

## **ABSTRACTS**

### **Fog / Zali Gurevich**

From an image to a state of consciousness, fog may refer to a pleasant haze, but it mainly describes an unwanted blur, which when extreme, can cause absent-mindedness and confusion, until it's difficult to draw a continuous line, stabilize a shape, or construct a sentence from beginning to end.

### **Hölderlin's Untergang: Poetry and Twilight / Galili Shahar**

Friedrich Hölderlin's (1770-1843) life was one of darkest in the history of European poetry. The greatest German poet, the author of long poems about rivers, the Danube and the Rhine, who translated Pindar and Sophocles, wrote his odes and verses at twilight – ill, irritated, lonely. However, Hölderlin's madness (is this the proper name?) is not only a sad chapter in the life of a German poet, an episode in the history of literature. Rather, it should be understood as a chapter in the history of the Western spirit, as a generational event: the downfall of Hölderlin's mind, the dementia, the forgetfulness, the fragmentation of his language, signify not only the terminal state of spirit, but rather its opening. Hölderlin's dementia forecasted a futuristic poetry. The essay discusses Hölderlin's mental downfall in poetic terms, following a few of his late poems and his prose "In lieblicher Bläue."

### **The Brittle Human or The Master of Memory: The Art of Forgetting in Meir Wieseltier's "HaAdam HaNidaf" / Haim Dorchin**

The article presents the betrayal of memory as a key to Meir Wieseltier's recent poetry collection, "HaAdam HaNidaf" (2018). Wieseltier's dual position activates a set of tensions between remembering and forgetting which dramatically influence the reading of the volume as a whole. By exploring the poetic forms by which dementia not only nullifies memory, but shapes

its biographical and historical dimensions, I analyze oblivion's unpredictable functions in an autobiographical narrative that encapsulates the cultural history of an era.

### **Dancing on the Bridge: Poetry in its Relation to Language / Shahar Bram**

The bridge is an image used by many poets to portray the unique quality of poetry, which breaks temporality and risks communication and comprehensibility. The article begins with a discussion of the poem "Bridgehead Photograph" by Dan Pagis, the second in the sequence of poems *City in December*. The poet depicts himself as a photographer standing on one side of the bridge, wondering if his art can catch the miraculously flickering past on the other side of the bridge. From here the discussion continues to other Hebrew and non-Hebrew poets (Hart Crane and Paul Valery among others), who also see poetry as a bridge: a horizontal, and seemingly stable path, which allows for the linear movement through language, on which the poet lingers and looks down into the abyss; thus, between these horizontal and vertical axes, a poetic space is opened.

### **"That Which I Have Forgotten You Have Remembered:" Father-Daughter Transmission in S.Y. Agnon's "The Stool and the Throne" / Adi Sorek**

This paper explores the question of forgetting in "The Stool and the Throne" by S.Y. Agnon. Forgetting is featured as a vital element of the textual fabric, which is both woven and unraveled by an elderly father – the narrator, Agnon's counterpart – whose memory betrays him, and his young daughter, to whom the inheritance of the story is passed on. The father/daughter pair illuminates the unraveled areas in paternalistic bodies of knowledge, creating an alternative to the conventional (father/son) axis, which is charged with establishing memory. In "The Stool and the Throne," Agnon's poetics of forgetting serves as grounds for a new interpretation. I show that the story's gender shift allows Agnon to link such demented writing with ancient feminine writing traditions – especially

those embedded in weaving and sowing – which are, themselves, forgotten yet present, both in the Midrashic tradition and in Western myth.

The question of the involvement of feminine forces in creating the corpus has accompanied Agnon's work from its very beginning. Quite surprisingly, however, "The Stool and the Throne" is one of the only texts in which the feminine figure is not bound to a tragic fate, but is featured as bearing the potential of verbal liveliness. The action of the feminine figure who joins the father's forgetful states challenges violent patterns which are engraved in the corpus, such as child sacrifice, cycles of war, and gender oppression. Her influence is apparent in a text where, precisely because the stability of memory is lost, remembrance of liminal-bodies and marginal voices is awakened – bodies and voices which work through and assuage the violence of ancient stories. In this paper, I demonstrate how the author of "The Stool and the Throne" uses the poetics of forgetting to create new literary potential, which is elucidated here through his very attraction to the liminal states characteristic of old age and forgetting.

## **The Unique Poetics of Witnessing in Dementia / Dana Amir**

The paper focuses on the unique poetics of witnessing, which are characteristic of demented language, and on the relations this poetics creates with the other. Its characteristics, ranging from metonymic to psychotic modes of witnessing, are discussed using the ideas of Jakobson, Lacan and Bion and through a close reading of Sylvia Molloy's *Desarticulaciones*.

## **On Annie Ernaux's Demented Poetics / Michal Ben-Naftali**

The essay presents a close reading of Annie Ernaux's *Je ne suis pas sortie de ma nuit* in an attempt to understand the concept of "demented poetics." Ernaux's book is a diary that recounts her mother's struggle with Alzheimer's disease. The essay tries to show how the act of writing coincides with the crucial experience of dementia: the deleted archive-of-memories that constitutes one's

self-identity. The psychological regression caused by the malady encounters its unique linguistic expression in the process of mutual dispossession that draws the daughter into her mother's void.

### **Wondrous Minds: Visions of Demented Wisdom in Independent Cinema / Amir Cohen-Shalev**

Three independent films, *The Memory of a Killer* (Erik Van Looy, Belgium, 2003), *Old Cats* (Pedro Peirano and Sebastian Silva, Chile, 2011), and *Pandora's Box* (Yeşim Ustaoglu, Turkey, 2008), are analyzed as cinematic expressions of old-old age, dementia and the impossibility of communication. These films reject the paternalistic hierarchy that favors middle age and replace it with an empathetic dialogue and existential curiosity. This dialogue presents an unconventional look at dementia, which dismantles the binary opposition between senility and normalcy, and reveals the depths of demented wisdom. Comparing these films reveals a paradoxical narrative that combines physical enclosure with the opening of an inner space, a disengagement leading to a first-hand re-engagement with the sensual elements of life. Public discourse on these issues, through popular films on old age and dementia, has the potential to raise awareness of this sensitive topic, whose importance is expected to increase.