

Michal Ben-Horin

The Shores of Lampedusa: Reviewing Tuvia Rübner's Poetry in Light of (Literary) History

A year after Tuvia Rübner's death, Gideon Tikotzky published an essay in the newspaper *Ha'aretz* claiming that Rübner, who wrote poems as well as haikus and aphorisms, could both Westernize the East and Easternize the West. Rübner immigrated to Eretz Israel from Slovakia in 1941 and lost his family in the Holocaust. Initially he wrote in German, but shifted to Hebrew in the 1950s – the language he was known for as an Israeli writer – until the 1990s, when he translated his own poems into German. In parallel, Rübner worked with Lea Goldberg, translated Shmuel Yosef Agnon's prose into German and translated the German literary canon into Hebrew. I have shown elsewhere how Rübner's self-translation was his way of bearing witness to the dead with whom he had spoken in German, while struggling for survival in the language he spoke in the new land.

The transition between German and Hebrew is unique to Rübner as demonstrated in recent scholarship (Seelig, Rokem, Ben-Horin). At the same time, for other poets who published in Hebrew only, such as Yehuda Amichai or Dan Pagis, the relationship between languages has received growing attention in the field, reflecting broader tendencies of reviewing the history of modern Jewish and Hebrew literature since the late 1990s. In contrast to the Zionist meta-narrative based on a redemptive binary from destruction to revival, and from Europe (exile) to Israel (homeland) developed by Gershon Shaked, a heterogeneous and multi-directional model, alternative to the national monolithic one, was suggested by Chana Kronfeld, Benjamin Harshav and Dan Miron (in his later books) as well as by Yigal Schwartz, Michael Gluzman and Hannan Hever.

The lecture will focus on some of Rübner's poems such as "The Great Days of the Century" (1997), "Lampedusa" (2015), and "Riva, No" (2019). I claim that Rübner's poetry, which was written in the Middle-East, impels readers to reexamine the cultural, ethical and political encounter between Europe, Asia and Africa. In turning and returning to poems that cross the lines between "here" and "there", the mythical and the historical, the verbal and the visual, I pose the question what they reveal to us about the relationships not only between past and present (tradition), but also about the future (inheritance).

Michal Ben-Horin is an Associate Professor of comparative literature and head of the department of comparative literature at Bar-Ilan University. She is the author of *Musical Biographies: The Music of Memory in Post-1945 German Literature* (de Gruyter, 2016), and *Reading the Voices: Musical Poetics between German and Hebrew* (in Hebrew), forthcoming (The Bialik Institute, 2022).

Chiara Caradonna

A Shrieking Outcry: The Human, Jewish and Animal Voices in Franco Fortini's "I cani del Sinai" (1967)

Written and published in 1967 in the immediate aftermath of the Six-Day War, Franco Fortini's *I cani del Sinai* (*The dogs of Sinai*) is a complex, multi-layered poetic text that is at once a harsh, committed and controversial response to the war by one of Italy's foremost Marxist intellectuals, and an autobiographical account of Fortini's own relation with Judaism. The shrill, distressed voice of Fortini's anti-fascist Jewish father gradually becomes the protagonist of Fortini's reflection and the key to an understanding of Jewish existence and experience revolving around figures of sound that oscillate from human to animal voices, from expressions of rage to lament. In my paper, I will map out the array of Jewish and other voices featured in the text in order to investigate their relation, function and meaning at a fundamental historical juncture in contemporary Jewish history. Furthermore, I will

extend my analysis to the film *Fortini/Cani (Fortini/Dogs, 1976)* by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub, in which Fortini is featured reading his own text, thus displaying his and other voices in a different medium and with entirely different implications.

Chiara Caradonna is Senior Lecturer (Assistant Professor) at the Department of Romance Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She completed her PhD at the Department of Romance Studies of the University of Heidelberg in 2017. Between 2017 and 2021 she was Postdoc-Fellow of the Martin Buber Society at the Hebrew University. In her research she deals with modern and contemporary European poetry on the one hand, and with the “excessive” novel that defies the genre’s formal boundaries on the other. In this context, she is particularly interested in the intersections between literature, philosophy and anthropology. In her first book, titled *Opak. Schatten der Erkenntnis im “Meridian” und im Gedicht “Schwanengefahr”* (Wallstein 2020) she analyzes epistemological and hermeneutic aspects in Paul Celan’s later poetry. She has published on Paul Valéry and Edmund Husserl, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Daniel Sada and Rainer René Mueller. Lately she has been focusing on the modern and contemporary literature of Southern Italy and in particular on the work of Sicilian writer Stefano D’Arrigo. She currently plans to expand her latest article titled “The Ethnographer from Within: Wild Thought in Stefano D’Arrigo’s *Horcynus Orca*” (*arcadia* 56, 2021) in a book tentatively titled *Ethnography in the Strait. Beyond Nature and Culture in Stefano D’Arrigo’s Horcynus Orca*.

Leena Eilittä

Viennese Modernist Literature and Glocalism: History and New Perspectives

Viennese writers including Peter Altenberg, Arthur Schnitzler, Richard Beer-Hofmann, Felix Salten, Alfred Polgar, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Stefan Zweig, Hermann Broch and Joseph Roth went beyond their local topics by incorporating in their texts topoi and myths from several multicultural traditions. By analyzing and highlighting how their assimilated position as Jewish writers made them to engage with themes, motifs and narratives of Jewish, Oriental, Classical and other world traditions, this paper will expose the works of Viennese modernist writers between their local circumstances and global traditions. Contextualizing Viennese Modernism in terms of David Damrosch’s concept of *glocalism* allows to show that there exist multilayered relations between local and global dimensions in the works of Jewish writers. As Damrosch points out, *glocalism* “(...) takes two primary forms: writers can treat local matters for a global audience – working outward from their particular location – or they can emphasize a movement from the outside world in, presenting their locality as a microcosm of global exchange”.¹ Their elaboration of global traditions to local issues allowed them to come into terms with their situation as the Jews living in the Viennese world of uncertainties and inner pressures. Moreover, the Viennese writers succeeded in expanding European modernism by elaborating ancient topoi, originating from religious or classical sources to the demands of modernity in all forms of literature. This contextualization of Viennese modernist literature in terms of *glocalism* allows us to understand the works of Jewish writers not merely as reminiscences of Viennese circumstances – as has been often done in the literary studies - but as an important chapter in the history of World Literature. Viennese Modernism is thus a key-period in the history of World Literature and has contributed to the creation of a “world literature space”, which in Pascale Casanova’s words, is “a mediating area”, “whose divisions and frontiers are relatively independent of political and linguistic borders” and which

¹ Damrosch, David: *How to Read World Literature*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell 2009, 109.

implies “the rejection of established national categories and divisions; indeed demands a trans- or inter-national mode of thought.”²

Leena Eilittä is a docent of comparative literature at the University of Helsinki. Her doctoral thesis at the University of Oxford was published as *Approaches to Personal Identity in Kafka’s short fiction: Freud, Darwin, Kierkegaard* (1999). Eilittä’s more recent research focuses upon Viennese Modernist writers, their connections to World Literature, Jungian philosophy and ecology. Since 2021 she belongs to the research group of Leo Beck Institute about Jewish European Environmental History. Her most recent publication is: “‘Glocalism’: Local and Global in Richard Beer-Hofmann’s *Der Tod Georg*” in: *From the Enlightenment to Modernism: Three Centuries of German Literature. Essays for Ritchie Robertson* (Legend 2022).

Amir Engel

The Affirmation of Exile in Contemporary German-Jewish Literature: A reading of Maxim Biller, Olga Grjasnowa, and Mati Shemoelof

On the face of things, there seems to be nothing more central to the Jewish faith and identity than the desire to overcome exile and return to the land of the Jewish forefathers. Zionism translated these tenants into a political program. It is still a central feature in Israeli discourse, not least in relation to the Jewish communities around the world.

My contribution to RETURN REVIEW REVISE attempts to take a fresh look at this discourse to examine the recreation of the Jewish diaspora in Berlin today. Berlin, of course, is different from most other Jewish Diasporas. As a metonym for the Holocaust, it stands for everything that is terrifying about Jewish exile. And yet, Berlin has become a hub for Jewish and Israeli creation.

To offer some thoughts on the contemporary restructuring of the Jewish problem of exile, this paper probes three works by three contemporary German-Jewish authors. The authors under consideration are Maxim Biller, Olga Grjasnowa, and Mati Shemoelof. Like so many other Jewish authors before these authors also understand the problem of exile and homecoming to be central for Jewish existence. But unlike many and against an entire tradition of Jewish homecoming, they actively choose exile over homecoming. More radically, they prefer Berlin to Jerusalem.

How do contemporary authors reconstruct the Jewish, Zionist, and Israeli discourse of Exile and Homecoming? What is Israel for them today? And how do they justify Berlin? My paper offers initial thoughts on these questions.

Amir Engel is the chair of the German department at the Hebrew University. He studied philosophy, literature, and culture studies at the Hebrew University and completed his Ph.D. at the German Studies department at Stanford University. He then taught and conducted research at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. His book *Gershom Scholem: an Intellectual Biography* came out with the University of Chicago Press in 2017. He is currently working on a project about postwar European Culture, titled “After the Shock: The Uniqueness of the Immediate Postwar”, and he is writing a book on German-Jewish esotericism.

² See Casanova, Pascale: “Literature as a World” (1999), in: *World Literature: A Reader*. Edited by Theo d’Haen, César Dominguez, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, London and New York: Routledge 2013, 277.

Mark Gelber is professor emeritus at Ben-Gurion University in Beer Sheva. He directed the Center for Austrian and German Studies at BGU for 10 years. He also served as Dean of International Academic Affairs. He was elected to the German Academy for Literature and Language (Darmstadt) in 2001. He received the Honorary Medal for Science and Art, first class from the Republic of Austria in 2018. He has been a guest professor or honorary guest researcher/fellow in Austria, Germany, Belgium, Slovenia, China, New Zealand and the U.S. He is presently editing a volume of essays about the legacy of Ruth Klueger, which will appear in August (2022).

Dr. Jan Kühne

German-Hebrew Homophonic Translation

Hebrew-German homophonic translation as a literary and especially poetic writing technique is a still largely unknown phenomenon both in German-Jewish and Hebrew Literature. In my research dedicated to mapping the diversity of multilingual modalities in modern German and Hebrew literature, I am particularly interested in German–Hebrew homophony and am developing an entirely new as well as first approach of analysis. In my presentation, I wish to present and discuss an overview over existing approaches to literary multilingualism, with special focus on the lack of Germany-Hebrew homophonic translation, which I will supplement with examples from the works of canonic Hebrew poets and writers of German-speaking background, such as Nathan Alterman, Ludwig Strauss, and Dan Pagis, as well as contemporary ones like Tomer Gardi and Mati Shmuelof. I will point to this phenomenon in the writings of Franz Kafka, Paul Celan, Franz Rosenzweig, and Else Lasker-Schüler, while aiming towards an encompassing critical outline of this hitherto unrecognized phenomenon in existing approaches and methodologies geared towards analysing and understanding German-Jewish literature. Thereby, my entirely new approach offers access to a hitherto unnoticed deep layer in German-Hebrew dialogues, which offers novel interpretations in the corpus of German-Jewish and Hebrew literature.

Jan Kühne, born in Dresden, studied at Heidelberg University, Vienna University and at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (Ph.D.). He conducted his postdoctoral research at the Martin Buber Society of Fellows, has been a research fellow and scholar-artist at the Israeli Institute for Advanced Studies, and is currently an affiliated researcher at the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History at the Hebrew University. Dr. Kühne initiated and serves as editor in chief of the Critical Edition of Collected Writings by Sammy Gronemann.

Asif Rahamim

Becoming-Jewish: The Reception of Paul Celan as a Jewish Poet

Today, Paul Celan is widely regarded as a *Jewish* poet. This designation seems so trivial, that it is hardly ever being contested or questioned. However, this was not always the case. Although the first commentators and interpreters of Celan's work did acknowledge, to certain degree, Celan's Jewish descent, the Jewish perspective was hardly their first interpretive prism of choice, through which to approach the poet's oeuvre. As the years went by, a shift in Celan's reception occurred, as different scholars and thinkers became gradually aware of, and felt obligated to emphasize, the profound and inherent "Jewishness" of the poet's work. This lecture will address the perception of Paul Celan from a Jewish perspective. In order to explore the impact of Jewish Studies on reading Celan as a Jewish poet over the past decades, I will review the work of four of Celan's prominent interpreters, who became milestones in his perception as a Jewish poet: George Steiner, Stéphane Mosès, Jacques Derrida, and John Felstiner.

Asif Rahamim is a research fellow at the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History. His field of study lies at the intersection between continental philosophy, contemporary theory, and modern literature, mainly German and Israeli. His PhD dissertation was titled “Displaced Cartographers: Space, Place, and Mapping in the Poetry of Paul Celan and Avot Yeshurun – A Comparative Study”. His essay on Paul Celan’s “Jerusalem poems” will be published in the forthcoming volume *Paul Celan Today*.

Orr Scharf

The Zionist Kant: S.H. Bergman’s Renegotiation of Cultural Hierarchies with Post-Imperial Europe

Prague-born philosopher S.H. Bergman (1883-1975), childhood friend of Franz Kafka and Max Brod, was a perfect product of the imperial academic system: he received philosophical training in Prague, Vienna and Berlin, directed the royal library in Prague, and served as an Austro-Hungarian officer in the First World War. In addition to his academic work, Bergman was a well-published member of the Jewish republic of German letters. Following his immigration to Palestine in 1920, he became a key figure in Jewish intellectual life, serving as the inaugural director of the Jewish National Library, first rector of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and a philosophy professor. Throughout his career, Bergman played an instrumental role in the shaping of a “world literature” canon in Hebrew. As chairman of a state-backed board, he selected and oversaw the translation of works diverse as Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis*, Vergil’s *Aeneas*, and Pushkin’s poetry. In many respects, Bergman could be considered a paradigmatic figure of a European Jewish intellectual who dedicated his life to the universalization of Hebrew culture, following a preconditioned and subconscious submission to European hegemony in literature and thought.

In my paper I will argue that Bergman’s career as author, publisher and translator actually provides an important counterexample to such a post-colonial view on the power relations between European and Jewish-Israeli canons. “The Zionist Kant” will present Bergman’s decades-long project of co-translating Immanuel Kant’s works into Hebrew (with disciple Natan Rothenstreich), as a process of rearranging hierarchies between center and periphery, universalism and particularism, the powerful and the meek. I will argue that the adaptation of Kant’s philosophy to an Israeli readership was part of a deliberate process of using the cultural capital of the Empire (Austro-Hungary and imperial Germany, as well as the abstract concept of Empire), for the self-empowerment of Jewish Hebraic culture.

My theoretical discussion will be based on the work of Aamir Mufti and Dipesh Chakrabarty, who highlight the dialectical complexities of intercultural relations under empire, and its aftermath. Focusing on the power relations between colonizer and colonized, I will explore the possibility of multi-directional hierarchies in which a so-called underprivileged group is able to appropriate, or expropriate, elements in the culture of the hegemony.

The model proposed in the first section of my paper will be examined in light of Bergman’s Kant translation project. I will argue that beyond the adaptation of Kant’s German syntax, grammar and vocabulary to Hebrew, Bergman sought to translate Enlightenment universalism into the language of his own brand of pacifist Zionism. Charting the project’s evolution, I will present Bergman’s motivations to address the intellectual and ethical needs of Israeli culture as guiding his self-empowering approach to Enlightenment ideas.

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Translation: Scripture and Redemption in the Thought of Franz Rosenzweig (De Gruyter, 2019), editor of volume 5 in the critical edition of Martin Buber's works, *Vorlesungen über Judentum und Christentum* (Gütersloh, 2017), and the Hebrew essay anthology *Hebrew Literature and its Cultural Impact* (Schocken, 2021).