bible, finding that they sometime "know better" than the "chosen people", and points out that this could have positive implications for accepting "the other".

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As in the previous Seventh and Eighth conferences, this time too, all papers and comments were delivered in English. The edited papers in this volume are therefore also presented solely in English, but the Table of Contents, Preface, and List of Participants, are given in Japanese as well.

We wish to express our sincere thanks to all the participants and to those who helped in the organization of the conference and the production of this volume. We are especially grateful to the students who volunteered to help in various ways and to the office staff of the School of Theology and of CISMOR for their assistance.

We wish and hope to be able to keep up the tradition of annual CISMOR conferences on Jewish Studies in the years to come.

Ada Taggar-Cohen & Doron B. Cohen
Editors
Kyoto, December 2017

巻頭言

第 9 回 CISMOR ユダヤ学会議は、2016 年 11 月 27 日と 28 日にかけて、京都の紅葉美しい季節の絶頂期に開催された。この度は、同志社大学にとりわけ多くの著名な研究者を、海外そして日本から迎えるという名誉を得ることが出来た。研究者たちは会議に精力的に参加する傍らで、有名な京都の魅力的な秋の色彩を楽しむことが出来た。

今年度の会議は主として、東と西の橋渡しとなる作品を創作したイスラエルの研究者、翻訳家、そして作家であるヨエル・ホフマンの業績に捧げられた。ホフマンが数年間、学問と著述において生産的な時期を過ごしたこの京都でこのような会議を催すことが出来たのは、かつて、ホフマンの足跡を辿って京都を訪れたバル･イラン大学のラヘル･アルベク･ギドロン博士の主導のおかげである。同志社大学に於いて我々は彼女のアイデアを受け取り、博士と共にホフマンの作品やそれに近接する哲学、文学、翻訳、そして今日進展中であるユダヤ文化と日本文化との間の交流などに特別な関心を抱いている研究者たちを招くことが出来た。そのため、本会議では多様な主題を扱い、 2 日間に及ぶ 会議の期間に大変刺激的な議論を行うことが出来た。

本号は会議で発表された主要な論文が、各々の著者による出版のための編集と、編集者による徹底的な校閲を経た後の形で収録されている。本号は編集者によるヨエル・ホフマンの略歴と著作一覧をもって始まり、次に、ホフマンが京都に住んでいた時、彼のホストの一人であった辻田真理子氏による彼の京都生活の短い回顧録が続いている。

本会議の基調講演者はホフマンの文学作品の編集に長年携わっているベングリオン大学のイーガル・シュワルツ教授であった。彼の論文は本号第 1 部の冒頭を飾るものであり、ホフマンのオリジナルの散文作品に焦点を当てている。この論文において、シュワルツ教授はホフマンの作品全体を「自伝的資料に非常に依存した一連のポスト・アポカリプティック的な詩」と見なす見解を提案し、引き続いて、彼の作品をジャンル的、主題的そして歴史的観点から考察している。これに続いてペンシルベニア大学のニリ・シャルフ・ゴルド教授の論文が収録されている。この論文においてゴルド教授はホフマンの著作である *Curriculum Vitae* を日本語の辞世の翻訳を含む彼の初期の作品、そして彼の人生を読み明かすための鍵であるという理解を提示している。そして第 1 部の最後はラヘル・アルベク・ギドロン博士の論文である。ギドロン博士はホフマンの出版作品における「虚空、静寂、カエスーラ」を検討し､それらに彼が表現しようとしたことの真髄があると示唆している。

文学と哲学との間における捉えがたい境界線についての議論は第 2 部でも続いている。ハイファ大学のイッド・ランダウ教授はホフマンの小説、*The Heart is Katmandu* は人生の意義という問いに対して「非完璧主義的」な見解を指し示していると論じ、本作は「人生の些細な、一般的なことにもまた大きな価値があると断言している」という所見を提示している。第 2 部の 2 つ目の論文では明治大学の合田正人教授が日本と西洋の哲学者の著作における生と死についての考えを学ぶための出発点として、ホフマンの *Japanese Death Poems* を取り上げている。

第 3 部は、ホフマンが日本語と中国語の詩と思想を西洋の読者の間で広めた多大な貢献を評価して、翻訳という課題に注目を当てている。同志社大学のドロン・B・コヘン博士

はホフマンの 3 冊の翻訳詩集を吟味し、特に日本語の俳句をヘブライ語に訳するにあたっての彼の独特な翻訳の仕方を指摘している。続いて、大東文化大学のジャニーン・バイチマン名誉教授が *Japanese Death Poems* の精密な研究を行い、本作の根源をたどって、ホフマンの独創的な翻訳の仕方を明らかにしている。そして最後にヘブライ大学のリヒ・ヤリヴ・ラオル博士がホフマンの作品における「東」と「西」との間でのダイナミックなシフトを取り上げ、事例研究としてヘブライ語聖書の中国語訳から幾つかの例を綿密に調べている。

本号の最後の 2 部はヨエル・ホフマンを集中的に扱うというよりも、日本文化とユダヤ（もしくはイスラエル）文化との接点に注目している。第 4 部では甲南大学の秋元孝文教授が、元々は英語で出版されたイスラエル人作家エトガル・ケレットの著作、*The Seven Good Years* の事例を通して、翻訳や文化の問題点と、本作の翻訳に関連する問題を検討している。東京外国語大学の細田和江博士は、彼女の論文において、日本語に訳されたヘブライ語とアラビア語文学への反応の幾つかの側面を吟味している。秋田大学の三宅良美教授は世辞の理解のされ方に関係する「文化的主要用語」の検討を通じてイスラエルと日本のコミュニケーション方法を比べている。

最後に、第 5 部にはユダヤ文化の過去に立ち返りながらも現在にも該当する考えを提供している 2 つの論文が含まれている。東京大学の市川裕教授はタルムードの中で示されている倫理的観念を明らかにし、それらを日本の禅仏教における倫理的価値と比較し、そして、仏教思想がそうなったように、ユダヤ教の知恵も教育を通して日本文化に融合され得るかどうかについて検討している。熊本大学の竹内裕教授はヘブライ語聖書における「義なる異邦人」の出現を検証し、彼らがしばしば、「選ばれし民」よりも「分別がある」ことを見出し、この事が「他者」を受け入れるに際して、肯定的な含意を持ち得ることを指摘している。

*

第 7 回と第 8 回会議と同様に、本会議においても論文とコメントは全て英語でなされた。それゆえ、本号に収録されている編集後の論文もまた、全て英語版のみが含まれているが、目次、巻頭言と出席者一覧は日本語訳でも収録している。

参加者全員と会議の運営、本号の作成に携わってくださった方々全てに感謝したい。ボランティアとして様々な方面で手伝ってくださった学生達、そして神学部事務室と CISMOR のスタッフの方々にはその絶えざる献身に特に感謝したい。

来年も、CISMOR ユダヤ学会議の伝統が維持できることを心から願う次第である。

編者
アダ・タガー・コヘン、ドロン・B・コヘン
2017 年 12 月、京都にて

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Judaism and Japanese Culture:
Studies in Honor of Yoel Hoffmann

In Honor of Yoel Hoffmann

Concise Biography and Bibliography of Yoel Hoffmann

Doron B. Cohen

Yoel Hoffmann was born in Braşov, Romania in 1937 to Jewish parents of Austro-Hungarian culture. When he was one year old the family immigrated to Palestine, then under British Mandate, where Hoffmann's mother died shortly after their arrival and his father later remarried.

Hoffmann studied at Tel Aviv University and at Kyoto University, completing a PhD in philosophy. He spent several years in Japan learning Japanese and Chinese, and studied Buddhist texts with monks in Kyoto temples. He later served as a professor of philosophy and literature at University of Haifa until his retirement.

His career as a writer can be divided into two phases. In the first phase (1975-1985 in particular) he published studies and translations of Zen texts, including *kōan*, *haiku* and stories. Especially outstanding was his book, published in both Hebrew and English, of "death poems" *(jisei)* by Zen monks and *haiku* poets. Some of his poetry translations and Zen-related books were also translated into other languages (Chinese, German, Spanish and Italian).

In his second phase (since 1986) Hoffmann revealed himself to be a gifted author of distinctive poetic prose in Hebrew, carving for himself a unique place in contemporary Israeli literature. He published ten volumes of such writing (as well as one book for children), most of which were also translated into several languages (English, German, French and Italian). His last book so far was published in 2009. Hoffmann has received several important literary prizes in Israel, and his writing has attracted much scholarly interest and debate.

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Yoel Hoffmann's Days in Kyoto, 1970-74

Mariko Tsujita

In November 1970, Yoel Hoffmann began his second long-term stay in Japan, and for the first time along with his family. He found a two-story traditional Japanese residence with a large garden, in a quiet, well-to-do neighborhood in Sagano, on the north-western edge of Kyoto, and lived on its second floor in two rooms, one an 8 *tatami* and the other a 4.5 *tatami* room with a large *oshiire* (built-in closet). They had their own small kitchen on the first floor, and shared a toilet and *goemon-buro*, the traditional Japanese iron cup-ball bath (like a deep giant pot placed on smoldering wood), with other boarders.

At that time, in the western part of Kyoto there was neither an organized sewage network nor flushing toilets, so the tiny luxury for them was to sit on a western style white plastic pan, installed especially for them, over the traditional Japanese basin. Thus, they started living "normal" everyday Japanese life of the times.

One year later, the Hoffmanns moved to live in the Buddhist Temple *Sanbo-ji*. This was not a Zen temple, but a temple of the Nichiren Sect, located north of their former residence, about 700 meters from the bus station of *Sanbo-ji mae*. Even now, this temple stands isolated from the neighborhood, sitting alone in the mountains. It is easy to imagine how detached it was then. But it must surely have provided an ideal environment for meditation.

The period in which they lived in Japan was right after the Japan-US Security Treaty had been extended. In most universities, non-sect students of *Zenkyoto* movement, together with protesters against the Japan-US Security Treaty, challenged the hierarchical and authoritarian establishment of their universities. With the automatic extension of the treaty in 1970, there was a feeling of setback and fatigue in most university campuses, due to the obvious defeat with no significant trophy to show for the struggle, and not knowing where to continue next.

At the same time, activists of the established radical sects became more radicalized. Some went underground, and there were those who organized their base outside Japan, later to be called "The Japanese Red Army". After the Lod Airport massacre (May 30, 1972), the Black September attack at the Munich Olympic Games (September 5, 1972), and the Yom Kippur War (October, 1973), Japanese police paid special attention to the security of Israelis living in Japan. After receiving

information in May 1974 that the Japanese Red Army might attack Israeli citizens, to mark the Lod attack, the Japanese Police warned all Israelis living in Japan to seek a secure place to live. Since the date of the Hoffmanns' departure had been set for June 25, they decided to tour Japan first, visiting Japanese friends in Kyoto, Akashi, Takahama, and other places before leaving.

After their return to Israel Yoel revisited Japan for several long periods. In 1975 he lived in Katada, Otsu, working on a dictionary of Buddhist Philosophy, and in 1988, Yoel and some of his family members revisited Kyoto and stayed in Otsu for six months.

Boarding house where Yoel Hoffmann and his family lived (renovated recently)

Cherry Blossom in the neighborhood

Sambo-ji Temple: Path leading to the temple

Sambo-ji Temple: Main Hall

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Part I

The Literary Work of Yoel Hoffmann

The Adventures of the Heart: An Introduction to Yoel Hoffmann

Yigal Schwartz

A. Artistic Discovery

Yoel Hoffmann appeared on the Israeli literary scene like a bolt out of the blue. I remember the moment when I first encountered his writing. I opened the second issue of the journal *Agra* (1985/6)[1] and was leafing through it in a leisurely manner and with much pleasure. The editors, Natan Zach and Dan Miron, and the associate editor, Tzipora Kagan, were strict about the quality of the works as well as the physical form of the issue. It was hardbound in red, a drawing by Lea Nikel adorning its cover, and it was printed in a way that was well spaced and pleasing to the eye. And then I came to page 149, to a story called "Katschen" by Yoel Hoffmann, whose name was unfamiliar to me. I read the prologue of the story. Then I went on and read the following two sections, which appeared after the story:

> Katschen drew a picture of a woman without any legs. He pulled one of her hairs upwards and curled it around the edge of the page. Then he looked at the woman and thought her face was a little frightening, but she did not frighten him at all. Still, she might frighten someone who had not drawn her.
>
> Uncle Arthur squeezed the bird's head at the tip of his cane and the skin on his knuckles turned white. "Komm!" he said, and stood up. Once Katschen had seen a cypress swaying in the wind. But that was before his mother had gone up to the sky. He thrust the woman into his trouser pocket and followed Uncle Arthur.[2]

I was stunned. It was clear to me that I was experiencing the kind of artistic revelation that people have only once in a generation, if ever. I later learned that similar feelings about their first encounter with Hoffmann's work were shared at that time by hundreds of readers of Hebrew, and later also by those who read his works in other languages.[3]

Another shared response of most first-time readers of Hoffmann was confusion. All of them were captivated by the magic of Hoffmann's texts, but the source of that magic was not clear. Many of the first readers who attempted to explain his work, and also some later ones, claimed that the basis of its magic was the fact that it is impossible to understand or that his character was enigmatic.[4]

Quite a few employed terms from East Asian philosophies and traditions, though not always with the necessary caution that they demand.[5] Although this move was "necessary" because Hoffmann specialized in this field (and lived in Kyoto, Japan for the purpose of research between 1970 and 1974), and had acquired an international reputation in it, not everything that was "necessary" is carefully and responsibly examined. Thus, for example, scholars and commentators hastened to connect Hoffmann's stories with the tradition of haiku poems. However, the Japanese poetic connection with Hoffmann's work exists, if at all, as experts on Japanese poetry who also know Hoffmann's work in Hebrew and English translation claim, precisely with tanka poems,[6] which are characterized, as Yoel Hoffmann himself notes in the introduction to his book *Poets on the Verge of Death*,[7] by a prominent personal, lyrical, and philosophical dimension that is very apparent in every line in his writing, a dimension that haiku, which came to the world after tanka, systematically and meticulously shed. The Haiku poets believed, as Hoffmann wrote, that "the poet must become unconscious of himself so as to see the object of his poem with absolute clarity".[8] A small number of critics went even further and argued that what we had before us was a sophisticated trick of the kind successfully carried out by the tailors in the tale "The Emperor's New Clothes".[9]

More than thirty years have passed since the sensational appearance of the novella "Katschen". During this long period, Hoffmann published nine other books of prose for adults,[10] a children's book,[11] and new editions of writings on his research that had been published previously in English and Hebrew. Readers' continuing familiarity with Hoffmann's work has made it more "user-friendly" for them, though not necessarily more understandable. Some readers – those, I suppose, that Hoffmann particularly likes – continued to read his works as they had before, as mainly incomprehensible texts that move and shake them. In contrast, the "professional readers", scholars and critics, gradually calmed down after the panic of the first encounter. Some even formed useful approaches to understanding the ways of the Hoffmannian world with its wide variety of characteristics. These approaches were presented in academic articles, essays, and reviews. Tal Frenkel, in her doctoral dissertation,[12] addressed Hoffmann's unique style as the key to understanding central thematic focuses and philosophical motivations in his work. In their master's theses,[13] Neta Stahl and Karin Neuburger presented interesting interpretations of Hoffmann's poetic and philosophical world, especially by examining the question of the status and role of the various kinds of intertextual links that fill his works. Merav Katz, in her master's thesis,[14] approached Hoffmann's corpus mainly through the use of the concept of the carnival in its postmodern context. Avraham Balaban, in his book *A Different Wave in Israeli Fiction: Postmodern Israeli Fiction,*[15] and Hanna Herzig in her book *The Voice Saying "I": Trends in Israeli Prose Fiction of the 1980s,*[16]

see his poetics as reflecting his affinity with modernism, on the one hand, and postmodernism, on the other (and both see him as a transitional link between the two). Anat Weisman[17] relates to him as continuing and using to the fullest the anti-rationalist movement in Western culture. Ariel Hirschfeld and others required psychological, mythical, and metaphysical terms to interpret Hoffmann's works.[18] Nili Gold[19] opened a discussion on Hoffmann's works through their links with his mother tongue (German), his biography, and the Haifa space in which many of his characters wander. Rachel Albeck-Gidron, in her book *Exploring the Third Option,*[20] discusses several kinds of language that Hoffmann's prose uses: the language of poetry, the riddles of *kōan* and Zen writings, the quoted language of the photograph, the stories of his protagonists, and more.

B. Post-apocalyptic Poems

In this article, I would like to look at Yoel Hoffmann's work through the generic prism that, if it is used intelligently, may explain, I believe, several seemingly strange characteristics in his narrative art and pave the way toward a better understanding of his poetic world. I would like to define his entire opus as a series of post-apocalyptic poems that rely massively on autobiographical material. The philosophical premise that stands behind the entire great artistic undertaking before us is post-apocalyptic. Hoffmann's writings suggest that with the events of the Holocaust, Western civilization, and in particular the achievements of "universal" European ethics and rationalist philosophy,[21] came to an end. The events of the Holocaust are perceived in the works of Hoffmann, who neither forgives nor forgets, as the suicide of the civilized Western world, which was replaced by barbarism in its renewed Teutonic Nazi-pagan incarnation, which lifted its head and tried and nearly succeeded in eliminating the Jews who are, in Hoffmann's eyes, along with Jesus as he appears in the New Testament, the ultimate representatives of morality, justice, and grace in the monotheistic space.[22] (The opening remarks that he sent to the body that organizes cultural events on behalf of the European Union when he was asked to compose a brief greeting that related to the union of Europe and was dedicated to Yiddish as part of a project of reviving vernacular European languages, were telling in this regard: The Jews too/Greet the Union of Europe/In their ancient Yiddish/From below). The fatal encounter between the representatives of the legacy of Mount Moriah, the site of the sacrifice of Isaac, and Golgotha, the site of the crucifixion of Jesus, on the one hand, and the representatives of Valhalla, the Nordic "Hall of the Fallen," on the other, is shaped in the novella *The Book of Joseph*, which is included in Hoffmann's first book of the same name, through a plot with two paths. On the first path, we become acquainted with the story of Joseph Zilbermann, Yingele, his son, and Miriam, described as "the holy family". On the second, we become acquainted with the

story of Siegfried, a German boy, named after one of the murderous heroes of *Nibelungenlied*. The events that take place along these two paths take place parallel to one another throughout most of the story, and their protagonists do not meet one another. The plot reaches its dramatic peak when on Kristallnacht, the night between the ninth and tenth of November 1938, when the Nazis carried out a pogrom against the Jews of Germany and Austria, Siegfried meets Yingele and Joseph on the street. The meeting is described as follows:

> Siegfried raised the club and hit Yingele's head, a single blow. From the force of that blow, Yingele's skull caved in and a bone splinter from the knife split Yingele's brain in that place where the dreams reside. And when Joseph saw the blood from Yingele's head streaming down his face, his heart broke.
>
> As for the rest, it is already written in the history books that Joseph was left up there, alone, and said "Mayn got, mayn got, farvos hastu mikh farlozen!" [Yiddish for "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"]and died.
>
> Siegfried raised the club for a second time and hit Joseph on the chest, a single blow. And from the force of that blow, Joseph's heart of flesh also split. "Na," Siegfried thought, "I'm certainly quite good with a club."[23]

The collapse of the civilized Western world following the Holocaust is reflected in the imaginary world of Hoffmann in the destruction of the axis mundi and in the cancellation of the law of gravity. The result has been – and in this matter Hoffmann's world resembles that of Austrian author Christoph Ransmayr in his novel *The Last World* [24] – that all the elements of this fictional, post-apocalyptic world, human beings, books, works of art, and so on, everything and everyone who survived the great catastrophe, move along independent paths, and connect to other elements, if at all, only in a random manner.

A distilled expression of this position appears in Hoffmann's latest book, *Moods*, which is prominently philosophical and strongly conveys the sense of a conclusion, a last will and testament:

> And we too are the product of a virgin birth. We were born twice. First when a woman of flesh and blood delivered us in the ordinary manner. Later, like everyone, we were wiped off the face of the earth, with the people who were sent to the ovens. And if we're alive, we are—like some sad kind of miracle—among the babies not in the ground, or far above in the place where the smoke from the chimneys ascended. Beyond history.[25]

> The counting did in fact begin, as the Christians have it, with the birth of the infant Jesus. But it

concluded with the birth of Adolf. We were given just 1,889 years of life.

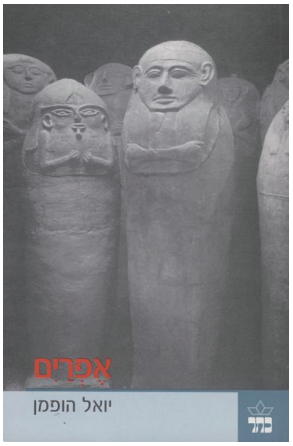
Now we're in the age of ash. Beyond time. As though in a game that has just come to an end. There's no more movement on the field. Just kicks toward the goal. Everything only *seems* to be. A thin wash of color covers it all, and beneath that—blackness.

Only giraffes remain. Mountains. Wisps of clouds. Celestial bodies. Woods. Bodies of water and shells of men. Europe, apparently. Hallucinations. A real sun rises over nothing.[26]

The post-apocalyptic nature of "Planet Hoffmann" is also expressed in the huge number of bizarre phenomena, objects, and linguistic configurations. It sometimes seems as though the author has established for himself a museum of antiquities devoted to strange things and created within it a separate wing for anachronistic objects, simulacra, or pastiches. This is the place to note, perhaps, that Hoffmann frequently watches television programs that deal with the buying and selling of seemingly rare objects, and in the past he had a special fondness for auctions. His open affection for bizarre performances is also prominently expressed in the photographs he chose for his book covers, front and back[27] For example:

(The Christ of Fish, back cover)

(Guttapercha, front cover)



(Ephraim, front cover)

Hoffmann's books are filled with linguistic eccentricities of all kinds: anachronisms (words no longer customarily used in spoken language); neologisms (linguistic innovations – but only, "of course", those not absorbed into the living language); barbarisms (linguistic mutations). In addition, there are words from dead languages (ancient Greek, Latin, Sanskrit), and words, phrases, and even entire sections in esoteric languages (for example, Hungarian), many times unaccompanied

by a translation to the language of the reader. These are all joined by weird phrases, the fruit of Hoffmann's whims.[28] Here, for example, are some numbered sections from Hoffmann's third book of prose, *Guttapercha* (1993) (in the Malayan language, *guttapercha* means "rubber tree"), which includes a typical range of performances from all the bizarre linguistic categories mentioned above:

128
We can think of Professor Takeuchi as being tossed from side to side with Noah. In the Ark. His fish eye watches the flood. As far as he is concerned, the rainbow pulled straight to the linguistics chair. What good were his shleikes [suspenders] to him? In any case, his body was in his trousers.
129
[and the trousers]
130
[in the world]
131
He must be registered in the corridor and returned to the room. And to take him out again to the end of the corridor and back to the room […]
132
And to bring him together with Franz. He should sit under the chandelier [and say "in Hittite esti and er ist"] and see a kind of electricity. Like the sight of fire.
133
What was lacking was the mindervertigastaytagfila. Feelings of inferiority.
In the Pacific Ocean air, Franz is flip and flop fish.
Here it must be explained. Sometimes a fish appears on the horizon.
The fish of virtues. The fish of strength. Franz grasps it at the angle of the head and forces it by the power of the dream into the individu-al pool.
134
Completely. A person has to walk around with a shredder. If a paper flutters away, it should be shredded. **Only foreign letters should be written.**[29]

The post-apocalyptic Hoffmannian universe is a forest of signifiers and signifieds with a very loose connection between them. This is an immense forest. It is packed with historical affairs, shreds of philosophical discussions, quotations and many references to hundreds of works of literature and art, both from the Western corpus and the East Asian corpus, and in addition it includes autobiographical segments, sections of biographies of well-known historical figures, numerous ars-

poetical discussions, dozens of scientific explanations, most of them clearly unfounded, moral and immoral judgments, tongue-lashings aimed at academic institutions, and political barbs, as well as riddles, proverbs, pieces of nonsense, hundreds of private jokes, and more.[30]

This chaotic forest contains characters from different places and different times. They are frequently engaged in esoteric subjects, like Professor Takeuchi of Japan and Franz, the Jew who immigrated to Palestine from Europe, in the excerpts above. Each of them moves around in a circle, trying to make sense of "foreign letters" whose meanings we have lost. Professor Takeuchi and Franz from *Guttapercha*, and like them, Bernhard in *Bernhard*, Yehoahim in *The Heart is Katmandu,* Ephraim in *Ephraim,* and all the rest of Hoffmann's main characters, including himself in his autobiographical and pseudo-autobiographical stories (in the story "Curriculum Vitae" in *The Book of Joseph*, and the novella of the same name, in *The Shunra and the Schmetterling*, in *Moods*, and so on), all of these and dozens more minor characters in stories, unusual men, women, and children, are heroes par excellence, in Hoffmann's lyrical post-apocalyptic epic.

These are, like similar figures in all epics, modern and post-modern (those that are not fantasies, and the exemplary model here is Cervantes's Don Quixote),[31] heroic figures who are larger than life and at the same time pathetic and ridiculous. Their heroism and ridiculousness stem from the same source – their repeated Quixotic attempts to impose on the post-apocalyptic reality the laws and rules that were valid in the reality that preceded the colossal destruction. They are, by their very nature, anachronistic characters who developed in one world and were planted into another. In addition, there are figures that have been excluded by society, a large and colorful group of outsiders, strange and bizarre. A good portion of them are immigrants from Central Europe and Germany who grew up in the lap of European liberalism and rationalism, which collapsed with a resounding bang.[32] Alongside them are other living refugees of history, kings and dukes who were removed from their high positions by the masses, eccentric women, larger than life, who seemed to come into the world from out of fairy tales, orphaned children, handicapped people, and so on. What all of these characters share is the unique cognitive mechanism with which they are equipped, which replaces, whether they are conscious of it or not, the old cognitive mechanism that has expired. I would like to call this alternative cognitive mechanism the "Cyclopean eye". Katschen, the boy protagonist whose mother dies and whose father loses his sanity (or, more precisely, his normative sanity) aptly conveys the nature and function of this "eye" in the following amazing excerpt:

> Once Margarethe had told Katschen about Cyclopes. "He who sees with two eyes", she said, "closes one eye when the sights he sees are painful. If he is also pained by the sights he sees with the eye that remains open—he closes both eyes. But the Cyclops never closes his one and

> only eye". On hearing this, Katschen closed one eye and saw that there was not a great deal of difference between the sights he saw with one eye and the sights he saw with two. Then he closed the eye that remained open and thought to himself, "Now I will never see anything ever again". But then, when his eyes were closed, an eye in his forehead opened. The sight he saw with this eye was not clear, but it held a kind of transparency missing from the sight he saw with his other two eyes. When Katschen looked in the mirror, he could not find the eye in his forehead, but when he closed his eyes again he knew for sure that the eye was there. Since that day, Katschen knew that he was a Cyclops and would look at people to see if they had an eye in their foreheads.[33]

The Cyclops's eye, the third eye through which all of Hoffmann's protagonists and Hoffmann himself absorb the world in their moments of revelation, is, according to Katschen's dead mother, a product of suffering that ordinary eyes cannot bear. This is a mystical organ that gives a chosen few the ability to see things that are invisible to ordinary mortals and/or the ability to endure sights that ordinary mortals cannot tolerate. The eye of the Cyclops is the "power of the dream" that gives Franz the ability to take the imaginary fish that appears on the horizon of his vision, "the fish of virtue or the fish of strength", and move it "at the angle of the head" to "the individu-al pool". In other words, not to the province of ordinary individuality, represented by the word "individuality" in its usual graphic form, but rather to a different, idiosyncratic "individuality", marked by a new word: "individu-al", which is based on the original word and divided by a hyphen that separates it into two parts in accordance with an arbitrary and completely random logic. Moreover, Hoffmann's characters have the Cyclopean eye, which allows them to see what other humans are unable or unwilling to see. But this advantage is also a disaster, because, as his mother tells Katschen, he whom fate has chosen to have a Cyclopean eye will never have the privilege of being able to close his eyes entirely.

One of the decisive conclusions of postmodern philosophy is that following the events of World War II, the "I" in its Western modernist format, whose most consolidated and well-known embodiment appears in Freud's writings, was shattered to bits. Some of Hoffmann's critics believed that this phenomenon was also characteristic of the human condition in the writings before us.[34] There are also those who believed that the Western modernist conception of the "I" in Hoffmann's writings was taken over by the principle of the Buddhist "I" – assuming that indeed it is possible to use the term "I" in the context of Buddhist thought – which is somewhat similar to the conception of the "I" of the Western post-modernist philosophers.[35]

I believe otherwise. I also think that Hoffmann's perception of human beings is profoundly influenced by the horrors of World War II. But Hoffmann, whose distaste for Freudian psychology is reflected on every page of his books,[36] never went, in the context of the concept of the "I," the way of postmodernism or Buddhism. Hoffmann's poetic conclusion from the rise of Nazi barbarity and the collapse of Western enlightenment is largely the opposite of the conclusion reached by postmodernists.

In Hoffmann, the systematic murder, the banality of evil, the sickening combination of kitsch and death, and the departure of the Teutonic monsters from their caves, on the one hand, and the Judeo-Christian silence of heaven on the other, did not lead to an explosion or erasure of the "I," but rather, on the contrary, to its empowerment and growth to semi-mythical dimensions, like those of the heroes of the epics. In fact, it is possible to say that the protagonists in the corpus before us decisively violate Galileo Galilei's famous assumption. In Hoffmann's cosmos, the sun, moon, and all the host of the heavens surround his most admired characters, particularly, but not only, his female characters. Here are three examples, almost random, from three different books, the first from *Ephraim,* the second from *Curriculum Vitae*, and the last from *Guttapercha*.

Here is the excerpt from *Ephraim*:

> Now we have to look deep into the heart of Yosepha.
>
> At first, we see a green landscape like the hills of southern England and we can go north up to the cold regions of Scotland.
>
> Boats sail along the lakes and the ducks hide in the bushes at the edge of the bank.
>
> You pass little villages there and in every town there is a square with stores where they sell all kinds of antiques.
>
> Her human form carries whole continents and when she sits with Esther Shapira you can see the atmosphere that surrounds her, just as space travelers see the earth from a distance.[37]

Here is the excerpt from *Curriculum Vitae*:

> Every morning Mrs. Kido came back from her night jog in the Gion quarter, with a cloud of sake before her like a pillar (of fire) that went before the camp.[38]

And, finally, an excerpt from *Guttapercha*:

> 34
>
> Afterwards, Mr. Moskovitch said "Di bist a kurveh" [Yiddish for "You are a prostitute," but also "crooked" or "a curve"]. He meant the dangerous non-Euclidean line. [In those days it was

known that parallel lines did meet.]

Stella Moskovitch was a very pretty girl. She caused the great snowfall that covered Ramat Gan in nineteen hundred and fifty.[39]

C. Adventures of the Heart

Almost all the critics and scholars who have written about Hoffmann's works have addressed their unusual formal appearance, first and foremost the fact that most of his belletristic works (in fact, all but *The Book of Joseph*) are presented to the reader in paragraphs that consist of lines shorter than those that usually appear in works of prose. In my opinion, this graphic presentation is nothing unusual. On the contrary, it is required by the generic nature of Hoffmann's works, since most epics, from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* through *The Aeneid*, as well as Serbian, British, German, and Norse epics, were written in the same graphic format. In all of these, we follow a plot with many lines presented to us in stanzas separated by caesuras. The stanzas and the caesuras in Hoffmann's works have attracted the attention of many Hoffmann scholars, but they have attributed them to the poetic nature of his work, the influence of haiku and/or philosophical essay writing such as that of Schlegel, Nietzsche, or Wittgenstein.[40] Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that the Japanese poetic tradition and the tradition of philosophical essay writing in the style of the three philosophers I have mentioned influenced Hoffmann's choice of a format that became one of the hallmarks of his work. But in my opinion, this is essentially a technical influence, while the influence of the epic poetic tradition is essential, both because Hoffmann's works are characterized precisely, and in contradiction with the first impression that they create, by their narrativity (thus, for example, the story in *Bernhard*, which is Hoffmann's most lyrical philosophical book, progresses along a number of parallel plot lines, in an almost completely consistent chronological order. The events begin after the death of Paula, Bernhard's wife, on September 18, 1938, and end on July 22, 1946, with the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. The story that mediates between these two framing events includes dozens of historical events that can be dated precisely), and Hoffmann himself was exposed to the mythological and epic traditions of the West many years before he was exposed to the other two writing traditions. This is the place to note that the epic graphic pattern perfectly suits the Hoffmannian temperament since, on the one hand, he is a "wild" author with a "Hungarian-gypsy" nature. He addresses, as I have mentioned, countless issues, and intentionally leaps wildly between them. On the other hand, he is a very meticulous author, extremely sensitive to order, with a "Yekke" (a term used to refer to Jews of German origin that connotes particular attention to detail) or perhaps a "Yekke-Japanese" temperament. The epic, like

the novel that succeeded it, is very permissive, a literary repository that accepts almost anything. At the same time, the formal character of epic expression is binding and inflexible. It imposes measured and precise conduct in the area of graphics that must not be breached.

Hoffmann's uniqueness in this genre is twofold: first, in the relatively independent character of poetic sections, which can be called the "stanzas," in relation to the entirety of the story, and second, in the lyrical philosophical perspective that dominates all of his works. The relatively independent status of the segments, the "stanzas," in relation to the narrative whole seems to stem from the same post-apocalyptic attitude that is responsible for the anachronistic, quixotic stance of the characters and the abundance of linguistic peculiarities. The relative independence of these "stanzas" was already apparent in Hoffmann's first stories, which were included in *The Book of Joseph* and written in regular prose form. Thus, we have, for example, the following passage, which was chosen, almost by chance, from the first story, "Katschen":

> Katschen was about two and a half years old when he first heard that his father was krank [German: sick (here, mentally ill)]. His mother placed a bowl of fruit on the table and walked out of the house. Katschen's father sat silent in the armchair, and when Katschen offered him an apple a tear appeared in the corner of his eye. Katschen opened the doors of the sideboard and arranged the silverware on the carpet. Then he surrounded his father's slippers with the silverware and the feet of the father inside the slippers did not move. After that, Katschen made a habit of asking whether this or that person were krank. By the time he found out that other people were nicht krank [German: not sick] his father was already in "the institution."[41]

This passage, like many others in Hoffmann's works, can be read as an independent little story, a closed and meaningful linguistic entity. It includes clear structural units that are interdependent, complement one another, and create a coherent narrative. In terms of syntactic logic, the segment consists of a frame unit and an interior unit. The frame unit consists of two parts, the expositional opening sentence. ("Katschen was about two and a half years old when he first heard that his father was krank"), which, like other opening sentences by Hoffmann, contains the kernel of the entire story,[42] and a concluding sentence ("After that, Katschen made a habit of asking whether this or that person were krank. By the time he found out that other people were nicht krank his father was already in "the institution"). The opening part is connected to the concluding part by a pattern of cause-and-effect relationships that are anchored in matching particles of time intervals: "Katschen **was** about ..."; "**After that**, Katschen made a habit..."; "**By the time** he found out that..."; "his father **was already** in 'the institution'". The interior unit in this section includes two mini-scenes that

modify the cause-and-effect relationship between the two parts of the frame, giving them emotional and conscious validity. These two mini-scenes occur after Katschen, aged two and a half, learns that his father is krank, and only the father and the son take a prominent part in it after "[h]is mother placed a bowl of fruit on the table and walked out of the house".

In the first mini-scene we learn about the relationship between the two. The father sits in his armchair and is silent, and the movement between them opens up precisely in the direction of the child. The child's (baby's) gesture to his father, which hints at a kind of role reversal between them, touches the father's heart, which is indifferent to his surroundings most of the time, and brings a tear to the corner of his eye.

The second mini-scene is less clear and more charged, both consciously and emotionally. Katschen opens the sideboard doors and arranges the silverware over the carpet. This is an unusual action. After all, it is reasonable to assume that a two-and-a-half-year-old child is not supposed to play with the silver – some or all of which may be sacred objects – especially not on the carpet. This deviation, which seems to signify the child's entry into a taboo area, continues with his next activity: he surrounds his father's slippers with the silverware – another unclear and charged move, for, on the one hand, this is a children's game and no more. Many children play with toy cars on the floor and sometimes even between their parents' feet. However, on the other hand, in this scene there are a number of uncanny factors that are disturbing and evoke displeasure. This is so because of the use of silver instead of toys and because Katschen delineates the father's space (restricts him, protects him, and so on) with the (sacred) silverware, and also because the father cooperates and seems to accept the decree: "the feet . . . inside the slippers did not move" and as a result of the tension produced between the components of domesticity (for example, the father's slippers) and the uncanny baggage (insanity, sacredness, and so on).

Either way, or in both ways, this short section may be read as an independent unit. It briefly, yet sufficiently, sketches the relationship between father and child, allowing us to understand the facts and conclusions contained in his two final sentences. First, we understand why Katschen divides the whole world into two types: krank and nicht krank. And secondly, we understand that Katschen is burdened with a sense of guilt for no real reason. Katschen, we understand from the final sentence, only later understood that his father was exceptional – but then he could no longer help him (as he had already tried when he was two-and-a-half years old), since he had already been admitted to the institution.

The relative independence of the passage before us is an essential characteristic of many of the passages, the "stanzas," in Hoffmann's prose. We may assume that this is the case because most

passages were written, as Hoffmann has testified, with one disappearance – a picture that arose in the author's dream or waking moments and was written in its brilliant isolation, bound to the chain of passages, the "stanzas" that preceded it, which were also created in exactly the same manner. We can assume that there is a deliberate concatenation of distinct units and relatively autonomous parts. In any event, the product is the same: an acute structural tension between the "stanzas" and the narrative.

The second unique characteristic of Hoffmann in this generic context – and he was influenced, in my opinion, by Rainer Maria Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* – is the dominant lyrical perspective in all his works, including those written in the first person singular, as is customary in this subgenre, and those written in the third person.

One of the most prominent manifestations of the lyrical perspective in Hoffmann's works, alongside its stunning figurative nature, is his close, very intimate treatment of his protagonists. Hoffmann loves his protagonists. He loves them when he describes them with admiration as forces of nature and when he places them in a ridiculous light necessary because they are anachronistic entities not suited to their time and place. He relates to all of them as relatives – both the characters who really represent his family, his father, his mother, his stepmother, his uncles, his children, and so on, and the "foreign" characters: "real," historical characters and completely or partially fictional characters.

The source of this warm and loving treatment is Hoffmann's perception of the post-apocalyptic nature of the world we have been living in since World War II and the Holocaust. Hoffmann believes, and in this matter corresponds in distorted ways with a Buddhist approach, on the one hand, and with an existentialist attitude, on the other, that the tragedy of human beings stems from the fact that they are conscious beings and cannot escape the realization that they are doomed to suffering and death. This epistemological fact makes them, especially when they are trying to attribute meaning to the essential absurdity of their situation, creatures who are worthy of love and kindness. And indeed, if I had to choose one attribute that characterizes Hoffmann's ethics, I would say that it was generosity, generosity to all people, with the exception of the Nazis and those who collaborated with them, and with particular attention to the Cyclopes, migrants, hallucinatory people, prostitutes, widows, orphans, in short, all who are blind, but wise.

If you need additional confirmation in this regard, see the amazing photograph by August Sander that Hoffmann placed on the cover of his first book, *The Bok of Joseph*.

In this photo we can see two blind children, a girl and a boy. The girl seems a bit older than the boy. She holds his left hand in her right hand with gentle authority. With her left hand, she demonstrates to the boy, blind like her, the approximate height of a person, child, or some object. This shocking photograph, which has a sarcastic and perhaps even a grotesque side, but also touches the heart and brings tears to the eyes, sums up the spirit of the entire tremendous artistic enterprise of Yoel Hoffmann.

*All translations of Hoffmann's texts by Dr. Hannah Komy, unless otherwise noted.

Notes

1 יואל הופמן, "קצכן" *אגרא,אלמנך לספרות ואמנות* 2, תשמ"ו,1985/6. 149 - 190.

2 Yoel Hoffmann, *Katschen* in *Katschen and The Book of Joseph* [*Katschen* trans. Eddie Levenston and David Kriss; *The Book of Joseph* trans. Alan Treister and Eddie Levenston] (New York: New Directions, 1997, 1998), 97.

3 These are some of the enthusiastic responses to the original Hebrew version of *The Book of Joseph*, Hoffmann's first book of prose:

שלומית גינגולד-גלבוע, "חגיגה אמיתית", *ידיעות אחרונות*, המוסף לשבת (1.2.1987) 22,21; הדה בושס, "עין הקיקלופ", *הארץ*, תרבות וספרות (4.1.1998) 14; דן דאור, "שבוע של ספרים: מקור", *הארץ* (8.1.1988); יעל לוטן, "הישאר איתנו יואל הופמן", *על המשמר* (12.2.1988) ב 6; דוד שיץ, "והילד הזה", *כותרת ראשית* 279 (6.4.1988) 32.

And here are some of the enthusiastic responses to the original Hebrew version of *Bernard*, Hoffmann's first novel:

אריאל הירשפלד, "הגלאקסיות של יואל הופמן", *הארץ* (31.3.1989) בס-ב9, (7.4.1989) ; אמנון נבות, "'על כיסוי הדם' ועל הנס", *מעריב* (26.5.1989) 5.

And following are some of the enthusiastic responses that appeared in the United States upon the publication of the translation of several of Hoffmann's books in English translation L. David Ulin, "On Katschen and the Book of Joseph," *Chicago Tribune* (11.12.1998); William Riggan, "Hebrew Literature in the 1990s", *World Literature Today* 72. 3 (1998), 478–477; Betty Falkenberg, "Tales Dreamlike and Precise": *Katschen and The Book of Joseph* by Yoel Hoffmann, Hoffmann, Translated by David Kriss, *The New Leader* 5 (1998); Nicole Jones, "9 New Must-Read Books," *Vanity Fair* (1.6. 2015).

4 רוני סומק, "ציפור מוזרה, רבת יופי", *במחנה* 37 (17.5.89) 5; הדה בושס, "קצה גבול האפשר", *הארץ* (16.11.1993) 4; לאה שניר, "'גוטפרשה' – הקוטב הסמוי מן העין", *דבר*, (31.12.1993) 24; שירי לב-ארי, "חידה ושמה הופמן", על הספר *מצבי רוח* , אתר *גלובס*, (14.2.2010) http://www.globes.co .il/news/article.aspx?did=1000538881.

5 מנחם בן , "חידות זן ברוטב ייקי", *ידיעות אחרונות* (5.11.1993) 89; עמוס לויתן, "קואן האהבה של הופמן", *עתון 77* 243 (2000), 31-32; אלי אשד, "בודהה מהפרברים", Time Out תל אביב 383 (3.2010 .4-11) 142.

6 Masato Goda, "A Philosophy of 'Death Poems'", in this volume.

7 יואל הופמן, *אומרי שיר על סף המוות, מבחר שירים יפניים ומסת מבוא* (מסדה, 1985), 8-17.

8 Yoel Hoffmann, *Japanese Death Poems Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death* (Clarendon, VT: Tuttle), 24 (English edition of the Hebrew book mentioned in the previous note).

9 גבריאל מוקד [גדעון מירב], "שני צדדים של בגדי המלך: קסטל בלום והופמן", *עתה*, כתב-עת לענייני חברה ותרבות 1 (1994) 34; דפנה שחורי, "פרה קדושה ושמה הופמן", *עכשיו*, גל' 72 (חורף תשע"ב, 2011–2012), 198–200.

10 יואל הופמן, *ברנהרט* (ירושלים: כתר, 1988); *כריסטוס של דגים* (ירושלים: כתר,1991); *גוטפרשה* (ירושלים: כתר, 1993); *מה שלומך דולורס* (ירושלים כתר, 1995); *הלב הוא קטמנדו* (ירושלים: כתר, 2000); *השונרא והשמטרלינג* (ירושלים: כתר, 2001); *אפרים* (ירושלים: כתר, 2003); *Curriculum Vitae* (ירושלים: כתר, 2007); *מצבי רוח* (ירושלים: כתר, 2010).

11 יואל הופמן, *בפברואר כדאי לקנות פילים* (איורים גל כרמי) (ירושלים: מסדה, 1988).

12 טל פרנקל, "סגנון ופואטיקה ביצירתו של יואל הופמן", מחקר לשם מילוי חלקי של הדרישות לקבלת התואר "דוקטור לפילוסופיה", אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב, נובמבר, 2004.

13 נטע שטהל, "אינטרטקסטואליות בין-ז'אנרית ביצירותיו של יואל הופמן", עבודת גמר לתואר מוסמך, אוניברסיטת תל-אביב, 1998; קארין נויבורגר, "רקמת טקסטים –'כריסטוס של דגים' מאת יואל הופמן", עבודת גמר לתואר מוסמך, האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים, 1999.

14 מרב כץ, "פואטיקה פוסט-מודרנית קרנבלית: עיון ביצירותיו של יואל הופמן"; נטע שטהל, לעיל הערה 13.

15 אברהם בלבן, *גל אחר בספרות העברית –סיפורת עברית פוסטמודרניסטית* (ירושלים: כתר, 1995).

16 חנה הרציג, *הקול האומר: אני – מגמות בסיפורת העברית בשנות השמונים* (תל-אביב: האוניברסיטה הפתוחה, 1988) 381–305.

17 ענת ויסמן, "אף מילה על כריסטוס", *דבר*, משא (12.7.1991) 27.

18 אריאל הירשפלד, "פואימה דפרסיבה", *הארץ* (7.4.1989), ב 8; הנ"ל, "הגלקסיות של יואל הופמן", *הארץ* (31.3.1989) ב8, ב9; הנ"ל, "הגלקסיות של יואל הופמן – איך קשור 'ברנהרט' לדיוקן", *הארץ* (7.4.1989) ב8; הנ"ל, "איש רואה דברים" על "Curriculum Vitae" מאת יואל הופמן, אתר *הארץ* (4.4.2007), http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1400202.

In this context, see also:

שי צור, "הכל נפצל רק למראית עין", *הארץ*, מוסף ספרים 379 (כ"ו באייר, תש"ס, 31.5.2000) 8; יגאל שוורץ, "הסיפורת העברית – העידן שאחרי", *אפס שתיים* 3 (1995) 1-51; הנ"ל, "'מ'מקום אחר' ל'דולי סיטי': הרהורים על אדם ומקום בסיפורת העברית בשנות השישים ובשנות התשעים", *הארץ*, תרבות וספרות, (16.6.1995) ב8, ב9; הנ"ל, "שירת הכוכבים", *הארץ*, תרבות וספרות (26.5.2000) ב14.

19 נילי שרף-גולד, "'הספר כנהר: עיון ב'ברנהרט' ליואל הופמן", *עלי שיח* 36 (קיץ תשנ"ה 1995), 67-72; הנ"ל, "ללכת ברחובות הפנימיים: יואל הופמן ו'אפרים'", *ביקורת ופרשנות: כתב עת בין-תחומי לחקר ספרות ותרבות*, כרך 43 : על הסף-לימינליות בספרות ובתרבות, (תל אביב, 2010), 229-247;

Nili Gold, "Yoel Hoffmann's "*Curriculum Vitae* and *Japanese Poems* as Keys to Reading his Work", *Conference on Jewish Studies*, Vol. 9, 2017 (see this volume); Gold, Nili, "Bernhard's Journey: The Challenges of Yoel Hoffman's Writing," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 1 (1994), 271–287.

20 רחל אלבק-גדרון, *השלישי האפשרי, מחקר מונוגרפי על עבודתו של יואל הופמן* (באר-שבע: אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב, דביר, 2016).

21 See:

אלבק-גדרון, "מפעל ההגחכה של הפילוסופיה המערבית", בתוך הנ"ל, *השלישי האפשרי*, 130–111.

22 Similar positions are presented in the following works:

שלמה גיורא שוהם, *אנטישמיות: ואלהאלה, גלגלתא ואושוויץ* (תל אביב: צ'ריקובר, 1992); אוריאל טל, *תאולוגיה פוליטית והרייך השלישי*. הקדמה ועורך מדעי, פול מנדס-פלור; פתח דבר ויועץ מדעי: שאול פרידלנדר (תל אביב: ספריית פועלים, 1989);

Saul Friedlander, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984). See also:

נטע שטהל, "האב ובן האלוהים: ישו ביצירותיו של יואל הופמן" בספרה *צלם יהודי: ייצוגיו של ישו בספרות העברית של המאה ה-20* (תל-אביב רסלינג, 2008) 165-187.

23 Hoffmann, *The Book of Joseph*, 79.

24 Christoph Ransmayr, *The Lost World*, trans. John E. Woods (New York: Grove Press, 1990).

25 Yoel Hoffmann, *Moods*, trans. Peter Cole (New York: New Directions, 2010), [124].

26 Ibid., [125].

27 See in this context: אלבק-גדרון, *השלישי האפשרי*, 131-177.

28 See in this context:

טל פרנקל, *סגנון ופואטיקה*, 103-217; יהודית בר-אל, "מה רואים בשוק ודיון בפואטיקה של 'כריסטוס של דגים'", *אפס שתיים* 1 (1992) 70-74. שמעון זנדבנק, "מעבר לכל המילים: הקסמים של יואל הופמן", אתר *הארץ*, 12.2.2010, http://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/1.1188332

29 הופמן, *גוטפרשה*. Emphasis mine

30 Nonsense, Common Sense וטראומה ביצירתו של יואל הופמן, בתוך: אליעזר פאפו, חיים וייס, יובל הררי, יעקב בן-טולילה (עורכים), *דמתה לתמר, מחקרים לכבודה של תמר אלכסנדר, איל פריזינט*, מחקרים בתרבות יהודי ספרד, כרכים ח-ט. *ומכאן*, כתב עת לחקר הספרות והתרבות היהודית והישראלית, כרך טו (תשע"ה) 745-774.

31 Marthe Robert, *The Old and the New, From Don Quixote to Kafka* (Berkeley;University of California Press, 1977) 200–221.

32 See, among others:

אמנון נבות, "מתוך שבר הקיסרות: הערות למקרא ראשון בסיפוריהם של אהרן אפלפלד ('עד שיעלה עמוד השחר') ויואל הופמן ('מה שלומך דולורס')", *מעריב*, מוסף לספרות (10.11.95) 47; מיכל ארבל, "מצב התרגום כמצב של גלות: 'קצכן' ליואל הופמן", *מאזניים*, כרך כ"ה 2 (2001), 38-42; מירי קובובי, "גלות במולדת: 'קצכן' ו'אפרים' ליואל הופמן", בתוך: *על בריאה ועל יצירה במחשבה היהודית: ספר היובל לכבודו של יוסף דן במלאת לו שבעים שנה*, עורכים: רחל אליאור ופטר שפר (טובינגן: מוהר סיביק, 2005), 225-237; רחל אלבק-גדרון, "מהי המולדת שבה מדברים הופמנית? סוגה וקהיליית מוצא בלקסיקון-אפוס של הופמן", בתוך: הנ"ל, *השלישי האפשרי*, 4-55.

33 Hoffmann, *The Book of Joseph* , 120.

34 In this context, see also:

בלבן, *גל אחר בסיפורת בעברית*, 13-82 ; אבנר הולצמן, *מפת דרכים*, סיפורת עברית כיום (הקיבוץ המאוחד/ספרי סימן קריאה 2005) 21-26;

Smadar Shiffman, "Orly Kastel-Bloom and Yoel Hoffmann: On Israeli postmodern prose fiction," *Hebrew Studies* 50 (2009), 215–227.

35 Different positions in this context are presented in the following:

אורציון ברתנא, *שמונים, ספרות ישראלית בעשור האחרון*, (תל אביב: אגודת הסופרים העברים בישראל, 1993) 163-164 ; בלבן, *גל אחר בסיפורת העברית*, 1995, 13-82; הרציג, *הקול האומר: אני*, 305-386; הולצמן, *מפת דרכים*, 229-231.

36 This is also made clear in a very open manner, in his latest book, *Moods* , for example in the following three sections:

A. "[109] How can it be that we walk around under the sky and nonetheless have an unconscious? Don't believe these lies. The world is large and wide and has no measure. And all is revealed."

B. [152] "We forgot to with the psychologists a Happy New Year. No doubt the cold makes it harder for them to look into souls. If only the New Year would bring about a condition in which their souls would melt (as one melts lead) into the great form of the soul of the world, and there'd no longer be any separation between their eyes (behind glasses) and the eyes of the people they're looking into. And that the rule against hugging might be dropped, and above all, that someone would hug them.Because there is no loneliness greater than that of the psychologist. His thought is always doubled, as he's forced to consider thought upon thought, and sometimes thought upon thought upon thought."

C. [189] "And don't be put off by the fear in people's faces. And don't worry about the policeman who might take you away. You can embrace him as well. And, above all, don't lose that love when you're with the psychiatrist they'll quickly call in. It isn't his fault. Just tell him: You too are worthy. You too."

Hoffmann is similarly uneasy regarding teachers, academics, and representatives of religious institutions. See:

יגאל שוורץ, "'הביצה שהתחפשה','בפברואר כדאי לקנות פילים': דן פגיס, יואל הופמן, מודרניזם ופוסט-מודרניזם", *צפון* ז: קובץ ספרותי, (2004) 277-293; רחל אלבק-גדרון, שם, 111-130.

37 הופמן, *אפרים* , 192. Translation mine.

38 Yoel Hoffmann, *Curriculum Vitae*, trans. Peter Cole (New York: New Direction, 2007), 88.

39 הופמן, *גוטפרשה*.

40 Rachel Albeck-Gidron, "Caesura and Holding in Yoel Hoffmann's Texts", in this volume.

41 Hoffmann, *The Book of Joseph* , 99.

42 Such expositions appear in the openings of all Hoffmann's great poems. For example: "After his wife died, Bernhard thought: "'The world / is infinite, beyond any common galaxy / another galaxy.'" [Yoel Hoffman, *Bernhard*, trans. Alan Treister (New York: New Directions, 1998), Part 1.] "At night, Uncle Herbert came like a / slow hunter of rabbits of air and spoke to me. I said/to my father: 'Is not Uncle Herbert dead, am I dreaming?' And my dead father said: 'He lives.' [Yoel Hoffmann,*The Christ of Fish*, trans. Eddie Levenston (New York: New Directions,

1999) Epilogue]. Hoffmann exposes this trick in the exposition of his latest book, *Moods*, in an ars-poetic passage that itself is similar to the same trick: [1] “Ever since finishing my last book, I’ve been thinking of how to begin the next one. Beginning is everything and needs to contain, like the seed of a tree, the work as a whole. And so, what I see is the figure of a man descending (from the sidewalk?) five or six steps to a basement apartment, and he’s halfway there. I know it’s a love story. And maybe there’s a woman in the basement apartment. It’s probably November.”

Yoel Hoffmann's *Curriculum Vitae* and *Japanese Death Poems* as Keys to Reading his Work

Nili Scharf Gold

Curriculum Vitae, the miniscule book by Yoel Hoffmann, has a gray cover that makes it look a little bit like an old-fashioned office file that holds formal documents. Its title is not in Hebrew, but is rather an international concept whose origin is Latin: even the letters printed on its cover are in the efficient Latin alphabet, not the Hebrew of Hoffmann's writing. An unsuspecting reader might actually be deceived by the cover of the volume and expect its contents to match the bureaucratic appearance. Indeed, even the title points to this tension. The literal meaning of "curriculum vitae" is "the course of life", while in everyday use it is a list organized by date of basic facts about someone's life: his professional and academic achievements, diplomas and prizes, and works produced. Hoffmann's *Curriculum Vitae* has some of this information, but none of it in order – almost an anti-curriculum vitae. From its pages, however, the strange, awkward heroes of Hoffmann's previous books also peek out, so one can read *Curriculum Vitae* as a summary of Hoffmann's literary corpus or even as a quasi guide to his life. Moreover, *Curriculum Vitae* conducts an active, intra-textual relationship with the author's other writings, both fictional and scholarly, suggesting that his previous works contain authentic elements from the life of the man who wrote them.

Yet, the little gray volume is not an autobiography. In an autobiography, there is a complete overlap between the main character and the author; a standard "curriculum vitae" relies on similar materials, but in a concise, impersonal and professional form. So how should one read Hoffmann's self-declared CV? Throughout his literary oeuvre, Hoffmann preserves the separation between character and author. He does so even in later works in which he includes a character by the name of "Yoel Hoffmann." Yet in the 2007 *Curriculum Vitae*, the distance between author and character narrows. Hoffmann's progress toward this shift may be seen if one pays careful attention to the various cover pages of his Hebrew books. A number of his earlier ones contain a ubiquitous disclaimer: "All characters and events are imaginary and any connection between them and reality is completely random".[1] A longer, more deliberate, disclaimer appears in later books. This disclaimer fully denies any connection between the book's plot and real events, as well as between

its characters and real people, dead or alive.[2] But *Curriculum Vitae* is different. On its cover page, it says: "The plot of the book, its characters, and their names, are **mostly** imaginary". It continues, "**sometimes** the connection between the plot of the book and real events, like the connection between its characters and real people, is random".[3] (emphasis mine) In other words, in the fine print often ignored by readers, Hoffmann admits that much of *Curriculum Vitae* is about his real life. Yet the way Hoffmann shares autobiographical information does not surrender to genre, certainly not to the genres of autobiography or curriculum vitae. Instead, it cancels them. In the same way that Hoffmann wrote novels that are not novels, and prose that is not prose, so too this pseudo-CV defies definition and mocks its genre's rules.[4]

In this article I attempt to point to some features that single out this work and to some that it shares with others. I devote attention to Hoffmann's poetics and thought, his fascination with sounds, especially the remembrance of sounds, as well as to biographical themes such as orphanhood and marriage. Part of the method by which Hoffmann subverts the genre of curriculum vitae is what I dub 'scrambling,' a Riffaterrian term that I have borrowed and modified. 'Scrambling' is a type of writing that presents itself to the reader as a well-formed text despite its lack of order or logical sequentiality. This kind of text contains narrative or poetic units, but their order is undone, and the links between them are omitted or made implicit. Riffaterre speaks of artistic 'scrambling' when describing a text that alludes to another text, but does so in such a way that the other text becomes almost unrecognizable because the order of its original units has been jumbled.[5] I suggest that Hoffmann indeed alludes to another 'text' in *Curriculum Vitae*. That other 'text' is his very life. Instead of forging it in an order common for a CV or autobiography, he takes that 'text,' his life story, and scrambles its units. For example, his travails in the Israeli navy appear *before* an anecdote from 6th grade in which he walks hand-in-hand with a girl. Hoffmann also intersperses seemingly random fragments between the autobiographical ones to confuse and separate their chronological order further. Yet Hoffmann's text does not become nonsensical. Each one of the units stands on its own but the connection between them is often unclear and it is up to the reader to rearrange them into a continuum.

A telling case of scrambling involves the details of the narrator's birth. Segment 1 in the book skips the day of his birth entirely and jumps to age three and a half. Additionally, his age appears in the second sentence, not the first. What follows is sporadic information about events that occurred after Hoffmann was seven or eight years old. It is not until segment 15, some thirty pages into the book, that the birth itself is mentioned. As for his birthplace, Brashov, it is buried in segment 57 and its importance is minimized by the context in which it appears: a marginal character references it

when he is trying to force his kinship on the narrator.

After he has told events that took place in later years, *Curriculum Vitae'*s narrator, without a visible impetus, momentarily seeks order. He states that if one were to bring order "into the world" one could start either from the heavens or alternately, from the bottom, and "if one started from the bottom one would have to start from the sex's opening, which is to say, from my mother, Margaritta."[6] In other words, while the book opens with the narrator as a three-and-a-half-year-old child, it returns midway to the actual moment when his life begins – his birth. This is also the only time the mother's name, Margaritta, appears in the book. But within that first moment of life lies the end. Hoffmann continues, saying that people ought to pronounce the "n" in "born" by forming their lips to recall death. Here, the author does not refer only to the universal truth that all who are born must die, but also to his own life. The shadow of his mother's early death and her absence determine the story of her son's life almost as much as her fleeting presence. In fact, the date of the mother's death is the first sentence in Hoffmann's so-called *Curriculum Vitae*: "My mother died on January 27th, 1941. I was three and a half years old." (#1)

This opening both echoes and diverges from one of the most famous openings in Hebrew literature, part of which is also the title of that masterpiece. I am speaking, of course, of Israel's Nobel laureate S.Y. Agnon, and his monumental novella *In the Prime of Her Life*, a fictional diary of a woman who lost her mother at a young age. It begins: "My mother died in the prime of her life. She was barely thirty-one years old. Few and harsh were the days of her life".[7] Unlike Agnon, Hoffmann does not disclose his mother's age, or anything about her life, for that matter. But it comes to reason that if her son was orphaned at three and a half, like Agnon's heroine, she too died "in the prime of her life". The great author Amos Oz, a contemporary of Hoffmann, lost his mother when he was twelve. Unlike the late-blooming Hoffmann, Oz burst into the Israeli literary arena at age twenty-five but waited over fifty years, until 2002, before writing *A Tale of Love* for his mother. In it, under piles and piles of words, hides that short and finite sentence, "my mother was thirty-eight when she died".[8] While Oz delayed, Hoffmann presented his tale of love to his mother Margaritta at the dawn of his literary career. His debut story features Katschen, a child consumed by the search for his dead mother. In his infantile consciousness, the lines between the dead and the living are blurred. Indeed, a motherless child continues to knock on the doors of many of Hoffmann's works. First was the neglected Katschen, whose father is in a mental institution while he himself nearly dies on his quest to find his mother Margaritta in the sky. Bernhard, Hoffmann's eponymous widowed hero, mourns his wife Paula but yearns to hear the voice of his mother. Even in the novel *Ephraim,* where the autobiographical plot about the end of a marriage is dominant, the primeval search

for the mother remains. Ephraim walks through Mother's Park (*gan ha-em*) in the city of Haifa, and thinks to himself that "Mother's Park" is so-called because it is where a person looks for his mother.[9] Similarly, the narrator of *Curriculum Vitae* maintains loyalty to his biological mother as he continually reminds the reader of her having been lost by meticulously attaching the words "my stepmother" to any reference to his father's second wife, even though he adored her.[10]

While the intensity of the longing for the mother fluctuates in Hoffmann's writings, her being, or rather the void that she created, is eternal. One of Hoffmann's idiosyncratic ways of giving a texture to that longing is by mimicking the remembered sounds of his infancy. Hoffmann's works are filled with sounds of languages other than Hebrew. This in itself was one of the features of the revolution he led in Israeli literature, which tended to linguistic purism.[11] The desire to listen to the voices or the music of the past began with the title of his very first story. "Katschen" is a German, not Hebrew, term of endearment, meaning "kitten." The speaker of *Curriculum Vitae* invents a term for acoustic memory, the Hebrew neologism *zikhronshema* (זכרונשמע).[12] The translator created a parallel English compound word for it, "memorysound," but it does not capture the essence of remembering something that one has heard as the Hebrew original does.

While *Curriculum Vitae* mentions the mother's name, Margaritta, only once, the story "Katschen" spells out the connection between the 'm' sound of that name and the German word for 'mother,' *mutti*. "Katschen" captures the thirst for the 'm' sound, the sound that connects mother and the child in her bosom. "Mmm" is the only sound that a baby can make while his mouth is closed when nursing. In both "Katschen" and *Bernhard*, the longing for the mother is intertwined with her voice and merges metaphorically with the Proustian awareness of a place where sounds are forever preserved:

> Katschen saw a shell. Once his mother Margaritta told him that shells contained the sound of the sea, and even if the shell was far away from the sea […] the sound of the waves is always in it.[13]

This beautiful image holds Hoffmann's suggestion that just as the sound of the sea continues to reverberate within the shell, so the voice of the dead mother continues to resonate in her son's consciousness. And indeed, the child Katschen follows his mother's distant voice as though under a spell.[14]

In *Bernhard*, Hoffmann's novel about a recent widower, a more mature variation on the same theme appears. Early in the book, Bernhard is at the center of a richly acoustic scene: the music of famous twentieth century composers fills the ocean with "an infinity of sounds"; the voice of God coos "like a dove"; the mating calls of rams echo through the mountains "with a blast and a wail"; and the messiah's horn blows. But finally, at the end, the mother's voice surfaces and the yearnings burst through:

> And sometimes Bernhard too hears the sound of his dead mother Clara's voice. He thinks: 'All the voices in the world are coiled together like threads on one bobbin (that's invisible) and the bobbin turns and turns and the voices are heard'.[15]

While the childish Katschen thinks of nature's recordings – the conch that preserves the sound of the waves – Hoffmann's adult characters allude to more sophisticated imagery to preserve their beloved inner sounds. They refer to a 'spool' or a bobbin, an axis around which a roll of film or a tape is wrapped. By playing that tape, one can again hear one's mother's voice.[16] The man who looks back, writing his *Curriculum Vitae*, uses a slightly different metaphor, but like Bernhard's, it too technologically belongs to the previous century.

> A man looks at his life in the way that one watches a silent movie. The mouth opens but you do not hear a voice. The movements are jumpy, here and there, because the spool of film is interrupted… (#79)

*Curriculum Vitae'*s adult narrator can no longer hear the sound of his mother's voice as it was originally recorded in the movie of his life. But all is not lost. In the same segment where the movie of his life is watched, a German word appears. German was the language that Hoffmann heard early in his life, the language that often reverberates throughout his literary corpus. Here, it presents itself with the word *Dunkelheit*, which means 'darkness,' perhaps the darkness that engulfs the man watching a movie. But *Dunkelheit*, which pops into the narrator's mind as his life movie rolls, carries additional associations for him. As *Curriculum Vitae* nears its end, darkness is also an allusion to the beginning; before God created light, there was chaos and darkness, *hoshekh* (חושך). *Dunkelheit* also begins with the syllable "*Du*", which means "you" in German. "*Du*" is the familiar form of address to the mother whose image is projected on the movie screen but whose voice is not heard. Hoffmann also attaches another meaning to the syllable "Du": in Hebrew, "du" is a prefix that means "double." He demonstrates its usage with the word *du-hayyim* (דו-חיים), literally "double life", the Hebrew word for amphibian, a creature that has two forms of life, in water and on land. The silent film of memories that is rolling in the dark, therefore, is a form of "double life": another way of bringing the dead into the world of the living.

> My mother. Every reader is dear to his mother. She hugs him even from the world of death. His fingernails are hers. […] His eyes are hers. Like the great rivers into which smaller rivers flow, so they themselves flow into the sea. (#79)

This paragraph is yet another attempt on Hoffmann's part to annul death in order to be one

with the mother he lost. Here, his approach is almost scientific: a mother never dies because she continues to exist genetically in her offspring. This perception is another variation on the core quest of the Hoffmann hero: to undo death, the quest that is, perhaps, also behind Hoffmann's attraction to Eastern philosophy, which rejects the binary oppositions of life and death.[17]

There is a direct line between "Katschen" and *Curriculum Vitae* in the desperate search for the mother. But *Curriculum Vitae* also has a strong intra-textual – as well as biographical – relationship with another book by Hoffmann that has a woman at its center. I'm speaking about *Ephraim*, the book dedicated to Hoffmann's first wife. *Curriculum Vitae* is set before he leaves her, and appears to be an attempt to both repay a debt and justify the separation. *Ephraim* delivers an homage to the woman the author abandoned; *Curriculum Vitae* records how she followed him to Japan and raised their children, but it also explores the roots of their discontent.

The first mention of their relationship in *Curriculum Vitae* is "I remember the woman I married and how in Edinburgh we saw a cat devour a fledgling" (#12). The cat killing a bird immediately follows the book's initial reference to the narrator's first wife. While the two parts of the sentence seem unrelated, one cannot ignore a sense of doom, as if the painful end was present at the start. Likewise, the record of the wedding and honeymoon are preceded in the text by a grotesque vision of Nero's fire in Rome: "The balcony he sat on while Rome burned was (I know) a Bauhaus balcony, like those in Tel Aviv [...] his testicles (on which there were lice) were squashed against the seat of the chair" (#14). Was this distorted depiction of the ancient fire another prophecy of doom? Shortly after the couple's wedding and relocation to the provincial northern town of Safed, their daughter is born. His wife, he recalls, "washed cloth diapers and hung them up on the roof to dry like flags of surrender" (#21). For her, it seems, being married and taking care of a baby was a form of defeat. This view of marriage reverberates later in *Curriculum Vitae* through a reference to Hoffmann's academic interest, Chinese symbols: "The symbol for a woman is a picture of a person bent over … The symbol for a married woman is a person bent over […] and a broom" (#42). Being a woman then, is a lower, bent state while being a married woman is almost synonymous with servitude. The symbols' interpretation expressed by the narrator seems to empathize with his wife's lot but we learn that she occasionally flees from Safed to her parents in Tel Aviv and that when she comes back, "her lips are pursed" (#23, #24). Later on, upon the family's return from their long sojourn in Japan, the narrator feels enriched with the treasure trove of Zen riddles he has brought home with him, but his wife does not. The children born into this marriage are welcomed by their father, the narrator, with enormous gratitude. At the same time, he divulges his loneliness, depicting himself and his wife sleeping, "back to back while each one saw, as though in a bubble emerging from the

head of a comic-strip character, different dreams" (#34). The narrator's dreams feature avalanches and earthquakes, symbols of destruction, and indeed in the middle of the book it appears that the marriage is over. The looming separation initially recalls a shipwreck and is later met with a lament: "Woe is me. And my wife. And my children" (#64).

Curriculum Vitae was published in 2007, but its sporadic autobiographical narrative dissolves in the 1990s. The final mention of the family unit intact, identifies each one of its members by name, either real or fictionalized: "We (which is to say, Yolanda and I, and Sivan, Mikha'el and Yotam) sat on the porch and ate our dinner…" (#81). At that time, outside their house in Safed, cows were sleeping, and the author suggests that those cows may be dreaming of "large glass windows beyond which very odd things were happening" (#81). The book does not elaborate on the odd things that were happening inside that house, but after this scene, *Curriculum Vitae* ceases to speak about the family as a whole. In other words, while Yoel Hoffmann, the flesh and blood author, stayed married to his first wife until 1997 and his novel *Ephraim* situates that separation on the first day of the new millennium, *Curriculum Vitae* implies that the marriage actually ended earlier.

Ironically imitating a true CV, Hoffmann's book is peppered with dates, one of which is precise: "My mother died on January 27, 1941" (#1). The others simply note years: 1970, 1956 or 1983. This is true in all but one date, mentioned in segment 97: "Maybe ten years **before the end of the second millennium** my son Yotam came back from school with a Great Pyrenees dog" (#97)(emphasis mine). This formula "end of the millennium" is familiar to the readers of the 2003 *Ephraim* because it is the one Hoffmann uses there to announce the day he abandoned his wife: "on the last day of **the second millennium**, Ephraim takes out the suitcase and leaves"[18] (emphasis mine). In reality, Hoffmann did not leave his wife on the last day of the millennium, but rather in 1997. Curiously, the "end of the millennium" wording appears in *Curriculum Vitae*, only once: in segment 97. The use of the similar phrase then is a signal that, although *Curriculum Vitae* was published four years later, it tells the story that led to the events in *Ephraim*. But the intra-textual connection between these two works goes beyond a dramatic allusion to a date. In segment 97 of *Curriculum Vitae*, Hoffmann wants to send an SMS, a text message, of gratitude to the dog who lay in his yard before the end of the millennium. And behold, the parallel segment in *Ephraim* also involves a technologically delivered message, this one, more desperate.

> Oh the beloved of my heart. I'm using the printing
> machines of Keter publishing in order to tell you. […]. A kind of Morse
> code […]

Save… our… souls… Save… our…
souls…[19]

Immediately following Ephraim's Morse code, or text message, comes the actual scene of the hero's abrupt abandonment of his wife.

Yet despite the heartbreak of the separation, *Ephraim* ultimately turns toward the future, to a new millennium and a new love. The later *Curriculum Vitae*, on the other hand, looks back, using its declared genre to conjure up an entire life from memory: "What do we remember? The lake at Biwa and the houses across it. The cherry blossoms, and Auschwitz, Treblinka, Maidenak…" (#73). In his private code, Hoffmann enumerates here three significant memories. First, moments of grace with his first wife in October 1980 near Lake Biwa, which he eternalized in a Japanese-style poem in an iconic Japanese location: "(She sprinkles / perfume on the lobe of her ear / my wife of autumn)" (#73). The second memory, the cherry blossoms, represents Hoffmann's spiritual immersion in Japanese culture, the importance of which cannot be expressed in words.[20] The third is the collective Jewish memory of the Holocaust. Hoffmann was not in Europe during World War II, yet the Holocaust haunts him. In fact, elsewhere in *Curriculum Vitae*, he says, "the people in the crematorium […] the books we've written are dedicated to them. One explicitly. One allusively. And the others secretly" (#88). He adds that, "There isn't a single page from which smoke does not ascend" (#88).[21] In a feat of artistic magic only Hoffmann could perform, *Curriculum Vitae* merges the Japanese sensibility that inspired him so profoundly with the Holocaust. *Curriculum Vitae* presents quotations from the scholarly volume that Hoffmann authored in 1981 about the poems that Japanese write before they die.[22] These quotations, however, turn into a dirge for the Jews who perished in Europe. Seven Japanese poems, some copied verbatim from that book, are mixed with seven new poems that give voice to Jews going to their deaths. For example, the poem by the Japanese poet Minteisengan: "Fall, plum petals, / fall – and leave behind / the *memory* of scent" is followed by a Hoffmann original: "Oy Mireleh / where have we lost / little Moshe" or "What kind of tree / did we see on the way / to the crematorium" (#74). The meeting of the minimalism of Japanese aesthetic and the poems that Jews supposedly composed on their way to the death chambers shocks with its understatement. For those Jews, the brevity of the poem is not an artistic choice, but a representation of their impending execution. Furthermore, a chilling association could be made between the traditional practice of

cremation, evoked in some Japanese death poems, and the cremation of living Jews by the Germans. Finally, one of the texts that Hoffmann formats as a poem and interlaces with the Japanese ones in *Curriculum Vitae* is the ancient Jewish verse: "Hear O Israel / the Lord is our God, the Lord / is one" (#74). This is the biblical *shmaʿ* that a Jew says before his death. As the Japanese genre is Judaified, the memory of Auschwitz overpowers Japanese poetics.

Curriculum Vitae ends with a treatise on the nature of memory. How could it be that we, with our little skulls, contain the entire world? Our own world, as well as the world that we have seen throughout our lives, or in Hoffmann's words, "the great river of memories that we call life" (#97). In the final three segments of the book, he lists a catalogue of memories that capture large portions of his life, all preserved inside his skull: mountains and continents, a Taiwanese market, corpses of pigs, paintings of hell in a Taoist temple, sellers of coral and the body of Chang Kai-Shek. There is no hierarchy to those recollections. As is the case throughout the book, the consciousness of a dog, philosophical studies, prostitutes in Paris, and the airport in Osaka are equally important.

The randomness of memories is underscored by a multivalent metaphor that captures the essence of *Curriculum Vitae*: "a string on which pearls are strung" (#99). The string, or *ptil* in the Hebrew original, is cut and the "pearls scatter". "A cut string" or "*ptil nikpad*" is an idiomatic way to say in Hebrew that a life has been cut off (*ptil hayim nikpad*). As he writes his *Curriculum Vitae*, does Hoffmann foresee his own death? Is this entire work a poem before death? Of the images preserved in his skull, randomly scattered like pearls from a snapped string, the narrator collects one hundred, the same number as the segments of the book. Hoffmann wonders, "how many could I have gathered?", and answers, "At most a hundred" (#99).[23] Each one of the segments of *Curriculum Vitae* is, therefore, one pearl that was picked up by the author, a memory-pearl that was privileged to be written. Indeed, the last segment, number 100, alludes to death through its imagery: night, white sheets, and burial. White sheets symbolize both sleep and the shrouds used in the Jewish tradition. They are followed by a body embraced by the roots of trees beneath the ground. Prayers are then recited by crows, the black birds associated with death in many cultures.

To conclude, while chronological scrambling dominates Hoffmann's subversive *Curriculum Vitae*, the arrangement of segments within it follows an alternate order, a poetic or musical order. One of the forces that motivates Hoffmann's work is the pursuit of the proper or correct melody. This is evident not only in the multiple musical compositions he

evokes throughout his oeuvre, but more importantly, in his insistent search for the mother's voice and the sounds of the languages he heard as a child. Musical principles also direct him as he orchestrates his individual works. When I interviewed Hoffmann in May 1993, he said, "The story is not important. The main thing is the music. The ending [of a book] needs to be like the chord that ends the symphony".[24] Indeed, the final chord is where the key in which a piece of music has been written is the clearest. Throughout the work, the composer may change keys, but he must conclude with the key he chose as his base because the final chord frames the entire piece. While the world of sounds inside a work is rich and varied, the ending must always return home.

The last lines of *Curriculum Vitae* are: "Everything grows increasingly distant. Only the women linger, like those lights one sees along the horizon, during the winter night at the Pole" (#100). The final chord struck by this piece, then, is the inner light he received from the women in his life: his first wife, the woman who brought his three children into the world; the kind stepmother who raised him; and the woman who gave him life, his mother.

Notes

1 This appears in Hoffmann's 1989 *Bernhard* and his 1991 *Christ of Fish*. Yoel Hoffmann, *Bernhard*, (Jerusalem: Keter Books, 1989), p. iv. Translation mine.

2 This more extensive disclaimer appears in Hoffmann's 2001 book *The Shunra and the Schmetterling*.

3 Yoel Hoffmann, *Curriculum Vitae*, (Jerusalem: Keter Books, 2005), p. ii. Translation mine.

4 As Rachel Albeck-Gidron notes, "The question of the genre of Hoffmann's texts… may open the discussion of the uniqueness of his works… it is a borderline case between poetry and prose, dirge and comedy, etc." Rachel Albeck-Gidron, *Exploring the Third Option: A Critical Study of Yoel Hoffmann's Works* (Or Yehuda and Beer-Sheva: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir and Heksherim Institute, 2016), pp. 44-45. Translation mine. Yigal Schwartz argues that Hoffmann's entire oeuvre may be read as chapters of a fragmented post-Holocaust epos. Yigal Schwartz, "The Exploits of the Heart: A Proposal for Reading Yoel Hoffmann" *Odot: Journal for Essays and Literary Criticism,* Vol. 1, December 28 (2016). https://www.reviewbooks.co.il/1-1 I agree with both critics that at least a partial key to the riddle of Hoffmann's corpus lies in the solution to this question of genre.

5 For a full discussion of scrambling, see: Michael Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry*, (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp. 138-150.

6 Yoel Hoffmann, *Curriculum Vitae*, (translated from the Hebrew by Peter Cole; New York: New Directions, 2009), Segment 15. There are no page numbers in *Curriculum Vitae*, so I refer only to the segment number. Henceforth, when quoted, the segment number will be indicated in the body of the article, not in an endnote. I use Cole's translation unless otherwise noted.

7 S.Y. Agnon, "In the Prime of Her Life," *Al kapot haman'ul* (At the doorknob), (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1971), pp. 5-54, p. 5. Translated from the Hebrew by Gabriel Levin.

8 Amos Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, (translated from the Hebrew by Nicholas de Lange; New York: Harcourt, 2004), p. 520.

9 Nili Gold, "To Walk on the 'Inner Streets': Yoel Hoffmann's *Ephraim," On Liminality*, special issue of *Criticism & Interpretation: Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Culture*, Vol. 43, spring (2009), pp. 229-248; pp. 243-245 [in Hebrew].

10 Hoffmann, *Curriculum Vitae*, Segments 1, 7, and 12 among others.

11 On the relationship between Hoffmann's Israeli environment and his immigrant experiential stance, see: Albeck-Gidron, *Exploring the Third Option*, pp. 53-55

12 *Curriculum Vitae*, Segment 5

13 Yoel Hoffmann, "Katschen," *The Book of Joseph*, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1987), pp. 7-49, p. 26. Yoel Hoffmann, "Katschen," *Katschen and the Book of Joseph*, (translated from the Hebrew by David Kirss and Eddie Levenston; New York: New Directions, 1998), pp. 97-161, p. 124

14 Nili Gold, "Betrayal of the Mother Tongue in the Creation of National Identity," *Ideology and Jewish Identity in Israeli and American Literature*, (ed. by Emily Miller Budick; Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001) pp. 235-258, p. 240.

15 Yoel Hoffmann, *Bernhard*, (translated from the Hebrew by Alan Treister with Eddie Levenston; New York: New Directions, 1998), Segment 34.

16 Nili Gold, "Bernhard's Journey: The Challenges of Yoel Hoffmann's Writing," *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, No. 1, (1994), pp. 271-287, pp. 274-275

17 In her articles, Chana Herzig examines Hoffmann's ties to Buddhist thought and discusses Buddhism's non-binary nature in relation to life and death. Chana Herzig, "From the Heights of Galaxies and Through the Magnifying Glass," *Iton*, (1989), pp. 77-139; "A Yeke in Buddhist Garb," *Yedi'ot Aharonot*, July 7, (1989).

18 Yoel Hoffmann, *Ephraim*, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 2003), Segment 83. Translation mine.

19 Ibid., Segment 82

20 Hoffmann devoted his entire scholarly career to the study of ancient Japanese philosophy and religion. He also translated Japanese poetry extensively into Hebrew and English. For example, see the following widely praised translations: Yoel Hoffmann, *Le'an Ne'elmu Hakolot* (Where did the sounds go: Zen Stories and Haiku Poems), (Israel: Massada Ltd., 1980); *Japanese Death Poems: Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death*, (Rutland Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1986). For a discussion of Hoffmann's translations of Japanese writings, see: Doron Cohen, "Yoel Hoffmann as a Haiku Translator" in this issue of *Conference on Jewish Studies*, pp. 1-14, pp. 4-10.

21 Schwartz echoes the overwhelming power that the Holocaust has over Hoffmann's oeuvre as a whole. Schwartz, "The Exploits of the Heart."

22 Hoffmann, *Japanese Death Poems*. For a discussion of this work by Hoffmann, see article by Janine

Beichman in this issue of *Conference on Jewish Studies*.

23 My translation of Segment 99.

24 Author's interview with Hoffmann, Safed, Israel, May 1, 1993

Caesura and Holding in Yoel Hoffmann's Texts

Rachel Albeck-Gidron

A.

In the introduction to his book, *Where Did the Sounds Go: Zen Stories and Haiku Poems*, from 1980, Yoel Hoffmann wrote:

> [...] Haiku poems represent an attempt **to say something without saying anything**. The silence says more than the words, but remains unclear without the words. That is what the words are for, like the handful of ink strokes that figure in Chinese and Japanese landscape paintings, to emphasize the empty space, the nothingness. Haiku, in all its seasons, contains something of the beauty of a snowy winter landscape. We cannot perceive the landscape unless there is at least a single point that is not covered with snow, a single dot of color that accentuates the white landscape. The Haiku's words are that dot, and the meaning of the Haiku – the entire expanse [the snow] (page 15).

In this study, I will explore the status of the empty space, the silence, the caesura between the different numbered segments in Yoel Hoffmann's texts. I will suggest, in the spirit of a quotation from Hoffmann's description of haiku poems, that the **space** between two "stanzas" in Hoffmann's novels is the essence, the very idea that he wishes to express.

The text on both sides of this space is the patch of color, whose only purpose is to call attention to the snow, the main subject matter. I will discuss the issue of this space, this caesura from the perspective of the [individual] subject that emerges from this rhetoric of lacunae and spaces, or rather from the perspective of the subject's distress as it emerges from the rhetoric of lacunae and spaces and represents the very heart of the narrating voice in Hoffmann's text. Perhaps this is the very source of motivation and the impulse of the creative act.

In this study, I will not address the important and significant question of "nothingness" (or "emptiness") in Buddhist thought, despite its profound relevance to this issue. Nor will I explore the issue of the "nothingness" of the "Kyoto School," which involved major interfaces with the philosophies of Descartes, Heidegger and Zen, specifically in regard to the questions of nothingness and of dialectics and dichotomy. Hoffmann was clearly aware of this school and these issues in its texts from the period when he audited lectures at the University of Kyoto, in the early 1970s.

These are weighty and highly charged issues within this area of caesura, spaces and caesura's relationship with speech and being. But here I will deal with other structures and a different lexicon that can support the meanings of the issue not from a philosophical and metaphysical point of view, but rather from a psychoanalytical one. Using a lexicon of terms borrowed from the post-Melanie Klein school of psychoanalysis, I will define different presences of a subject in Hoffmann's fictional space.

I will then ask: what kind of deficiency, what kind of deprivation produces a creativity that appears in the form of fragmented, segmented rhetoric, a rhetoric whose caesurae, whose spaces are highlighted by so many forms – in terms of its typography, rhetoric, narrative and poetic genre. What I want to look into is which area of the psyche is marked by a highlighted caesura and how does that area construct a world.

B.

Hoffmann's works are described by him – and are identifiable by their form and content – as novels. In other words, they contain a long story plot in the form of fiction. They tell a story, and they have the fictional time and space of novels; they have characters, background, development. It may be difficult to point to a structure of "complication and resolution" in them, as demanded by Aristotle in *Poetics*; this is certainly an issue of a separate study of the works of Hoffmann, but we can clearly point to a process in them, and to what Frank Kermode called "eschatology," that is, a directionality of striving towards an end, towards a culmination.

However, in terms of their rhetoric, typographic layout and substance, his novels are constructed in the form of fragments, numbered segments, between which the space is accentuated and emphasized. This is the case starting with Hoffmann's first novel-like work, *Bernhardt*.

In Hoffmann's later novels, the basic form is maintained in which the text appears on only one page, opposite which is a blank page. Whether or not this is an "empty page" is, of course, a matter of interpretation.

C.

The first term I would like to present is one I already used in its disciplinary sense known to scholars of literature and poetry from the field of metrics and prosody: "caesura." As we know, a caesura is a metric break or pause in a poetic line, which divides the line into hemistichs or creates a break between two lines, etc. In terms of the poem's melody, as well as in terms of the relations between melody and meaning, a caesura can have a large range of meanings for notation,

interpretation and analysis, and just like any other metrical signs, it becomes an actual semiotic component of reality, rather than mere absence. That is to say that the caesura already offers a dialectic quality of presence and absence in the poetic dictionary, of a sign and a non-sign by the very fact of it being a sign.

But I would like to reinvest the term with the deeper meanings given to it by the psychoanalytic discourse of Wilfred Bion (1897-1979), following Freud's work, especially as articulated in his essay named for this term "Caesura." [2] With it I will start building the lexicon I will use to discuss the subject of the space.

Human life, suggests Bion in the wake of Freud, starts with a great "caesura", one that is unbridgeable and yet is bridged. It is the one from which every other caesura later in life will derive its strength and character – the caesura of the act of birth, of being born. This is the caesura between the state of the fetus, its modes of absorption, its sensory dimension, and the state of the baby after the event.

In 1977, Bion published this essay, and it has since served as a therapeutic work tool in the clinic, but also as a subject of discussion in its own right. In many senses, it crossed the border of psychoanalytic discourse and moved over to broader neighboring issues, as Bion himself suggests already at the beginning of his essay.

He introduces the subject with a series of quotes or epigraphs. For our subject, it is important to see that not only does he cite Freud – which is a given, since Freud was the first to point to the caesura, and he did so in the same sense as it is dealt with in Bion's article, and it in fact serves as the basis for Bion's thought on this matter – but he also cites Martin Buber in *I and Thou*. From Buber, Bion borrows the universal philosophical-experiential ramifications of the subject, expanding the concept's range of possibilities, and going far beyond the clinic.

Bion, following Freud, tries to show that there is continuity between the life of the unborn fetus and post-natal life. That is why both of these divisions can be seen as a single existence having a continuous cognitive, experiential, existential meaning. In the middle of this existence is a huge break, which is the event of birth. In Bion's view, many aspects of human life are affected by how this first caesura is experienced. Every aspect of life that involves a transition from one state or matter to another, even as mundane decision in everyday life, carries an echo of that first caesura and the way in which it was experienced and processed. And this has practical therapeutic implications.

The broad emotional, philosophical and perhaps transcendental meaning given to this break can be embodied in a quotation from Buber's *I and Thou*, which is also cited as an epigraph by Bion in the introduction to his essay as follows:

> "Every developing human child rests, like all developing beings, in the womb of the great mother – the undifferentiated, not yet formed primal world. From this it detaches itself to enter a personal life, and it is only in dark hours when we slip out of this again (as happens even to the healthy, night after night) that we are close to her again. But this detachment is not sudden [...] like that from the bodily mother" (M. Buber, *I and Thou*). (p. 38).

Here too we can talk about analogous Buddhist dimensions, but I will not address that here. In other words, the caesura is the embodiment, a reminder and presencing of that which can never be repeated: being in the huge, all-embracing bosom of the "great mother" in a state of perfect union with it. And at the same time, there is the separation from this primordial state, the monumental removal from it. The split, the fissure, remains. This removal is in of itself the individuation, the being of the "self." In other words, it is the possibility of life and its great joy, which is embodied in the multiplicity and the cleft (as exemplified by the Dionysian orgies, according to Nietzsche's interpretation, for example).

Toward the end of his essay, Bion cries out with all his heart:

> "Investigate the caesura; not the analyst; not the analysand; not the unconscious; not the conscious; not sanity; not insanity. But the caesura, the link, the synapse, the counter-transference, the transitive-intransitive mood. (pp. 54-55).

In that and in other respects discussed earlier, I have responded to his call in this study.

Another addition to the glossary that will help me discuss the workings of space in Hoffmann's writing is Winnicott's terms *holding* and *indwelling*. Both terms are used by Winnicott to describe the proper state of the mother-baby relationship (in which the mother, as part of her identification with her baby, "holds" it, in empathy, as a whole). Consequently, she also holds the possibility that emanates from this sound relationship to create integrative life, a normal mind-body relationship, a normal perception of subjects that are not me (objects) and generally good, caring and empathetic interpersonal relations.

In his *The Fear of Breakdown*, (1986), Winnicott writes:[3]

> The facilitating environment can be described as ***holding***, developing into ***handling***, to which is added *object-presenting*.
>
> In such a facilitating environment, the individual undergoes development which can be classified as integrating, to which is added in-dwelling (or psycho-somatic collusion) and then object-relating. (p.89)

> [...] primitive agonies
> From this chart, it is possible to make a list of primitive agonies (anxiety is not a strong enough word here).
> Here are a few:
> 1. A return to an unintegrated state. (Defense: disintegration.)
> 2. Falling forever. (Defense: self-holding.)
> 3. Loss of psycho-somatic collusion, failure of indwelling. (Defense: depersonalization).
> 4. Loss of sense of real. (Defense: exploitation of primary narcissism, etc.)
> 5. Loss of capacity to relate to objects. (Defense: autistic states, relating only to self-phenomena.)
> And so on (p. 89-90).

Here, he describes those cases that reach the clinic, situations in which normal holding and indwelling did not occur, and in which the individual suffers from varying degrees of disintegration and different types of anxiety associated with it.

In the written text, where the dominant features are separation rather than sequence, atomism rather than totality and logical poetic causality, the segment rather than the long, continuous text, might we not inquire about the "holding" dimension of the discourse, the holding dimension of the rhetoric and of the characterization, and of the fictional universe as a totality? It seems that the "indwelling" of the meaning within the language and of the image within the word also become a wish.

About a text in which caesura is the subject, in which holding is the wish, we can say, as Martin Buber put it in the epigraph cited by Bion: The Great Mother herself, is, like the absence, the metaphysical subject of the text, and she has the ability to be a metaphor for its utopia. And the question will be: What is it that this metaphor seeks to describe?

The question of empathy and caring, which Winnicott considers to be a direct result of normal holding, is an important one when discussing certain issues in Zen Buddhism which border in it. This chiefly involves two important concepts: "compassion" and "disattachment," concepts that at first blush appear contradictory. I will discuss this subject later on. At present, I would like to discuss the series of terms *caesura, holding*, and *indwelling* and to return to Hoffmann's text and the subject that he proposes and to that certain dimension that the Hoffmannesque subject suggests as poetics.

D. Exemplification

Let me focus, in the final section of my paper, on a caesura between two consecutive fragments in Hoffmann's novel *Guttapercha* (1993).[4] I chose this novel because it pursues a particular autobiographical dimension: The book deals with the life of a linguist named Franz, a scholar of isogloss, a German expatriate living in Israel, who travels to Japan with his beloved Lillian to explore certain linguistic aspects of the Japanese language. In Japan, he marries Lillian and they have a baby. He is involved in learning Japanese, and is in a dialogue with a Japanese professor of linguistics, Professor Takaotzi of Kyoto University.

Very typical of this subject is an aspect of the plot that is difficult to accept: As it happens, the book has another protagonist with a different name, Hugo Togenhaft, who has a similar yet different biography, except that he does not go to Japan and continues to live in Israel. He is described in one paragraph as being identical to, interchangeable with, the protagonist, Franz.[5] And further on, in yet another paragraph, Franz and Hugo are described as being identical with yet a third person, one named "Yoel Hoffmann," the character of the narrator, who for his part, it goes without saying, has his own identity, which needs to be distinguished from the biographical author Yoel Hoffmann who lives outside the fictional space, (to which, by the way, is added yet another character as an identity: Jehoiachin). In other words, in this novel, as in other novels by Hoffmann, questions of identity, unity, and their fissuring are present both as narrative content, as an interface between rhetoric and the real, and as a constant call to the reader to accommodate the impossible caesura, that is, to assume that different objects, which have individual idiosyncratic features and a personal biography of their own, are still, despite this existential and logical contradiction, one and the same. The reader is forced to create an active "holding," an especially challenging holding, for the sake of the narrative content in order to enable it to exist, and to "agree" to consider possible a universe containing characters and events. The holding is such a difficult challenge for the reader, because he must expand significantly the concept of "indwelling," the indwelling of the psyche inside the body, the indwelling of the individual inside his own body, so that he can accept a double or triple body that is actually one, and a triple psyche that is one person. In other words, the reader must accept a kind of "soft" arithmetic, which is usually enlisted by myths and religions, but not by novels and literature. Holding is the dominant distress experienced by the reader as a demand made of him that he cannot fully agree to, despite the flexible epistemology that he brings to his reading.

Let me now illustrate the **caesura, holding and indwelling** in terms of a poetic question and textual feature, that is in the sense of the claim that the text is the "patch of color," and the space, the caesura, is the snow: This is the subject of the artistic endeavor, its main point and purpose.

In fragments 154 and 155, the protagonist is already in Japan, his home, which is in a temple converted into a residence. He has just finished giving his baby a bath, and he looks out of the window into the autumn cityscape. Here is how Hoffmann describes it:

154

אם פורשים עיר פורשים אותה בסתיו.
מחלקים. כמו על לוח שח. את הפגודות.
זבובי הסתיו נחלשים מאד. אם מחפשים
מוצאים מתחת לעצים פגרי ציקדה.
מה שקשה זה למתוח קו רקיע. אדם נדחף
[כלומר מרגיש מן דחף] לשרטט קווים בלתי
אחראיים. קווי בריאה. קו אור גדול. קו
חושך. קווי עצים קדמוניים. או את צורת
המוות: מעגל ונקודה.

155

החלון שקוראים "עין הרוח" הוא הפיווט
[כלומר הציר] שעליו מתרחשים
האירועים.
צריך לראות איך פרנץ נשקף שם. את
המרחק שבין אוזניו. את קדקדו.
מה. הוא כפוף? אם הכפוף הגדול כפוף גם
הוא כפוף.

If you spread out a city spread it out in the fall. // Divide it. Like on a chess board. The pagodas. // Autumn flies are very weakened. If you look // you find cicada carcasses under the trees. // What is hard to stretch out is a skyline. If urged // [that is if it feels the urge] // to draw lines that are not // responsible. Creation lines. A great line of light. A line // of darkness. Lines of primordial trees. Or the shape of// death: circle and dot.

155

The window that is called “the eye of the wind” is the pivot // [meaning the axis] upon which occur // events. // Have to see how Franz is reflected there. The // distance between his ears. The crown of his head. // What. He’s bent? If the big bent is also bent // he is bent.

One can say many things about these two fragments and their continuity. But as I noted earlier, I am exploring here the caesura, not the analysand, not the poem, only the caesura.

I want to examine the place where the caesura was created between the fragments, that is, the last sentence of the fragment 154, and the first sentence of fragment 155:

> of darkness. Lines of primordial trees. Or the shape // of death: circle and dot.
>
> 155
>
> The window that is called "the eye of the wind" is the pivot // [meaning the axis] upon which occur // events.

Let us then enter this white space and cross through the fact that it is no more than blank paper, and restore to it the semiotic status it had when we read the text sequentially.

The last line was, as previously noted, the second half of a complete sentence, whose words are: "of death: circle and dot." The white space is filled, then, with death, which seems a natural metaphor for it, in analogy to eternity rising from the ocean of the word "circle" and in the finality – a kind of end for every form and vision – that arise from the semiotic equivalent of the word "dot," and especially the fact that it is accompanied by the grammatical symbol of the period, which immediately follows. (Here too, I will not address symbols of the type that could be dealt with here).

While a regular storyline mentions death by means of the denotation "death," the poetic form of the fragmentary work enables us to experience the tiny death, panic and loss of grip on the epistemological abyss. The final words of each fragment resonate powerfully as they open inner associations through a kind of conduit to the unconscious, made possible by the void that crosses the epistemological strata, of the pause.

Thus, the caesura forces the reader to retain the multiple meanings, all of which are impossible to take in, in the absence of any text. He is forced to "face" that thing that cannot be faced. To face the nothingness. To face the naked material. The paper itself. This refers to the nothingness that constitutes the naked reality, the suchness. [Once again, I will not address the specific Zen issue of this aspect at this time].

And therefore, the number 155 in the line after the space is like a return to the orderly, the rational, the anthropomorphic – it is salvation. The salvation intensifies as the reader moves to the words that follow next: "the window" – and it is a kind of escape hatch. Upon seeing the phrase "the eye of the wind" in this line – the reader actually breathes a sigh of relief.

This caesura is then exactly what Wilfred Bion says about the caesura: It is the thing that must not be crossed, but is nevertheless crossed, like a baby at birth.

Summary

The caesura is the great theme of Hoffmann's text, and his desire is the holding and indwelling of the soul in the body, of content in form. His desire is empathy and compassion, unity and rest, the opposites of conception and individuation. One might say that his question is the nothingness, to which he points by using the being. It is this secret that he learned during his years in Japan: the secret of the Zen literary genre form, to contain the void as its essence. To draw the void, to speak it. This secret led Hoffmann to his writing subject, in order to express the deprivation that this art seeks to describe: the deprivation of maternal holding, as a metaphor, as an experience, as the "human condition."

Let me conclude by saying that I am not speaking here of a Japanese influence in the pure and independent sense of "Japanese." This is a Japanese possibility as seen through the Hebrew lens of an Israeli immigrant, the son of immigrants from Center Europe, who moves between languages, between belonging, between different modes of "holding" that different civilizations create and pass on. This is Japanese as seen through a Hebraism such as this, one that is borrowed along with its patterns, as a kind of image, learning and wonder. This Hebraism borrows space and void from haiku poems, and on the other hand, lends biblical Hebrew's Chaos and the European perception of the subject to a reading of haiku poems through the prism of Hebraism as Hoffmann embodies it – all the while drawing on the haiku poems' subtle ability to mark nothingness.

Notes

1 *Where Did the Sounds Go: Zen Stories and Haiku Poems*, [Hebrew] translated from Chinese and Japanese with introduction and commentary by Yoel Hoffmann, (Ramat Gan, Massada, 1980), p. 15.

2 Wilfred R. Bion, *Two Papers: The Grid and Caesura*, (Karnac Books, London, 1989).

3 D. W. Winnicott, 'The Fear of Breakdown', in: Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd, Madeline Davis (Eds). *Psycho-Analytic Explorations*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1989), pp. 87-95.

4 Yoel Hoffmann, *Guttapercha*, (Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem, 1993).

5 Fragment number 52.

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「ユダヤ教と日本文化：ヨエル・ホフマン記念特集」

Judaism and Japanese Culture:
Studies in Honor of Yoel Hoffmann

Part II

Philosophy in the Context of Yoel Hoffmann's Work

Yoel Hoffmann and the Meaning of Life

Iddo Landau

Approaches to the meaning of life can be divided in various ways. One classical division is between optimists and pessimists, that is, between those who think life can be meaningful and those who think it cannot. Another common distinction is between theists and atheists, namely, between those who think that life cannot be meaningful if there is no God and afterlife and those who think that it can. A third familiar division is between subjectivists and objectivists, that is, between those who take meaningfulness to depend on our subjective feeling and those who take meaningfulness to be objective. And yet a fourth possible distinction is between perfectionists and non-perfectionists, which will be the focus of this paper.

Perfectionists about the meaning of life are those who hold that in order to be meaningful, lives must include some excellence or difficult and rare accomplishments. Lives that lack these characteristics are meaningless. Meaningful lives, then, have to rise above the ordinary. According to this view, only people such as Michelangelo, Beethoven, Newton, Gandhi, or Aristotle lead meaningful lives, whereas your life or mine is meaningless. Perfectionists about the meaning of life are a bit like the perfectionist student who feels that she has failed after receiving a mark of less than a 100 in an exam. For her, a mark of a 98, a 91, an 86, or a 72 is like a zero. She fails to notice the continuum between a hundred percent and a zero. Similarly, a perfectionist would hold that if she does not write like Shakespeare, she should not write at all, or that if she is not as wise and deep as Aristotle, she should stop doing philosophy altogether.

Non-perfectionists, on the other hand, see a continuum of degrees of meaningfulness, and hold that perhaps Rembrandt, Einstein, or George Washington led more meaningful lives than you or I, but that our lives, too, may well be meaningful. For non-perfectionists, meaning is found not only in perfection or excellence, but also in the simple things in life. While perfectionists tend to be pessimistic about the meaning of life, non-perfectionists tend towards optimism. Traditionally, perfectionism dominated discussions on the meaning of life. Thinkers such as Spinoza, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Camus, as well as modern writers on the topic such as Nozick, Hanfling, Bond, and Brogaard and Smith, have endorsed perfectionism.[1] But there are also important and interesting non-perfectionist positions, such as those advanced by Emerson, Huxley, Taylor, Wolf,

Baier, and Trisel,[2] and today non-perfectionism is becoming more dominant.

We may identify perfectionism and non-perfectionism about the meaning of life not only in philosophy. For example, in Western painting we can see the shift from representing almost exclusively great religious, mythical, and historical events and figures—mostly gods, saints and heroes—typical of medieval and renaissance art, to depicting ordinary people, situations, and everyday objects, more typical of 17th century Dutch art and of Impressionist paintings. And in prose, too, we can identify some works that have a non-perfectionist message. For example, in Voltaire's Candide, we read how Candide, Pangloss and their friends, after taking part in many dramatic escapades, settle for a simple life of work in the garden. Hermann Hesse's Siddhartha, in the eponymous novel, after having tried the options of asceticism and meditation in the forest, and then of carnal pleasures and material success in the city, finally finds his calling by working as a simple ferryman who helps people cross the river. Hemingway's short story *Big Two-Hearted River* tells us how Nick Adams, after returning from the horrors and senselessness of World War I, and perhaps suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, finds some solace in fishing. Tolstoy's Levin in *Ana Karenina* and Pierre in *War and Peace* find meaning in life, towards the end of these novels, not in the exceptional and great but rather in simple family life. Tolstoy emphasizes that both Levin and Pierre love their wives dearly and contentedly, but that their love is not the romantic, or romanticized, love in which lovers idealize and idolize each other.

In this paper I focus on one of Yoel Hoffmann's books, *The Heart is Katmandu*, and argue that it, too, is part of the non-perfectionist streak as regards meaning in life in philosophy, culture and prose.[3] I suggest that this book, too, proposes that value and meaning is found not only in the exceptional and excellent, but also in the quotidian and common, where we rarely look for meaning. Many of us are like a person who has several bank accounts, but has forgotten about the particular account that contains the majority of his funds. This person believes he is poor because he does not remember that he has much more than meets the insensitive eye.

The Heart is Katmandu is composed of what might be called prose poems, 237 in number, some of which are difficult to decipher. For lack of a better term, and following Rachel Albeck-Gidron's term, I will refer to these prose poems as "fragments."[4] Many of these fragments describe the lives and developing love between the two protagonists, Yehoahim and Batya, who live in Haifa, Israel. It is sometimes unclear whether the fragments describe the thoughts of the author or of the protagonists, although in some cases the author mentions that a particular thought should be attributed to Yehoahim or to Batya.

The book has much to do with issues traditionally taken to relate to the meaninglessness of life. The lives of Yehoahim and Batya are not easy, and include events that sometimes lead people to wonder whether their lives are meaningful or even to contemplate suicide. Yehoahim is 43 years old. His wife left him, and he seems quite lonely. The book offers no descriptions of his interactions with friends or loved ones, except for Batya. Nor do we read of any job or work in which he is engaged, or of any purpose or project that preoccupies him. He seems very unhappy, and from time to time he suffers from stretches of desolation. For example, in fragment 16 we read:

> Suddenly, with no reason, his heart breaks. The red heart, which has seen all sorts of things—streets, candles burning in the night, countless feet—the heart gives way out of loneliness and dread. There is no longer anything to hold on to (Yehoahim thinks) and he weeps like a jackal, or an owl, or a legendary river that sweeps along, with neither purpose nor end.[5]

We also read that occasionally Yehoahim goes through sudden bouts of pain, sometimes crying, as in fragment 98:

> These (Yehoahim thinks) are the legs I will lead to the Bank Café, a grasshopper like me, vay, and he cries over the sink, into the stainless steel. Something ascends through this internal fire and burns toward the ceiling: the life that is so dreadfully only for once.

Some of his dreams, or perhaps hallucinations, are frightening. In fragment 19 we read of a scene reminiscent of a Hieronymus Bosch painting in which many images seem to arise from Yehoahim's mouth. Some of them, such as turquoise birds hidden in the reeds, are beautiful. But as they progress they become less pleasant, and eventually, as if in a nightmare, "extremely dark, limbless creatures, composed of the bodies of memories" emerge.

Likewise, as is typical of people concerned with the meaning of life, Yehoahim is preoccupied with death. He considers, not theoretically but rather personally, both his own death and the death of those close to him. We already saw in fragment 98 how Yehoahim is in pain and cries when realizing that we live only once. But death also appears in many other places in the book. In fragment 17, for example, we read

> Now he is thinking: I had a dog and the dog died. I had a woman and the woman left. I have seen cadavers. The empty shell of a man, and I have heard the terrible noise that is beneath the surface of the world. He lies in bed and counts his limbs: Ten. Two. One. In a little while (he thinks) the heart will go still.

Likewise, in fragment 186 Yehoahim muses to himself that he is alive, but could have been dead, and fragment 221 says that "Death stands in the air, quite naturally, in the way one takes one's place at the table for lunch."

Related to Yehoahim's intense unhappiness and his interest in death is his suicidal tendency. Fragment 89 describes how "All of a sudden, as though for no reason, he picks up a knife and cuts into the flesh of his arm. Blood comes out of the cut skin and drips into the sink." Yehoahim's suicidal tendency is apparent also in fragment 136, in which we are told "Yehoahim requires extraordinary strength not to die." Since there is no reference in the text to any terminal sickness, it seems that Yehoahim has an urge to die, or to kill himself, and in order to resist this urge he must collect all his strength.

Up to now I have focused on Yehoahim. But Batya, too, does not have an easy life, and some of what we hear of her also relates to the meaninglessness of life, even if not as intensely as with Yehoahim. She too does not have a family, although in her case it is she who has left her partner, Robert. She is a single mother to a baby with Down syndrome. As with Yehoahim, there is no mention of friends or of a job. And like Yehoahim, she too is subject, even if less frequently, to difficult moods that are not caused by any specific unpleasant event. Fragment 184 narrates how Batya thinks to herself that she is going toward love almost out of desperation. In fragment 182 tears just stream down Batya's face after an inner voice tells her to cry, for no reason, while she is walking back home from the medical center. Admittedly, crying is not always bad. Sometimes people cry from happiness. But the fragment tells us that tears stream down Batya's cheeks like worn plaster crumbling and falling from the walls of old houses. This analogy does not bring to mind anything good or happy but, rather, connotes decomposition and decay. The text continues with Batya thinking that there is no end or purpose to things,[6] but that nevertheless she is walking under the sun. The expression "under the sun" seems to allude to Ecclesiastes, the biblical text that raises questions relating to the meaning of life. The expression "under the sun" appears often in Ecclesiastes—thirty times—and nowhere else in the Old Testament,[7] and in almost all thirty cases in verses that suggest that life is meaningless. There are also more allusions to the meaning of life in *The Heart is Katmandu*, such as the mention of Nietzsche's theme of the death of God (fragment 135), or the description of Batya's baby crying as if from *Weltschmerz* (fragment 136).

Up to now I have tried to establish that the meaning, or perhaps meaninglessness, of life is one of the themes of *The Heart is Katmandu*. I should now like to suggest that this book, too, could be typified as belonging to the non-perfectionist tradition as regards the meaning of life. The book avers

that there is much value also in the small, ordinary things in life. Its heroes, or rather anti-heroes, find some relief and consolation in the simple and mundane rather than in the transcendent, absolute, or ideal. The trivial, the book suggests, is often not trivial at all.

Take, for example, the text's use of "Halleluiah," originally a religious term, most densely used in Psalms 111-117 and 145-150 in the Old Testament as a way to praise God (which is the term's literal meaning in Hebrew) or to thank God for helping the righteous and performing great acts of salvation. However, although fragment 12 opens with "Hallelujah," punctuated with an exclamation mark, no great miracle, mystical union, or wondrous achievement follows the interjection. Following this "Hallelujah!" the text only indicates:

> The sun finally sets and, as though at a concert, an invisible conductor turns on the streetlights. Variatzia the waitress gathers the coffee pots and wipes off the surface of the table with a damp cloth. Maybe because of the cloth, or the motion of her hand, or her fingernails, which are red, Yehoahim is suddenly filled with joy.

In another passage, from the latter part of fragment 220, "Hallelujah" is also employed in a non-perfectionist way: "Hallelujah! Thanks for all the graces, like for instance the skin that envelops us or the fingernails, and also for the shadow that the kettle casts and for the lamp within which the filament burns like, in the Bible, that bush." The bush is the biblical *sneh* that Moses saw burning without being consumed (Exodus 3, 1-6), and from which God talked to Moses and appointed him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. The narrative of the burning bush recounts an extremely dramatic and important religious event in the Old Testament. But the book compares this miraculous, mystical event with the common modern light bulb whose filament is illuminated without withering away. By employing this unlikely analogy, the author suggests that small, common things can be as meaningful as dramatic, holy events, if we are ready to open up and experience them as such.

The notion that if we take the trouble to be sensitive enough we can find great value in the common and mundane also appears in fragment 15, where the text focuses closely on a relatively ordinary item, a philodendron plant in a pot, calling us to de-trivialize it: "In the kitchen there stands a clay pot, and in it—a philodendron plant. No one knows its first name, but it has a clear articulation: Leaf. Leaf. Leaf. Leaf. And it continues today what it started yesterday." De-trivialization is achieved here not only through focus and sensitivity, but also through naming. The same is true of fragment 47, which suggests that we give a name to each step we walk. Similarly, in fragment 100 Hoffmann writes: "The unbelievable: He walks step after step to the Bank Café, in an infinite space, on the external crust of a planet." Thus, a very common event, walking, is described

in a way that makes it special, new, and even exciting. Likewise, in fragment 160 Yehoahim understands that the act of loving or opening up to another is itself a miracle, and in fragment 165 the baby with Down syndrome, Yonatan, laughs because he learns the wonder, Hoffmann writes, of having ten fingers. The non-perfectionist sentiment in the book is again expressed in the following passage from fragment 204: "Then the happiness spreads. She acknowledges the quotidian when making a single act: attaching socks to a line or rinsing a teaspoon."

A little more than half-way through the book, where a meeting between Yehoahim and Batya is described, we learn about Batya's non-perfectionism, which Yehoahim does not yet grasp:

> Batya turns on the radio and they hear the news: the laundry in such and such a place has dried faster than expected. There is an apple that is eaten by worms. Dust covers the kitchenware and someone is crossing the street. In the place where she is, on the other side of the world (Yehoahim thinks), the sun certainly rolls over twice, and he touches Batya's back like wind on soil. This, then, is happiness, he thinks. And because of that his heart breaks like the sides of the mountain when the lava rises" (fragments 143-144).

Usually, the news relates what could be considered great or important events, such as earthquakes, wars, or exceptional achievements. But for Batya the news has to do with what she and the author take to be *really* important, that is, the simple, mundane events that form the foundation of a life, such as the laundry drying on the line, dust covering the pans in the kitchen, or worms in an apple. Yehoahim understands that this is happiness, and his heart so to say breaks, because he knows that he cannot yet sense things as Batya does. But although he does not yet sense this type of happiness, Yehoahim does understand, thanks to his relationship with Batya, what this happiness is and where to look for it. And this, too, is important progress. As the book advances, so does Yehoahim, who learns to actually see the good, important and valuable in simple, everyday life. Thus in fragment 229 Yehoahim, like Yonatan the baby in fragment 165, realizes that "The number of my and her fingers and toes (Yehoahim thinks) is forty together, and he is filled with wonder." Note that earlier, in fragment 3, after Yehoahim and Batya meet for the first time, Yehoahim also observes that his and Batya's toes add to twenty, but at that early point he notes it as a trivial detail, without being filled with wonder.

Interestingly, the author briefly mentions, but does *not* develop, a sphere in which Yehoahim and Batya could have found meaning, namely literature. Hoffmann hints that both Yehoahim and Batya know something about literature. In fragments 185 and 186 we read that Yehoahim dreams the words "the mountain falls on me" and then thinks to himself that he could have been dead but is, in fact,

alive. This suggest that Yehoahim is familiar with S.Y. Agnon's short story *Fernheim*, in which we hear about a certain Karl Nice, who was thought to be dead because , as Agnon tells us, a mountain fell on him, a somewhat odd way to describe what was probably an avalanche or a landslide. Karl Nice afterwards turns out to be alive. Likewise, two fragments earlier, in fragment 183, we learn that Batya is reminded, for a reason that she herself does not understand, of the words *the streets of the river*, which is the name of Uri Zvi Greenberg's 1951 book of poems whose theme is the Holocaust. The explanation appears immediately afterwards, when we are told that when Batya sees the thin arms of the nurse Pirhia "she looks off in another direction." The thinness of the hands, which is so unpleasant for Batya that she has to turn her eyes away, must have reminded Batya, unawares, of pictures of starved inmates in concentration camps, and thus brought to mind, by association, the name of Greenberg's book, although Batya herself does not understand this relation of associations. Both Yehoahim and Batya, then, seem to be more familiar with modern Hebrew literature than the typical Israeli, and they may have been capable of finding meaning in literature, as some people indeed do. But this path to meaning is only mentioned, and then not pursued in the book, perhaps because it would have portrayed Batya and Yehoahim as finding meaning in something more exalted and special than the ordinary and mundane. Batya and Yehoahim find their happiness in the ordinary things in life.

Admittedly, at the end of the book non-perfectionism is mixed with perfectionism, as the end describes also extraordinary, miraculous events, such as in fragment 237: "It's hard to believe, but suddenly the sun is shining. At half past 9 in the evening it's shining on the ceiling … Also the caption 'This is a family' passes across the ceiling as if a light plane is carrying it … ." But there is also much that is non-perfectionist at the end. While the caption "This is a family" carries the connotation of the Christian Holy Family, the light plane that carries this caption is typical of commercial advertisements for soft drinks and the like. Similarly, we read in fragment 230 that when Batya invites Yehoahim to lie down beside her "it's hard to describe the simplicity of the act." Likewise, the ordinary objects in the room are conceived differently, freshly: "Within the room, everything is created anew: the twin bed. The dresser, etc. like big icebergs rising up out of the water. The names too are created…" (fragment 237). The non-perfectionist approach also appears in the way that this love story diverges from the genre of romantic fiction. Unlike most romantic stories, this one lacks an extraordinary event. There are neither great conflicts nor great achievements. There is hardly a plot. And although we learn that our anti-hero and anti-heroine eventually find a degree of happiness and that their condition greatly improves, what they achieve differs from what lovers achieve in generic love stories. Here, the "happy ending" is neither very

happy nor really an end. True, the book concludes when Yehoahim and Batya are happily together. However, the lovers do not meet in a meadow full of flowers and birds or at a lake on top of a mountain with a beautiful sunset in the background. Rather, they are in a much more conflicted, tense condition. Batya screams, perhaps climaxing sexually, and Yehoahim almost faints, but at the same time Robert, Batya's ex-husband, keeps knocking on the door and shouting that he wants it opened, Batya tells Yehoahim not to open it, Yonatan the baby cries, and Hoffmann mentions Edvard Munch's unsettling painting *The Scream* (fragments 233-235). All of these bring tension into what is often described, at the end of romantic novels, as a perfect, harmonious event. In generic love stories there is a radical difference between the bitter, troubled life before the happy ending and the sweet, trouble-free life expected to follow the happy end. But Yehoahim and Batya, it seems, did not completely overcome all their difficulties. The only difference is that at the end of the book they are in a better position to *cope* with the difficulties they must face. The reader is also left with the impression that both protagonists are likely to face many more ups and downs in their lives, even romantically. But, nonetheless, we feel happy for them, and congratulate them for finding something truly good and valuable in the regular, un-assuming, non-excellent aspects of life, aspects in which one can find a lot of joy if one is open to the possibility. And perhaps we may even learn something for our own lives from Batya, from Yehoahim, and from Yoel Hoffmann here.

Notes

1 Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, in *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, ed. and trans. Edwin M. Curley, vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 617; Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* and *Repetition*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 34, 38; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), 458, 506; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen, 1966), 566; Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage, 1991), 17–22; Oswald Hanfling, *The Quest for Meaning* (New York: Blackwell, 1988), 24; Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), 582; E. J. Bond, *Reason and Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 159–161; Berit Brogaard and Barry Smith, "On Luck, Responsibility and the Meaning of Life," *Philosophical Papers* 34, no. 3 (2005), 446.

2 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Experience," in *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: Modern Library, 1950), 351; Aldous Huxley, "Swift," in *Do What You Will* (London: Watts, 1936), 79–80; Richard Taylor, "The Meaning of Life," in *The Meaning of Life*, ed. E. D. Klemke, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 174–175; Susan Wolf, "Happiness and Meaning: Two

Aspects of the Good Life," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 14, no. 1 (1997), 224; Kurt Baier, "The Meaning of Life," in Klemke, *Meaning of Life*, 126–129; Brooke Alan Trisel, "Futility and the Meaning of Life Debate," *Sorites* 14 (2002), 75–80.

3 Yoel Hoffmann, *The Heart is Katmandu*, translated by Peter Cole (New York: New Directions, 2001). All citations are from this translation, sometimes slightly modified.

4 Rachel Albeck-Gidron, "Everything Has a Name and the Name Itself Has a Name: Onomatopoeia as a Wish in the Novel *The Heart is Katmandu* by Yoel Hoffmann" (in Hebrew), *Criticism and Interpretation* 38 (2005): 141-160.

5 Unlike Cole, I translated here the Hebrew אימה as *dread* rather than as *fear*, as the latter is usually understood to be object specific, while Yehoahim's emotional reaction seems to be general.

6 This echoes Yehoahim's sentiment in fragment 16. In both cases Hoffmann employs the Hebrew word Tichla תכלה.

7 Ecclesiastes I 3,5,9,14, II 11,17, 18, 19, 20, 22, III 16, IV 1, 3, 7, 15, V 12, 17, VI 1, 5, 11, VIII 9, 15, 17, IX 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, X 5.

A Philosophy of “Death Poems”

Masato Goda

Our eyes can see various objects in the external environment, but they cannot see themselves. In fact, we need a mirror in order to see our own face. This is what Jacques Lacan calls ‘‘mirror stage’’. However it can be said that any external objects such as trees, flowers, water, sky, other persons etc. can serve as a mirror for us. Anyway, just as Rousseau said on the difficulty human beings have in knowing themselves, it is very difficult for the Japanese, for example, to be aware of the particularities of their own culture through their own eyes. As for me, I have learned a lot about Japanese culture by reading much literature written by foreign writers and scholars, from which I cite *The Japanese Curios of Autumn* (1889) by Pierre Loti (1850-1923), *The Black Bird in the Rising Sun* (1926) by Paul Claudel (1868-1953), *Chrysanthemum and Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture* (1946) by Ruth Benedict (1887-1948), *The Voluntary Death in Japan* (1984) by Maurice Pinguet (1929-1991), and *Japan as a System which cannot make People Happy* (1994) by Karel van Wolferen (1941-).

Nowadays the frequent suicidal attacks or suicide bombings in various regions of the world terrorize us and people worldwide, apart from the Japanese, call these ‘‘Kamikaze’’, referring to the suicidal attacks the Japanese army dared to attempt at the end of the Second World War. Nevertheless, despite the dramatic *hara-kiri* suicide committed by Mishima Yukio, we Japanese live as if the tradition of Hara-kiri has totally disappeared. However, over the last eighteen years, thirty thousand people or even more have committed suicide every year. But I don’t think we’ve made any sincere effort to understand the profound reasons for this phenomenon.

Two years after the publication of research by Maurice Pinguet, Yoel Hoffmann published his *Japanese Death Poems* where he asks, in our place as it were, what the Japanese think about death and dying (p.28). I repeat: how do the Japanese think, what do they think about death and dying? And why do the Japanese write about their imminent death in either *tanka* or *haiku* poems? To tell the truth, this association of ideas surprised me very much. However, regarding this, a French literary critic immediately came to mind. Who is he? His name is Maurice Blanchot (1907-2003), well known as the author of *Literary Space* (1955), *Book to Come* (1959) and so on, and as the best

friend of a great Jewish philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas.

Since his earliest essays, Blanchot continually associated death with literary work. Regarding this, Blanchot even spoke about ''the right to die'' (*droit à mourir*) not about ''the right to live''(*droit à vivre*). So what does ''the right to die'' mean here? Blanchot writes as follows: ''The writer who writes a work does away with himself (*se supprimer*) in his work, and he confirms himself in it''. In order for a writer to be a writer, work is necessary. But work is not the only product of a writer. On the contrary, it is only his work that justifies his existence as a writer. In this sense, a writer confirms himself in his work. However the situation is not so simple. As soon as I write ''I'' on this paper, this ''I'' stops coinciding with the man who has just written this word, and begins to live a life of its own so to speak, without relation to the existence of the writer. The *énoncé* ''I'' is quite different from the *énonciation* ''I.'' The former is a kind of unknown and external stranger to the latter. That is why Franz Kafka said that ''I entered literature when I could write 'he' (impersonal) in the place of 'I'''.

''Death'' is a fundamental metaphor for this alienation of the writing subject outside of his limit. To generalize this fact, Blanchot came to see the ''work of death'' (*travail de mort*) at the bottom of language; and to this Freudian expression Blanchot gave an original meaning by referring to an aphorism we find in Stephane Mallrmé's *Divagations* (*Ramblings*).

> I say: a flower! and, outside of the forgetting where my voice banishes any outlines, the suave idea itself of the flower, the absent from all the bouquets, raises musically as something other than calyx we have known.
>
> Je dis: une fleur! et, hors de l'oubli où ma voix relègue aucun contour, en tant que quelque chose d'autre que lescalices sus, musicalement se lève, idée même et suave, l'absente de tous bouquets.

Even if a word directly designates the flower in front me, this word annihilates not only this flower but also all the existing flowers in the world and raises the idea of "flower" that we cannot find elsewhere in this world. An impossible idea, so to speak. Where is such idea of flower? Nowhere. And Blanchot named it ''space of death''(*espace de la mort*). Poems or ''poiein'' by Mallarmé as well as by Rilke were nothing but the approach to, or exploration of this space. According to Blanchot, worry about works merged with ''suicide'' in Mallarmé; as for Rilke, the same worry drove him to research a more ''accurate'' relation to death than voluntary death. The fact that their efforts were as it were, endless testifies to that ''space of death'', even if it were always open and already here, as ''impossible'' to reach in this world of beings.

In the second half of the seventies, Blanchot was very much read by Japanese students. Since when have Japanese read Blanchot? As far as I know, Tanabe Hajime was one of the first who mentionned Blanchot’s *Literary Space* in his ‘‘Notes on Mallarmé’’ written in 1961. Do you know Tanabe Hajime? Tanabe was one of the greatest philosophers in modern Japan. If we can call Nishida Kitaro our first philosopher, Tanabe is our second. Tanabe was born in 1885 and died in 1962. His name is linked to his grand theory called ‘‘Logic of Species’’ which, as a new ontology of Nation-State, made an enormous impact on many Japanese intellectuals and students facing the imminence of war. It cannot be denied that ‘‘Logic of Species’’ more or less served as the ideology for total mobilization.

Yoel Hoffmann cites the remark made by a famous scholar of German literature named Takahashi Yoshitaka (1913-1995) in his *Death and the Japanese* (1959).

> A certain Japanese professor has defined Japanese culture as a ‘‘culture of death’’. In a long essay, he argues that the ‘‘collective unconsciousness’’ of the Japanese is governed by a strong attraction toward death. His theory somehow explains even the peculiar five- and seven-beat rhythm that characterizes Japanese poetry. ‘‘If Freud was correct,’’ his thesis concludes, ‘‘and the death wish is a basic desire in all human culture, then it can be admitted that one culture in particular may represent that desire’’.

1959 was the very year that Tanabe published his ‘‘Todesdealektik’’(Death’s dialectic) in order to celebrate the 70th anniversary of his lifelong rival, Martin Heidegger.

For example,Tanabe gave a lecture titled ‘‘Death-Life’’（死生）to the students of Kyoto Imperial University who would soon be mobilized. This was on May 19th in 1943. Tanabe explained the title of his lecture.

> “Death-Life”（死生）is an expression used in Confucianism; we say ‘‘Death and Life’’（生き死に）in Japanese and ‘‘Life-Death’’（生死）which originally signifies metempsychosis, whereas we use it in ordinarily life in the sense of ‘‘Death and Life”. I too, would like to use either Death-Life or Life-Death in their ordinarily sense without making the strict distinction between them (8/247).

Tanabe enumerates three possible attitudes toward Life-Death. First, the naturalistic attitude which consists of regarding death as well as life as a natural event we cannot control. It resembles the Stoic’s position according to which it is inutile to think about death or about life. Spinoza said the more a human being becomes free, the less he thinks about death. On the contrary, in the second attitude we actively consider death-life as our own problem because death and life are bound to

one another inseparably, so life is always haunted by death. Martin Heidegger's philosophy can be classed in this category. In his philosophy, death is the limit (Grenze) of existence; and in our ordinarily life, something calls us to make resolutions in the face of death.

These two attitudes did not satisfy Tanabe. The first attitude cannot explain the birth of religions which he said, must be caused by anguish concerning death-life. Just like Hoffmann, Tanabe remarked that even very famous Zen monks had been drawn to religion by the fear of dying. As for the second attitude, it conceives death as only an ideal and not as something concrete. And Tanabe asks himself: are there ways of renewing life, not by such an abstract death but by really dying? And he answers "yes".

> I cannot name the third position; but let's call it temporarily, "the practicable position". It consists not in idealizing death, but in really dying. However, this seems very fantastic. Because we cannot think if we are dead. ''Practice'' signifies to really die. Practice cannot be practice without dying really. Plato said philosophy is nothing but the ''exercise of dying''; exercise of dying is impossible in thought only; I myself have to die really in order to exercise death (8/256).

You may think that Tanabe spoke about the ''impossible'', but Tanabe thought it was rationally possible to distinguish between the second and third positions. The second position signifies a resolution to die; but death here is conceived only as possible someday. On the contrary, the third position which Tanabe called ''decision to die''（決死）conceived death not only as possible but necessary or ineluctable. In this respect, I'd like to quote an impressive passage: ''Hiersein throws itself there. This means life throws itself into death; so life and death come to replace one another and we can overcome the alternative life and death'' (8/257).

''Decision to die'' signifies to throw oneself into death; but if I survived after this decision, my survival signifies ''resurrection'': ''dead I'' is revived. What is important here is that the link between the decision to die and resurrection is not accidental at all. It does not mean that if a Pilot-Kamikaze survived accidentally, he would be resurrected. ''Decision to die'' implies necessarily ''resurrection'', so that paradoxically we can live at the same time as really dying and really being resurrected. Needless to say, Tanabe's lecture encouraged willy-nilly the spirit called *sange* (dispersion of flowers) at this time.

After the defeat of Japan, Tanabe forced himself to stop writing and but later published the *Philosophy as Metanoia*. I cannot detail here the changes which occurred in the philosophy of Tanabe. But in spite of these changes Tanabe seemed to retain the motif ''Death-Life.'' In fact, after 1950, Tanabe returned to this problema by referring to Zen buddhism, in particular to Suzuki

Daisetu on the one hand, and on the other poets such as Paul Valéry, Stephane Mallarmé and Reinar Marya Rilke which he read for the first time.

In the text titled ‘‘Memento mori’’, Tanabe refered to a *koan* of Zen Buddhism at the time of Tang. Two Zen monks made a visit of condolence. While striking the coffin, the young monk Zengen asked his teacher Dougo: ‘‘Is this life or death’? But Dougo answered that ‘‘It is neither life nor death’’. On their way back, Zengen posed the same question again to his teacher and said to him ‘‘If you don’t answer, I will hit you’’. The teacher didn’t answer, so Zengen hit his teacher. After the death of Dougo, Zengen posed the same question for the third time to his superior, Sekisou, who answered: *Iwazi-iwaji* (Unsayable-unsayable). At last Zengen came to understand that life and death, despite the fact that they distinguished one from another as incompatibles, do not conform to the law of contradiction, and that we cannot decide if it is life or death.

Thus, in the world ordered both by the law of conjunction (~and~) and the law of contradiction (either~or~) opens the space (*espacement*) of ‘‘neither~nor~’’, from which the word neutral (*neutrum*) is derived. I cannot help but remind myself that Blanchot characterized the ‘‘space of death’’ as ‘‘neutral’’. In other words, man is neither dead nor alive in the ‘‘space of death’’. As seen above, Tanabe at the time of war said that the ‘‘space of death’’ opened itself for the man who had already decided to die and that by really dying this man could be resurrected. Then what did Tanabe say about this point in 1958?

> In general, when man, facing the alternative of death or life, decides to reject actively his own ‘‘self’’, he can keep, while being dead, a tense relationship with life, and what is more, transform death into life’’ (13/169).

Tanabe had not changed at all. In fact, Tanabe wrote of Master Dogen (1200-1253) in 1939, that there are both death and life in the absolute reality of *Zenki*（全機）. *Zenki* signifies all the functions of the universe; and Tanabe quoted the words of Master Dogen according to which ‘‘In the revelation of Zenki which isn’t life nor death there are both life and death’’. Tanabe’s fundamental idea as well as his preference for Zen Buddhism, was invariable despite his manifestation of anguished confessions just after the defeat of Japan. But curiously enough, as I’ve mentioned above, Tanabe in his last years took up French symbolic poets such as Valéry and Mallarmé and came to reconsider the relation between philosophy and poetry by examining Martin Heidegger’s essays on Rilke, Hölderlin and so on. I must add that Tanabe himself was a poet belonging to the Araragi school.

Almost simultaneously with Tanabe, Blanchot wrote his essays on Valéry, Mallarmé, Rilke, and Hölderlin, taking into account the concept of death in Heidegger’s philosophy. For Yoel Hoffmann,

"death poems" are not poems written just before one's death. Then what makes poems "death poems"? It is not that poems speak about death either directly or metaphorically. For Blanchot as well as for Tanabe, it depends on the attraction "Space of death" has on Poiein. In other words, "poetic existence", Hölderlin said "*dichterisch wohnet der Mensch auf der Erde*"-- must approach the "Space of death", open it and try to live in it. Just like poets, Zen monks live in the "Space of death" both as not alive and not dead. From this point of view, Tanabe criticized Valéry for failing to reach the "Space of death" and abiding with the simple dichotomy of life and death.

In Mallarmé's *Igitur*, Igitur (*conséquent, cependant*) commits suicide because of the absolute contingency of his existence. If one of my ancestors cut off his genealogy, I would not exist. However, this position is insufficient for the "Space of death". It still obeys the law of contradiction as well as the law of identity. In fact, Igitur thinks what might be inexistent can or must negate itself.

Unlike Valéry, Mallarmé was not satisfied with this concept. According to Tanabe, he made great efforts extended over 30 years to overcome it and to write *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*. This title testifies against Igitur that one must affirm and accept contingency. Very paradoxically, "decision to die necessarily" professed by Tanabe, does not abolish the contingency; it is precisely this paradox that makes the "resurrection" possible. The "Space of death" is the "nowhere", where the decision to die reverses itself into resurrection; and Tanabe saw there the birth of "love" stronger than so called "mortal life".

I am uncertain whether my thoughts concerning Tanabe can be applied to Yoel Hoffmann; nevertheless, it cannot be denied, at least by me, that Tanabe showed the philosophical foundation of what Hoffmann calls "death poems."

*Regarding the texts of Hajime Tanabe, only the volume and page numbers of his Complete Works (in 15 volumes) published by the Library Chikuma in 1962 are indicated.

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Judaism and Japanese Culture:
Studies in Honor of Yoel Hoffmann

Part III

Yoel Hoffmann's Art of Translation

Yoel Hoffmann as haiku Translator

Doron B. Cohen

1. Translating poetry

All those who have attempted it would no doubt acknowledge that translating poetry can be as frustrating as it is exciting. All the well-known difficulties which plague the act of translation from one language to another become even more acute when poetry is considered. Those in the know often repeat the famous statement attributed to Robert Frost that "poetry is what gets lost in translation", or Roman Jakobson's dictum that "poetry by definition is untranslatable". The case is even stronger when translation of Japanese poetry is considered. The great Arthur Waley, who published several volumes of Chinese poetry in English translation, as well as translations of classical Japanese prose literature, including its crown jewel, *The Tale of Genji*, produced only one slim volume of Japanese *tanka* poems in English, stating that "Japanese poetry can only be rightly enjoyed in the original" (Waley, *Uta* 12). He therefore recommended that his readers learn to read Japanese and offered them an eight-page long grammar introduction, promising that "a few months should suffice for the mastering" of classical Japanese (and he probably meant it in earnest).[1] Waley also promised to deal with haiku poems later on, but never did.

Every translation reflects the norms and sensibilities of its time, as we learned from the late great Gideon Toury. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Japanese tanka were often translated into English as rhymed couplets, and even a great scholar with fine poetic sensibilities such as Basil Hall Chamberlain adhered to this folly. As for haiku (which Chamberlain sometimes misleadingly dubbed "epigrams"), all manners of translation were attempted, and the age-old arguments apply here once again: should a creative translation by a gifted poet be preferred, even at the price of faithfulness? Or should the translation strive to be as faithful as possible even at the price of beauty? Or could the two paths be somehow merged into one at the hands of a gifted translator? These are only some of the questions which are always on the minds of poetry translators and their readers.

Yoel Hoffmann, who in his later phase revealed himself to be the gifted author of what might be termed poetic prose, carving for himself a unique place in modern Hebrew literature, published earlier in his career three books of poetry translations, two in Hebrew and one in English, the latter paralleling one of the Hebrew books. These books demonstrate admirably his gift for language and

translation, no less than his deep insight into Japanese culture and his vast scholarly erudition in the fields of religion, philosophy and literature. Although not considered a poet *per se* he succeeded, as I will try to show, by merging poetic creativity with scholarly abilities, in creating some remarkable translations of Japanese poetry.

2. Hoffmann's books of poetry translations

Hoffmann's first Hebrew book of haiku translations was titled *Le'an ne'elmu hakolot?: sipurei zen veshirei haiku*, or (quoting the information in English on the back of the title page): "*Where did the Sounds Go? Zen Stories and Haiku Poems*, Translation from Japanese and Chinese, introduction and commentary by Yoel Hoffmann" (Massada, 1980). The book was printed on high quality paper, in hard cover and attractive design (all of which were already uncommon in Israeli publishing at the time, and have become even rarer since then), and also includes some Zen paintings and calligraphy. It contains 48 Zen stories (some with short annotations) and, on the page facing each story, one, two or three translated haiku are printed, 85 in all. The haiku are also transliterated in vocalized Hebrew script at the back of the book, including macrons to indicate long vowels. In his 25-page-long introduction Hoffmann first explains the world-view of Zen Buddhism and then the form and nature of haiku poetry. On the final two pages of the introduction he also imparts his opinion on how better to translate haiku, to which I will return later on.

Hoffmann's second book of poetry translation, that of Japanese "death poems", was published first in Hebrew and soon afterwards in English (later on, German and Spanish versions were also published). Although basically similar, there are also some conspicuous differences between the two versions, which must have been prepared in close proximity.

The Hebrew version was published in 1985, once again in a fine edition by Massada. Surprisingly, unlike the first book, and contrary to standard publishing custom, the back of the title page does not include any information in English. However, at the end of the long introduction (p. 61) it is stated (in Hebrew, except for the publisher's name): "An English edition of the book published by TUTTLE, Japan 1986". The Hebrew title is different from the English one, and is considerably more poetic: '*Omrei shir 'al saf hamavet*, "Utterers of poem on the threshold of death", with the subtitle "A selection of Japanese poems and an introductory essay" (my translation). On the back of the title page there is a dedication which is missing in the English edition: "For Etka, of blessed memory". The acknowledgments, which in the English edition appear first after the title and contents pages, appear here following the bibliography and are shorter, including: "… my wife, Varda, who helped me in translating the poems into Hebrew" (p. 61). In the English edition, on the

other hand, Hoffmann thanks "… my father, Abraham Hoffmann, who read through the manuscript and offered helpful suggestions", as well as "Mr. Lavern Lenz, with whose invaluable help this book now appears in English". Hoffmann also acknowledges "the assistance of the staff of the Charles E. Tuttle Company, who were able to refine many points of detail throughout the manuscript" (p. 8). I assume that Hoffmann translated the book from Hebrew (and the poems from Japanese and Chinese) into English himself, and received assistance in editing it.

The English title of the book is: *Japanese Death Poems: Written by Zen Monks and Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death*. Like the Hebrew version it is divided into three parts, but close inspection reveals several differences. In the Hebrew version the first part, which is an introductory essay, is somewhat longer, and repeats some of the material from the introduction to the earlier *Le'an ne'elmu hakolot*? The English version of the introduction is arranged more methodically (historically and thematically); many paragraphs and poetic examples have been moved around, and the whole text is divided into shorter paragraphs with additional explanatory subtitles. Some sentences and several poetic examples in the Hebrew introduction are not included in the English version. For example, the death poem of Mishima Yukio, for which Hoffmann appends a sarcastic remark (p. 37 in the Hebrew edition), was omitted. Also missing are several other modern poems (by the mother of Matsunaga Goichi, p. 42; by Katō Shūson and by Iida Dakotsu, both p. 57). I would venture a guess that these poems were omitted due to copyright concerns, which may have been disregarded in the Hebrew edition but could not be ignored in the English one issued by Tuttle in Japan. It should also be noted that while some parts of the Hebrew text were omitted, as far as I can tell nothing was added to the English version of this part.

The second part of the book contains death poems by Japanese Zen monks written originally in Chinese, some accompanied by short or more elaborated explanations. In both versions the poems are organized alphabetically according to the Buddhist names of the monks, and since the Hebrew and English alphabets are quite different in order, so is the order of the poems in each edition. Had the poems been arranged historically this discrepancy would not have occurred. Another fact that stands out is that in many cases the transliteration of the names is considerably different; for example: Enni Ben'en in the English edition (p. 96) is called Shōichi Kokushi in the Hebrew version (p. 88); Bassui Tokusho (p. 91) is Battai Tokusho (p. 68), and so on (at least 12 poets' names are transcribed differently). This is not very surprising. All those familiar with the Japanese writing system are well aware of the enormous problems one faces when trying to read personal names correctly, and in particular some of those obscure Buddhist names (which are also different from the original personal names of the poets). It is possible that the English edition is more accurate,

because it came after the Hebrew one and benefitted from the assistance of the publisher's staff. Another difference is that the Hebrew edition contains 46 poems, two of which are missing from the English one (Taigu, p. 73, Seiju, p. 82), while the English edition contains 45 poems, one of which is not included in the Hebrew one (Doyu, p. 95). So on the whole the two editions are similar but not identical.

The third part of the book contains the translations of death poems by haiku poets, once again organized in alphabetical order of the poets' pen names and often including explanatory remarks. If I counted correctly, there are 333 haiku poets represented in the Hebrew edition, compared with 325 in the English one; in both cases some poets are represented by more than one poem, so the number of poems is considerably larger. However, while the problem of the transcription of poets' pen names is marginal in this part, there is an even bigger difference in the identity of the poets than in the two versions of the second part of the book. In the Hebrew version there are 29 poets who do not appear in the English one, most of them modern ones, including several who died in the 1950's and 1960's and up to 1980. Among them are the celebrated author Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (died 1927), and the famed haiku poet Kyoshi (died 1959). Once again I assume that the reason for the absence of these poets from the English edition was due to copyright concerns. To compensate, the English edition includes 16 poets, mostly from the 18th and 19th centuries, who do not appear in the Hebrew book. Evidently the nature of the two editions is different: while the Hebrew one includes much modern material bringing examples of haiku poetry up to our time, the English one is limited to older periods, with very few early 20th century examples.

There are a few more differences between the two books. The English version has the names of the poets also in *kanji*, which the Hebrew one lacks, but on the other hand, the macron indicating a long vowel is not printed in the Romanized version of the poets' names, while in the Hebrew book it is. The English book has an index of poetic terms as well as a general index, both of which are missing from the Hebrew version.

3. Hoffmann's policy of translation

As I mentioned earlier, Hoffmann dedicated the last two pages of his introduction to his first Hebrew book of poetry translations (preceded only by his Hebrew translations from Chuang-Tzu), *Le'an ne'elmu hakolot*? to the question of translation (pp. 30-32). This text was lifted almost verbatim – with a few short additions and while omitting most of the poem examples – into the introduction of *Death Poems*' Hebrew version (pp. 14-15). It was in turn translated in the English version (pp. 22-23). Hoffmann first gives an example of a translation maintaining the 5-7-5 syllables

rhythm of the original Japanese haiku (the same poem is translated in both versions), but then proceeds to reject this method of translation and explain his reservations and priorities in a short paragraph which I will quote fully while dividing his arguments into numbered points:

> [1] Haiku are sometimes meticulously translated into English with exactly seventeen syllables, often at the expense of accuracy. [2] But even when such a translation remains as true to the original as a free rendering, the poetic achievement is slight, for the reader who has not been raised in a haiku-saturated culture is unlikely to appreciate the poem's peculiar 5-7-5 beat rhythm as keenly as one who has. [3] Other translators forgo the convention of counting syllables and replace it with another convention, rhyme. A successfully rhymed haiku may indeed contribute to the beauty of the translation, but because of the extreme brevity of the haiku style, rhyming more often than not makes a jingle of the poem. [4] The translations in this book are nearly all in free verse. The one structural precept adhered to throughout is that each haiku is translated in three lines – usually a short, a long, and a short one again.[2] [5] While free style lessens the number of formal constraints on the translator, it demands greater attention to the choice and arrangement of words.

So Hoffmann is basically in favor of free translation, but he is aware of the great responsibility and difficulty in choosing the right words and putting them in the right order. He also makes sound arguments against insisting on the 5-7-5 rhythm in translation or the use of rhyming. In the following I will examine briefly Hoffmann's stated principles as implemented in some of his translations.

3.1 Brevity

In the above-quoted paragraph Hoffmann mentioned "the extreme brevity of the haiku style"; undoubtedly, brevity is one of the outstanding characteristics of the Japanese haiku, and ideally this should be reflected in the translation. And indeed, anyone reading Hoffmann's Hebrew translations cannot but be struck by their brevity (in most cases) and by how condensed they are, especially compared with many English (and some other Hebrew) translations. The nature of the language is an advantage in this regard; in Hebrew, pronouns can be indicated by the form of the verb, the definite article is attached to the noun, and the construct state allows the linking of two nouns without a preposition. These and other features create what writer Amos Oz once called the "stone quality" of Hebrew. Still, Hoffmann excels others in putting these advantages to good use, and in some cases he manages to be even briefer than the original. For example, see the following haiku by Issa:

秋の風一茶心に思ふやう　　一茶
Aki no kaze / Issa kokoro ni / omou yō

Here is an English translation by R. H. Blyth (V. 3, p. 949):

The Autumn wind;
There are thoughts
In the mind of Issa

Hoffmann makes do with five words in two lines (*Where*, p. 79):

רוח סתיו:
מחשבות בלב איסא

It is more difficult for Hoffmann to be so brief in English; for example, here is a haiku by Masahide, one of Bashō's disciples:

蔵焼けてさはるものなき月見哉　　正秀
Kura yakete / sawaru mono naki / tsukimi kana

In Hebrew (*Where*, pp. 25 & 39) Hoffmann was able to limit his translation to seven words, as in the original:

המחסן נשרף:
דבר אינו מסתיר
פני הלבנה

Note that he avoided using the direct object preposition [את] which other translators might have included (although the original poem does not have it either); however in English (p. 240) he had to use 12 words:

Now that my storehouse
has burned down, nothing
conceals the moon

I would argue that this translation is not as successful as the Hebrew one, perhaps due to the redundant addition of the opening words "Now that my", information which in the original poem is only implied and the Hebrew version did without.

In the introduction to the English edition of *Japanese Death Poems* (p. 23) Hoffmann has another

translation of this poem, in which he maintained the 5-7-5 rhythm (in order to explain why he does *not* use it regularly), and which has 13 words:

My storehouse burned down –
now nothing stands between me
and the moon above

Obviously, in order to achieve the 5-7-5 rhythm in English (a language known for its many monosyllabic words), he had to add even more words and again include information which is not specified in the original, only implied (my, me, above). So all in all, the translation gains in brevity what it loses by avoiding the 5-7-5 rhythm.

Just as he experimented with two-line translations, Hoffmann also offered some four-line versions of haiku, but again managing to maintain extreme brevity in some cases. The following haiku is by Ryōta, an 18th century poet:

追はれては月に隠るゝ蛍かな　　蓼太
Owarete wa / tsuki ni kakururu / hotaru kana

Once again here is the English version by R. H. Blyth (V. 3, p. 807):

Being chased,
The fire-fly
Hides in the moon

Hoffmann's experiment limits the Hebrew version to four words, one on each line (*Where*, p. 135):

גחלילית
נרדפת
מסתתרת
בירח

The vertical shape of the printed poem creates a story in itself, expressing visually, to some extent, the flight of the fire-fly. This is another example for Hoffmann's imaginative creativity and his daring as a translator of haiku, particularly into Hebrew.

3.2 Choice of words

Choosing the right word, especially when translating from one culture to another, can be a daunting task. Hoffmann sometimes makes surprising choices that may reflect his creative nature,

sometimes even at the expense of faithfulness. His choices also demonstrate the well-established fact that any translation is also an interpretation, and that when translating haiku, the meaning of which can sometime be somewhat obscure, the translator must make a choice between different interpretative options. I will offer a few examples in which a certain choice or interpretation stand out.

The first example is a celebrated haiku by Bashō:

静かさや岩にしみ入る蝉の聲　　芭蕉

Shizukasa ya / iwa ni shimiiru / semi no koe

Out of the dozens of English translations of this poem, here again is the one by R. H. Blyth (v. 3, p. 816):

The silence;
The voice of the cicadas
Penetrates the rocks

This straight-forward translation (compared with some much more elaborate ones by other translators) still contains an amount of interpretation. Due to the lack of a plural indicator in Japanese, the translator must decide which form to use: one rock or many rocks? And what about the insect? The sound of a singular cicada, as anyone who has experienced the Japanese summer can testify, conveys a very different feeling than that of a multitude of them. Blyth opted for the plural, but Hoffmann preferred the singular in both cases, and he even made one more daring choice (*Where*, p. 59):

דממה:
קולו של הצרצר
נספג בסלע

Apparently, since the cicada is a relatively rare insect in Israel, and most readers of Hebrew would not be aware of its distinct sound, Hoffmann replaced it with the grasshopper, thus making a cultural interpretation. Is this choice justifiable? It is a matter of personal preference, although as a translator I would probably not go that far. Interestingly, however, Donald Keene also replaced the cicada with locusts (Keene, p. 99).

No less challenging for the translator is another haiku by Bashō, which conveys a deep mysterious feeling:

蛸壺やはかなき夢を夏の月　　芭蕉

Tako tsubo ya / hakanaki yume wo / natsu no tsuki

First, here is Blyth's translation (V. 3, p. 680):

The octopus trap:
Fleeting dreams
Under the summer moon

Octopus traps are clay pots which fishermen place on the bottom of the sea and pull up by a rope after an octopus, looking for a place to hide, has entered them. Interpreters speculate whether Bashō saw such pots lying on the shore in Akashi where the poem was composed, or perhaps he was in a boat out at sea and saw the floating wooden markers attached to the ropes or even some traps being lifted out of the water (Ueda, pp. 201-2). Blyth did not commit himself in his translation (although he opted for a singular trap and for dreams in the plural), but Hoffmann made a more daring choice (*Where*, p. 61):

תמנון במלכדת
חלומות ריקים
ירח של קיץ

Hoffmann goes a step further, translating "an octopus *in* the trap" (first line) which he contrasts with "empty dreams" (second line). Again, is this justifiable? Bashō mentions the trap (or traps) which may or may not contain the octopus already, but Hoffmann makes a concrete choice, although the question of who is dreaming under the moon of the short summer night remains open: the octopus? The poet? All of us?

The third and final example is also by Bashō, one of the last poems he composed in the final month of his life:

秋深き隣は何をする人ぞ　　芭蕉

Aki fukaki / tonari wa nani wo / suru hito zo

Apparently the meaning is simple, but it turns out that the final line could be open to interpretation; autumn deepens, and the man next door: "what does he do for a living?" (Ueda, p. 411); "how does he live?" (Blyth, V. 3, p. 896); "what is he doing now?" was also suggested. But Hoffmann takes the meaning a little deeper (*Where*, p. 79):

עמוק הסתיו:
אני תוהה
השכן ממול – מיהו?

Rather than wondering what he does for a living or what is he doing now, Bashō in Hoffmann's version wonders about the neighbor: "who is he?". Also in this version the neighbor isn't next door, but opposite. It is very hard to explain, but unless I'm gravely mistaken, this little change somehow makes the situation more natural to Hebrew readers. In Japan *tonari* usually means literally next door, to either side of where one lives; in the Israel in which Hoffmann grew up (but perhaps less so today) the people in the opposite tenement or house, seen through the windows and verandas open to the sea breeze in towns and cities along the Mediterranean coast, were more conspicuous and also more mysterious. It is therefore possible that by adding the preposition *mimul*, Hoffmann once again made a cultural translation.

Hoffmann is a conscientious translator who strives to be faithful to the haiku he rendered into Hebrew but the above examples show him also to be a daring translator with a great amount of self-confidence and a unique way of interpreting his material. His translations demonstrate that once he believes he has caught the spirit of a haiku he conveys it in his translation in a way that fits it best. Just as Bashō's haiku often leave us deep in thought when reading them in the original, so do Hoffmann's Hebrew versions of them, which is the highest praise for a translator.

3.3 Arrangement, or the order of words

When translating, it is often difficult to preserve the order by which information is conveyed in a poem. The usual order of words in a Japanese sentence is more or less the reverse of the order in an English or a Modern Hebrew one, so when translating a Japanese sentence into Hebrew or English translators start from the end and work their way back. This may happen in poetry as well, and in some cases cannot be avoided, but translators should be sensitive to this point. It could be asked: why is the order important, especially in a haiku which is read in one breath? However, I maintain that the order by which information is conveyed even in the short haiku is one of the tools of the poet, and therefore one should try to remain faithful to it in translation as well. To illustrate this see the following example of a haiku by Issa:

寝て起きて大欠して猫の恋　　一茶
Nete okite / ōakubi shite / neko no koi

In Lewis Mackenzie's translation (p. 73):

Sleeping, waking
Giving such tremendous yawns –
The cat goes courting!

In this case, if the order is reversed, much of the charm and power of the haiku is lost. Indeed, I feel that Hoffmann lost something by reversing the order and starting with the cat, although his translation still has a lot of charm:

החתול קם משנתו
ובפהוק גדול
יוצא להרפתקת אהבים

Going through the haiku translated in *Where did the Sounds Go*? I found that in a little more than half the cases Hoffmann was loyal to the order of information in the original poems, but in many cases he was not. For example, the line *aki no kure* (autumn evening) appears in five of the haiku translated in the book; in one case (p. 111) it appears as the first line of the poem and was not changed by Hoffmann, but in three other cases (pp. 43, 81, 113) although it appears as the last line, Hoffmann translated it as the first one. Only in one case (p. 85) did he leave it as the last line. There is no real consistency, and in some other poems where a certain season is explicitly named, Hoffmann sometimes maintained the original order, but in other cases he turned it around. It must be assumed that he tried different translations for such poems, and chose the one which to his ears sounded the best in Hebrew. So for Hoffmann "the arrangement of words", the importance of which he indicated when explaining his translation policy, does not mean being faithful to the original order of words, but to the preferable order in the target language as uncovered by the translator.

4. Conclusion

It is difficult to judge Hoffmann's influence as a translator of poetry. In Israel his later literary output may have overshadowed his earlier work as translator, although all those interested in Japanese poetry are no doubt aware of his work and appreciate it. In my personal view he remains the best translator of haiku into Hebrew we have ever had. *Where did the Sounds Go?* was reprinted and may still be in print; the Hebrew version of *Japanese Death Poems* is on sale on second hand booksellers' sites on the Internet for a considerable price. The English edition is still in print, and it must have had a much wider impact than the Hebrew one. Recently I happened to encounter some

evidence that illustrates the book's longevity and wide appeal. The Australian novelist Richard Flanagan won the prestigious Man Booker Prize of 2014 for his novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, a title obviously copying that of one of the numerous translations of Bashō's classic haiku diary, *Oku no hosomichi* [奥の細道]. The narrow road in Flanagan's book is the notorious train line built by British and Australian war prisoners and local laborers through the jungles of Thailand and Burma under the command of the Japanese army during WWII. The novel describes the life of some of the Australian prisoners and Japanese military men before, during and after the war. The main protagonist is an Australian officer and doctor; many years after the war he receives a copy of a book "of translations of Japanese death poems" (p. 28), in which he is especially impressed by the "death poem" of Shisui, who painted only a circle with his brush before he died. This circle is reproduced both in Hoffmann's book (p. 295) and in Flanagan's (p. 28). Although the circle may be the same and is wordless in itself, we should be aware that it underwent translation along the way from the old Zen master to the contemporary Australian author through the intermediary work and inspiration of Yoel Hoffmann.

*

Transliteration and literal English versions of Hoffmann's Hebrew translations

In the following literal translations, English grammatical rules are not maintained; "[of]" is added when the construct state is used in the Hebrew; "-" between English words indicates that in Hebrew it is one word.

רוח סתיו:
מחשבות בלב איסא

ruaḥ stav: / maḥashavot belev issa

(wind [of] autumn: / thoughts in-the-heart [of] issa)

המחסן נשרף:
דבר אינו מסתיר
פני הלבנה

hamaḥsan nisraf: / davar eino mastir / pnei halevana

(the-storehouse burned: / thing none hide / face [of] the-moon)

גחלילית
נרדפת
מסתתרת
בירח

gaḥlilit / nirdefet / mistateret / bayareaḥ

(firefly / chased / hide / in-the-moon)

דממה:
קולו של הצרצר
נספג בסלע

demama: / kolo shel hatsratsar / nispag basela

(silence: / the-voice of the-grasshopper / absorbed in-the-rock)

תמנון במלכדת
חלומות ריקים
ירח של קיץ

tmanun bamalkodet / ḥalomot reikim / yareaḥ shel kayits

(octopus in-the-trap / empty dreams / moon of summer)

עמוק הסתיו:
אני תוהה
השכן ממול – מיהו?

'amok hastav: / ani tohe / hashachen mimul – mihu?

(deep the-autumn: / I wonder / the-neighbor opposite – who-is-he?)

החתול קם משנתו
ובפהוק גדול
יוצא להרפתקת אהבים

haḥatul kam mishnato / ubepihuk gadol / yotse leharpatkat ahavim

(the-cat wake-up from-his-sleep / and-with-yawn big / go-out for-adventure [of] love)

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Notes

1 Indeed, when translating *Genji* Waley tackled hundreds of *tanka* (poems of 31 syllables in 5 lines), but in most cases he incorporated them into the text, offering translations that are markedly different from his earlier ones in his *Uta* book.

2 This last sentence does not appear in the introduction to *Where did the Sounds Go*? As we shall see below, Hoffmann experimented with form more freely in his early Hebrew translations.

Yoel Hoffmann as Japanologist: Japanese Death Poems

Janine Beichman

Introduction

Before he became known as a novelist, Yoel Hoffmann was a pioneer of Japanese poetry studies in Israel. Through his book *Japanese Death Poems,* which he translated into English from the original Hebrew, he also occupies an important place in English-language studies of traditional Japanese poetry. First published by Tuttle in 1986, this book is still in print and widely available. In addition, the well-known poet Eduardo Moga's Spanish translation was published in 2000 and by 2009 had gone through five printings.

Japanese Death Poems is a unique book, one of those unclassifiable treasures that are at once strongly individual and yet speak of universals. Sometimes books like this are forgotten then later rediscovered, but so far Hoffmann's book is if anything growing in popularity, particularly among those with a personal interest in haiku/short poems, Buddhism (especially Zen), or both. It has even spawned a Facebook page. This then seems a good time to reassess it.[1]

As a researcher and translator of Japanese literature, especially poetry, I was on the fence about Hoffmann's book when I began to prepare this paper. I had known about it for years, but felt unable to judge it because the poems and stories seemed so distant from their original contexts. There was an entire section of poems by Zen monks that were, Hoffmann said, originally in Chinese.[2] Since he did not include the originals, I felt on thin ground there. In other cases, the original Japanese sources were given but they were first editions of pre-modern block-printed books without publisher or page numbers. And there were other cases, which I only discovered later, in which the original Japanese source was nowhere to be found.

Once embarked on this paper, however, I could no longer avoid making judgments, and to do so I had to investigate Hoffmann's original sources insofar as possible. Buoyed by the enthusiasm of my haiku friends, I sought out modern editions of the pre-modern books Hoffmann acknowledged and compared them to his own renditions. I also looked into the sources for the Chinese poems. As I dug deeper, I came to realize that while the death poem is a recognized genre in Japan, until very recently there were no collections devoted to it exclusively. Hoffmann had to wend his way through a mass of material picking out the works that served his vision.

Now I think of Hoffmann as drawing a rake through the rock garden of Japanese poetry, creating his own design. Stubbornly sticking to his own perspective, mining only what is gold for his subject, he let the rest fall away like dross, shaping and reshaping as he went, acting as translator, editor, and interpreter. It was the creative aspect of the book that had made me wary of it, but I came to realize that it was that very aspect that makes it so compelling.

Part One

Japanese Death Poems is divided into three parts: Introduction, Death Poems by Zen Monks, and Death Poems by Haiku Poets. The history of Japanese poetry that Hoffmann outlines in Part One gives less space than most accounts to the imperial anthologies of waka and zooms forward as quickly as possible to the haiku. It then shifts direction to a discussion of Japanese attitudes towards death. This is followed by examples of several different kinds of death poems in various forms, ranging from poems by warriors, women, and others, to parodies of the very genre itself, and then to poems which are not usually defined as death poems but which "are more forceful" for all that.

Having given this exhaustive survey in the brief compass of 40 pages (43-83), Hoffmann suddenly shifts direction, leaping from humorous poems about death to a profoundly serious question. "How," he asks,

> is a person's poetry linked to his life? What can it tell of his death? One poet may search in vain for a poem as long as he lives; another repeats one poem again and again; yet another lives and dies in every poem that he creates. Before his death, Joha said that if someone writing a poem prior to his at a renga-composition gathering had only suggested the phrase 'a little of the sea,' he would have followed it with a phrase containing 'Mount Osaka.' 'I wished,' he wrote, 'for the phrase long ago, but no one ever started out like that, and now I must leave this life without having composed my verse'(83).

Hoffmann's own interpretation of Joha's words follows at once: "Even if we were to analyze at length the images Joha wanted to combine, we would never understand the particular note he strove for all his life, a note only he could comprehend".

A few pages later, coming to the end of Part One, Hoffmann returns to this theme, making a declaration regarding the mutual inability of individual human beings to understand each other, a declaration which I feel may be fundamental to his sensibility:

> Let us not forget, however, that when someone dies, it is not a nation but an individual that is dying. A person can bequeath his property and even his opinions to his survivors, but he buries

> his own name with him. And what stands behind that name, which belongs to the man alone, will never be understood by another (86-87).

For Hoffmann, what could better illustrate an idea than a poem? Thus he continues,

> This is perhaps what a certain little-known poet named Tomoda Kimpei meant when he composed his death poem:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | In life I never was | *Aru toki wa* |
> | among the well-known flowers | *hana no kazu ni wa* |
> | and yet, in withering | *taranu domo* |
> | I am most certainly | *chiru ni wa morenu* |
> | Tomoda Kinpei. | *Tomoda Kinpei* (87) |

In a manner typical of the novelist Hoffmann would become, we are given an affirmation (when someone dies, it is not a nation but an individual), which leads to a negation (no one will ever be understood by another), and then to a poem that "perhaps" may mean what the prose has just said, or may not. We are offered certainty only to have it torn from our hands. And on that note, which ends the Introduction, we are left to turn the page and enter Part Two, the poems of Zen monks.

Part Two

Hoffmann is aware that it may seem strange to have early Zen monks writing in Chinese in Part Two of the book and then haiku poets of a later time writing in Japanese, in Part Three, since they have "no direct historical link" (17). But he explains that they are similar in several ways:

> The attitude expressed by haiku poets, however, often reflects Zen Buddhist elements; indeed, many haiku poets took a deep interest in Zen Buddhism, some to the point of donning a robe and wandering up and down Japan begging rice from door to door, after the manner of Zen monks. Despite the historical gap and the consequent cultural differences, a strong spiritual kinship can be discerned between the farewell poems written in Chinese by Zen monks and many of the poems written by haiku poets. By contrast, tanka, at least with regard to death poems written in this genre, tend to reflect a rather different perception of the world (17-18).

Hoffmann, in other words, has begun with a diachronic—historical—approach in his charting of the history of Japanese poetry, but now returns to his real interest, which is synchronic, that is to say, thematic. This is a comparative literature approach: one compares authors who have a spiritual

or other kind of kinship but may never have known one another. Like the English novelist and critic E.M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* almost a century ago (1927), or the contemporary scholars of world literature (for example, David Damrosch) who are opening up the borders of comparative literature today, Hoffmann imagines all the writers in his world sitting around a table, transcending borders of time and space.

Bassui Tokusho:

In the Acknowledgments, Hoffmann says his sources for Part Two: Death Poems by Zen monks (89-129) were two books by the contemporary scholar Furuta Shokin, *Zenso no Yuige* (Last words of Zen monks) and *Zenso no Shoji* (Lives and deaths of Zen monks).[3] Hoffmann describes both books as though they were anthologies of poems (7) but this is somewhat misleading. Both books consist of biographical sketches (in modern Japanese) of well-known Zen monks, and include quotations from their sayings and last words and, where they exist, their death poems. The quotations in Furuta's books were originally written in Sino-Japanese (or Chinese, as Hoffmann calls it), and Furuta, whose aim was to popularize Zen, gives them in both the original Sino-Japanese and then in modern Japanese translation. One has to agree with Hoffmann's decision not to provide original texts for the poems in Part Two.

In compiling the stories of Part Two, Hoffmann made extremely effective use of Furuta's work, radically condensing and reshaping it. As an example, take the account of Bassui Tokusho, which opens Part Two. Furuta's account of Bassui is eight pages long, Hoffmann's adapted version is a single page. For Furuta, the prose sentences that Bassui pronounced at death are memorable, but at the same time they are one element among many in Bassui's biography, and come where they came in his life, very near the end. In Hoffmann's account these words, reshaped as a poem, become the centerpiece, the place we begin:

> Look straight ahead. What's there?
> If you see it as it is
> You will never err.

Furuta begins his account by saying of Bassui that "His role in the democratization of Zen [禅の民衆化] was very important" (Furuta, 46). Thus, Bassui's greatest achievement was his contribution to the spread of Zen teachings among the common people, which he accomplished by speaking in a way that all could understand. Furuta also gives many examples to illustrate that Bassui felt a "responsibility to educate the people of perhaps low intellectual level" who gathered around him

(Furuta, 51). Hoffmann whittles all this down to the single dramatic observation: "Bassui did not turn his back on the simple people, but taught them Zen in words they could understand."

Furuta's portrait is rich in detail and a valuable account of Bassui's life. However, it has a certain didactic, almost hagiographic quality that is lacking in Hoffmann's condensed and reshaped portrait. To put it another way, Hoffmann gets a lot done in a very small space, which of course resembles his short yet suggestive novels in which the mundanity of the everyday often bumps up against the infinite spaces of everything we cannot say. Hoffmann likes concision.

In Hoffmann's retelling, Bassui appears as an eccentric but extremely wise human being who on his own portrait wrote the mysterious declaration: "I teach with the voice of silence". Furuta's discussion suggests a more precise translation: "It would be better to teach with the voice of silence [instead of having to use words]".[4] Yet how lame that would be and how untrue to the strength and imagination of the original words. The original phrase itself compels because of the rich imagery and powerful concision of the Sino-Japanese. The mystery of silent words lies at its heart, as Furuta stresses. I would argue that keeping that sense of mystery, as Hoffmann's translation does, makes up for the loss in precision. As the Senegalese novelist Boris Boubacar Diop says, in translation loyalty is sometimes more important than fidelity.[5]

Part Three

Shisui:

In Part Two, we saw that Hoffmann arranged the words of prose that Bassui spoke just before death so that they became a poem. Moving on to Part Three: Death Poems by Haiku Poets, we find an even more radical editing in the story of the haiku poet Shisui. Here a picture substitutes for the words that Shisui refused to say.

The original context of Shisui's story is a work of 1771 titled *Haikai Kafu Shūi*,[6] where it is a mere two lines of Sino-Japanese prose. These lines give Shisui's name, his surname, and the fact that his father was also called Shisui. Then come the date of Shisui's death and his age at death, and a single sentence describing his last moments.

Here is how Hoffmann edits this: he places the date of Shisui's death and his age at death beneath Shisui's name, omitting Shisui's surname and the fact that his father was also called Shisui. Then, adding: "The following has been written about Shisui's 'death poem'", he translates the sentence describing Shisui's last moments in a fashion at once literal and elegant:

> During his last moments Shisui's followers requested that he write a death poem. He grasped his brush, painted a circle, cast the brush aside, and died (295).

To complete the entry, Hoffmann adds what the reader needs to know to make sense of Shisui's actions:

> The circle (*enso*) is one of the most important symbols of Zen Buddhism. It indicates void—-the essence of all things—-and enlightenment. There is perhaps a connection between the figure of a circle and the shape of the full moon, another symbol of enlightenment (295).

And yet that is not all. At the beginning of the story, Hoffmann inserted a picture of a circle drawn with a brush. The original text does not have a picture of a circle, but it does say that Shisui drew one. By adding the circle, Hoffmann has restored the wholeness of the original event. It is almost as if we were there, seeing what the monk drew for his followers, and being encouraged to meditate on what the circle might mean.

Small but highly effective touches like this make one respond to *Japanese Death Poems* as a work of art based on a translation, rather than a translation only. Yes, we have translations and we have works of art, but we also have works of art whose first layer is translation. Perhaps only a translation that values loyalty above fidelity can become art.

Unrei:

Another story in Part Three concerns Unrei. The original context is *Wakan Bunso*, which as Hoffmann writes is "a collection of short pieces of poetry and prose with commentary". In this Japanese work, Unrei's story, including the poem, is a little over three pages, about the length of a short-short story. Hoffmann makes it even shorter. Almost all proper nouns are excised. And the entire first page and a half, which details the years Unrei spent wandering about in the company of various haikai poets and has many place names that would mean nothing to most non-Japanese readers, is summarized in the single phrase "he took to wandering up and down Japan" (333). However, when Unrei settles in Izumozaki, where he intends to live out his days and where he dies, the details are translated in full.

In Hoffmann's reconstruction all that is left is Unrei's last poem, the moving and dramatic description of his preparations for death, and the moment of his expiration. It is almost as if Hoffmann were saying to us, "In his death he was most fully himself, and so that is what I have given you". Again, we feel the sense of individuality that is so important to Hoffmann.

Above I have discussed how Hoffmann revised and reshaped his sources to create the brief but compelling poem-narratives of *Japanese Death Poems*. Next I will discuss two of the most

successful poem translations.

Yoel Hoffmann as Translator

Oroku:

The section called Death Poems by Lovers in Part One (57-65) has some of the finest translations in the book. Hoffmann writes:

> In many of the death poems written by Japanese women, the reader may sense a longing for a place of refuge from the many hardships the women encounter. The following death poem belongs to a woman named Oroku and dates from the first part of the seventeenth century. Oroku marries a certain Sakon, the retainer of a provincial ruler, and bears him a male child. She is treated cruelly by her mother-in-law, however, and finally kills herself. This poem appears in her will:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | And had my days been longer | *Nagaraete* |
> | still the darkness | *kono yo no yami wa* |
> | would not leave this world— | *yomo hareji* |
> | along death's path, among the hills | *shide no yamaji no* |
> | I shall behold the moon. | *iza tsuki wo min* |
>
> The moon symbolizes salvation in the world beyond the sufferings of the present life (65).

Even if she had chosen life, the darkness would never have lifted for her, Oroku says. Better to die, for in death she shall see the moon, symbol of salvation and relief from suffering.

The translation conveys the meaning faithfully and yet there are small inventive touches which have large effects. Beginning *in media res* with "And" makes the poem seem to flow from the thoughts expressed in her "will". To unfold *shide no yamaji* into "along death's path, among the hills" lends concreteness to what is a set phrase in the original. To end with the word "moon" creates a sense of surprise that the original, being slave to Japanese noun-verb word order (*tsuki* means "moon," *min* means "shall behold"), cannot duplicate.

Subtle sound patterns also contribute to the effect. The alliteration of "d" moves us from "days" to "darkness" to "death," underscoring the opposition of light and dark. Then, having plunged to the very depths, the lisped, somehow sinister "th" of "death" is channeled into the "th" of "path," only to open up into the silvery final "l" and "s" of "hills" and "behold". At the very end, with that solo appearance of "m" at the beginning of a word (it has been used before, but only for the accessory words "my" and "among") comes the moon, salvation and comfort at once. The extremes

of suffering and of joy, of death and birth, reside together in one poem.

Kagai:

Barren branches:	*Kare-eda ya*
the autumn left behind	*hakanaku nokoru*
a cicada's hollow cry.	*semi no koe*

Hoffmann does not cite the source of this poem.[7] The entry is also unusual in that aside from the poet's date of death, which is 1778, there is neither commentary nor story. The translation, however, is remarkably effective.

Kare-eda is a winter season word, usually translated as "withered branch", "dead branch", or "bare branch".[8] Although not unprecedented, "barren branches" is an unusual translation for this word. It includes bareness but suggests sterility as well. Beneath the surface of the poem "barren" tangles with the "hollow" cry of the cicada, and its similar suggestions of sterility, mortality, and death. The branches are barren, sterile, nothing can be born of them—except the cicada's cry, which is hollow and faint. The trees evoke sight, the cicada's cries evoke ears, yet both signify the same thing. Sterile branches, sterile insect, sterile world.

"Branches" could be the singular "branch", and "a cicada" could also be the plural "cicadas", but using the plural for the branches and singular for the cicada creates the dramatic image of a large landscape within which there is one small cry.

Hoffmann adds the word "autumn" to ensure that the seasonality of *kare-eda*, always associated with early winter, is not lost. This results in nearly personifying the autumn, giving it agency, for "left behind" can be understood as an action. If the personification of autumn were obvious, it would injure the effect of the poem, but it is subtle.

In terms of sound, the alliteration of "b" in the first line, and then the reversal from "bar-" to "bra-," and the partial rhyme of the long "i" of "behind" and "cry" create the subtle sound patterns that are especially important when translating short poems.

Hakanaku is usually translated as fleeting, empty, evanescent, passing, mortal. "Hollow" implies all this and at the same time echoes, with its "h," the very sound of the original's *hakanaku*.

Meter also adds to the effect. The first line's trochaic meter (alternate strong and weak stress) changes in the next two lines to iambic (alternate weak and strong stress). The two opposite meters, helped by the sound repetitions, play against each other so that the first line firmly sketches out a static landscape, while the second and third lines fill it in with things that move, the vanishing

autumn and the crying insect.

Like Oroku's tanka, this haiku is a translation that turns into an English poem.

Conclusion

Hoffmann's novels are short and typically described as fragmented; words like "kaleidoscopic", "mysterious", and "mosaic-like" tend to be used about them. At first I imagined that such elements might have been inspired by his encounter with Japanese poetry. After my own encounter with him through *Japanese Death Poems*, I would instead suggest that the measure ran the other way. "I teach with the voice of silence": surely this is what Hoffmann himself, torn between words and no words, memory and forgetting, explanation and silence, would like to do.

As a translator, Hoffmann is being most himself when he has a genuine source and is being faithful to it but at the same time keeps it partly hidden from his readers. The distance—or shall we say the silence—so created leaves him free to perform the alchemy by which a translation becomes a poem.

* * *

A Bibliographical Note:

In the text and notes of *Japanese Death Poems*, Hoffmann identifies the following sources:

Part One (as given in Notes, pp. 343-344, with my corrections in brackets):

Nishimura Hakucho, *Enka Kidan* [Hakucho should be Haku'u]

Muju, comp., *Shasekishu* [author's full name is Mujū Ichien]

Matsu'ura Seizan, *Kasshi Yawa* [Matsu'ura should be Matsura]

Nomori no Kagami

Ban Kokei, *Kanden Jihitsu*

Okanishi Ichu, *Ichijiken Zuihitsu*

Takukuwa Ranko, *Haikai Sesetsu*

Natsume Seibi, *Zuisai Kaiwa*

Momoi Tou, *Kyuai Zuihitsu*

Part Two (as in Bibliographical Notes, p. 347)

Furuta Shokin, *Zenso no Yuige*

Furuta Shokin, *Zenso no Shoji*

Part Three (as in Notes, pp. 344-345, and Bibliographical Notes, p. 347):

Hayakawa Joseki, comp., *Haikai Kafu*

Takarai Kikaku, *Zotanshu*

Hirose Jikko, comp., *Haikai Kafu Goshui*

Yamamoto Kakei, *Aranoshu*

Takarai Kikaku, *Hanatsumi*

Ishida Mitaku, *Hitomotogusa*

Naoe Mokudo, *Mizu no oto*

Takebe Ryotai, *Basho-o Zuda Monogatari*

Hirose Jikko, comp., *Haikai Kafu Shui*

Saida and Ennyu, comps., *Yugao no Uta*

Kamata Haruo, *Kinki Bosekiko*

Kagami Shiko, comp., *Wakan Bunso*

Bibliographical Notes (p. 347)

Hoji and Onishi Kazuto, *Shinsen Haikai Nempyo* (Osaka:Shoga Chimpon Zasshisha, 1923) [the index is in *iroha* order]

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For further research:

All the notes given in **Japanese Death Poems** for pre-modern Japanese sources refer to the first editions, which were block-printed books. Hoffmann does not make it clear whether he consulted the works in these difficult to read and relatively rare first editions, or if he consulted them in modern movable-type editions, or both. In any case, with the rise of online digital archives at the National Diet Library (NDL) and many university libraries, these sources may often be found online. The following series also contain many of them:

Kohaisho Bunko, Vol. 11, Tenseidō, 1925 古俳書文庫 , 第 11 巻 , 天青堂 has Natsume Seibi *Zuisai Kaiwa* 夏目成美　隨齋諧話 .

Nihon Haisho Taikei, Nihon Haisho Taikei Kankōkai, Shunjūsha, 1926-1928 日本俳書大系 , 日本俳書大系刊行会 , 春秋社 has Takakuwa Rankō, Haikai Sesetsu 高桑闌更俳諧世説 and Hirose Jikkō, Haikai Kafu Shūi 広瀬十口俳諧家譜拾遺 .

Nihon Kagaku Taikei, edited by　Sasaki Nobutsuna, Kazama Shobō, 1956, Vol 4. 佐佐木信綱編、日本歌学大系、風間書房 has Nomori no Kagami 野守の鏡 .

Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei, Vol. 85, Iwanami Shoten,1966 日本古典文学大系 岩波書店 , has

Shasekishū 沙 石 集 , with commentary and annotations. This 1966 edition is available online, and any university library in Japan will have the more recent revised edition. *Shasekishū* is a well known and studied work and also exists in other editions, as well as in English translation: Robert E. Morrell, *Sand and Pebbles (Shasekishu). The Tales of Muju Ichien. A Voice for Pluralism in Kamakura Buddhism*. State University of New York Press, 1985.

Nihon Zuihitsu Taisei, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929 日本随筆大成日本随筆大成刊行会 , 吉川弘文館 has *Enka Kidan* 煙霞綺談 , *Kasshi Yawa* 甲子夜話 , *Kanden Jihitsu* 閑田次筆 , and *Ichiji Zuihitsu* 一時随筆 . "Table of Contents and Index to Nihon Zuihitsu Taisei," compiled by Michael P. Williams and Alban M. Kojima, 2008 has the complete contents of old and new editions of this multi-volume work: (http://www.library.upenn.edu/docs/collections/japan/_NihonZuihitsu-j.pdf

Shinsen Haikai Nempyo, edited by Hirabayashi Hōji and Ōnishi Kazuto, Shoga Chimpon Zasshisha, Osaka, 1923 新撰俳諧年表 : 附・俳家人名録 , 平林鳳二 , 大西一外編 , 書画珍本雑誌社 has some of the haiku in Part Three, according to Hoffmann, p.347. Digital copy at http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/969169

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My deepest thanks to Professor Lawrence Marceau of The University of Auckland and Miyabi Modry Yamamoto of OneTransLiteracy for their help and encouragement, as well as to Professor Emeritus Steven Carter of Stanford University, Abigail Friedman of The Wisteria Group, and Michael Dylan Welch of Press Here. Responsibility for any mistakes or infelicities is mine.

Notes

1 The Facebook page is Https://www.facebook.com/JapaneseDeathPoems (accessed June 27, 2017). There are also sites about Buddhism, spirituality, and the samurai which incorporate material from the book, such as https://www.samurai-archives.com/deathq.html.
(accessed June 27, 2017).

2 The poems are originally in *kambun*, a form of classical Chinese annotated so that it can be read as Japanese. Also translated as Sino-Japanese, *kambun* was widely used in Japan until modern times.

3 Here and elsewhere Hoffmann does not use macrons over long vowels. If he did, the titles would be *Zensō no Yuige* and *Zensō no Shōji* and the author's name Furuta Shōkin. However, Furuta himself apparently preferred to Anglicize his name. In the colophone of Furuta's two books his own name appears as "Shokin Furuta."

4 「自らの像に賛した一偈に「雲樹陰中の一種草、塩山峰下、千衆を累わす、咄哉(とつさい)、此の漢已むこ

とを獲ず、争(いか)でか黙声の塵刹に通ずるに如(し)かん」と。雲樹はいうまでもなく雲樹寺孤峰を指し、一種草とは抜隊自らを指そう。塩山にあって千衆に説法する立場になったことは、やむを得ないめぐり合せであるとし、実際のところは黙声をもって塵刹に教えを弘め通ずるにしくはないといっている。黙声は沈黙の声ということであり、黙の声とは矛盾するようであるが、無言(むごん)の言(ごん)といった意味に等しかろう。塵刹の塵は微塵であり、微塵、無数の国土ということである。対示説法を巧みにしたであろう抜隊が黙声をいっているこの一語は、抜隊の禅を理解する上に見落としてはならない。」（古田紹欽「禅僧の生死」春秋社、1971 年、pp.53-54）As one can see from this, Hoffmann quotes only the central part of Bassui's original inscription.

5 Diop's remark was made during the 2015 PEN Translation Slam. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toeYE6yk8NI (accessed June 26, 2017).

6 Note 13, p. 345 of *Japanese Death Poems* cites Hirose Jikko, comp. *Haikai Kafu Shui*, 1771, but with no publisher or page number. I cannot tell if Hoffmann actually used the original edition of this book or not, but it also exists in several modern editions. The one I consulted was contained in 日本俳書大系、第 15 巻（通編）（俳諧系譜逸話集 at the National Diet Library Digital Collections: (http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1179401(accessed June 26, 2017). P. 137, コマ番号 86 has the poem.

7 In the bibliographical notes Hoffmann writes "Most of the poems whose sources are not stated in the Notes were taken from the biographical dictionary *Shinsen Haikai Nempyo*"(347). I searched this work, which consists of an index of names (arranged in *iroha* order) and of poets (arranged according to date of death, with death poems if they have one), for both the poet and the poem, but could find neither.

8 Elin Sütiste, "A Crow on a Bare Branch: A Comparison of Matsuo Bashō's Haiku "Kare-eda ni…" and Its English Translations," in *Studia Humaniora Tartuensia, an international online journal of the classics and the humanities*. https://www.ut.ee/klassik/sht/2001/sytiste1.pdf (accessed June 27, 2017). Only two of the 22 translations discussed by Sütiste use "barren" for *kare-eda*.

Linguistic and Cultural Trans-creation: From Conceptual Patterns in the Chinese Bible Versions to Yoel Hoffmann's Translational Stance

Lihi Yariv-Laor

To the blessed memory
of my friend Tsujita Kyoji,
a true disciple of Father Otsuki
and a lover of the Bible

Yoel Hoffmann constantly translates, trans-creates and moves between languages, cultures and *Weltanschauungen*. Dynamic contacts between West and East are clearly observable in his work: between the Western, Austro-Hungarian cultural world and the Eastern worlds – the Israeli one in the "Near East", and, very significantly, what used to be called "the Far East" – mainly Japan but also China with their own multifaceted cultural worlds. In what follows I illustrate some of the paths taken by Hoffmann when he moves and associates between the so-called different "worlds", then show some of the ways taken by Bible translators as the exemplary mediators between "West" and "East".

1. Shifts and Border-crossing in Hoffmann's Writings

Swift moves from one arena to another, or, border-crossing, seems to be one of the most pertinent "names of the game" in Hoffmann's writing. What borders are crossed by Hoffmann, and in what way?

The following fragment taken from *Christ of the Fish,*[1] originally written in Hebrew, and followed here by its English version, might illustrate Hoffmann's way of moving in the text:

באלף תשע מאות ושלושים **אדון**
מושקוביץ בנה (**מצמנט** ומאבני חצץ)
שובר גלים. הוא עמד [כמו **פרומתיאוס**
שהנשרים ניקרו בכבדו], פניו צפונית
מערבית, לעבר קונסטנצה, ואחורי גופו
אל המנזר שעל גבעת הנמל. "**ור בין איך**,"

חשב [**דגי סרדין חמקו** בין השוניות],
"**אננדרר מושקוביץ אודר איך אליין**?" (מושקוביץ אחר או אני עצמי)

> In 1930 Mr. Moskowitz (from cement
> and gravel) built a breakwater. He
> stood (like Prometheus when the ea-
> gles plucked at his liver) with his face
> pointing northwest, towards Con-
> stansa, and his back to the monastery
> on the port hilltop. "Wer bin ich", he
> thought (sardines slipped away be-
> tween the rocks), "ein anderer Moskowitz oder ich allein?"

Hoffmann, *Christ of the Fish*[2] 88

The very first line of this fragment sets the scene and the atmosphere of the picture portrayed for the Hebrew reader when he meets the phrase *adon Moskowitz* ("Mr. Moskowitz"). Using the word '*adon*' as opposed to *mar* (both words meaning 'Mr.', each belonging to another register of spoken modern Hebrew) to precede the surname *Moskowitz*, is a socio-linguistic mark characterizing the speech as referring to the register of spoken Hebrew employed by so-called "new immigrants" (here, those who came to Palestine of the 1930's from Eastern and Central Europe), whose Hebrew level was considered below normative. The vibrant marking of this register of spoken Hebrew is strengthened by another feature of the speech distinctive to people who immigrated from Central and Eastern Europe, which is the mix of words from different languages in their speech. Hoffmann's Hebrew use of mi(=from) *-tsement* ("from cement" in the verse 'from cement and gravel built a breakwater'), *tsement* being the Hebrew pronunciation of the foreign word "cement", instead of '*melet*' which is the Hebrew word for this material – is one more characteristic of this well-defined spoken Hebrew register. The distinction in the Hebrew original fragment between two kinds of registers, differentiating between the Hebrew phrases marked as "new-immigrants' speech" and the rest of the text, is altogether lacking in the English version of the fragment, thus entirely "lost in translation".

What was *adon Moskowitz*, or, in the English version, *Mr. Moskowitz*, doing? He was standing "with his face pointing northwest" in a position referring to Greek mythology "like Prometheus when the eagles plucked at his liver", and then, without further ado, the tiny fish ("sardines slipped away between the rocks") moving swiftly serve as the background of his self-dialogue[3]. Not only is a self-dialogue, by definition, an ultra-intimate way of expression, but in Hoffmann's fragment the

inherent intimacy is all the more marked by the fact that Mr. Moskowitz uses his Yiddish mother-tongue to ask himself who he really is "Who am I, another Moskowitz, or I myself?"

Hoffmann's movements of border-crossing are done swiftly, very much like the almost unnoticed movements of sardines slipping away between the rocks. Thus, with fish in the background and the existential question of self-identity, Hoffmann may allude, among other relevant possibilities, to one of the most well-known pieces in Chinese Daoist thought, drawn from the *Zhuangzi*, with which he had a very early acquaintance:[4]

> The "the Happiness of Fish" (魚樂之辯 *Yú lè zhī biàn*, literally: "the debate on the joy of fish")
>
> Zhuangzi and Huizi were strolling along the bridge over the Hao River.
>
> Zhuangzi said, "The minnows swim about so freely, following the openings wherever they take them. Such is the happiness of fish".
>
> Huizi said, "You are not a fish, so whence do you know the happiness of fish?"
>
> Zhuangzi said, "You are not I, so whence do you know I don't know the happiness of fish?"
>
> Huizi said, "I am not you, to be sure, so I don't know what it is to be you. But by the same token, since you are certainly not a fish, my point about your inability to know the happiness of fish stands intact…"[5]

With Hoffmann we come across intermingling of Western and Eastern cultural systems. Looking at Hoffmann's daring ways to move to and fro from what is called "West" to what is called "East", to *trans*[6]*-fer* languages and registers, to *trans-mit* different cultural views, to *trans-late* and *trans-create* a world within a world, one naturally resorts to the mega translational project of conveying Western patterns to Eastern audience. The great endeavor to which I refer here is precisely the translation of the Bible to the languages of East Asia which plays a crucial role in East-West encounter. Chinese was the first East Asian language to which the biblical text was conveyed in the first decades of the nineteenth century, followed by the Japanese translation completed by 1887.[7]

2. East-West Encounter in Translation: The Bible in Chinese as a Case Study

In so far as we cannot think without language, and basing myself on Wittgenstein's statement "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world" ("*Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt*"),[8] I am concerned with the way in which concepts immanent to a cultural and cognitive system born in the Western Judeo-Christian world are conveyed to the world of the East.

Different Bible-in-Chinese versions have been published since the first quarter of the nineteenth century. I have examined several versions - the first one, translated by Robert Morrison[9] and

published in 1823, is actually the second Chinese Bible of Protestant origin.[10] The second version that I have studied is known as the Delegates' and London Mission Version. Published in 1858, it was the most used Chinese version in the nineteenth century.[11] These two versions were translated into the classical Chinese language. The third translation referred to is Schereschewsky's 1874 version; S. I. J. Schereschewsky,[12] a member of the Peking Translation Committee, was the first to translate the Scriptures not into the classical language, but rather to the modern language, *bai hua*,[13] based on the northern vernacular. The fourth version under examination is the Union Version.[14] Published in 1919, thus coinciding with the May Fourth Cultural Movement in China, the Union Version has been the most widely circulated and is still the translation most commonly used by Chinese Protestant Bible readers throughout the world today. The fifth is the Roman Catholic version translated by a team at the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Sinense, and published in 1968.[15] The sixth version is Lü Zhenzhong's version, published in 1970 by the Hong Kong Bible Society.[16] The seventh version is the 1992 New Chinese version, popular in nowadays China, among other new versions. While examining the Chinese translations, my attention was obviously drawn to the cases where I located dissimilarities between the various versions and occasionally also some blatant deviations from the original in conveying the biblical message, although no formal restrictions on the part of the Chinese language seem to have caused these deviations.

Whatever text in a certain language is naturally imbued with cultural and linguistic premises of the culture and the language in which it is written. When the text is translated, be it a direct translation or a relay (indirect) one, the text in the target language is the one carrying the cognitive-cultural load that is transmitted to the reader. As part and parcel of the transmission project that the translator or translators have undertaken, cultural patterns as well as modes of thinking that are characteristic of the target language are present in the translated text. In the Chinese Bible versions, whether the version was translated from the English and/or other European language, whether directly from the Hebrew (Old Testament) or the Greek (New Testament) original sources, we encounter expressions and modes of speech that correspond to cultural patterns as well as to the modes and patterns of thinking extant and prevalent in the Chinese system.

Cultural considerations and cognitive decisive factors in translation, although at times intermingling, differ from each other, as each kind is motivated by a dissimilar mechanism: *cultural translation* is dictated by the politico-cultural agenda of the translator(s) which is most often dependent on the cultural set of premises and values inherent to the worldview prevalent in the target society; *cognitive translation or lingo-cognitive translation* is, on the other hand, motivated by cognitive traits common in the target socio-linguistic system.

Cultural Translation: Accommodating the translation to the Confucian value system

Often encountered in Chinese versions of the Bible, cultural translation is mainly observable when the translated versions manifest accommodation tendency to the Confucian set of values. The following cases illustrate this tendency.

"Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father" אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ (Leviticus 19:3). In the Hebrew original of the verse, it is the mother who comes first in order, the father figuring in the second place. Some of the Chinese versions (such as Morrison's pioneering version, Lü Zhenzhong's and the Catholic version) were indeed faithful to the original order, thus not following the Confucian ethical code where the father has a definite priority. Others, however, calculatingly and deliberately skipped the mother's precedence and adhered to the familiar Chinese expression *fumu* (father-mother), where the father figures first:

Delegates: 敬尔父母 *jing er fumu* "revere your parents".

Schereschewsky: 你们都当敬畏父母 *nimen dou dang jingwei fumu* "you should all stand in awe of (your) parents".

Union: 你們各人都当孝敬父母 [17]*nimen ge ren dou dang xiaojing fumu* "each of you should be respectful and filial to (your) parents".

New Chinese Version: 各人要孝敬父母 *geren yao xiaojing fumu* "each one has to be respectful and filial to (his) parents".

The same phenomenon is observed in the translations of the verse "But for his kin, that is near unto him, that is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother" כִּי אִם-לִשְׁאֵרוֹ הַקָּרֹב אֵלָיו: לְאִמּוֹ וּלְאָבִיו וְלִבְנוֹ וּלְבִתּוֹ וּלְאָחִיו (Lev. 21:2), where the original Hebrew manifests the mother's precedence over the father. Whereas the "fidelity versions" (Morrison's, Lü Zhenzhong's and the Catholic) preserve the original order with the mother preceding the father, the "acculturation versions" put the father first:

Delegates: 若死者為己书属、父母、兄弟 [18]、子女

Schereschewsky: 唯独為骨肉之親、即如父母兒女弟兄

Union: 除非為他骨肉之亲的父母、兒女、弟兄

New Chinese Version: 除非骨肉至亲，例如父母、兒女、兄弟

What stands behind the deviation from the original order of components in these "acculturation versions"? The answer has to do with Confucian perceptions of hierarchical order. In traditional China, as well as in the entire East Asian sphere under the influence of

Confucian ethical code, hierarchy was considered as indispensable for the right functioning of social order. It was the common, strengthening element in the set of relations serving as a model for proper social operations known as "five relationships" (五 论 *wulun*), i.e. differentiated statuses between ruler-subject, father-son, husband-wife, elder brother-younger brother and between friends. What is more, hierarchical order was well integrated into cosmological theories by connecting it to *yin* and *yang*,[19] where *yang* was preferred over *yin*. Thus, whereas the father's priority is incontestable according to Confucian ethics, a biblical verse in which the mother is mentioned first and the father comes next to her seems to confuse the right, conventional hierarchy in family relations.

Also, since Chinese canonical texts such as the *Analects* (*Lun yu*), the *Book of Rites* (*Li ji*), and the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiao jing*) almost exclusively talk about the relationship between father and son (*fuzi*) and mention mothers only within the compound "father and mother" (*fumu*), Cole[20] argues that Confucian filial piety concerns only a son's responsibilities to his father and male ancestors. Positioning the mother as primary out of the two parents may cause a kind of disorientation and bewilderment in the readers' minds. Consequently, in order not to shake the notion of unequal, hierarchical relationship between father and mother, and in an attempt to avoid any doubt of the father's prominence in the hierarchy, four of the translations amend and rearrange the original order.

Another deliberate translational amendment, that was performed by the Delegates and followed by Schereschewsky, has also to do with relations emanating from the Confucian ethical code. Isaac's blessing to Jacob, which contains the phrase "be lord over thy brethren" הֱוֵה גְבִיר לְאַחֶיךָ (Gen. 27:29), is expressed in Hebrew as directed towards Jacob, who is to preside over his brothers. All Chinese translations, except the Delegates' and Schereschewsky's, are faithful to the original in transmitting this verse with "you" (*er* in Morrison's translation to classical Chinese and *ni* in the vernacular versions), referring to Jacob as the actor in the phrase "may you be lord over your brothers". However, in the renditions of the Delegates and Schereschewsky, a change in the direction of the action is introduced: the action does not derive from "you", but rather originates from the brothers (*xiongdi, dixiong*), who are placed as the agents in the phrase: Delegates: **兄弟**以尔为主 ***xiongdi*** *yi er wei zhu* "(your) younger brothers will take you for lord"; Scherescehwsky: **弟兄**尊你为主 **dixiong** zun ni wei zhu "(your) brothers will look up to you as (their) lord".

The reason for this twist lies, here too, in the "five relationships" of the Confucian ethical code, according to which it is the duty of the person whose status is lower to pay respect to the one higher

in status, and not vice versa. Just as a subject has to revere the ruler, a son – his father, a wife – her husband, so it is the younger brother's duty to be loyal and servile to his elder brother, rather than the elder brother's task to rule.

Another interesting case concerning alteration or lexical substitution in the translated version for cultural reasons, occurs in Schereschewsky's rendering of the sentence וּפָנֶיךָ הֹלְכִים בַּקְּרָב *u-phaneikha holekhim ba-kerav* which literally reads "and your face (will) walk into battle" (2 Samuel 17:11). The original Hebrew sentence consists of a metonymy in which a body part, the face, stands for the larger individual who is Absalom, King David's son. The metonymic expression ("your face") is not rendered as such in the Chinese versions which, perhaps in accordance with the English King James Version reads "and that thou go to battle in thine own person", opting to render the meaning of this expression using the semantic equivalent of 'in person': 亲 *qin*, or 亲自 *qinzi* "in person". Accordingly, the Union version runs as follows: 你也亲自率领他们出战 *ni ye qinzi shuailing tamen chu zhan* "you yourself will lead them to war". However, in Schereschewsky, the 2nd personal pronoun is substituted by the noun 王 *wang* "the King": 王亲自率领他们出战 *Wang qinzi shuailing tamen chu zhan* "the King in person will lead them to go into battle". The reason for this change, from "you" to "the King" in addressing Absalom, seems to be culturally based. As the speaker in this case is Ahitophel (originally a counselor of King David, who at the time of Absalom's revolt deserted David and supported the cause of Absalom), the language he would use here, following Schereschewsky's recognition of Chinese mores, should fit Absalom's expected status as future king. Thus, although the original does not contain any reference to the word "king", and the other Chinese versions do not attempt this strategy, Schereschewsky, with his reader-oriented translation policy, employs this manner of addressing the usurping Absalom.

Looking at ways of how father-son relations were rendered in the early Chinese versions of the Bible, I came across cases in which some of the Chinese versions simply do not convey part of the original. For example: "the nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover" עֶרְוַת אָבִיךָ וְעֶרְוַת אִמְּךָ, לֹא תְגַלֵּה *ervat abhikha ve-ervat imekha lo tegale* (Leviticus 18:7). Three versions, that is the Delegates, followed by Schereschewsky and the Union, omit the part of the verse designating "the nakedness of thy father" altogether.Delegates: 勿烝尔母 *wu zheng er mu* "Do not commit incest with your mother". Schereschewsky: 不可与母苟合 *bu ke yu mu gouhe* "You are not allowed to have an illicit union with your mother".

Union: 不可露你母親的下体 *bu ke lu ni muqin de xiati* "You are not allowed to expose your mother's lower part of the body".

Not mentioning the father's nakedness at all, these three versions refer solely to the mother, and,

when referring to the mother the Union version uses the metaphor "expose the lower part of the body", while the Delegates and Schereschewsky both translate the biblical metaphoric expression "disclose the nakedness of your mother" by interpreting it literally as incest. How can the total omission of "the father's nakedness" be explained? The answer lies, here too, in the Confucian ethical code, according to which filial piety was extolled for centuries as the highest virtue. Now if these three versions were making a great effort to accommodate the Judeo-Christian scriptures to the ethical system they saw praised by the Chinese literati of the nineteenth century, they evidently preferred not to adduce any detail that might even hint at debasing or disgracing the father's status. Moreover, as can be gathered from Confucian literature, filial piety essentially concerned the attitude of a son towards his father and male ancestors, so that a mother's nakedness, if mentioned at all, might offend to only a lesser extent the sensibilities of the Chinese literati who read the translated versions of the Bible.

Lingo-cognitive Chinese Translation

Four predominant cognitive traits that represent very typical lingo-cognitive phenomena of Chinese *Weltanschauung* are revealed in the language of the Chinese versions of the Bible. They are: accuracy in definition; concreteness (as opposed to abstraction); refraining from extreme expressions; and numerical representation of phenomena.

Accuracy in definition

In a dialogue between the two biblical figures Laban and Jacob, Laban asks Jacob: "Because you are my brother, should you therefore serve me for nothing?" *Ha-khi ahi ata va-avadetani hinam*? (Gen. 29:15). As shown by the different Chinese renderings, it is the Hebrew word *ahi* "my brother" figuring in this verse, that constitutes the problematic focal point for translation. Only Morrison's version, showing maximum literal fidelity to the original, translates this word almost literally, using 弟 *di* "younger brother": 因尔为我弟则应无报而事我乎 *yin er wei wo di ze ying wu bao er shi wo hu* "Because you are my younger brother (do you) have to serve me without compensation?" However, if one might think that the problem lies in the fact that Chinese kinship terms do not include a neutral word for "brother", so that a choice in translation should always be made between elder or younger brother, the other versions demonstrate that the difficulty goes further. All other versions offer different solutions:

Delegates: 尔虽我甥 ...*wo sheng* "Although you are my nephew…".

Schereschewsky: 你虽是我至亲 …*wo zhi qin* "Although you are my closest in kin…".

Union: 你虽是我的骨肉 …*wo de gu rou* "Although you are my flesh and bone…".

The Delegates draw on the term *wo sheng* "my nephew" using the character 甥 *sheng* "nephew, who is the son of my sister". Their translation runs as follows: 尔虽我甥岂可使尔徒劳乎 *er sui wo sheng qi ke shi er tulao hu* "Although you are my nephew how can (I) cause you to labour in vain?" Schereschewsky employs the compound 我至亲 *wo zhiqin* thus interpreting "my brother" as "my closest of kin": 你虽是我至亲、岂可白白的服事我 *ni sui shi wo zhiqin, qi ke baibai de fushi wo* "Although you are my closest of kin, how can (you) serve me for nothing?" And the Union Version used the expression 骨肉 gurou "flesh and bone".

What these different solutions reflect is that each translation looks for accuracy from another point of view: whereas Morrison seeks near-literal faithfulness, rendering the word meaning "my brother" as *wo di* "my younger brother", the Delegates version opts for the exact definition of the kind of kinship relationship that existed between Laban and Jacob. Since Laban is the brother of Jacob's mother, Jacob was his nephew, and the term used by the Delegates is therefore 甥 *sheng*. The modern Chinese versions such as the Catholic translation composed by the Studium Biblicum, Lü Zhenzhong's and the New Chinese Version all follow in the Delegates' steps, employing the term 外 甥 *wai sheng* "sister's son, nephew". This solution that seeks the accurate designation of the actual relationship between the two biblical figures, perfectly fits the Confucian principle of 正名 *zhengming* "rectification of names". Thus, the faithfulness here is not to the literal wording in the original text, but to reality, in that it conveys to the Chinese reader the proper state of the relationship between Laban and Jacob. Schereschewsky's and the Union's versions, each in its own way, seem to look for another kind of faithfulness in this case: faithfulness to the true intention of the biblical text, rather than to real family relationships. In translating *ahi* "my brother" as 我至亲 *wo zhiqin* "my closest of kin," Schereschewsky finds an exact semantic equivalent that conveys the Hebrew meaning. The Union version, too, with the expression 骨肉 *gurou* "bone and flesh, kindred" aspires to a suitable accurate semantic parallel.

Concreteness (as opposed to abstraction)

God's first commandment imposed on the newly created human beings in the Garden of Eden is: מִכֹּל עֵץ-הַגָּן, אָכֹל תֹּאכֵל "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat". God goes on prohibiting: וּמֵעֵץ, הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע--לֹא תֹאכַל, מִמֶּנּוּ "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it" (Gen. 2:16-17). Are God's words concrete or specific? No. What exactly should Adam and Eve eat of the trees? What part should not be touched by them? The original wordings "of every tree"/ "of the tree" do not contain any exact reference to the specific part of the tree. However, all Chinese

versions specify "the fruit of the tree". Schereschewsky's: 園中各樣樹上的果子你可以隨意吃，只是分別善惡樹上的果子你不可吃 *yuanzhong geyang shushang de guozi ni keyi suiyi chi, zhishi fenbie shan'e shu shang de guozi ni buke chi* "The **fruit** of every kind of a tree that is in the garden – you may eat as you wish; only the **fruit** of the tree of discerning good and evil – you are not allowed to eat". The tendency of Chinese for concrete designation of things is here revealed.

The phenomenon of preferring concrete reference rather than a metonymic, sometimes unclear description, is illustrated by two verses from the Book of Esther: "but the city Shushan was perplexed" וְהָעִיר שׁוּשָׁן נָבוֹכָה (Esther 3:15). The translators to Chinese made it a point to clarify who exactly in the city was perplexed: the people. Schereschewsky's version reads 書珊城的民都慌亂 *Shushan cheng de min dou huangluan* "all the people of the city Shushan were alarmed and confused". The same procedure can be seen in a very similar line וְהָעִיר שׁוּשָׁן צָהֲלָה וְשָׂמֵחָה "and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad" (Esther 8:15). The Union version reads: 書珊城的人民都歡呼快樂 *Shushan cheng de renmin dou huanhu kuaile* "all the people [*renmin*] of the city Shushan cheered and were happy".

Refraining from extreme expressions

Chinese language shows a relentless abstinence from extreme, negative expressions. A vivid illustration is drawn from the Chinese translation of a very well-known scene in the Judeo-Christian tradition: Cain and Abel, sons of Adam and Eve, each presented his offering and made sacrifice to God. God favored Abel's sacrifice instead of Cain's. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect" (Genesis 4:4-5). Cain's reaction was extreme: "he was very wroth" וַיִּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד (Genesis 4:5). Schereschewsky's translation consists of a typical understatement: 該隱就大大的不悅, *Gai Yin jiu da da de bu yue* "Cain was very much displeased".

Numerical representation of phenomena

A mode of expression deeply rooted in the Chinese way of thinking consists of the tendency to use numerical expressions to represent various sorts of phenomena. In the Chinese Bible translations this tendency is reflected when numerical expressions are employed to render expressions that in the original do not consist of numerical or quantified expressions. Derk Bodde entitled this propensity as "Categorical Thinking",[21] by which he meant the overall tendency to classify and categorize each and every phenomenon in terms of a numerical group.

When God found out that the serpent had persuaded Eve to taste the fruit of the tree of discerning good and evil, he cursed the serpent: אָרוּר אַתָּה מִכָּל-הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה "you are cursed more than all livestock, and every animal of the field" (Gen. 3;14). In the translated version of Schereschewsky,

we find two numerical expressions in this verse: 你...就必比六畜百獸加倍受咒詛 "you are cursed doubly more than the six domestic animals (livestock) and the hundred animals". The compound 六畜 *liuchu* (the six domestic animals: horse, ox, goat, pig, dog and fowl), and 百獸 *baishou* (all animals) are used to express all kinds of animals.

When Joseph was in the land of Egypt, he managed to gather all sorts of wheat "and Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much" וַיִּצְבֹּר יוֹסֵף בָּר כְּחוֹל הַיָּם הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד (Gen. 41:49). Whereas the original uses a general term referring to "corn," "wheat" or "grains" (Hebrew *bar*), Chinese versions use the compound 五穀 *wugu* (lit. five grains) in which the numeral 五 *wu* (five) precedes the noun 穀 *gu* (grain). Schereschewsky gives: 約瑟這樣積蓄五穀 *Yuese zheyang jixu wugu* "Joseph thus stored up all kinds of cereals" [lit., five grains]; and so do other versions. The compound *wugu* "five grains" is intended to semantically encompass all the cereals, the exact list of which varies.[22] The specific items that constitute the list being irrelevant, this compound denotes the whole, i.e., food crops in general.

In the Book of Isaiah we find כִּי-לִי תִכְרַע כָּל-בֶּרֶךְ תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל-לָשׁוֹן "unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isa. 45:23). The expressions citing the body parts (knee, tongue) referring to the whole person are translated into Chinese as 萬膝 *wan xi* "ten thousand knees" and 萬口 *wan kou* "ten thousand mouths" respectively. Preceding a noun, *wan* is idiomatically used in Chinese to mean "all".

Having portrayed some features that characterize the rendition of Judeo-Christian scriptures coming from the West to Chinese audience, I would like now to look afresh at Yoel Hoffmann's shifts between the worlds.

3. Back to Yoel Hoffmann

天地一指也，萬物，一馬也 "Heaven and earth are one finger. The ten thousand things are one horse".[23] According to the Chinese Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi, the greatness of heaven and earth is no different from one finger; the amount of the ten thousand things is no different from one horse. In Hoffmann's translation to Hebrew of this line which is included in a selection from the *Zhuangzi*,[24] we find not only his rendering of the idiosyncratic Chinese tendency to classify and categorize each and every phenomenon in terms of numerical group (*wan wu*, "ten thousand things" is a generic term signifying all things in the universe), but also major clues to his works. As to the Chinese compound "ten thousand things", Hoffmann rightly conveys it as "all things". As to the overall idea of this phrase – this seems ro be a concept of paramount significance in Hoffmann's writings. Trifle or gigantic, main or trivial, from here or from there, in this language or in another – things all seem to come up to one. There is no essential difference between things, thus no real

borders exist.

Daoist reflections may be traced everywhere in Hoffmann's writings. Dream or reality, dream and reality? Is there a clear cut line between dream and reality? That is the question. The allusion to *Zhuangzi*'s "butterfly episode" is vibrant:

> "Once upon a time, I, Chuang Chou, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was Chou. Soon I awaked, and there I was, veritably myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man".[25]

Below are samples of Hoffmannic ruminations between dream and reality:

> "I dream that I am a murderer. (Of a man? It
> Was a kind of small mummy into whose neck I'd
> injected poison. But, without a doubt, there was
> life within it.) I try to wake up so I
> can find that I haven't killed a soul. I wake and understand that
> in fact I've committed a murder. In the morning,
> when I rise, I understand that I dreamed the part about waking up".
>
> *Curriculum vitae*, 2

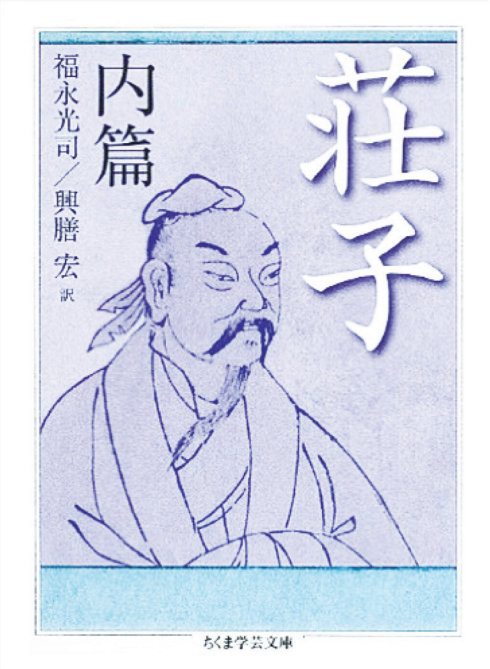
> I want to know: are there colors and
> smells in the brain? The pig farmer is
> dead and now the old sow is running
> through the streets of my mind (across
> wooden bridges) looking for him. And
> maybe the sights I see when I'm awake
> are someone else's dream?
>
> *Christ of the Fish,* 37

Or, is there a distinction line between East and West?

Hoffmann makes it a point to elucidate his total rebuff of marking borders and even the sheer irrelevance of borders. The title of his Hebrew book *Ha-Shunra ve-Ha-Shmeterling*[26] (*The Shunra and the Schmetterling*)[27] is yet another illustration of this point. *Shunra* and *Schmetterling* are both foreign words for the Hebrew reader. However, whereas *shunra* is Aramaic, and belongs to the stock of Hebrew cultural tradition as having a place in the Haggadah of Passover, *Schmetterling*, "butterfly"

in German, is totally unknown to a Hebrew speaker. With this mélange between languages and cultures, between what is considered East and what is considered West, Hoffmann consciously affirms that he does not bother to accommodate his writing to the reader's expectations. Hoffmann moves swiftly from one cultural setting to another, from one *Weltanschauung* to another. But, without the slightest attempt to make the text comprehensive to his readers: Just as his relatives and other people who immigrated from the Austro-Hungarian sphere to the Asiatic sphere in Palestine were not aware of the fact that some of their sayings were not clear at all to the audience. Following this Hoffmannic line, I suggest a slight revision in the above mentioned Daoist "Butterfly episode", to a trans-created *Schmetterling's episode:*

"Formerly, I, Zhuang Zhou, dreamt that I was a Schmetterling, a Schmetterling flying about, feeling that it was enjoying itself. I did not know that it was Zhou. Suddenly I awoke, and was myself again, the veritable Zhou. I did not know whether it had formerly been Zhou dreaming that he was a Schmetterling, or it was now a Schmetterling dreaming that it was Zhou. But between Zhou and a Schmetterling there must be a difference…"



Like his *Schmetterling*, Hoffmann freely but consciously and wide awake, flies over registers, cultures, languages, people, east – west, and backwards. Liberated yet with full consciousness he takes his reader on a very lucid journey in which the dream is very real.

Not only dream versus reality is being probed, but also a parallel pair: death versus life. Here too, the answer is not clear:

> I said to my father: "but Uncle Herbert is dead. Am I dreaming?" And my dead father said: "no, he is alive"
>
> *Christ of the Fish (first page)*

Beyond all these existential questions, there is however a question that never finds an answer, a perpetual elusive question that emerges time and again: *"Wer bin ich?"* "Who am I?" (*Christ of the Fish,* 88)

> "The little girl Sivan was there, and also Yoel
> Hoffmann, who eludes me continuously and
> Whose nature it is hard to grasp".
>
> *Curriculum Vitae,* 28

Notes

1 *Kristus shel Ha-Dagim*, (= Christ of the Fish), (Keter Publishing House, 1991).

2 Yoel Hoffmann, *Christ of the Fish*, Translated to English by Eddie Levenston, (A New Directions Book, New York, 1999).

3 "Self-dialogue involves a constant process of demarcation and interaction between "I" and "me," between speakable and the unspeakable, and between what is said and what is meant" says Victor N. Shaw "Self-Dialogue as a Fundamental Process of Expression," *Social Thought & Research* Vol. 24, No. 1/2, The Politics of Gender (2001), pp. 271-312.

4 In 1977 Hoffmann published the book *Kolot Ha-Adama. (The Sounds of Earth. Selection from Chuang-Tzu*). *Translation from Chinese and commentary* (Massasa). As Hoffmann states, it is a kind of relay (indirect) translation, as he relied also on Japanese translations of this text, especially that of Fukunaga, *Soshi*, asahishimbunsha publishing.

5 From *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings, With Selections from Traditional Commentaries.* Translated, with Introduction by Brook Ziporyn, (Hackett Publishing, 2009).

6 From Latin trāns ("across, on the far side, beyond").

7 On the Japanese Translations of the Bible, see Doron B. Cohen, *The Japanese Translations of the Hebrew Bible: History, Inventory and Analysis*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

8 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung*, (London: Kegan Paul, 1922).

9 Morrison was the first Protestant missionary to have lived and worked in China.

10 The first Protestant version, translated by J. Lassar and J. Marshman and published in 1822 in Serampore, India, was not as widely used as Morrison's.

11 See, for example, Strandenaes, Thor, *Principles of Chinese Bible Translation as Expressed in Five Selected Versions of the New Testament and Exemplified by Mt. 5: 1-12 and Col 1*,(Almqvist and Wiksell International. Coniectanea Biblica. New Testament Series 19, 1987), p. 48.

12 For a thorough study of Schereschewsky, his life and work see Eber, Irene. *The Jewish Bishop and the Chinese Bible: S.I.J. Schereschewsky (1831-1906)*, (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

13 All the Chinese versions that followed from that time on used the modern language as well.

14 The entire complex history of the Union Version is dealt with by Zetzsche, Jost Oliver, *The Bible in China. The History of the Union Version or the Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China,* (Monumenta serica Monograph Series XLV. Sankt Augustin: Monumenta serica Institute, 1999).

15 Cf. Camps, Arnulf. O.F.M., "Father Gabriele M. Allegra, O.F.M. (1907-1976) and the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*: The First Complete Chinese Catholic Translation of the Bible". in Eber, Irene, Sze-Kar Wan and Knut Walf (eds.), in collaboration with Roman Malek, *Bible in Modern China: the Literary and Intellectual Impact*. (Monumenta serica Monograph Series 43, Sankt Augustin: Nettetal Steyeler Verlag, 1999), pp. 55-76.

16 See Zetzsche, op.cit. p. 347.

17 The Union version not only follows the Delegates' and Schereschewsky's using the compound *fumu*, but also goes further in pursuing Confucian spirit as it prefers the verbal compound 孝敬 *xiaojing* instead of transmitting the concept of "awe".

18 The Delegates' version reverses, in addition, the order of the components that follow in the text-positioning "brother" before "son and daughter".

19 This viewpoint is generally credited to Dong Zhongshu of the Han dynasty, although as Sarah A. Queen has noted, historians have somewhat overstated Dong's contribution to the systematization of yin-yang thought. Queen, Sarah A., *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, According to Tung Chung-shu,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 3.

20 Cole, Alan. *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*, (Stanford University Press. Stanford, California, 1998).

21 Bodde, Derk. "Types of Chinese Categorical Thinking" *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* vol. 59.2 (1939), pp. 200-219.

22 According to Mathews' *Chinese-English Dictionary*, "five grains" may include "hemp or flax, millet of two kinds, wheat and barley, and pulse. This is an ancient classification," he adds, "other lists include rice" (p. 1072).

23 From *Zhuangzi*, 齐物论 , "Essay on the Uniformity of All Things".

24 *Kolot Ha-Adama*, p.18.

25 Translated by Lin Yutang.

26 *Ha-Shunra ve-Ha-Shmeterling*, (Keter Publishing House, 2001).

27 *The Shunra and the Schmetterling* translated from the Hebrew by Peter Cole, (New York: New Directions Books, 2004).

第 9 回CISMORユダヤ学会議
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「ユダヤ教と日本文化：ヨエル・ホフマン記念特集」

Judaism and Japanese Culture:
Studies in Honor of Yoel Hoffmann

Part Ⅳ

Israeli & Middle Eastern Literature, Israeli Culture and Japan

The Seven Good Years in Japanese: Translating a Translation without the Original

Takafumi Akimoto

1. Etgar Keret, Hebrew Language, and *The Seven Good Years*

Etgar Keret is an Israeli short story writer who is very popular both domestically and internationally. His stories have been translated into more than 45 languages and are read worldwide. *The Seven Good Years* (2015) is Keret's first collection of nonfictional essays that depict the seven years between the birth of the author's son and the death of his father, which are, just like his stories, funny and profound at the same time. The book, which opens with a terrorist attack and the birth of Keret's son, Lev, ends with a chapter where Keret and his wife try to make their son lie down during the air-raid siren. Some pieces in the book deal with current issues facing his country and people, such as Keret and his wife's debate on whether they are going to let their son serve in the army in the future, and Keret's mistaking what a German stranger said to him as racial discrimination against his people which had made him very angry. On the other hand, it is a book about his family, too. His son is born and grows up during these seven years. There are stories about his brother, who read his first story and made him want to be a writer, and who now lives in Thailand as a social activist, and one about his sister who turned to religion and became an Orthodox Jew, and one about his father, a Holocaust survivor, who suffers from cancer and passes away at the end of the book. If we use the metaphor of fabric, the warp of this book is Jewish and Israeli stuff and the weft weaving them together is the family.

Etgar Keret writes in his native tongue, Hebrew, and in interviews he often makes claims for the uniqueness of his language. Keret responds to the interviewer who asked him what he thought is lost in translation as follows:

> A lot. The Hebrew slang in which I write represents a unique language, one that existed exclusively as a written language for two thousand years only to find itself "defrosted" at an arbitrary historical point. This created a spoken language that had preserved its ancient biblical roots on the one end but that was also very open to invented and imported words out of necessity—there were two thousand years worth of words that didn't exist in the language. This

> tension between traditional language and a very chaotic and anarchistic one creates a spoken language that is bursting with unique energy and that allows you to switch registers mid-sentence. All of these linguistic aspects can't pass translation (Interview with Rebecca Sacks).

As Keret says, Hebrew is a very unique language which had only been used as a written language for 2000 years and then suddenly and quite arbitrarily became a spoken language, and in order to adjust to the new reality, it adopted, imported and invented a lot of new words. However, there are few readers who can enjoy the uniqueness of his language, because the number of Hebrew speakers around the world is estimated to be no more than 9 million. On the other hand, Keret's stories are being read in as many as 45 countries, and it is safe to assume that far more people read his stories in translation than in the original, unable to enjoy the uniqueness of the original Hebrew. Although this concerns him, he seems resigned to the inevitability of the loss, and to the fact that for a writer who writes in a minor language, translation is the only realistic way to obtain a wide readership.

However, *The Seven Good Years* is actually quite different from his other works in one important respect, because although this book has been translated into more than 20 languages, there is no original Hebrew edition to work from. The book consists of 36 essays which were originally written by Keret in Hebrew, and then translated into English by various translators and published in a variety of English language media such as *The New Yorker, The New York Times*, and *Tablet*, an English web magazine on Jewish matters. The definitive edition is the English translation, and all the other editions are translated from this English edition, not from the original Hebrew; that is to say, all the editions except the English one are examples of retranslation, or indirect translation, which is usually not recommended in academic literary studies. Most of Keret's fictional works have been translated directly from Hebrew. Even in this process, as we have seen, Keret believes that many things are "lost". So all the translated editions of *The Seven Good Years* except the English one have been translated twice, and are two steps removed from the original pieces, which means that they suffer "loss" in translation twice.

What I want to discuss in my paper, though, is whether indirect translation is always undesirable and should be avoided. I will argue that it may well sometimes bring about advantages and thus have value and importance as a literary practice.

2. Examples of Indirect Translation

The most well known example of indirect translation is that of the Bible, which was written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek and Latin, and then translated into other languages, and

although not so common, indirect translation itself is not so rare in the publishing world either, especially where the source language does not have many readers among the population of the target language. For example, the first Keret book published in Japan was his picture book *Dad Runs Away with the Circus*, which was originally written in Hebrew, and then translated into English, and from that translation, translated into Japanese.

When it comes to serious literature, on the other hand, indirect translation is not without problems. Haruki Murakami's *Nejimakidori Kuronikuru* (translated into English as *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*) is an example of indirect translation that was the source of controversy. The book was translated and published in Germany but later it turned out that this German version was in fact an indirect translation from the English translation by Jay Rubin. Rubin's text was an abridged version, due to the American publishing house, Knopf, stipulating that the book should not exceed a certain length. When the German edition was translated from this abridged English edition, although the English edition was authentic as a source text, it is different from the original Japanese edition even in the matter of physical length.[1]

Another example of a writer whose works exist in various translated editions is I. B. Singer. I.B. Singer wrote in Yiddish, but some of his stories were translated into English and won a wider readership in America. Moreover, Singer recommended using the English translation as the source text when his works were translated into other languages. As a result, most of the translation of Singer's works are indirect translation, which implies the author himself regarded the translated version, not the original, as authentic.[2]

In the case of Murakami and Singer, at least they had their original texts published as they were written by the authors themselves, so it is possible to insist that these Japanese and Yiddish editions are authentic and all the other editions are secondary to them. But *The Seven Good Years* does not exist publicly in an authoritative original form. It is quite a rare book that has many translated editions but no published original edition.

Keret provides an explanation for this absence of the original Hebrew text as follows:

> When you publish a work of fiction, people can tell you that your book is boring or your books suck, but when you write about your family people can tell you that your family is boring or your family sucks. And for me, never publishing nonfiction before, this is something that is very, very stressful. And I feel that there are many intimate details in the book that it's easier for me to share overseas.
>
> It's kind of like those stories that you feel comfortable to tell somebody in a bar or on a train,

> but you wouldn't tell your next door neighbor. So, I don't know, maybe one day I'll publish it in Israel, but right now it feels a little bit too scary and too personal (Interview, "'Seven Good Years' Between The Birth of a Son, Death of a Father").

Keret focuses on the nature of the material, and claims publishing in translation is less personal and helps to define the kind of audience he wants. The pieces in *The Seven Good Years* are sometimes about his family members or personal reflections that are written about in a way which involves a degree of caricature and irony. So it is, perhaps, understandable that he feels nervous about sharing them with his countrymen who could easily identify the individuals he writes about. At the same time, nonetheless, this book is also about how people in Israel survive their never-ending state of hostilities, and sometimes he cannot help but be critical of his own country. Therefore, it is understandable that Keret refrained from sharing it with his countrymen in anticipation of criticism from them. So, there are plausible reasons for his decision to forgo an original edition in Hebrew.

On the other hand, it is interesting that he doesn't refer to the technical problems of translation, nor to the need to reach an international audience; also interesting is his metaphor, illustrating why he needs to tell the stories to "somebody in a bar or on a train". All we can know here is that Keret chose that his stories be translated from English translation, not from his native tongue, even at the risk of indirect translation.

3. Translation Studies: Domestication or Foreignization?

In translation studies, Friedrich Schliermacher has argued as quoted below about the methods of translation:

> [T]here are only two. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him (Schliermacher. qtd in Venuti 19-20).

Lawrence Venuti calls the former the "domesticating method" and the latter the "foreignizing method" and he supports the latter on the grounds that "foreignizing translation in English can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism". Accordingly, he criticizes the fluent, and therefore, domesticating translation into English as reinforcing the ethnocentrism of Anglo-American culture, as if taking postcolonial theory into translation studies.

I strongly agree with Venuti on the point that we should resist the cultural dominance of a hegemonic language and culture, and in that sense, *The Seven Good Years*, which employs English as its mediator to other languages and therefore reinforces the dominance of Anglo-American culture, can be criticized. However, from the pragmatic perspective of translation, Venuti's theory seems too politically-correct and too cut and dried. I wonder if "foreignization" and "domestication" are really mutually exclusive approaches that oblige us to choose one or the other. I suspect it is an artificial dichotomy.

My feeling is that translation is always a kind of compromise. Whether the translator tends towards the "domesticating" method or to the "foreignizing" method, translation is an act of transporting a text into another culture. However good your translation might be, it can never be the exact equivalent of the original text. There is always going to be some distance from the original text, and something can be lost at each stage. From my personal experience, I see translation as inevitably a process of "filtering out". When you transport a text into another language and culture, you cannot help "filtering" something out of the source text, just as Keret described what is lost from Hebrew when translated, in the previous quotation. We can easily find this kind of filtering out in other languages, too. For example, in Japanese we have a range of different first person singular pronouns, such as *watashi, boku, ore, washi*, and *atashi*, which reflect the gender, age, social position and self-recognition of the utterer. When translated into English, there is generally no alternative to replacing them all with a simple "I". The subtle nuances of the original Japanese words cannot generally be rendered. So, the important thing is what you filter out and what you leave in the translated text. That's where translators have to work hard, and continually choose how to keep the distance: sometimes they choose to domesticate it and in other places to foreignize it. A uniform policy of either domestication or foreignization would not produce a satisfactory result in practice.

I'd like to give an example from my own translation. When I translated *The Seven Good Years* I first chose to express the word "dreidel" using the phonetic *katakana* syllabary. The source text is quoted below:

> When I was a kid, I always thought that Hebrew Book Week was a legitimate holiday, something that fit comfortably amid Independence Day, Passover, and Hanukah. On this occasion, we didn't sit around campfire, spin dreidels, or hit each other on the head with plastic hammers, and, unlike other holidays, it doesn't commemorate a historical victory or heroic defeat, which made me like it even more (21).

In Japanese there are two kinds of phonetic alphabet, *hiragana* and *katakana*. In contrast to *hiragana*, which is a major component in written Japanese, *katakana*'s main use is to represent phonetically words which are imported from foreign languages and don't have appropriate matching Japanese translations. Among the words used in this quotation, we don't have words for "Hanukha" or "dreidels" in Japanese, so in my first draft I transliterated them into *katakana* as seen in the next passage below. This is the translation of the second sentence, which begins with "on this occasion":

> この行事では、他の行事のときみたいにキャンプファイアを囲んで座ったり（※ラグバオメルでは焚き火をたいて一日を祝う）もしなければ、ドライデル（※ハヌカのときに遊ぶコマ）を回すことも、プラスチックのハンマーでお互いの頭を叩く（※独立記念日の習慣）こともないし、他の祝日みたいに歴史的な勝利や英雄的敗北を記念したものでもないから、それだけにいっそうヘブライ・ブック・ウィークが好きだった。
> (underlining added)

In Japanese, we can use brackets to insert a short note, so I *katakanized* "dreidels" to show that the term is a foreign one, and added a note in a bracket saying "the spinning top they play with during Hanukkha" as a way to maintain both readability and information of the foreign cultural background. My editor, however, suggested that I delete this bracket note and change *katakanized* "dreidel" into a Japanese noun "koma", which simply means "spinning top". I had no objection to my editor's proposal, accepting it because I thought too many brackets interrupt the reader's concentration on the story. In short, it is a matter of story or information. If you have to sacrifice either story or information, you have to make a choice, and my choice was to sacrifice a little of the information about the cultural background. This is the only place in the account that refers to driedels, and the story itself is about the narrator's experience at the Hebrew Book Week. Holidays in Israel are listed just as examples of legitimate holidays, so for ordinary Japanese readers, the necessary information is just that there are several holidays in Israel where they have different customs from those in Japan. I judged that the specific and detailed information about the dreidels was not significant enough to break the flow of the passage.

So, it can be said that I chose domestication here, but it depends on what you think the priority is at each point in the translation. Venuti might criticize this as an instance of domestication. He insists uncompromisingly on the authenticity of the foreignizing method. But I believe the translated text should be continually moving between the dichotomy of familiarity and foreignness according to circumstances. A translator's job is to decide what is to be filtered out, even when he wants to keep

everything in.

4. Reactions to the Japanese Edition

If the translation is the process of filtering something out, indirect translation is the process of filtering out twice. When it is successfully done and shedding the details twice, what is left after the process is a purer and more essential core of the story. When I compare my translation of *The Seven Good* Years with the translation of another Keret book available in Japanese, *Suddenly a Knock on the Door*, translated by another translator who worked from the original Hebrew, I have to say that I feel my translation is more fluent and easier to read for the Japanese audience, and I think this is partly due to the process of indirect translation, which necessarily involves delocalizing and shedding details twice. Because this book is nonfiction, readers already have a certain knowledge and know that this is a story about some foreign country. Too specific information about the culture might make the story too foreign for the readers outside of it, and this wouldn't have been a good policy for *The Seven Good Years*.

Here is an example that may help to prove the point. A Japanese fiction writer, Toh Enjo, wrote a review of *The Seven Good Years* in a Japanese national newspaper:

> When Japanese people travel abroad, no one would brag to their faces that they had killed many of their ancestors, nor ask if they are ashamed of being Japanese. But this kind of thing regularly happens to Keret.
>
> It is a very demanding experience to be expected to speak as a representative of your country abroad. Even when you know what is wrong with your country, you sometimes find yourself in the position of having to defend it, although in your own country you are widely regarded as someone who routinely speaks ill of it. You might feel like keeping your mouth shut, but you cannot escape from the stereotypical images other people have about you…. Keret's words are always uttered in a situation where it is hard to speak—so hard that you have to refrain from publishing your opinions in your own country. Yet for all Keret's intellectual rigor and toughness of spirit, he never forgets to offer the opportunity for laughter (Enjoh, my translation).

It can be readily appreciated that this reviewer saw the book as depicting something specific to Israeli and Jewish people and therefore emphasized the uniqueness of their experience as something others will never have or understand. Reading this review, however, two of my friends,

who are both academics majoring in foreign cultures—one in American Literature and the other in Arabic culture—told me that they have also suffered from this kind of racial discrimination abroad and believed this book should be read as something more universal, depicting situations and problems we can all experience, whatever our nationalities are.

I find these two distinct reactions quite interesting. The book is the same, yet the readings are contradictory, and I think they can both be right, and that interpretive diversity is part of the appeal of this book. The hardship Jewish people suffered throughout their history is specific to them and the memory of the Holocaust and the current situation in which Israel exists permanently in a virtual state of war with some of the peoples and nation states in the region makes her situation unique. With few exceptions, it is hard for the rest of us even to imagine what it must be like to be an Israeli, let alone claim to understand from our own experience. The racial stigma, which had unjustly been cast upon Jewish people, is the worst in scale, and I cannot say that I really understand how it must feel to experience it. But at the same time, what this book is really depicting is, to a much smaller degree, what we all experience every day. Sometimes it is difficult for us all to escape the national stereotype within which other people seek to constrain us, and we all sometimes find ourselves speaking or being spoken of in a racist manner, even if it is unintentional.

"Bombs Away", a story contained in this book, describes the reaction of Keret and his wife when they hear the news of the possibility of an imminent nuclear attack by Iran on Israel. They give up their daily routine such as washing dishes, fixing a wet spot on the ceiling and taking care of plants, anticipating they are going to be wiped out soon. Finally, discovering that the rumor is not trustworthy, they feel afraid of peace. The closing lines are quoted below:

> "Don't worry, honey. We're both survivors. We've already survived quite a bit together---illnesses, wars, terrorist attacks, and, if peace is what fate has in store, we'll survive it, too." Finally my wife fell asleep again, but I couldn't. So I got up and swept the living room. First thing tomorrow morning, I'm calling a plumber (75).

What is funny about this conclusion is the paradox that they have to "survive" peace, which in normal circumstances would be the one thing you wouldn't need to "survive". But since they have already given up their possibility of survival and accepted their doomed fate, survival, which necessarily requires them to do the duties which they have long postponed and haven't taken care of since they heard the news, turns into a threat. As long as the readers know this is a story of Israel

and its enemy country, they can get the gist of the story. And I think as long as that core of the story remains after the process of translation, it does not much matter how domesticated or foreignized the translated text is. It is inevitable that through the process of reading and responding to the text, each reader will fill the blanks in the translated text.

5. Conclusion

In his op-ed article, "I'm Not Anti-Israel, I'm Ambi-Israel", published in *The New York Times* at the time he won the Charles Bronfman Prize, Keret reacts against his being called an "Anti-Israel Author", arguing that it is dangerous to define a person's position in terms of the dichotomy of "pro" or "anti". This can stop people debating specific issues, denying them the possibility of criticizing the side with which they identify. As an alternative to this 'pro' or 'anti' attitude, Keret proposes the third position which he calls "ambi":

> To lend a helping hand to those who are fond of simplified labels, I would like to suggest a third option. Let's call it "ambi." The terms "ambi-Israeli" or "ambi-Palestinian" will simply indicate that our opinions on Middle Eastern affairs, while they may be resolute, are complex. Those with "ambi" positions will be allowed to support an end to the occupation while still condemning Hamas; they may believe that the Jewish people deserve a state but also maintain that Israel should not occupy territories that do not belong to it. Careful application of this new label might enable us to delve deeper into the essential arguments around the conflict and its resolution, instead of merely squirting water at one another in the shallow end of the pool.

It is refreshing to encounter an appeal for a nuanced position in place of rigid, polarized standpoints in which the participants must accept a set package of views at one or the other end of the spectrum. It is not necessary to believe that everyone must accept a rigid set of views on the basis of their national identity. People must think as individuals with a variety of perspectives on the key issues. Disagreement with certain positions or policies is not incompatible with a fundamental patriotism or support for the Jewish state. And the same is true about the policy of translation. You don't need to choose between the polarized standpoints of either domestication or foreignization.

With this perspective of Keret's in mind, we can see why *The Seven Good Years* engendered two different readings among Japanese readers. In keeping with Keret's 'ambi' attitude, the book neither requires the readers to read it as something solely depicting specifically Jewish and Israeli issues, nor as something focusing totally upon the universal with which all people can identify regardless of

their ethnic and national backgrounds.

Indirect translation, the route through which this book has reached its audience, is a process in which many details, even more than usual, are "lost in translation". This has led to indirect translation being criticized as an invalid literary practice. But I believe that in some cases, the opposite may be true. In providing the text with more blanks for readers to fill in, this loss of detail can be beneficial. If we can let go of our fear of indeterminacy and uncertainty, we can see that indirect translation can be a good way to place a text somewhere between 'here' and 'there', allowing it to shift flexibly according to how close the readers want it to be to them, and give it the distance from the original that enables it to speak to a world-wide readership. Ideally, such a translation can welcome readers who stay "ambi"— readers who are free to respond to the book in different ways, so long as they each respond in their own way.

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Notes

1 As for the controversy over the indirect translation of Murakami's work, see Rubin, pp. 273-289. What is interesting is that Murakami himself supports indirect translations on the ground that English is the lingua franca of the literary industry and although direct translation is the most accurate and desirable, it is not always possible.

2 Osaki, pp. 221-228.

Japanese Reception of Literary Translation from the Middle East: Focus on Arabic and Hebrew Literature

Kazue Hosoda

Introduction

This article outlines the characteristics of Japanese translations of Middle Eastern literature and reviews the contemporary situation of Middle Eastern literature in Japan. I focus on the reception of Arabic and Hebrew literature in Japan after the Second World War. The distance between Japan and the Middle East is big. Little information arrives from there. However, it is a fact that what little information that does arrive, forms the images which the Japanese people have of the Middle East. The reception of literary works also depends on the historical context. I am convinced that this study helps to clarify how Japan sees the Middle East.

1. History of Cultural Reception in Modern Japan

1-1 Translation of European Literature

The translation of foreign literary works in the Meiji Period (1868-1915) played a leading role in the development of the modern era. Besides several practical European books, some novels, such as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (English) and Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (French), were translated into Japanese and adapted to suit the Japanese context. Likewise, a theatrical adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* was performed in 1885. The works of Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870), Charles Dickens (1812-1870), and Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) were introduced through the adaptation of their novels.

1-2 Japanese Understanding of the Middle East

In the early 1900s, Japan was on the brink of Imperialism while also learning about the Middle East. Japanese Christian intellectuals were interested in the Jewish people because of the former's fascination with the holy land. Meanwhile, Tokutomi Kenjiro (1868–1927), a popular Japanese writer later known as Tokutomi Roka, visited Ottoman Palestine in 1906.[1] Some intellectuals considered the Jewish people an enemy of the Christians; others, such as Uchimura Kanzo[2] (1876-

1930) and Yanaihara Tadao[3] (1893-1961) supported Zionism.[4] The Japanese government entered into an alliance with Nazi Germany in the 1930s, at which time Japan, and Japanese media in particular, began leaning towards anti-Semitism.

In addition, the Japanese right wing believed in Pan-Asianism and recognized Middle Eastern society as a member of greater Asia. Okawa Shumei (1886-1957), a Japanese nationalist and the first translator of the holy Quran into Japanese, wrote the book *Introduction to Islam* in 1942. Further, Tatars, an ethnic minority from Russia migrated to Japan and fought for their independence.[5] Japanese intellectuals learned more of the Middle East through their influence.

During this time, a limited amount of information nonetheless reached Japan. After the Sino-Japanese War, many Russian merchants visited Japan, and some of them were Jewish. During the Second World War, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*[6] was available to the public. However, the Japanese masses were not interested in the Middle East, located far from Japan, and few literary works from the Middle East were available in Japan.

1-3 Reception of Middle Eastern Literature (in the case of Arabic literature)

The reception of Middle Eastern literature in Japan started after the end of the Second World War because of the strong impact of the international situation, such as the Algerian War and broader Middle East conflict. From the 1940s to 1950s, many scholars and writers who knew French translated works on the Algerian liberation. A novel by Jules Roy, a French Algerian writer, was translated into Japanese in 1955 as part of a literary collection. This collection contains two other novels, by Henry Millon de Montherlant (1895-1972) and Paul Bowles (1910-1999), written in North Africa[78]. However, these were introduced as part of European literature.

After Algeria, Arabic literature gained popularity amongst the Japanese public because of left-wing intellectuals. Support for third world[9] societies and cultures led by the Afro-Asian Writers' Association inspired the introduction of Arabic literature. *Shin Nihon Bungakukai* [New Japan Literary Association] also played an important role in this movement.[10] The first conference of Asia-African Writers was held in 1958, in Tashkent.[11] In 1967, just before the Six Days War, the writers decided amongst themselves that they would release an international literary journal.

Writers from the third world largely opposed the Israeli occupation of Palestine and translated much resistance literature. The works of Ghassan Kanafani (1936-1972) and Mahmud Darwish (1941-2008) were introduced during that period.[12] Noma Hiroshi (1915-1991), a prominent Japanese novelist, played an important role as well. He gathered writers, scholars, and translators, edited *The Collection of Arabic Literature* in 1974, and committed to publishing another ten volumes

of translations of Arabic literature.[13] A monthly magazine from the General Mission of Palestine-Tokyo, *Filastine-Biladi* [PLO Magazine, 1979-1983] contained some literary translations of Palestinian literature. Moreover, solidarity with the Palestinian Liberation Movement was the key to attracting young Japanese students who were seeking an international revolution. Some of them, such as the Japanese Red Army, joined the underground Palestinian organization and committed the Lod Airport Massacre in 1972.[14] Also, Japanese minorities, such as people from Okinawa or Korean-Japanese sympathized with Palestinian refugees.

Takeuchi Yasuhiro, a Japanese novelist and critic, recorded his exchange with Arab writers, such as Adunis (1930-) or Darwish.[15] In 1983, the quarterly literary magazine *Aala* was published. It included short stories, poems, and essays from the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Hebrew literature, however, was not included in these circles.

2. History of Hebrew literature in Japan

2-1 The Image of Jews in Japan

Hebrew is the language of Judaism. Jewish people have begun using the language as their national tongue since the eighteenth century.

Before discussing Hebrew literary history, however, we must establish the nature of the images the Japanese have had of Jewish people. The three most common Jewish images in Japan before the Second World War were as follows:

1. The character of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*
2. The enemy of Jesus
3. “People of the Book”

These are mere secondhand impressions from the West. The evil image of Shylock was molded into a generic Jewish image when Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* was translated into Japanese in 1877.[16] Anti-Semitism never took root in Japan, however, despite the radical ideologies that appeared at that time. Some believed that the Japanese were descendants of the “Ten Lost Tribes of Israel”, a notion popularized by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

After the Second World War, anti-Semitic attitudes among the Japanese faded.[17] Possibly, ordinary Japanese people could not afford time to think about Jews amid their own post-war chaos. This situation changed in the 1950s.

Considering the literature, Japanese intellectuals focused on Jewish rather than Hebrew literature. Many Japanese scholars of European literature study Jewish literature, focusing on the “Jewishness”

of the writers. Often, writers such as Barnard Maramad (1914-1986), Elias Canetti (1905-1994), and Philip Roth (1933-), are introduced in that context. German and Polish specialists have also researched Yiddish literature. For example, there are many Japanese translations (over 20 titles) of the works of Yiddish-language writer Isaac Bashevis Singer (1902-1991). Although the Jewish community is almost non-existent in Japan, we have several translations of Jewish literature. One reason for this may be that Japanese scholars have researched Jewish literature and culture from a minority perspective. Another possible reason is the ease of translation from major European languages, compared to Arabic or Hebrew.

2-2 From the 1950s to the 1960s

When the San Francisco Peace Treaty (otherwise known as the Treaty of Peace between the U.S. and Japan) was signed and Japan restored to independence in 1951, various types of documents about the war were made available to the public.[18]

Jewish literature from Israel was partly accepted in Japanese society after the publication of *The Diary of Anne Frank* (it was first published as *In a Dim Light: The Diary of Anne Frank*.). When the book was published in 1952, it provoked much discussion because of Japan's wartime alliance with Nazi Germany. However soon after the publication, "Holocaust literature" became widely read in Japan. "Anne Frank" was not only the most notable and remarkable example of Jewish literature in Japan at the time, but also topped the Japanese bestseller list in 1953.[19] The Japanese version of the book has been reprinted over 100 times. In 1956, the *Mingei* Theatre Company, which pioneered socialist-realist theater companies in Japan, adapted the story for the stage. The play received an enthusiastic public reception.

After that, many testimonies of the Jewish catastrophe, which was known afterward as "Holocaust literature", such as a collection of personal notes by the victims, were published and became a popular theme of Jewish literature in Japan at the time. Shinoda Kouichiro, a Japanese scholar of French literature, called such publications "literature from the concentration camp."[20] Victor Frankl's (1905-1997) *Man's Search for Meaning* (Japanese title: *Night and Fog*) also appeared in 1956. It was the best-selling translation that year and was the basis for Alain Resnais' (1922-2014) film,[21] which was also shown.

Next to the fantastic reaction to "Anne Frank" was *Daniela's Diary.*[22] This book details the holocaust experience of Ka Tzetnik 135633, the pen name of Yihiel De Nur (1909-2001; the number that follows was his identification number at Auschwitz). It was translated in 1956.[23] This is probably the oldest Japanese translation of the book, which was originally written in Hebrew and

published in Israel.[24] Other Israeli works on the Holocaust, such as *My Hundred Children by* Lenah Kichler Zilberman (1910-1987), appeared in 1964.

The Kibbutz movement also attracted Japanese youth in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1953, the prototype of the Japanese Kibbutz called *Yamagishi Kai* was established. A monthly Kibbutz magazine was published[25] and several Japanese people traveled to Israel to stay in the ideal commune. The older generation of translators of Israeli literature in Japan experienced kibbutz life in those days. Motai Natsuu, the most active translator of Israeli literature in Japan, and Higuchi Noriko, a translator of Israeli juvenile literature, were among these enthusiasts.[26] During this period, the Japanese public sympathized with the Jewish people. The political situation in Israel was not an important factor in the question of Japanese translations.

2-3 From the 1970s to the 1980s

Japanese public opinion has changed since the 1970s.[27] This was a crucial time for Japanese attitudes about Israel's political position because of the 1967 War and the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement.

To further the effort, literary translations started to appear from the 1970s in publications from the Israeli embassy in Japan and a pro-Israel organization. The embassy published the first issue of a literary journal, *Ariel*,[28] in 1977 to promote Israeli literature and culture. Although it was not distributed to the general public, *Ariel* published four issues up to 2003. These issues included the poetry of Israeli Arabs who write in Hebrew, such as Anton Shammas (1950-) and Naim Araidi (1950-). Other journals included other translations. For example, *Monthly Israel* or *Myrtos*, which vindicated Israeli policy towards its neighboring Arab countries, introduced Ephraim Kishon's (1924-2005) satires and S. Y. Agnon's (1888-1970) short stories. Two small research journals, *Journal of Jewish and Israeli Studies and Namal* (meaning "Port" in Hebrew), were important introducers of literary translations and criticism from Israel. These two journals featured popular young Israeli authors such as Etgar Keret (1967-) and Orly Castel-bloom (1960-), although they contained only short stories and poetry because of the limited space devoted to literature. Moreover, they were not distributed to the general public in Japan due to their academic nature, so their readership was also quite limited.

Another phenomenon showing that Japanese scholars started to emphasize political issues over cultural ones is that between the 1960s and the 1980s, most publications on Israel in Japan focused on political analyses or reports on the conflicts between the Arabs and Jews. As a result, three nonfiction works and one fiction work by David Grossman (1954-) were translated into Japanese.[29]

Grossman is known as a polemicist of the Palestinian issue, rather than a novelist. His political views on the issue are highly respected in Japanese society. The same is true of Amos Oz (1939-).[30] It is important therefore, for Israeli writers to publish political essays and express their political stance on left-wing politics in order to gain credibility in Japan.

Turning to novels, some have been intermittently published in Japan. *New Face in the Mirror* by Yael Dayan (1939-) appeared in 1968 and Amos Kollek's (1947-) *Don't Ask Me If I Love* in 1973. In 1978, Yitzhak Ben-Ner's (1937-) *The Man from There* and, in 1979, Oz's *My Michael* were translated. With the exception of the collection of Agnon's short stories, which was translated from Hebrew in 1971, these three works were translated from English. Agnon's translator was Muraoka Takamitsu, a scholar of Biblical Studies.[31] Furthermore, Agnon was published because he had been awarded a Novel Prize in Literature and was included in a series of collections of Nobel Prize winners.

The 1980s contained little of note regarding literary translations from Israel.[32] The only exception was Kishon's comic short stories. Five books of his were translated from English into Japanese in the 1980s.

2-4 From the 1990s to the present

Most Japanese translations of Israeli literature, in the modern sense, occurred in the 1990s. Three novels of Amos Oz, David Shahar's short stories, Aharon Appelfeld's (1932-) *Badenheim and Bartfus*, and Batya Gur's two detective stories were published in the 1990s. Shiraishi Kazuko, a notable Japanese poet, translated Yehuda Amichai's (1924-2000) poems and invited him to Japan in 1992. It was also during this period that translators began to translate from Hebrew. The Israeli government encouraged these translations.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, most publishing houses in Japan have been facing a deteriorating economy. Very little literature is published these days. Murata Yasuko, a translator of Oz and Amichai, has made it clear how difficult it has become to find publishers.[33]

3. Characteristics of Israeli literature translated into Japanese

3-1 Preferred Genre for Japanese Readers

The most popular genre of Israeli literature in Japan is children's literature, as it constitutes the largest percentage of Japanese translations of Hebrew literature. These works have enjoyed wide public acceptance. According to the report from the international library for children in Tokyo, 34

titles were published in the last decade.[34] The number of publications has been constantly increasing in recent years, which is remarkable considering the situation of literary translations in Japan. In comparison, only a few novels, a poetry book, and three essays were commercially published in adult literature from 2000 to 2017.[35]

Why is children's literature in Hebrew well received in Japan? The first reason relates to Israeli publications. Before its independence, children's literature in Israel focused on spreading national values and the Hebrew language. After the foundation of the Israeli state, the publication of children's literature continued at a high rate. According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, from 1975 to 1976 the percentage of children's literature reached 13.5% of all books published in Israel.[36] As a result, almost all the prestigious writers and poets of adult literature, from Nathan Alterman (1910-1970) to Oz, are involved in writing books for the younger generations, and these books are comparatively more in number. Children's literature in Israel, accordingly, is gaining prominence.

Until recently in Japan, it has been easier to publish literature for children than for adults. Many Japanese people buy children's books as educational materials. The commercial success of children's literature is one of the reasons so many books for children are published in Japan.

The most popular theme of Israeli children's literature is the Holocaust and the relationship between Arabs and Jews. Uri Orlev (1931-),[37] who has written many children's stories on the Holocaust, is widely known to Japanese readers.

The coexistence of two peoples is also a popular theme in Israeli children's literature published in Japan, because it is easily acceptable for Japanese people who hope for peace in the Middle East. The Stories of Tamar Bergman (1939-2016), Dorit Orgad (1936-), and Galila Ron-Feder Amit (1949-) have been translated, many of which deal with the "friendship between Arab and Jew."[38] I will add one point about Israeli picture books for children. The Japanese, both children and adults, enjoy picture books of all types and provenance. For instance, the story of "Prudence's Goodnight Book" by Alona Frankel (1937-) tells an ordinary story about people going to sleep rather than a story specific to Israel. Thus, it can be translated and published regardless of the political situation in the Middle East.[39]

3-2 Preferable Themes: "Holocaust Literature"

As I discussed in Chapter 2, the Japanese pay less attention to Holocaust fiction than to the many translations of personal Holocaust memoirs.[40] Only children's books of Holocaust fiction have been introduced in Japan.

Many people's recollections of the tragedies of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Okinawa during WWII

have provided perspective on the Jewish tragedy of the Holocaust.[41] The Japanese sympathize with the Jewish people as "historical victims," having suffered the death of so many innocents. The Japanese are different from the Europeans in that they do not "bear a cross" of responsibility for the Jewish genocide, which is why the Japanese identify with "the weak Jews." Because of this identification, literature of the Holocaust is widely known in Japan[42]. Holocaust literature is also widely popular in the West; Europeans read Holocaust literature because they feel some remorse towards the Jews. They accept the works as didactic. On the other hand, Japanese rarely feel responsible towards Holocaust victims. This is the big difference in popularity compared with Europe.

We must note however that there are very few translations of Chinese and Korean testimonies concerning Japan during the Second World War. These narratives from other Asian countries are not popular with the Japanese because they deal with Japanese wartime brutality.

In summary, Jewish literature of the Holocaust (including Israeli literature) was introduced as an embodiment of "Jewish weakness"; however, other literature portraying "weakness" from Asian countries has not been favorably received in Japan.

3-3 Difficulties of translation from the Middle Eastern languages

While discussing translations, we must also consider the problems of retranslations. Due to the lack of specialists, literature from the Middle East has sometimes been translated from the translations of dominant languages, such as English or French. In the Meiji Era, the Japanese enjoyed the stories of *One Thousand and One Nights* retranslated from English and French translations.[43] Even in several recent decades, Zeruya Shalev's (1959-) *Love Life* and Kishon's satirical works have been retranslated from English into Japanese.[44]

Due to the decline of Japanese publishing houses, translation of literature, except for specific subjects, has been limited. In particular, publishers are reluctant to translate long novels. There is no scope for publishing David Grossman's *To the End of the World* or A.B. Yehoshua's (1936-) *Mr. Mani*, although writers and translators hope for it. The same trend has been observed with Arabic literature. After the tenth volume of Arabic literature compiled by Noma, publishers have since been reluctant to publish Arabic literature. Many years ago, the trilogy by Nagib Mahfuz (1911-2006), an Egyptian who won a literature prize for his novel, was translated into Japanese by Hanawa Haruo (1931-2016), a Japanese diplomat. However, we had to wait until 2011 for the translation to be commercially published. Because of this delay, literary works that should be available are sometimes not translated. This also means that translators are responsible for selecting the works to

be translated and that this selection depends on their personal preferences.

Exceptionally, the situation of Turkish novels is different. Many translations are being published at present. This is the result of two factors: (1) Orhan Pamuk (1952-), a talented Turkish novelist who won a Novel Prize in Literature, and (2) the increasing number of talented young translators.

In 2015 and 2016, Etgar Keret's works (a collection of short stories and an essay) were translated and published[45] and gained some popularity. Since 2016, literature from the Maghrib (North Africa) area has started to be published, and Zakariya Tamir's (1931-)[46] short stories will be published in 2017. This is because young, energetic translators have appeared and begun to pressurize/lobby publishing houses.

In 2010, Japanese researchers and translators (and students) who study literature from the Middle East established a research circle on contemporary Middle Eastern literature. This is the first time joint research has been attempted by researchers of literature. Usually, joint academic research is conducted within the same area or same language. For instance, however, we have many interdisciplinary workshops on Turkey or Egypt, not interlingual or interregional workshops. Our members study literary works from the Middle East, Europe, and of writers who migrated from the Middle East. We have formed panels for an international conference and listed the works from the Middle East that have been translated into Japanese.

As one of our achievements, we have just released in 2017 the second anthology of contemporary Middle Eastern Literature. The first anthology was published in 2012. I personally contributed two translations to the issues, Sayed Kashua's (1975-) *Hertzl Disappears at Midnight*[47] for the first issue and Almog Behar's (1978-) *I'm One of the Jews* for the second. Though this is a non-commercial publication, we are approaching some publishing companies to commercially publish the translations. Since 2015, a series of monthly essays introducing Middle Eastern writers has appeared in Mainichi Newspaper.[48]

3-4 Israeli Cultures with Contemporary Meanings

In recent years, the Japanese view of Israeli culture has changed for the better because of the favorable reviews of some Israeli films and contemporary dance performances. Two artists especially, film director Amos Gitai (1950-) and the *Batsheva* Dance Company, are not recognized for their Jewish identities, but for their "Israeli" and "cosmopolitan" characteristics. Many documentary movies have been produced in recent decades. Japanese audiences accept them as they are a revelation of the current Palestinian occupation.[49] These artists represent contemporary Israeli society and culture, rather than Jewish culture.[50]

The younger generation especially, tends to be less interested in Palestinian affairs. They are only acquainted with affairs concerning ISIS. Israeli literary works and other cultural activities are cut off from the political situation. Therefore, for the younger generation of Japanese, Israeli culture is represented by cosmetics and Jazz music.

Conclusion

The aforementioned features characterize the literary reception of Middle Eastern literature in Japan. It has been politically accepted, but sometimes characterized as propaganda. On the one hand, Arabic literature, especially Palestinian literature, was introduced thanks to the contributions of Japanese intellectuals, while Algerian literature was introduced by scholars of French literature. Left-wing intellectuals including Korean-Japanese and Okinawans, minorities in Japan, have been at the fore of such activities. Resistance literature from the third world likewise became a social movement in the 1960s.

Israeli literature has been comparatively well received. First, it was combined with Jewish literature after the establishment of the country and was perceived as part of Jewish literature. Second, with regard to genre, Japanese readers appreciate Holocaust literature. The most popular works include personal memoirs and nonfiction, although there are a few translations of Holocaust fiction. Children's literature is also comparatively well accepted in Japan. The Holocaust and friendship between Arabs and Jews are favored themes in terms of Japanese peace education.

Contemporary Israeli literature is not well known nor popular with the Japanese public despite its positive critical reception. Cinema and dance are more popular among the Japanese, as they are regarded as aspects of contemporary Israeli culture, not of Jewish culture.

At present, it is extremely difficult for us to deliver translations to Japanese readers. However, we continue to try by requesting publishers to invest in publications or by obtaining grants.

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Notes

1 Tokutomi wrote an essay on his pilgrimage to Palestine. See Tokutomi [1914].

2 He was an author and one of the most influential Japanese Christian intellectuals in the Meiji period.

3 A Japanese economist and the director of the University of Tokyo.

4 See Yakushige [2010].

5 For example, Abdurresid Ibrahim (1857-1944), a Tatar Muslim leader and journalist visited Japan in opposition to Russia and Ottoman Turkey.

6 This is a forgery claiming to prove that the Jewish people intend to conquer the world. It spread in Japan after the Russian Revolution.

7 Udo Satoshi: 2010, from his presentation in WOCMES, Barcelona.

8 These works are Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) and Montherlant's *La Rose de sable* (1954).

9 According to the definition by Alfred Sauvy, this means countries of neither the West nor of the Communist bloc.

10 Other members were Hotta Yoshie, Hasegawa Shiro, Oda Makoto, Oe Kenzaburo, etc.

11 In 1956, The first Asian Writers' conference was held in New Delhi. There, they decided the next conference would be in Uzbekistan and should include African writers.

12 Alumni from The Department of Arabic Language at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies undertook an important role in literary translation from Arabic.

13 Others: Kawasaki Torao (1914- ?) wrote on Arab resistance poets in 1975 and Sekine Kenji wrote the *History of Arabic Literature* in 1978.

14 Palestinian commands from PFLP recruited three Japanese nationals to attack Lod International Airport, killing 26 people and injuring 80 in 1972.

15 See the article, Takeuchi 1979, pp. 413-428.

16 Miyazawa 1990: , pp. 1-2.

17 Oiwagawa Kazumasa (1933-1981), a scholar of sociology who researched the kibbutzim, pointed this out as he criticized the Japanese habit of confusing Israel and Jew: "It is very difficult to understand Israeli society. Unlike other countries, Israel attracts many preconceptions because it is a state for the Jewish people. Such preconceptions appeared typically in the media during the Six Days War" (p. 81).

18 Photographs taken by American soldiers soon after the bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki were also disclosed in 1952.

19 Data from Shuppan Nyuusu, [Publication News].

20 See Shinoda 1980.

21 Alain Resnais, *Nuit et Brouillard* (1955).

22 The original title was *The House of Dolls*.

23 The paperback version of the book was published in 1963, with the revised title, *Daniela's Dairy*.

24 The Japanese translation of *Daniela's Diary* was translated from the English version.

25 *Gekkan Kibutsu* [Monthly Kibbutz] was published from 1967 to 1973 and continued as *Gekkan Kyoudoudai* [Monthly Commune] until 1988.

26 Hirokawa Ryuichi, is not only a famous journalist and photographer, but is known as a peace activist devoted to the conflict in the Middle East, where he was also attracted by the kibbutz and its socialistic utopia. However, when he lived in a kibbutz, he had doubts about the Israeli occupation of Arab land.

27 Another phenomenon affects the image of Jews in Japan. In 1961, Adolf Eichmann was captured in Argentina. Japanese media reported this trial, trying not to miss the slightest detail. The Japanese audience paid attention to the sensational reports of the trial. Hanna Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, translated in 1969, helped its Japanese readers follow the proceedings. In 1971, a book called *The Japanese and the Jew* made it to the top of the bestseller list. It was awarded the Osaragi Prize, a prominent prize in Japan for the year's outstanding essay. The book became an issue because an anonymous author, "Izaya Bendasan," wrote it. Until the author was revealed to be Japanese, Yamamoto Shichihei (1921-1991), the book provoked much argument.

28 Its English version is published every year by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel. This was the first version in Japanese. Four issues were published in Japanese, in 1977, 1982, 1991, and 2003.

29 A journalist, Sembon Ken'ichiro translated from English Grossman's two essays *The Yellow Wind and Sleeping on a Wire* about the Palestinian situation. Niki Mari translated *Death as a Way of Life: Israel Ten Years after Oslo.*

30 *In the Land of Israel* (1985), *The Slopes of Lebanon* (1993)

31 He was also translator of Aharon Appelfeld's *Badenheim 1939* (1996, Misuzu Shobou).

32 Ishihara Shintaro, a Japanese writer and the former mayor of Tokyo, became the chairperson of JIFA in 1988. The supporters of Israel tend to be nationalists.

33 This was her comment in a conversation with the author.

34 Motai 2010, p. 37.

35 A.B. Yehoshua's Short Stories, Grossman's *Lion's Honey*, and Etgar Keret's *Suddenly*, *a Knock on the*

Door.

36 "Children's Literature," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, third edition.

37 *The Sandgame and Run, Boy, Run* are available in Japanese.

38 The other writers are Daniella Carmi, Dvorah Omer, and Dalia Cohen.

39 The others are the stories of Yannets Levi, Tami Shem Tov, etc.

40 For example, David Grossman's, *See Under: Love*, one of the best-known works of fiction about the Holocaust, has not been translated yet.

41 In 1972, an exhibition on Auschwitz was held in Hiroshima, and in 1977 an exhibition on the effects of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki ws held in Auschwitz.

42 Ben Ami Shillony, the Israeli scholar of Japanese history, notes that the Jewish Holocaust and the atomic bomb in Hiroshima are similar in both being examples of a new, modern kind of atrocity (Shillony, 130.).

43 The first Japanese edition of *One Thousand and One Nights* was translated from an English version in 1875. *Kokkai Toshokan* [National Diet Library] Temporary exhibition series no. 92. (Jul. 28-Aug. 21. 1998.) https://rnavi.ndl.go.jp/kaleido/tmp/92.pdf Access (Aug. 11. 2017)

44 Motai, Higuchi, Muraoka, and Kokubo Solomon translate from Hebrew; Murata translates from English, referring to the original.

45 *Suddenly, a Knock on the Door* (2015) translated by Motai and *Good Seven Years* (2016) translated by Akimoto Takafumi were published by a leading publishing company in Japan.

46 He is a Syrian diaspora writer, settled in England.

47 This is his short story that appeared in *Haaretz* newspaper (Oct. 3. 2005): https://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1048468. Accessed Aug. 11. 2017.

48 *Shin Sekai Bungaku Nabi: Chuuto Hen* [New Navigation of World Literature: Middle East], Mainichi Evening Newspaper. (It comes out every first Wednesday.)

49 Eyal Sivan & Michel Khleifi's Route 181 (2003), Adi Barash & Ruthie Shatz's The Collaborator and His Family (2011), etc.

50 A few other artists, such as cinematic artists Shira Geffen (1971-) and Eran Riklis (1954-) and the dance company Inbal Pinto Company have also been introduced to Japan.

Supplement

List of Israeli Literature Translated into Japanese*
(1948 - 2017)

Year**	Jewish Literature (selected)	Israeli Literature	Israeli Juvenile Literature	Works translated in journals
1948				
1949	Kafka's short stories			
1950				
1951	Anne Frank, "The Diary of Anne Frank" Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"			
1952	Kafka, "The Trial"			
1953				
1954				
1955	V.E.Frankl, "Man's Search for Meaning"	Ka Tzetnik 135633, "House of Dolls"		
1956				
1957				
1958		Emanuel Lingelbloom, "Notes from the Warwaw Ghetto"		
1959				
1960	Anne Frank, "The Diary of Anne Frank"(paperback)			
1961				
1962	Barnard Malamud, "A New Life"			
1963		Lena Kuchler-Silberman, "My Hundred Children"		
1964				
1965	Kafka, "The Castle"			

1966	Elie Wiesel, "Night" Sholem Aleichem, "The Jews"(selected stories)			
1967	Barnard Malamud, "The Magic Barrel" Saul Bellow, "Dangling Man"	Yael Dayan, "New Face in the Mirror" Mordechai Bernstein, "The Daughter of the Kibbutz"		
1969	Barnard Malamud, "The Fixer" Barnard Malamud, "The Assistant" Philip Roth, "Goodbye Columbus"			
1970	Saul Bellow, "Herzog", "Seize the Day", "Mosby's Memoirs"			
1971	Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Short Friday and Other Stories" Elie Wiesel, "Dawn" Philip Roth, "Portnoy's Complaint"	S.Y. Agnon, "Short Stories" (In the collection of Nobel Prize in Literature)		
1972	Elias Canetti, "Auto da Fé"	Ka Tzetnik 135633, "Phoenix over the Galilee"		
1973	Elias Canetti, "The Voices of Marrakesh" Sholem Aleichem, "Tevye the Milkman"	Amos Kollek, "Don't Ask Me If I Love"		
1974	Elie Wiesel, "The Beggar in Jerusalem" Barnard Malamud, "Rembrandt's Philip Roth, "The Breast"			
1975				
1976	Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Mazel and Shlimazel"			
1977		Amos Oz, "My Michael"		*Ariel* no.1

Supplement

1978		Yitzhak Ben Ner, "The Man from There"		S.Y. Agnon, "Friendship"
1979	Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Zlateh the Goat"			S.Y. Agnon, "Yesterday's Enemy is Today's Friend"
1980	Barnard Malamud, "Dubin's Lives"	Ephraim Kishon's Best Jokes		S.Y. Agnon, "The Face in the Mirror", "Dutifulness to My Father"
1981	Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Naftali and the Storyteller and His Horse, Sus"			
1982				*Ariel* no.2
1983				
1984	Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Yentl the Yeshiva Boy"		Alona Frankel, "Once Upon a Potty - Boy", "The Family of Tiny White Elephants", "Prudence's Goodnight Book", "A True Story", "Prudence's Book of Food"	
1985		Amos Oz, "In the Land of Israel" (Essay) Ephraim Kishon's Short Stories1-3		
1986				
1987		Shalom Cholawsky, "Beleaguered in Town and Forest"		
1988		Ephraim Kishon's Humor Book		
1989				Manya Halevi, "Host Me Overnight"
1990		David Grossman, "The Yellow Wind" (Essay)		

Supplement

1991				*Ariel* no.3
1992	Saul Bellow, "The Bellarosa Connection"		Dalia Cohen, "Uri and Sami"	
1993	Philip Roth, "The Counterlife"	Amos Oz, "The Slopes of Lebanon" Lena Kuchler-Silberman, "We Accuse"	Uri Orlev, "The Island on Bird Street"	David Shahar, "Bruria", "A Story of Midnight","Death of the Small God"
1994		Amos Oz, "Black Box" Batya Gur, "The Saturday Morning Murder"	Meir Shalev, "My Father Always Embarrasses Me"	
1995			Uri Orlev, "The Man From the Other Side"	Anton Shammas, "Bilingual Solution" Roth Almog, "Good Corner"
1996		Batya Gur, "A Literary Murder" Aharon Appelfeld, "Bardenheim" Aharon Appelfeld, "Bartfus" "Collection of Israeli Poetry"		Savyon Liebrecht, "Apples in the Desert" Meir Wieseltier, "Selected Poetries"
1997	Pinchas Sadeh, "Jewish Folktales"	Shulamit Lapid, "Bait" David Grossman, "Sleeping on a Wire: Conversations with Palestinians in Israel"(Essay)	Amos Oz, "Soumchi" Uri Orlev, "Granny Knits"	Uzi Weill, "And You Will Die" Orly Castel-bloom, "Narrow Corridor" Shulamit Lapid, "Bisness"
1998	Saul Bellow, "The Actual"	Amos Oz, "Panther in the Basement" Yehuda Amichai, "Collection of Poetry" Amos Oz, "Israel, Palestine and Peace"(Essay) David Shahar, "Bruria"	Tamar Bergman, "Along the Tracks" Tamar Bergman, "The Boy from Over There"	David Shahar, "A Doll From Palermo"

Supplement

1999			Galila Ron Feder Amit, "Letter to A Special Child" Galila Ron Feder Amit, "Nadia"	Uzi Weill, "The Day They Shot the President"
2000			Uri Orlev, "The Sandgame" Uri Orlev, "Shampoo on Tuesday" Uri Orlev, "Wings Turn and Other Stories" Galila Ron Feder Amit, "Not with A Belt"	
2001			Uri Orlev, "The Lion Shirt" Daniella Carmi, "Samir And Jonathan on Mars"	Shulamit Hareven, "Ornithocide"
2002			Uri Orlev, "The Big Little Girl"	Yudith Hendel, "Son's Grave"
2003			Dorith Orgad, "Testing Time" Uri Orlev, "Run, Boy, Run" Tamar Bergman, "Sunbirds at My Window"	Etgar Keret, "Paint", "My Best Friend", "That you Die" *Ariel* no.4
2004	Gilad Atzmon, "Guide to the Perplexed" Philip Roth, "The Human Stain"	Zerya Shalev, "Love Life" David Grossman, "Death as a Way of Life" (Essay) Yehuda Amichai, "Poetry of Jerusalem"	Uri Orlev, "The Good Luck Pacifier"	Avner Shatz, "Yehoshua"
2005	Philip Roth, "The Dying Animal"		Devorah Omer, "The Border in the Heart" Etgar Keret, "Dad Runs Away with the Circus" Dorith Orgad, "Friendship at Risk" Dorith Orgad, "Leaving Cordoba"	Michal Govrin, "Hold the Sun"
2006	Isaac Bashevis Singer, "A Friend of Kafka, and Other Stories"	A.B.Yehoshua, "All the Stories"	Galila Ron Feder Amit, "To Myself"	S.Y. Agnon, "The Lady and the Peddler"

Supplement

		Moshe Smiransky, "Selected Stories" David Grossman, "Lion's Honey" Emil Habibi, "The Pessioptimist"	Bat-chen Shahak, "The Bat-Chen Diaries" Devorah Ellis "Three Wishes"	Adir Cohen, "Gold Chain"
2007		Yaakov Raz, "*Yakuza* , My Brother"	Galit Fink, "If You Could Be My Friend" Alona Frankel, "The Princess and The Caterpillar"	A.B.Yehoshua, "The Death of the Old Man"
2008				Atallah Mansour, "Two Cups of Coffee"
2009	Isaac Bashevis Singer, "My Father's Court" Bernard Malamud, collection			Eddy Zemach, "Two Roots"
2010		Amos Oz, "A Lecture and an Interview" (Non-fiction)	Uri Orlev, "Last of Kin" Uri Orlev, "The Song of the Whales"	Dan Tsalka, "Apprentice"
2011			Tami Shem-Tov, "Letter from Nowhere"	Irit Amiel,Three Short Stories
2012				Dan Pagis, "Father"
2013	Issac Bashevis Singer, collection			Sayed Kashua, " Hertzl Disapeared in the Midnight" Nicanor Leonoff, "Odd Man"
2014			Yannets Levi, "Uncle Leo's Adventures in the Romanian Steppes" David Grossman, "Jonathan Detective Real" Nathalie Belhassen, "Little Miss Scissors" Uri Orlev, "Homeward from the Steppes of the Sun"	David Grossman, "Hug"

Supplement

2015	A collection of Jewish Folklore	Etgar Keret, "Suddenly, a Knock on the Door"	Rita Jahanforuz, "The Girl with Brave Heart" Tami Shem-Tov, "I'm not a Thief" Uri Orlev, "Run, Boy, Run" (Reprint)	
2016		Etgar Keret, "The Seven Good Years"		Nava Semel, "Walking on the Moon"
2017				Almog Behar, "Ana Min al-Yahud"

*The list contains "the writer", "the English title".
**A year of publication in Japan.

Cultural Key Terms and Politeness in Communications in Israel

Yoshimi Miyake

Introduction

My intention in this paper is to compare the Israeli and Japanese way of communication by comparing some of their "cultural key terms". I will discuss politeness and directness in conversation styles and also attempt to interpret the Israelis' attitudes to politeness.

One of my strategies in attempting to describe a certain culture is to look at "cultural key terms". These are the terms which are often mentioned, cited and used in everyday life. These terms are also the ones which bind the mentality and behaviorof the members of a culture (Ortner 1981, Wierzbicka 1997).

1."Chutzpah"

Wierzbicka (1997) discussed *amae* (cf. Doi 1971), *enryo, wa, on* and *giri* as Japanese cultural key terms which cannot be translated into English. Katriel (1986) described the Israeli straight way of talk using the Arabic originated term *dugri*. In this section, I will describe the term *chutzpah* and its variations (*khutzpe, chutzpa, chutzpah, hutzpa, chuzpe*) as one of the Israeli cultural key terms. *Chutzpah* is a word of Hebrew or Aramaic origin, appearing a few times in the Talmud. Its intention and connotation has evolved throughout history.

Chutzpah can be translated into English as "utter nerve, effrontery". The reason why the term *chutzpah* is considered a cultural key term is because I have heard expressions which contain the term quite often in the public sphere. Some Israelis say that *chutzpah* is the key metaphor for Israel, although it is significant that the term *chutzpah* is often used as a term for criticizing somebody for his/her behavior.

An English-English dictionary defines *chutzpah* as follows:

chutzpah: gall, astonishing guts, cheekiness, cheap things, worthless things, nerviness

People are often criticized for showing *chutzpah* when they cut in line, behave in a rude manner or show no consideration for others in the public sphere; such behavior is met with '*Eize chutzpah!*' "What *chutzpah*!" and this can be heard frequently be it on the streets, in post offices, at bus stops,

in cultural halls, etc.

The term *chutzpah* is used in various European languages and in American English. A German colleague of mine said that he believed the word was a term borrowed from Hungarian. Some Americans also use the term, although they are probably unsure where it comes from. According to English-Japanese dictionaries, *chutzpah* is defined as follows:

Chutzpah

図々しさ、あつかましさ（口語）（Iwanami）
zuu-zuu shisa, atsukamashisa (colloquial)
'arrogance'
ひどい厚かましさ、鉄面皮（Kenkyu-sha）
hidoi atsukama-shisa, tetsu-mem-pi
'extreme arrogance, shameless'

2. Four Categories of *Chutzpah*

Chutzpah has four categories. The first category is simply *chutzpah*, i.e. simple behavior similar to *gasut* 'rudeness', which is often equated to '*chutzpah*'. Simple *chutzpah* could be behavior such as bothering people in public, shouting in public, etc. When arguing or fighting, children often call each other:

(1) *Chutzpan!* – A male with *chutzpah* character
Chutzpanit! – A female with *chutzpah* character

The second category of *chutzpah* is lack of consideration for others as seen in examples (2) to (5), which I observed when on a bus in (2), when walking along a street in Zichron Yaakov in (4), and when standing in front of a shopping mall in Tel Aviv between 2005 and 2010.

(2) A man refused to relinquish a vacant seat next to him, after an elderly woman asked him to do so. The woman yelled at him, "*Eize chutzpah*!".

(3) A large pick-up truck blocked a narrow street so that other cars could not enter. Seeing the situation, an elderly woman yelled at the truck driver, "*Eize chutzpah*!".

(4) There was only one entrance or only one line for a ticket office at the top of a long line of people, who claimed, "*Eize chutzpah*!".

(5) There was only a single officer at a security check point telling people to open their bags, but did not help close the bags after checking them. Several people started yelling at the security officer: "*Eize chutzpah! Ma ata oseh*?" ("*What chutzpah*! What are you doing?").

This kind of verbal attack shows that Israelis actually consider *chutzpah* acts negatively, and referring to them as *chutzpah* could be a source of accusation. Observed incidents in which *chutzpah* was uttered are not few.

The third category is self-justification and rejecting accusations. The following situation indeed confused me, because a *chutzpah* act was denied by the person accused, by labeling the accuser's behavior in turn as *chutzpah*.

(6) When a couple cut in line in front of a cashier, the woman behind the couple told them not to; the couple then accused the woman of committing *chutzpah* because she was not tolerant enough to let them cut in line.

A similar thing happened to me when a man cut in line in front of me at a train station ticket office and I said, "It's my turn!" and he replied accusingly, "*Chutzpanit*!".

The fourth and last category is similar to the third. However, it is different from category 3 in that the *chutzpah* person manipulates a possibility of forgiveness, using his/her *chutzpah* behavior despite the fact that he did something wrong.

(7) Episode 1. A man, having killed his parents, asked for mercy from the court, on the grounds that he had now become an orphan.

(8) Episode 2. An abusive husband, asks his wife for help, while beating her.

From socio-psychological points of view, people who indulge in *chutzpah* are often those who cannot control their own behavior. Several Israelis I talked to said that *chutzpah* behavior is considered childish and less engaged in social interaction. Children should be gradually socialized and not have recourse to chutzpah.

3. *Chutzpah* and Insider vs Outsider

To outsiders, Israelis' lack of empathy toward them appears distinctive. Interestingly however, this *chutzpah* attitude is more tolerated outside the domestic domain. Acts of *chutzpah* should not occur between insiders such as family members and very close friends. Israelis say that they would not do anything *chutzpah* at home or when they were with their relatives. It should be noted that acts of *chutzpah* occur in the boundary space between insiders and outsiders in a situation where everybody recognises a certain behavior norm but somebody does not follow it.

Acts of *chutzpah* are observed more often in public, outside the actor's inner circle. On the other hand, linguistic politeness is observed more among family members and friends. So when Israelis behave with *chutzpah* in front of non-Israelis, it gives the impression that Israelis are arrogant or rude.

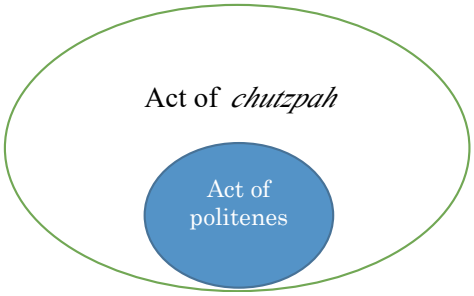

Figure 1. Act of *chutzpah*

As opposed to a simple native connotation, American English *chutzpah* can be rather positive. Even when the speaker or writer may feel that *chutzpah* is associated with rudeness or arrogance, s/he thinks that its use is necessary in order to reach his/her goal. This use of *chutzpah* occurs especially when writers or speakers describe themselves. Alan Dershowitz pointed out the importance of being *chutzpah* and how it has supported his life in his book entitled *Chutzpah* (Dershowitz 1991).

The term *chutzpah* seems to have been used often to describe toughness and guts of certain people. However, *chutzpah* is used to describe people's selfishness or contradictory but aggressive linguistic behavior as in (12).

I have discussed behavior described as *chutzpah* in this section and whether *chutzpah* is counter-politeness. In the next section, I will discuss the relation between the idea of politeness and chutzpah, then discuss the similarities and differences between Israeli and Japanese attitudes towards what is politeness.

4. Chutzpah, Politeness, and Impoliteness

In terms of the traditional studies of linguistic politeness, Lakoff (1973) defined the principles of politeness as follows:

1. Do not impose.
2. Give a choice.
3. Make a person feel good.

These three principles are rather ambiguous. The first two principles of giving a choice and not imposing will make a person feel good. These principles seem to have come from the author's background, based on the idea that the conversation participants are in a horizontal or equal relationship, and that all participants are sociable and communicative. Lakoff's principles of

politeness may not fit the Israeli way of conversing. Israelis tend to impose, thinking that imposing will help the others, or make the other person feel good, while at the same time, give abundant choices generously.

Brown and Levinson (1987) divide the attitudes to politeness into two kinds: positive politeness and negative politeness. These positive-negative dichotomy models might help us understand the idea of Israelis and Japanese politeness.

According to Blum-Kulka (1992), Israeli politeness is strongly positive politeness, which manifests itself in mitigation and nicknaming. Adding *motek, metuka chamud/a* 'sweetie, honey', adding *bevakasha* 'please, you're welcome' or flattering compliments are polite acts, according to Blum-Kulka (1992). Again, interestingly, these positive expressions politeness are observed more often in family conversations, for example between a mother and her children.

In this way, intimacy and solidarity is manifested in Israeli linguistic politeness. For the Japanese, on the other hand, nicknaming is avoided as it is considered too informal, too friendly or even threatening, unless the conversation participants have a close relationship.

Japanese politeness is that of negative politeness as described by the term *enryo*, distancing from others in order not to offend them. Also the expression *meiwaku o kakenai* is repeated to children by parents as they grow up. The object *hitosama ni 'to outsiders'* is also emphasized. From this point of view, Japanese politeness is extremely negative politeness. Positive politeness is observed for example in dialogues in corporations and convenience stores between salespersons and customers, and in vertical relationships, that is, between subordinates and their bosses.

I observed that the Israeli attitude of assertiveness and straightforwardness is observed in public space dialogues. As a result of this straightforwardness, Israeli politeness often manifests itself in humorous exchanges as in the examples below:

In (14), A (who informed me of his experience on the same day) was driving a car but got stuck on a steep road. He had to go down the slope but was scared that if he made a mistake, his car might go over the cliff. A middle-aged man B happened to be passing by. A asked B to give him instructions on how to do U-turn.

(14) A: Could you help me?

B: Do I have a choice?

In the dialogue (15) below, the father of a 7 year old girl Or, asked her classroom teacher whether she could leave the class for about an hour in order to attend her two year old sister's birthday party at the day care centre.

(15) Father: Can Or leave the class for about an hour to attend her little sister's birthday party at the day care centre?

Teacher (holding out her hand): If you pay me.

(16) A asks if the bus they are in is going to the parking lot where A needed to go:

A: Does this bus go to the parking lot?

B: This bus does not go farther than the parking lot.

(17) A asks how to get into a shopping mall where all the doors seem to be locked because it is Shabbat.

A: Where is an entrance door?

B: Just there if you push it.

Besides answering humoristically to a question, Israelis are eager to give information even when they are not asked to do so. Israeli strangers also show concern for others, as in (18).

(18) I was about to purchase a few pastries at supermarket bakery, when a woman spoke to me.

A woman: You know, the bakery next door is better and cheaper than here.

(19) Illustrates the concern which a security personnel showed me, when I (A) was about to go back to Israel from Japan where I had returned for a few weeks, via Bangkok. In order to confirm that I really resided in Israel, a security man started asking a few questions about bank and health insurance systems I was using:

(19) Security man: Which bank are you using?

A: *Bank Hapoalim*

S: It's not such a good bank. Use *Bank Leumi*.

S:Which health insurance are you in?

A: *Klalit*.

S: You know, *Meuchedet* is better.

A: Why?

S: Well, it is just better.

Examples (18) and (19) illustrate the concern that Israelis show towards foreigners. They wish to help them by giving useful information, but this might make foreigners, especially Japanese, feel confused and uneasy.

Japanese in Israel are sometimes shocked and bewildered by Israeli behavior. A female student, who had studied at the University of Haifa in 2015 and 2016, described an unforgettable experience

she had had in Israel as follows:

(20) 'When I was riding in a tram in Jerusalem, a woman sitting next to me started to talk to me: "You know, those people [pointing at *Haradim*] do not even have to pay for the train ride tickets. Isn't this upsetting? They are wasting tax we pay."

'I was surprised (*bikkuri shita*) that a stranger should suddenly talk to me in this way. She even looked angry.'

The Japanese student was surprised by the behavior of this Israeli woman who seemed to treat her like a close friend. This Israeli woman was severely criticizing the Israeli situation to an Asian stranger. For a Japanese person used to Japanese politeness which distinguishes between insiders and outsiders, this Israeli's attitude of treating a stranger like an insider was confusing.

It should also be noted that Israeli politeness favors intimacy and honesty. It has little to do with power relationships. Any Israeli might accuse any other Israeli for doing or saying *chutzpah*.

Israelis think that they should curb their *chutzpah* attitude. Japanese also think that they should not be impolite. However, the significant difference is that Israelis are not concerned with the power relationship between interlocutors, whereas Japanese on the other hand accuse people of lower status of being impolite younger people, subordinates, and women must be more polite than elders, bosses, and men. Besides the vertical relationship, Japanese must be more polite to those people who do not belong to their own category, such as their family members, coworkers, etc.

One of the reasons why non-Israelis consider Israelis impolite, is because politeness is particularly associated with intimacy and solidarity between Israelis. In other words, they tend to be less attentive to politeness with strangers than with intimates.

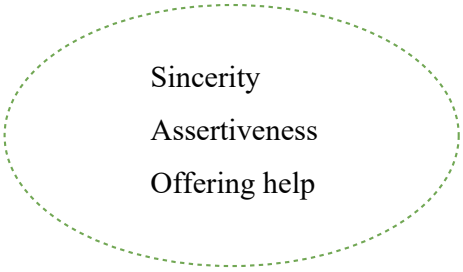

Figure 2. Israeli Politeness

5. Conclusion

This paper attempted to describe one of Israeli's cultural key terms *chutzpah* from the politeness point of view. We also attempted to compare Israeli politeness and Japanese politeness.

Israelis do not blindly respect linguistic politeness although they have a Hebrew term for

politeness, *nimus*, a noun from an adjective *menumas/menumeset* 'polite'. Performatives such as *toda* 'thank you', *bevakasha* 'please, you're welcome' and nicknaming and mitigating is necessary for interlocutors to make the other person feel good. However, Israelis respect an assertive attitude of offering help or giving information, regardless of whether it is toward people they know or do not know. On the other hand, Israelis think that they should avoid *chutzpah* acts. They severely criticize those who act with *chutzpah*.

Japanese people might feel shocked, and could get upset, which might lead to a negative evaluation of Israelis, as Israeli interlocutors even talk to Asians as though they were speaking to insiders. But at the same time, some Asians have positive feelings concerning their Israeli experiences because they feel as though they were treated as insiders, as peers. And although they may sometimes have negative feelings about Israeli linguistic behavior (= invasion of the inner circle), they never feel isolated or distanced.

Being with Japanese, Israelis might feel comfortable not being threatened by a Japanese invasion of their inner circle, but at the same time they can often feel isolated and distanced when they are in Japan. In this way, the principles of politeness, power relations and social distances between speakers are related to each other.

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第 9 回CISMORユダヤ学会議
The 9th CISMOR Annual Conference on Jewish Studies

「ユダヤ教と日本文化：ヨエル・ホフマン記念特集」

Judaism and Japanese Culture:
Studies in Honor of Yoel Hoffmann

Part V

Judaism and Japan

Talmudic Discussion in Japanese: On the Possibility of Cultural Innovation

Hiroshi Ichikawa

Introduction: Foreign Religious Thoughts and Japanese Culture

The Bible is well known to the Japanese people in the modern era. However, the Bible as Jewish literature is still foreign to us. You may wonder why on this occasion, I would like to talk about how Jewish literature exerts great influence on Japanese culture, since it may sound a bit strange. But reflect on how Buddhism influentially shapes Japanese culture as a whole. Buddhism itself too was in fact a foreign ideology which has penetrated the Japanese way of life since antiquity and is now regarded as an indispensable element and core value of Japanese culture. In this vein, we can at least say that *Zen*, the most famous and still influential religious culture in Japanese history, has built the tenets of Japanese culture. Daisetsu Suzuki, a very prestigious scholar monk, wrote a book titled "*Zen and Japanese Culture*."[1]

Suzuki wrote about the profound influence of Zen Buddhism on various spheres of Japanese spiritual life. In this paper I would also like to evoke the kind of role Jewish literature called the Talmud could possibly play in shaping the moral values of Japanese culture if the Japanese chose to adopt the Talmud as part of a school curriculum in the educational system of our society. Although such a possibilty is very unlikely and hence imaginary, my intention is to examine the degree of difference in some basic ideas of moral values that lie between Jewish and Japanese religious culture, by assessing the extent to which Talmudic thinking could shape certain moral values to the same degree as Japanese classical thinking.

In this paper I will first examine the implications of the three classical ideas of the Japanese moral values by measuring to a varying degree the Jewish ones. Then I will go on to discuss how the Talmud as classic literature has influenced Jewish culture as a whole. Lastly I will suggest how certain ideas of religious education might influentially shape the moral values of both cultures.

1. Three Classical Ideas in Japanese Moral Values

We will now examine the nature of the three classical elements of Japanese moral values in order to clarify the Jewish ones cherished by the Talmud. Most people would agree that the following

three are usually regarded as classical Japanese moral values: Firstly, harmony is to be valued, and any discord is to be strongly deprecated; secondly, the idea of the divine nation is espoused (i.e., "*Shinkoku Shiso* 神国思想"); thirdly, sin and impurity can be washed off or cleansed by water. These three values are somewhat inter-related and are often seen in the naïve ethno-centric ideas of primitive society.

The Japanese are said to highly value the idea of harmony. This clearly appears for the first time in the "*Constitution of Seventeen Articles*" of Prince Shotoku promulgated in 604 CE in which he tried to establish a social order with the king at the summit. This document stated that the ontological basis of social order was faith and reverence in the threefold Buddhist authority: Buddha, Dharma, and Monks. It also introduced the idea of the community and its legitimacy, advocating the nomination of state officers according to ability and endeavoring to establish the rule of law and individual morality. The ideal of this Constitution seems highly respectable and dignified but we cannot take it at face value as the real basis of Japanese society in those days. Reading the whole of the Constitution gives the impression that the harmony promulgated in it seems to force subjects to conform to the regime.[2]

The word harmony sounds benign to the ears, but we should not let our eyes be deceived by the scent of its sweetness. The idea of harmony was sometimes misused and abused in the political arena as the favorable cause of subjugating the minority to the majority. We have to distinguish between respect of harmony and mere convenient abuse of political power. More importantly, the idea of harmony must be compatible with the idea of righteousness, which also entails respect for the opinion of the minority even in ancient times.

The second element of Japanese moral values has been closely tied to the supremacy of the Japanese nationhood, which in the modern era is deeply rooted in the state religion of Shintoism. It infamously evoked a sense of national chauvinism in such an emotional way that it authorized and even helped precipitate Japanese colonialist expansion and invasion of Korea and China.

The third element is likely to be used as an apology for the lack of a sense of guilt among the Japanese. I am not sure whether a sense of shame has something largely to do with the idea of cleansing of impurity by water. I will not delve in detail here about the idea of a sense of shame that has been fostered in Japanese society. The sense of shame may have been connected in depth with a sense of guilt that fostered a sense of responsibility among the Japanese political elite in the military regime of the early modern era, which was presumably influenced by Confucianism and Zen Buddhism.

Now we will turn to the topic of Jewish moral values. As previously stated, these three elements

of Japanese moral values can be seen universally in many cultures in the world including Jewish culture. But more importantly Judaism has not striven to cultivate such values as much as other cultures have. Moreover rabbinic Judaism, on the contrary, has endeavored to minimize and even delegitimize such primitive ethno-centrism by Talmudic education. Let us now enquire into this issue.

2. Renovation of Talmudic Thinking that has Transformed Jewish Moral Values

Here we contemplate how the sages of the Talmud developed their ideas concerning the above three themes. As the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament was shared with Christianity, we have to point out the characteristics of the Jewish Biblical exegesis established by the Jewish sages. It was the Talmudic sages who determined the Jewish understanding of the Bible and this has not been introduced into Japan. We Japanese are all well aware of the Christian Biblical exegesis but not yet of Jewish hermeneutics. What is the Jewish way of reading the Bible? First of all, the Bible, especially the Torah, has been the legal normative authority for ordinary Jewish life. Additionally, in the narrower sphere of Biblical hermeneutics the Jewish people have been confronted with some inconvenient and unpleasant descriptions of their ancestors in the Bible and have regarded them as moral lessons by which to live according to the divine will. Here are a few examples: Jacob's deception of his father in order to receive the blessing of the first-born; the event of the Golden Calf at the foot of Mt. Sinai and the executions by the Levites; the false report of the spies dispatched to search the Land of Canaan; the Israelites' incessant defiance of Moses' leadership in the wilderness etc. The great achievement of the sages was to face the difficulties and to encourage the people to overcome their suffering and malice in the life of the diaspora and thus to become the chosen people with total allegiance to God. Whereas the great achievement of the Hebrew Bible was to collect the unpleasant facts of the people, the greatest achievement of Judaism is its inexhaustible endeavor to learn from the very mistakes of the previous generations so as to live according to the divine revelation. Therefore, the following three elements of Jewish moral values are part of such intellectual endeavor.

2.1 On the Idea of Harmony

First, with regard to the idea of harmony, the famous Aggadic tradition of Hillel and Shammai reminds us of the sophistication of Jewish society in that discussion and argument were highly recommended among the sages and even controversy among them was permitted, instead of being forced to conform to an authoritative opinion. It says, "Any controversy that is for God's sake shall

in the end be of lasting worth, but any that is not for God's sake shall not in the end be of lasting worth".[3]

Keeping the lesson of this tradition in mind, the sages of the supreme rank of every generation have argued with each opinion and strove to persuade the opponent with their reasoning. The Talmud recorded their discussions and controversies in such specific technical terms as *mahaloket* (מחלקת), massa u-*mattan* (משא ומתן), *kushiya we-terutz* (קושיה ותירוץ), *rminhi* (רמינהי), etc.[4] It was axiomatic that the sages of the highest authority enjoyed freedom to express their opinion concerning the divine intention of the Scripture and that they permitted the same for their disciples. They did not allow any political authority to intervene and oppress their freedom. This is the critical spirit of the Jewish sages that has been fostered in the diaspora without their own political autonomy. It was indeed fortunate for Jews that they had no political power of their own and could therfore attain and cultivate their own specific moral values.

Characteristically, the Jewish people take pride in their love of debate, which can be best illustrated by the common saying that there are three opinions for every two Jews. We can find another merit in this freedom of expression. The Jewish mother is said to praise her child for asking his teacher a good question; this is even more important than getting high marks in an examination or attaining full credit for some notable achievement. This seems to be inseparably connected with the merit that values and promotes intellectual creativity. Additionally, another merit of the Jewish people that deserves attention is that they attained their emancipation from the magical worldview, which in turn gave preference to the intellectual rigor of reasoning.

2.2 On the Idea of the Chosen People

The Jewish idea of the chosen people has been a most problematic idea, and has been misinterpreted variously by many, consciously or unconsciously, but has nothing to do with ethnic superiority nor with this-worldly prosperity but with the profound ethical idea of responsibility. Ethnocentric ideas have been ubiquitous. Examples of the ideology of superiority can be found among the ancient Greeks or the ancient Chinese, white supremacy in the West and the divine peoplehood among the Japanese, etc., and so it can also be found among the ancient Israelites. The Hebrew Bible depicts the story of the opposition of Korah and his group in rejecting the divine authority of Moses. The Bible however denounced the attitude of Korah and his reasoning that the Israelites were all sacred and that God was within them. The rabbinic tradition mentioned above rules that Korah's claim against Moses was not considered as a "controversy for the sake of Heaven". The sages interpreted the Bible and rejected Korah's rationale because it sanctified the

people for their own sake, which is nothing less than an idolatrous way of thinking.[5]

The idea of the chosen people was firmly connected with the covenant of God with the Israelites, as the result of which they became His chosen people. They became the chosen people because they accepted His precept and promised to perform the divine will. If they did not perform it, they would no longer be the chosen people, but in an even worse position than any other people. However, they were confronted with the reality of being dispersed and politically deprived in spite of their privilege of being chosen by God. Faced with this difficulty, the sages attempted to answer this riddle in their biblical exegesis. One of their exegeses, based upon the problematic expression "under the mount", *tahatit ha-har* in the original in the book of Exodus 19:17, is that their covenant is interpreted as forcefully imposed upon them by God under threat of death, not as something accepted by their own free will. It says that "This teaches that the Holy One , blessed be He, overturned the mountain upon them like an [inverted] cask, and said to them, 'If ye accept the Torah, 'tis well; if not, there shall be your burial…..".[6]

It was inferred that God had to make covenant with them lest the world be brought back to chaos. Whether the world would go back to chaos or would be perfected depended largely upon the decision of the Israelites. Therefore they were chosen for the completion of the world according to the divine will by fulfilling the commandments given to them.

The Jews were thus destined to fulfill the divine task of keeping the commandments to let the world be safe and firm. This is exactly the idea of the responsibility of the chosen people, which is very similar to the idea of *noblesse oblige*.

2.3 The Idea of Remorse and Repentance

Thirdly, we will consider the idea of remorse and repentance in Jewish moral values. The culture of remorse and repentance culminated most importantly in the ritual of the Day of Atonement. I still remember experiencing this idea for the first time when I was studying at the Hebrew University in the 1980's. I felt as if the summer in Jewish life was like a season of repentance. I used to go to a nearby Sephardi synagogue early in the morning during the forty days before the Day of Atonement and listen to the sound of the *shofar* in the darkness before sunrise. It seemed as if the whole world of the Jews was going through repentance. I learned that the *shofar* was blown at exactly when they recited the passage of the Torah representing the thirteen attributes of God, i.e. *Shlosh Esre Middot* (י"ג מדות). It says, "*Adonai, Adonai, El rahum ve-hanun, erekh appayim ve-rav hesed ve-emet...*".[7]

So what is the method of repentance? The Mishnah already decreed the basic precept, and according to it, there are four methods. The first is the Temple sacrifice, which is the most important

and effective. However the Temple in Jerusalem has been in ruins for many centuries. The second is death. The third is the ritual of the Day of Atonement. And the fourth is repentance. The same idea of offering an apology through death exists in Japanese culture, and Judaism similarly seems to echo our tradition of apology. However the Day of Atonement in Judaism is of equal value to that of death. Man has no need to die for repentance. In addition, death and the Day of Atonement are not sufficient for atonement. The act of repentance is indispensable. The Mishnah says, "Death and the Day of Atonement effect atonement if there is repentance" (M. Yoma 8:8)".[8]

Sin will be atoned for ultimately by the act of repentance and the Day of Atonement. Human life is unalterable. It should not be treated lightly. Do not say how easily sin can be atoned for by repentance only. Easy repentance is no repentance. The Mishnah describes the nonsense of such an easy act of repentance. It says, "If a man said, 'I will sin and repent, and sin again and repent', he will be given no chance to repent. [If he said,] 'I will sin and the Day of Atonement will effect atonement', then the Day of Atonement effects no atonement (M. Yoma 8:9)".[9]

3. Examination of Japanese Moral Values

Given the significance of Talmudic thinking in the Jewish moral values examined above, we will discuss the possible reasons for the differences between Jewish and Japanese moral values, and consider ways of renovation in Japanese education of the classical religious scriptures of Buddhism, Confucianism, and even the Talmud.

We understood that Rabbinic Judaism taught the Jews responsibility regarding sin, encouraging them to attain righteousness by way of learning and practicing the divine commandments. If specific Jewish moral values can be attained by religious education based on Talmudic literature, then we Japanese might be able to find a kind of corresponding history in which a certain style of Japanese religious education emphasizing the perfection of moral and ethical excellence strived to establish sophisticated moral and ethical values of the Japanese people, which could help restrain and control their rude, arrogant and ethnocentric tendencies. There certainly was a period in our history when Buddhism and Confucianism played an indispensable role in fostering such universal moral values in the mind of the Japanese military ruling class based on their religious education. This period was that of Feudalism in the medieval and early modern period, especially the Tokugawa Shogunate period in 1603-1868. We will now consider the role of Zen Buddhism in inculcating ethical enlightenment among the military ruling class.

3.1 Zen Buddhism and Japanese Intellectual Tradition

Firstly, we will glance briefly at the theory of transmitting the truth from master to disciple in the tradition of Zen Buddhism. This theory was referred to most clearly in a statement by the most important Japanese Zen Master, Dogen (1200-1253). Dogen went to China to complete his study of the innermost truth of Buddhism and began to serve Chinese Zen masters at the age of 20. He visited and was enrolled in several famous Zen schools and spent about two inconclusive years. Eventually he had an opportunity of seeing the greatest master of the time named Nyojoh, whose encounter was depicted as an ineffable experience of seeing a living Buddha. He served him and was ordained at the moment when the whole truth had been transmitted from the master to him. Dogen stayed with the master Nyojoh until he passed away a few months later; he then came back to Japan to teach the true Buddhist teaching of the master and founded the Soto Zen School. When he was forty he left Kyoto, the political and cultural center of Japan to detach himself from political and social influences and temptations and founded a temple deep in the mountains to train his disciples. This temple has been preserved to this day and his Zen school and groups are flourishing. His writing on the genealogy of the evidence of the truth by transmission between Zen masters can be found at the beginning of the discourse on the Truth of the Teaching of Buddha as follows:

> The great master Gautama Buddha attached the Dharma (truth, Law) to the disciple Kasho at the assembly of Mt. *Ryozen*, and through the true transmission of masters it reached the honorable great master Dharma. The master attached the Truth to the great master *Eka*. Thus transmitting simply from master to master, it reached of nature the sixth leader, the great Zen master *Daikwan*…. . In his time there were two disciples of excellence, both of whom kept the evidence of Buddha and both were the master of the world. These two schools having prevailed, five branch schools were extended…. Although these five families differed from each other, all of them kept the one and the same evidence of Buddha's Heart (*Bendo-wa by Dogen*).[10]

According to this statement, the notion of transmission of the whole truth may be understood as follows: The transmission of the whole truth contains something ineffable and bears a mystic quality. What is transmitted should not be knowledge of this or that matter. It can not be calculated individually. What might be contained in the master's mind should be transmitted. Because the disciple becomes a representative of the master in a moment, we can only say that the whole spirit of the master was transmitted to the disciple. This transmission is ineffable. This is a whole transmission from the master to the disciple. And because this is whole, it is a simple transmission.

Because this is simple, it should be wholly true. The whole instructions of the master and the whole devotion and allegiance of the disciple make the transmission simple and whole. But it is ineffable.

Seen from another aspect this theory of transmission is exactly the essential notion of the perfection of human virtues as the ultimate aim of Zen Buddhism. What is meant by human perfection in Zen Buddhism? It was an enlightened state of mind, objective in judgments of right and wrong and of good and evil, unbiased, recognizing the preconceptions of one's own and of others. An enlightened person is of pure reason if there be such a person. This is because Zen Buddhism or Buddhism in general has at all times and in all places attracted men.

3.2 Zen Buddhism and Japanese Military Class

We now shift our focus to the consistent systematic religious education by the Tokugawa Shogunate rulers, to see how the religious values of Zen Buddhism were embodied in the culture of the ruling military class as the way to spiritual perfection. This brought forth social justice and compassion in the whole of Japanese society, preventing an outburst of political barbarism.

Strongly influenced by the Zen-Buddhism of China, especially with the rise of the military *samurai* class in Japan since the thirteenth century onward, the idea of enlightenment through Zen training had begun to profoundly influence Japanese culture in the middle ages. It should be noted that the military class accepted the tenets of Zen Buddhism as its authoritative spiritual discipline in opposition to the magical ritualism of the dominant Buddhist authorities supported by the Emperor and the noble class. This tendency was promoted more in the early modern era when the military class of the samurai took over political power and became the dominant ruling class in Japanese society. This was the period of the Tokugawa regime with the Shogun ruler at the summit in early modern Japan from 1603 to 1868.

After the one hundred years of civil wars among military landlords called *daimyo*, the Tokugawa military clan subjugated other landlords and founded the dynasty in 1603. The founder was awarded the title Shogun by the Emperor. In the past the Emperor normally endowed the military general commander with that title, but this time it meant that the title holder represented a man of supreme administrative power and thus Japan became a 'united states' perhaps for the first time in its history. From that time until 1868 the Tokugawa dynasty ruled Japan peacefully, with almost no military confrontations among feudal lords.

One of the characteristics of the Tokugawa regime was that it accepted the Chinese political philosophy of Confucianism as the principle that brings about the ideal aim of society as well as that of the individual. The ultimate aim of society was to live according to the Heavenly norms and

in order to realize that ideal, man has to endeavor to accommodate himself to the Heavenly Will by rigorous learning and thus his household will be in order, the country will be justly and peacefully ruled and consequently the whole universe will be in order under Heaven. The whole universe is totally dependent upon the quality of man; social justice and well-being could be realized to the extent that man in society accomplishes his duty according to the Heavenly Will, called *Ten-Mei*.

The idea that the ultimate aim of man is to subject himself to the Heavenly Will in the theory of Confucianism is similar to Buddhism in the sense that the elimination of egoistic desires and the annihilation of selfishness are the ideal state of human cognition. These two ideas were then so distinctly amalgamated that the ideal of ruler as a man of discipline according to Confucianism was to be realized by the systematic practice of Zen-Buddhism. Thus education in Zen Buddhism was established in the Tokugawa regime and the universal aspect of human reason was embodied in this culture. It is important to point out that this legitimate education in 'Zen Buddhist eschatology' succeeded in suppressing the outburst of persistent ethnocentric barbarism in Japanese society.

3.3 Four Subjects of Education in the Tokugawa Regime

The subjects of education for the Tokugawa feudal lords are best illustrated by the concept of the exhibition at the Tokugawa Art Museum in Nagoya. The museum consists of six exhibition rooms representing the most typical elements of the lord's castle. The first four rooms desplay the following subjects: the Sword and Armor Room, the Tea Room, the Official Confucian Chamber, and the Noh Theatre Stage.[11] It is surprising that a military castle contained such cultural facilities. This fact, however, implies that the life of the ruling class was governed by Zen Buddhist ideas and these four elements seem to symbolize the spirit of the ruling *samurai* class of the age. Here I will consider the significance of tea ceremony.

The tea ceremony was meant to be a special way by which to attain spiritual enlightenment in place of Zen-discipline. The spirit of the tea ceremony was firmly established upon the principle of *Cha-Zen Ichi-Mi* (茶禅一味), that is, "the tastes of Tea and Zen are one and the same". The tea master Rikyu, who founded the school of the tea ceremony, became an adviser to the military ruler of Japan at that time, recruiting many distinguished disciples among *samurai* warriors. As a result, the spirit of his tea ceremony was gradually accepted by the entire *samurai* military class.

The ultimate aim of man is, according to my understanding, to live a righteous life; to that purpose, the elimination or annihilation of egoistic desires should be attained. Only when man conceives himself as ephemeral and sinful, will he find his life invaluable and precious; he feels as if he were endowed with new life in tasting tea in the tea room that constitutes part of the universe.

Inside the tea room everybody is deprived of social status and all must live a simple and modest life in light of the Heavenly dominion; decency and modesty abound therein and man's mutual relationships with each other and other objects shed a new beam of Heavenly light. Under such circumstances, man will change himself and become a new creation.

3.4 Transformation of Japanese Moral Values in the Modern Nation-State.

With the formation of a modern centralized state in the late nineteenth century, Japanese rulers adopted State Shintoism as the state religion, officially implementing the policy of separation between Shintoism and Buddhism, which in turn precipitated the annihilation of Buddhist values.

Shintoism or the Shinto religion was based on the naïve belief in the mysterious uncanny being possibly revealing in every matter. It has no universal morality or righteousness except for absolute fear and total subjection to de-facto social authorities including man. This tendency could lead to blind conventionalism or uncritical traditionalism. Thus that is how a sort of emperor worship came into being. The imperial family established its rule by military power in ancient times and holds the function of officiating rituals for the supreme deity, the Great Goddess of *Amaterasu* (Heavenly-Sunlight) who was originally an imperial family deity at the summit of the divine hierarchy. Although the *samurai* military class had endeavored to prevent the Emperor from exercising political power from the Middle Ages onward, the sacred social order of Shintoism has persisted into the modern era and took political authority in the Meiji Restoration assuming modern nationalism since 1868. The spirit of the ruling class of Japan, characterized by a sense of loyalty and duty embodied in the Confucian and Buddhist values, was then dramatically transformed into modern egoism that only seeks the pursuit of this-worldly prosperity with political barbarism, which has succeeded in confronting the threat of the Western powers.

It is true that Japan has succeeded in attaining this-worldly prosperity without falling prey to western colonialism. But it is equally true that Japan imitated the West in becoming a colonial country. If we have attained this status by denouncing the Buddhist values that we have cherished for so long, we might as well realize that it is still too high a price to pay. We should all be aware of man's ephemeral life even while we are flourishing.

The State of Israel has succeeded in building a firm and flourishing country in the modern era, and I hope that at this time of her political triumph, the Israelis will remain aware of the historical lessons to be learnt from their own people that the religious triumph of Talmudic Judaism caused by their political defeat, fostered their specifically Jewish moral values.

Conclusion: Towards the Revival of Classical Scriptural Education

We have witnessed that as rabbinic Judaism has exerted great influence in shaping modest and responsible Jewish moral values in the long history of the Diaspora, so decent, modest and responsible moral values flourished in medieval and early modern Japan in which the free and vigorous activities of various Buddhist sects were permitted by the military regime. If we could recognize that Buddhism as foreign thought has been rooted into Japanese culture, I wonder if we could integrate Jewish thought and its wisdom into Japanese culture through education. In my concluding remarks I would like to consider the possibility and methodology of generating Jewish Talmudic study in terms of the revival of classical Japanese education in Buddhism. We would not be able to reestablish the educational system of the early modern Tokugawa regime; in modern secular society, we have to presuppose the separation of religion and state so that classical education would take place in the system of secular education in terms of religious studies in university curriculum. Comparative study of Buddhism and Judaism would be the best environment in which the similarity between the two could be recognized and reaffirmed. On the one hand, there are two phases in the process of Buddhist enlightenment: *Zu-ij-Yi* 随自意 (recognition in terms of Buddha) and *Zui-ta-Yi* 随 他 意 (recognition in terms of laity), while Judaism has two approaches in the perfection of cognition: Torah lishmah (Torah study for its own sake) and Torah lo lishmah (Torah study not for its own sake). On the other hand, the purpose of practicing Buddhist commandments is the practicing of the same in the evidence of enlightenment, which is called *Shu-Sho Ittoh* 修証一 等 in technical terms, i.e. the disciplinary practice and the evidence of enlightenment are one and the same, while the purpose of practicing Jewish commandments is the practicing of the same in the evidence of the love of God, which is called *sekhar mizvah, mizvah*, i.e. the reward of a commandment is a commandment.[12] This is perhaps why many Jewish intellectuals have been so interested in Zen and were affiliated to Zen masters' apprenticeship. Yoel Hoffmann's biography and thoughtful works will be more properly evaluated in this context. I still hope to see a society in which people are aware of their ephemeral existence even in their flourishing lives and live decent, modest and responsible lives based upon the hermeneutics of the classical Buddhist and Jewish scriptures.

Notes

1 The original title was *Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture*, published by The Eastern Buddhist Society, Otani Buddhist College, Kyoto, 1938. It was then translated into Japanese with the title *Zen to Nihon-Bunka*, i.e. "Zen and Japanese Culture", published by Iwanami-Shoten in 1940, including

the original six chapters and one additional chapter.

2 When I invited Professor Rachel Elior of the Hebrew University to the University of Tokyo 15 years ago and we read together the *Constitution of Seventeen Articles* in English translation at the seminar, we came across the same impression that the idea of harmony in the Constitution seemed to force subjects conform to the regime. In addition, the ideal was not realized because the Prince's family was annihilated by the powerful Soga clan and government was taken over by its clan, which led to the Coup in 645 CE.

3 The Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 5:17. H. Damby, *The Mishnah*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1938), pp.459-460. A more literal translation would be: "any dispute which is for the sake of Heaven, shall in the end be of lasting worth." *The Mishnah: A New Translation with a Commentary by Rabbi Pinhas Kehati, Seder Nezikin Vol* 4, Eliner Library, Department for Torah Education and Culture in the Diaspora, (Jerusaslem,1994), p.175.

4 Ezra Zion Melamed, *Mabo le-Sifrut ha-Talmud*, (Kiryat Sefer, Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 49-68.

5 Illuminating is the explanation by Y. Leibowitz on the difference between the holiness mentioned in the verse on *tzitzit* (Numbers 15:40-41) and the holiness in regard to Korah (Numbers 16:1). The difference between them is for him "the difference between faith in God and idolatry". Yeshayahu Leibowitz, *Notes and Remarks on the Weekly Parashah*, tr. by Rabbi S. Himelstein, (Chemed Books & Co., Brooklyn, NY, 1990), p.143.

6 BT Tractate Shabbat 88a, *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud, Seder Moed, Tractate Shabbat*, (The Soncino Press, London, 1987).

7 An Israeli radio program of the *Selihot was broadcasted during the season in* 1983, which I recorded and listened to many times with the prayer book, *Mahzor Beit Israel, Yamim Noraim, Ke-Minhag Qehilot Qodesh Spharadim*, ("Sinai" Publishing, Tel Aviv, 1977).

8 H. Damby, *The Mishnah*, p.172.

9 *Ibid*.

10 *Nihon-Shisou-Taikei: Dogen, First Volume*, (Iwanami-Publishing Co., Tokyo, 1970), pp. 12-13.

11 The homepage of this museum gives a glimpse of its concept. See www.tokugawa-art-museum.jp/english/.

12 Comparative religious thought between Buddhism and Judaism has been one of my great concerns, the first article on which was published with the title "Scripture and the Modern Era" in *Japanese Literature and the Buddhism, Sixth Volume*: Scripture, (Iwanami Publishing Co. Tokyo in 1994). An English abstract of the comparative study "Persecution and Theodicy in the Case of Medieval Japanese Buddhism", appeared in the booklet of the international conference "Monotheism and Asia", joint program of Bar-Ilan University and the University of Tokyo, held at the University of Tokyo in August 30 and 31, 2010, sponsored by Dr. Naim Dangoor, (OBE Program for Universal Monotheism of Bar-Ilan University), pp. 101-106.

Outsiders Know Better? — Introducing the 'Righteous Foreigners' in the Hebrew Bible and their Significance

Yu Takeuchi

1. Introduction: God and Israel, and foreigners

If someone says, "As the Book about God and his chosen people, the Bible recounts events which happened between these two parties", I suppose that this is not far too wrong. Nonetheless, this generalising statement excludes so many chapters, or even some books from the canon. We have, for example, the Book of Job, where no Hebrews are mentioned, or the Book of Esther, where there is no reference to God. The election of Israel among other nations is indeed the basic tenet of the Bible. Accordingly, foreigners are, so to speak, referred to in the margin of the Book. But this Book seems to have generously margined pages. Since God's chosen people were "the smallest of peoples" (Deut 7:7), surrounded by oftentimes more powerful nations, they could not stay indifferent to those foreigners. Their God is the God of the universe, He is not only concerned with his "peculiar treasure (Exod 19:5 in KJV < Heb. 'am segulah')", but also with those whom He did not choose. From that, it is only natural that the Bible is abundant with references to foreigners, even though they are excluded from the divine election.

2. Two 'classical' ways of how Israel treats foreigners

Foreigners appear, most oftentimes, in two (and contrasted) versions: 'the wicked in power' or 'the weak in need'. Let us briefly look at these two versions before we go into the third and largely neglected version, which is the main theme of this presentation.

To illustrate the first version concretely, I find it fitting to cite a couple of well-known verses from the Bible.

> No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none belonging to them shall enter the assembly of the LORD for ever; because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Be'or from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. (Deut 23:3-4) [Following the Revised Standard Version translation here and below.]
>
> Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Per'izzites, the

> Hivites, and the Jeb'usites. Take heed to yourself, lest you make covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither you go, lest it become a snare in the midst of you. You shall tear down their altars, and break their pillars, and cut down their Ashe'rim. (Exod 34:11-13; cf. Deut 7:1-2)

In this first category, which can be treated as an exclusive model, foreigners are a threat, or the despicable ones, who possess a variety of enchanting devices to lead the Israelites astray and abandon their faith. These foreigners are often in power, too or at the very least powerful enough to cause the Israelites to worry about the former's potentially disturbing influence on their creed and rituals.

The other category of foreigners, seemingly opposed to the above, can be found prescribed in ethical encouragement as follows.

> He [God] executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner (ger), giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. (Deut 10:18-19; cf. Exod 23:9)
>
> You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner (ger), or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge; but you shall remember that you were a slave ('ebed) in Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this. (Deut 24:17-18)
>
> When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers (gerim) in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. (Lev 19:33-34)

These examples portray foreigners as weak and in need of help. They depict the Israelites themselves in the past as well, namely, sojourners in a foreign land. Israel, when they see sojourners in difficulty, are to protect them, and include them magnanimously in their community.

3. 'Righteous Foreigners' in the Hebrew Bible

Apart from these two types of foreigners, we know that there is one other category of foreigner in the Hebrew Bible, which I would tentatively call 'righteous foreigners'. Or, to be more modest and safe, and perhaps less attractively, they could be classified as 'positive and active foreigners', as opposed to the 'negative and passive' ones seen above. They are strikingly different from the two preceding types in that they walk, or show the right and even the divinely inspired path to the chosen, or help the chosen to find that path, quite paradoxical to the election scheme where it is theoretically postulated that the chosen always know better. In addition, *they* take the initiative, that is, they emerge from the position of receivers of Israel's actions (hostile or merciful), and appear on

the scene as the main actors.

Examples of these foreigners, at least illustrative ones, are not so abundant, nonetheless, neither are they insignificantly scarce. Within the limited pages allocated here, we can not afford to go into the details of all the pericopes concerned, but must restrain ourselves to sharing the modest and non-exhaustive list of 'righteous foreigners'. We will take a quick look at these figures listed in the table below.

Melchizedeq (Gen 14:18-20; Psa 110:4)	Tamar (Gen 38)
Jethro (Exo 18; cf. 2:16-21; 3:1; 4:18-20)	Balaam (Num 22)
Rahab (Jos 2; 6:17.22-25)	Uriah the Hittite (2Sa 11, cf. 12)
Naaman (2Ki 5)	The Ninevites (Jon 3) The anonymous foreign sailors (Jon 1)
Ruth (Ruth 1-4)	Job (Job 1-2; 42 [so called its 'frame narrative'])

Table 1: the list of the 'Righteous Foreigners'

Melchizedeq from Genesis 14 was a priest of the 'Most High' and the king of Salem. He blessed God and Abraham with bread and wine, and gave him a tenth (or, could it be rather the other way round: Abraham gave Melchizedeq the tenth? The massoretic text is notoriously ambiguous here). Abraham the patriarch, accepted every generous and venerable act of this stranger without showing any bewilderment.

Tamar in Genesis 38 was Judah's daughter-in-law, likely a Canaanite woman. She was once maltreated by Judah, but by courage and wit became pregnant after sleeping with the patriarch, and succeeded in giving birth to Perez (and Zerah) so that Judah's family would not perish. (She conceived for him (*lo*), Gen 38:18).

Jethro appearing in Exodus 2-4 and 18 was a Midianite priest, and Moses' father-in-law. Somewhat echoing Melchizedeq, he blessed the safe return of Moses and his people from Egypt, and praised God with sacrifices. Moreover, he contributed in establishing an effective way of judging conflicts, observing Moses bearing too heavy a load.

Balaam from Numbers 22-24 was a reputed foreign fortune teller, but at the same time behaved as a loyal servant of the God of Israel. He received revelations from God and refused to curse Israel disobeying Balak the king of Moab, and instead kept on blessing Israel.

Rahab from Joshua 2 was a Canaanite prostitute [*zonah*], or possibly a landlady of a sort of an inn. She sheltered two Hebrew spies and helped Joshua's army in occupying Jericho, and eventually in conquering Canaan.

Uriah the Hittite, from 2Samuel 11 and 12, was a common foreign soldier serving David's army, and was the husband of alluring Bath-Sheba. Against David's malevolent ruse, Uriah refused to go home to enjoy intimacy with his wife, thus showing fidelity to the king and solidarity with his

colleagues, only to fuel the king's maliciousness.

Naaman's episode was recounted in 2Kings 5. He was a military commander in the Syrian army, suffering from leprosy. He was introduced to the prophet Elisha, and Elisha cured Naaman. Naaman reverentially acknowledged the God of Israel, and sent the prophet a gift as a token of appreciation, which the prophet politely, and perhaps duly, refused. Contrastingly, Gehazi, Elysha's disciple, reclaimed the gift by greed, and became a leper.

The Ninevites were the people of a notoriously wicked city. But in Jonah 3, they repented immediately after Jonah's reluctant warning, and were saved from the foretold disaster and annihilation.

The anonymous sailors in Jonah 1 were worshippers of various pagan gods. They acted piously, trying to avoid killing the rebellious prophet Jonah, and prayed to the God of Israel, made sacrifices and swore oaths.

Ruth was the only foreign woman for whom an entire book was allotted (the only man was Job just below). This widow from Moab showed steadfast fidelity to her mother-in-law, her people and its God. Her outstanding devotion led Boaz to marry her and she gave birth to Obed, king David's grandfather.

Job the righteous man of Uz, especially the one depicted in the frame narrative of the Book of Job, proved his unshakable faith by enduring reverentially the dreadful doom which he actually did not deserve.

4. Diversity among 'Righteous Foreigners'

These figures, almost countable merely by the fingers on both hands, except for the 120,000 Ninevites in the Book of Jonah, display quite a colourful collection of different human status. I would like to share some observations that I made about this list.

They come from all walks of life: a priest-king (Melchizedeq), a priest-shepherd (Jethro), widows (Tamar and Ruth), a harlot (Rahab), a commander (Naaman), and a common soldier (Uriah), a wealthy man of note (Job), a fortune teller (Balaam), and sailors (in the Book of Jonah). And in passing, it can also be noted that these figures are spread in all three canonical divisions of the Tanakh.

While some are legally integrated into the community of Hebrews by marriage (Tamar, Ruth, Jethro), others belonged to an antagonistic nation (the Ninevites), or did so once (Tamar was probably of Canaanite origin; Uriah the Hittite, Ruth the Moabite).

Most of them acted in cooperation with the Hebrews, but God's pride par excellence, Job the

righteous, leads a life without any contact with Israel.

Some seem (or pretend) to reflect real historical events, others appear to be more idealised fictional characters (Job, the Ninevites and the sailors in Jonah). One is, of course, merely referring here to the difference in style of description, not to the historicity per se.

Most of them are individuals bearing his or her proper names, but in the Book of Jonah groups of 'righteous foreigners' are depicted *without* their personal names, even the king is not an exception.

And perhaps more importantly, a distinction should be made according to how they behaved vis-à-vis the chosen people of Israel. I attempt herewith to introduce another division into our general list, in order to capture significant nuances between those whom I have been simply calling the 'righteous foreigners'. In my view, they are possibly divided into four to five groups of different types.

Type	Figures	Common feature among each type
1	Tamar / Uriah / Naaman / Foreign sailors and the Ninevites in the Book of Jonah	Foreigner "more in the right" (Gen 38:26) than the chosen people
2	Jethro / Rahab	Harmonious cooperator
3	Melchizedeq / Balaam	Ambiguous (enigmatic?) helper
4	Ruth / Itai, Hushai, Shobi, Machir (?), Barzil'lai (2Sam 15:17-23. 32; 17:27-29; 18:2.5) / (Rahab?)	Sympathetic follower
5	Job	'Independently righteous' i.e., no contact or comparison with the chosen ones

Table 2: Five types of 'Righteous Foreigners', according to how they function vis-à-vis the people of Israel

Some are admittedly "more in the right" (borrowing the wording of Judah to Tamar from Gen 38:26) than the chosen protagonist(s) (Tamar than Judah, Uriah contrasted with David, Naaman with Gehazi the disciple of Elisha, the Ninevites and the sailors with the prophet Jonah). Some cooperate harmoniously with the Hebrews (Jethro, Rahab), and others have a more ambiguous stance in their helping (Melchizedeq, Balaam), others are, more modestly, sympathetic followers (Ruth, Itai, Hushai, Shobi, Machir (?), Barzillai from 2Samuel 15; 17), and Job, who is 'independently', i.e., without any explicit comparison with others, righteous in the eyes of God.

5. Some common features between 'righteous foreigners': a loose web

Now we are well aware that the group of our 'righteous foreigners' is far from being monolithic. Apart from their being 'righteous foreigners', we can merely point out that each one commonly appears once or just a few times in the Hebrew Bible, and that each one, except the Ninevites (cf. Nahum 1-3), is portrayed as a 'single-faceted' character (unlike Noah, Moses, David and so on, who

are multi-faceted humans with both virtue and vice).

This diversity observed above may make it difficult to regard these 'righteous foreigners' in one tight lineage. However, in spite of these observations, I maintain that they can indeed be classifiable in one catalogue as examples of unusual and distinct figures who transcend the postulate of 'the chosen always knowing better' and 'the foreigners either wicked or weak' (as seen in the two 'classical' versions in chapter 2 above).

In fact, with closer observation, we discover quite a few things in common among them, each tying some of them close together. One could, to cite some good examples, name eight such elements. 1) Melchizedeq, Jethro, and Balaam are all foreign priests who blessed the Hebrew protagonists and their God. 2) The stories of Tamar and Ruth both have levirate marriages as background. 3) Tamar, Ruth and Rahab form a group of courageous foreign women, and are also the outstanding matriarchs of David's genealogy. 4) What is common among Melchizedeq, Jethro, Balaam, and Rahab is that they are all contrasted with other hostile foreigners (Melchizedeq with the King of Sodom, Jethro with Egyptians, Balaam with Balak the King of Moab, and Rahab with other townsfolks in Jericho). 5) As seen in the previous chapter (Type 1 represented in Table 2), some are contrasted with the Hebrew (not so righteous) protagonists, and "more in the right" than those chosen ones: Tamar (versus Judah), Naaman (vs. Gehazi), Uriah (vs. David), and the Ninevites and the sailors in the Book of Jonah (vs. Jonah). 6) Melchizedeq, Jethro, Uriah and Job are somewhat mysterious figures, who surprise readers by their abrupt and short appearance or disappearance. 7) Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Jethro share a rather exceptional social status: favoured inclusion in Israel's community. Lastly, 8) all except the Ninevites are depicted as 'single-faceted' characters.

With the help of these clues, we can see that one story resonates with another, and these foreign figures, dispersed in remote pericopes, are again revealed to be loosely connected in a large web.

Surely, the connection between them by these links is not so much a strict one, as none of these links are all-encompassing ones, but these pericopes seem to echo one another leaving us with one global impression that, crossing the boundary between the chosen and the *non*-chosen, outsiders actively help insiders out of good faith, and insiders accept these outsiders who behave rather uncommonly, in view of their usual perspective.

It seems important to note that they are not described to be a threat to the chosen ones, that is, they are, in most cases, gently received by the chosen protagonists, who might have acted differently if they had been trapped in their lofty self-identity. And potentially, these foreigners could have assumed quite a subversive role and might even have taken over the more favoured position, but *that* never happened. These marginal individuals and groups of people acted amiably for the good

cause of the chosen, or in the right fear of their God, and the God's chosen people accepted their acts, showing neither surprise nor bewilderment to their foreignness - I say, "mostly" since Jonah might be an exception.

The motives for including these notably uncommon stories in the Bible may not always be the same in each case. But these pieces of evidence scattered in all three canonical divisions show either that there was a certain openness present, not so rarely, on the side of the elite, or that there were chances here and there for self-reflection and criticism which led the chosen few to sense the need or possibility to listen to or to receive the help of foreign outsiders, leaping across the boundary of the chosen and the non-chosen.

6. Possible implications of 'Righteous Foreigners'

As a tentative conclusion from what we have just looked over, I would like to submit the following.

Firstly, the pericopes we have briefly treated are clear testimonies of the possibility that outsiders in the Hebrew Bible, sometimes and somehow, could know better than insiders, or help them, cooperate with them, or to come and stay with them.

And *that* precisely conveys a positive image of the chosen with ears to listen, not only to their Chooser and their peers, but also to their outsiders.

In other words, this 'accepting of strangers' implies Israel's receptiveness to the otherness. Here I would like to insist that this is quite different from all-inclusive universalism. From what we have examined, the boundary itself is not banned, it is firmly valid, and / but the unusual and exceptional figures transcend the boundary just here and there.

Thus, the 'righteous foreigners' can function to relativize the election scheme where the chosen always know better. It is not only the chosen who are in the right, but the chosen can communicate with and learn from the virtuous outsiders. In these somewhat neglected treasures of the biblical narrative, I dare to reckon a narrow but auspicious path which leads to co-existence without fusion, something so daring in the era of conflict where self-centered expansion and neglect of others are not a rarity.

One may find it fitting to conclude this paper by citing a proverbial formula from the Jewish sages: "The wisest is the one who can learn from any person" (איזהו חכם הלומד מכל אדם).

Author’s note

This is basically the paper read at the conference, only slightly polished and modified for the sake of readability, not presuming to be a full-fledged article. I am grateful for the editorial support and patience which allowed the inclusion of this modest work of mine in this volume. For readers wondering about the relevance of the subject treated in this paper to that of the volume, I believe that a brief mention is in order that the conference was about an outsider, in origin, in the tradition for which he showed deep comprehension and so much contributed to.

Conference Program

The 9th Annual Conference on Jewish Studies

Judaism and Japanese Cultures:

Encountering Judaism and Buddhism in Hebrew Literature

Conference in Honor of Yoel Hoffmann's Writings, Translations, and Beyond

第 9 回 CISMOR ユダヤ会議

ユダヤ教と日本文化

ユダヤ教と仏教　－遭遇の場としてのヘブライ語文学

ヨエル・ホフマン記念会議－作品・翻訳・その彼方

November 27-28, 2016

Doshisha University, Karasuma Campus, Shikokan

I 11/27 (Sunday)

Session A: The Literary Work of Yoel Hoffmann

ヨエル・ホフマンの文学作品

9:30- 9:40	Greetings
9:40-10:10	Nili Gold – "Yoel Hoffmann's *Curriculum Vitae* and *Japanese Death Poems* as Reflective Keys to Reading *The Christ of Fish*, *The Heart is Katmandu*, and *Ephraim*"
10:20-10:50	Rachel Albeck-Gidron – "Caesura and Holding in Yoel Hoffmann's Texts"
11:00-11:30	Discussion
	Chair: Ada Taggar-Cohen

Session B: Japanese Culture and Judaism

日本文化とユダヤ教

13:00-14:30	Keynote Address
	Yigal Schwartz – "Hoffmann's Fiction: At the Crossroads of Religions and Cultures" (with Japanese translation)

14:30-15:00 Q&A

Chair: Etsuko Katsumata

Greetings: Dean Ritsu Ishikawa

Session C: Philosophy and Buddhism in Yoel Hoffmann's Writings and Beyond

哲学と仏教－ヨエル・ホフマンの作品とその彼方

15:30-16:00 Iddo Landau – "Yoel Hoffmann and the Meaning of Life"

16:00-16:30 Masato Goda – "From '*Japanese Death Poems*' to the '*Philosophy of Death*' by Hajime Tanabe"

16:30-16:50 Comment for both speakers by Hisao Takagi

16:50-17:10 Discussion

17:10-17:40 Admiel Kosman – "From Yoel Hoffmann to Martin Buber: On the Place of 'Enlightenment' in Jewish Thought in Light of Buber's Teaching"

17:40-18:00 Discussion

Chair: Rachel Albeck-Gidron

18:00-20:00 Reception at Shikokan

II 11/28 (Monday)

Session D: Issues in Cultural Translation

文化に関する翻訳における問題

9:00- 9:30 Doron B. Cohen – "Yoel Hoffmann as a Haiku Translator"

9:40-10:10 Janine Beichman – "Yoel Hoffmann's *Japanese Death Poems*"

10:20-10:50 Lihi Yariv-Laor – "Linguistic and Cultural Trans-Creation: From Conceptual Patterns in the Chinese Bible Versions to Yoel Hoffmann's Translational Stance"

11:00-11:30 Michal Daliot-Bul – "Uncle Leo's Adventures: A Cultural Perspective on Translation"

11:40-12:00 Discussion

Chair: Avidov Lipsker

Session E: Israeli and Middle Eastern Literature and Japan

イスラエル及び中東文学と日本

13:30-14:00 Kazue Hosoda – "Translation of the Middle Eastern Literature in Japan: Focusing on Israeli Literature"

14:00-14:30 Yoshimi Miyake – "Cultural Key Terms for Communications in Israel"

14:30-15:00 Takafumi Akimoto – "*The Seven Good Years* in Japanese: Translating a Translation without the Original"

15:00-15:30 Discussion

Chair: Chizuko Takao

Session F: Judaism and Yoel Hoffmann

ユダヤ教とヨエル・ホフマン

16:00-16:30 Hiroshi Ichikawa – "Talmudic Discussion in Japanese: On the Possibility of Cultural Innovation"

16:40-17:10 Yu Takeuchi – "Outsiders Know Better? – Introducing the 'Righteous Foreigners' in the Hebrew Bible and their Significance"

17:20-17:50 Mariko Tsujita – "Yoel Hoffman's Days in Kyoto, 1970-1974"

18:00-18:30 Discussion and Closing Remarks

Chair: Doron B. Cohen

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第四回 CISMOR ユダヤ学会議 「ユダヤ教従、キリスト教従、ムスリムの相互作用－歴史的、文化的見地から」
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