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Aharon Appelfeld, cinquante ans d'écriture

Le'at (Slowly): The Orchestration of a Motif in Appelfeld's Fiction

L'orchestration d'un motif dans la narration d'Appelfeld

תיזמורו של מוטיב בסיפורת של אפלפלד

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Appelfeld's Narrative: the Route of Perishability

- 1 Fifty years have passed since the publication of עשן (*Smoke*), Aharon Appelfeld's first book (Achshav Publishers 1962). During those fifty years, he has produced over thirty books, most of which have been published in dozens of languages. These include short novels, novellas, short stories' collections, books of essays and one play. During this period, hundreds of critics and reviews have appeared in most of the world's leading publications: research journals, magazines and literary supplements. "Lyrical prose" is very frequently used in those critical essays.¹ Scholars and critics in Israel and abroad have repeatedly noted that Appelfeld's writings are characterized by a sophisticated rhythmic arrangement with important aesthetic and thematic functions, but only few of them have systematically studied this rhythmic arrangement and rigorously discussed its' aesthetic and thematic functions.² In this paper, I will attempt to add a layer of understanding to this important issue.
- 2 The stylistic level in Appelfeld's writing is fundamentally related to two other levels: the narrative structure on the one hand and the human condition on the other, as it is quite clear that a tight, decisive, even fateful reciprocal affinity exists between these three levels all along his work.
- 3 The narrative in Appelfeld's stories is marked by a chronicle of a death foretold.³ The details of the plot are always aiming for some catastrophe that is hinted at from the very beginning of the story, usually in its first paragraph.⁴ Sometimes this catastrophe actually

arrives in a wave of destruction that erases everything, and sometimes it is only implied. In any case, it's future appearance is a certainty and hence, might be considered as the most characteristic element of the narrative structure.

- 4 This structure of Appelfeld's stories can be described in a different way as well, as a chronicle that takes place not in the shadow of a death foretold, but as a chronicle that takes place in the shadow of a death that has already occurred. This assertion, which may sound surprising at first, is valid in the historical-reception context as well as in the philosophical-conceptual context.
- 5 Regarding the context of reception, Appelfeld's stories are read against the backdrop of the historical narrative of the extermination of Jews during the Second World War. This is the typical reading of stories that indeed end on the verge of the Holocaust, those that cross it's starting line, as well as stories that occur before or after it. In all those stories, the reader navigates himself to construct the fictional plot with a close affinity to the part of the historical sequence that ended in catastrophe.
- 6 The assessment of Appelfeld's stories as a chronicle that takes place in the shadow of death that has already occurred also derives from the philosophical-conceptual context. A careful reading of Appelfeld's writings shows that the Holocaust, or any other catastrophe that is represented in these stories and serves as a parallel to the Holocaust (a pogrom,⁵ a mass deportation,⁶ a typhus epidemic,⁷ and so on), is a kind of deductive event, a constructing and organizing event that imbues the whole body of the narrative that preceded it with its sense of ending.⁸ Thus, it establishes his writing as an artistic act that has philosophical and conceptual validity, since, as the stories demonstrate, the Jewish People in Europe was already dead, at least spiritually, before the arrival of the Nazi butchers, who "only" finished what would have happened anyway. In this respect, one might say, and this is validated in dozens of ways, that the Holocaust in Appelfeld's stories was a sort of electric shock that brought to life, for one postponed fictional moment, the Jewish body, which was already considered deceased since it had lost its religious tribal connection⁹. In any case, whether the narrative in Appelfeld's stories is a chronicle standing in the shadow of death foretold or a chronicle standing in the shadow of death that has already occurred, the course here is clear: it always documents the route of perishability, loss of vigor, and waning.

Real Time and Illusory Time: *Like the Pupil of the Eye*

- 7 A clear correlation between plot structure and the human condition exists in Appelfeld's stories. The course of perishability and waning, which is the axis of the aim and purpose of the plot, is seen as being in line with the existential situation of the characters, which may be defined as fatal anachronism. In my opinion fatal anachronism means extreme desynchrony, which exists in all Appelfeld's stories between what is presented as experience, that is, as the world's ontological plane, the reality-like space in which the fictional characters wander, and what is presented as recognition, that is, the epistemological plane, the way in which the characters understand the reality-like world in which they wander.
- 8 This desynchrony has different aspects in different areas of Appelfeld's artistic project. However, in all of these areas, his central characters are portrayed as living not in the "narrative present", that is, in the historical, real, concrete time in which regular mortals

live (such as Gentiles and animals), but in another sort of time, not real or concrete. This “not current” time in which Appelfeld’s main characters live appears in several typical ways. It can be either past time that remains frozen in the consciousnesses of the characters, or time that seems to have expired, that is no longer relevant, as well as time that was never valid and never will be, whose entire existence is the product of the characters’ yearnings and desires. In other words, the world, the chain of events that creates reality, exists in one dimension, while the characters conduct their lives in a different, illusory dimension.

- 9 This lack of correlation between the “real time” and the “illusory time” of the protagonists sheds light on them as anachronistic creatures, not relevant to their time and place. This is an extreme lack of correlation, a total dissonance, whose meaning, due to the dominant Darwinian philosophical context of Appelfeld’s writings, is superfluity and redundancy, which lead to waning and obliteration. Still, many of these characters remain ignorant of their situations, while the author and the readers are well aware of their terminal condition. The cognitive gap makes them, of course, very intense carriers of emotion. On the one hand, they seem to be pathetic victims, and, as such, they arouse our pity and empathy, and on the other, they seem to be naïve and ludicrous and invite ironic observation.
- 10 The retrospective narrator in the early novella *כאישון העין* (*Like the Pupil of the Eye*) (1975) reveals to us the nature of this lack of correlation between “real time” and “illusory time”. This novella, which is Appelfeld’s first long Austro-Hungarian¹⁰ story, begins thus:

“Let us extol, let us raise aloft, let us glorify”, the ancient words rustled, fluttered, and descended. And the ensuing silence descended over the people and bound them like a dusky icicle. In the windows, the day’s darkness vaporized [...] Snowflakes slowly fell and covered the face of the earth in a grey white cloak. A storm was already rising on the horizon, and the trees, whose leaves had fallen, stood shaking, their skins turning blue.

My mother’s mother had passed away. Since this morning, people had assembled, huddled, in the yard. In the last weeks, she spoke of death with a kind of practical simplicity. The illness was not noticeable in her, but she never stopped talking about that wonderful world to which she was departing. Her highbrow wore purity. On the last day of her life she still had time to taste the new vishniac, to check the dairy cellar. And when the day expired, her life expired. Death found her sitting in the straw chair on the glazed veranda.

Outside, heavy masses of fog rose. Grandfather wore the old winter coat and mother the brown jacket of her youth. We stood, surrounded by a crowd of strangers who murmured, whispered, beckoning each other with their hands. The ancient words returned and were elevated, and an old man with a majestic appearance led the voices. And we stood like shadows in her fading world.¹¹

- 11 This opening section begins like many opening sections of Appelfeld’s stories,¹² at the moment after everything has happened, that is, post-mortem, or, more accurately, at a moment of actual (as in this example) or symbolic death: everything that comes after it is only a reflection. This is an actuality like that of an echo without a voice, a shadow without a body, or, to borrow an image from the field of astronomy, like that of the light of a star that reaches us years after the physical body—the star itself—no longer exists. This section is marked by a destructive gap between a façade of greatness and glory expressed by the meaning of the words: “exalted, extolled, mighty”, as well as by the idiomatic background of this verse, taken from the *kaddish* prayer. Another aspect of this gap, which precedes the gap between the impressive presence of the grandmother and the lowly existence and spiritual poverty of her descendents, described in the following

sections, is reflected in the sharp dissonance between the lofty words of the opening verse and the sequence that follows it, which is characterized by action words and phrases that mark a clear unidirectional process of decline, diminution, dying, and negation. The two action phrases in the opening verse, which refer to upward motion (let us raise aloft, let us set on high), a movement that carries a rooted cultural connotation of supremacy, strengthened by the third action phrase in an idiomatic expression (let us glorify) that also includes an element of ritual and theatrical elevation, are followed by action words that clearly signify downward movement (descended, came down, fell, in Hebrew נשרו, ירדה, צנחו). This movement, which is strengthened by the use of the phrase “the trees whose leaves had fallen” (in Hebrew, an unusual formulation in the passive form: העצים הנשורים, which corresponds with the verb *nashru* [fell] in reference to the snowflakes) carries a rooted cultural connotation of inferiority, reinforced by the verb “fluttered”, רפרף, which in Hebrew signifies a slight, weak tremor, on the verge of non-existence. This process of deterioration is also marked by the double objectification of the “ancient words” that “fluttered and descended” (פרפו וצנחו) on the one hand, and of human beings (the silence “bound them like a dusky icicle” הדממה צררה אותם כגליד אפל on the other. The objectification of the abstract (the words) and of living people (described as an icicle) is highlighted by the strong personification of the “trees, whose leaves had fallen... [which] stood shaking, their skins turning blue”: העצים הנשורים שעמדו נרעדים עורם מכחיל).

- 12 The effect of the process of deterioration and devaluation that characterizes this section is validated by the semantic field activated by the Biblical allusion: “covered the face of the earth” (כסו את עין האדמה). Here this phrase describes the action of the snowflakes, but it is connected in our consciousness with the powerful phrase from Exodus,¹³ describing the plague of locusts that destroys everything in its path. Moreover, the activation of the semantic field that raises this allusion opens up another connotation of the word rustled (רחשו) whose denotation comes from the field of sound concerned with vermin and insects—and thus reinforces the process of human devaluation described here.
- 13 The death of the grandmother, the representative of the oldest generation in this fictional world, could have represented, as in thousands of stories in many cultures, the end of the old, no longer relevant world, that allows the beginning of a new world a fresh, vital, and much more relevant one. But and this is the basic existential paradox at this novella, it is precisely the death of the seemingly irrelevant grandmother that signals the disconnection of the last living link of the family to the real world. With her death, the rest of the nuclear family members fence themselves off in illusory time that has no actual connection to reality and become “shadows”.
- 14 The narrator bases this fundamental existential paradox,¹⁴ that the dead are perceived as alive, while the livings are perceived as dead, on the combination of two pieces of information: the grandmother is a rural Jew and a religious woman, a combination of information that contains the two conditions necessary for existence in the real time of the world of the story. She is connected to the world of the fathers, to the existential kernel of the tribe, with the whole array of unifying norms and commands that define it, as well as to its human and scenic environment, to rural nature. Therefore it is not surprising that “[o]n the last day of her life she still had time to taste the new *vishniac*, to check the dairy cellar”. And it is only natural that “when the day expired, her life expired”. That is, the time of her life is simply, practically, and wonderfully, coordinated

with real, natural time. She lives life in its full reality; that is, according to Appelfeld, in a religious way, and receives death with “a kind of practical simplicity”, as though it is an old acquaintance, a natural part of her existence. Death finds her ready for its arrival, calm and serene, after she has completed her daily deeds: “Death found her sitting in the straw chair on the glazed veranda.” The grandmother’s existence is harmonious, and its harmony is expressed in the complementary relations between different contradictory natures. The “dairy cellar”, on the one hand, symbolizes the deep affinity to Jewish tradition, and the “glazed verandah”, on the other, symbolizes in all Appelfeld’s Austro-Hungarian stories the distanced, uppermost observation post, but is alienated and even cut off from the object of observation, which characterizes the “New Jews”. The same wonderful harmony is also apparent in the soul of the grandmother, between her life in this world, in its various aspects and her future life in “that wonderful world to which she was departing”. It is no wonder, then, that the narrator creates a clear linguistic link between the verse from the *Kaddish* prayer, “Let us extol, let us raise aloft, let us glorify”, *ב.ע.ל ה.ד.ר.ת פ.נ.י.ם ש.ה.נ.ח.ה א.ת ה.ק.ו.ל.ו.ת*:¹⁵ and the high forehead, *ה.ר.ם מ.צ.ח.ה* of the grandmother, on the one hand, and, on the other, the elderly man “with a majestic appearance [who] led the voices”¹⁵.

- 15 The harmonious link between the grandmother in *העין כאישון* (Like the Pupil of the Eye) and her world, strongly emphasizes the extreme lack of correlation between the existence of the rest of the members of the nuclear family and their world, both in their relationship with their natural, scenic, and human environment and in relation to their connection to the deep kernel of the tribe. Regarding the environment, the lack of correlation of the family members, who are perceived as helpless orphans after the death of the grandmother, is expressed both at the metaphorical and metonymical levels. The narrator, who is apparently the youth who has grown up, notes that “the trees, whose leaves had fallen, stood shaking, their skins turning blue”. This is an expression that sheds a sharp, ironic light on its creator, since it clearly reflects the situation of the family, and not that of the trees, which not only are not shaking with the cold, have no skin, and are not turning blue, but for which the cold is essential to their growth process. The source of irony here is also, of course, that this is not an expression that we would expect to hear from a person who lives among trees. The family members’ lack of connection to their “natural” environment becomes clear, in the semantic field, in a metonymic manner as well. The narrator, the youth who has grown up, notes that: “Outside, heavy masses of fog rose. Grandfather wore the old winter coat and mother the brown jacket of her youth” (*ה.ח.ו.ר.ף מ.ע.י.ל א.ת ל.ב.ש ס.ב.א ב.ח.ו.ץ נ.ת.נ.ש.א.ו ג.ו.ש.י ע.ר.פ.ל כ.ב.ד.י.ם*). (*נ.ע.ו.ר.י.ה ש.ל ה.ח.ו.ם ק.ט’ה.ז א.ת ו.א.מ.א ה.י.ש.ן*).
- 16 This is a perfect example of Appelfeld’s brilliant metonymic art of characterization: on the one hand, the masses of fog, which represent the tangible narrative present, are described by the adjective “heavy”, and on the other, the people, whose whole existence is anachronistic, are described as follows: the grandfather is wearing his “old” coat, while the mother wears the jacket “of her youth”.
- 17 The alienation of the family members is also apparent, as mentioned, when we examine their connection to the deep kernel of the tribe. The people who come to the grandmother’s funeral surround the family members like a supportive, protective wall. Led by the “elderly man with a majestic appearance”, a duplicate of the grandmother whose forehead, on the day of her death “wore purity”, their prayers, carried away in the air, are supposed to connect the family members to the community and the Creator. And

indeed, the assimilated family members understand neither the ceremony nor the language: "We stood, surrounded by a crowd of strangers that murmured, whispered, beckoning each other with their hands." The way in which the crowd is described, as a mob of creatures making unclear sounds and strange gestures, like a kind of multi-headed monster, reflects not on the crowd itself, but rather on the family members, who, with the grandmother's death, have lost forever their real selves and become shadows.

Progressive and Retardative Motifs in Appelfeld's Writing

- 18 The unidirectional deterministic character of plot in Appelfeld's prose, that is, the trajectory of perishability, loss of vigor and waning, on the one hand, and the fatal anachronism that characterizes the main characters, on the other, is consistent with one of the prominent stylistic signatures of Appelfeld's work. I refer to the nature of the orchestration of a motif, that is, to the type of philosophical artistic logic that is responsible for the relationships between the recurring elements that appear in his works: marginal characters (those that carry previous cultural baggage: beggars, clowns, dwarves and so on, or those that are charged with meaning throughout the text before us), accessories (keys, scarves, and so on), common expressions (popular expressions together with unique linguistic patterns for certain characters), figurative expressions (metaphors, imagery), textual units (scenes, narrative devices), typical grammatical structures and so on. To be precise, I mean the character of the orchestration of a motif in the narrative context of the work. That is, as we have learned from Goethe, with the mediation of Gershon Shaked,¹⁶ in the specific character of two pairs of motifs. The first pair consists of progressive motifs, which advance the plot towards what seems to be its purpose, and retardative motifs, which slow down the progress of the plot towards what we see as its purpose. The second pair consists of retrogressive motifs, which relate to a time before the "narrative present" of the story, the time during which the events are presented in a manner that is reinforced, tangible, and simulates reality, and anticipatory motifs, which relate to events that occur after the "narrative present of the story". An additional type of motif can be added to these two pairs: retrogressive motifs, whose definition stems from the identity of the plot axis along which they operate. The two former pairs of motifs operate along the central axis of the plot, while retrogressive motifs operate on secondary axes. They can advance, postpone, return to events from the past, or anticipate the plot's future. However, they make all these moves alongside the central sequence of plot events.¹⁷
- 19 The progressive plots in Appelfeld's work are those that advance the plot toward its expected end: perishability, loss of vigor, and waning. The retardative motifs are those that create the momentary false impression that it is possible to prevent the expected ending of the plot or at least to postpone its arrival. The retrogressive motifs, or to use Genette's terminology,¹⁸ units of analepsis, and the progressive motifs, or in Genette's terminology,¹⁹ units of prolepsis, which recur in Appelfeld's works, function almost always as retardative and/or progressive motifs. Thus, for example, in his early prose, which focuses on Holocaust refugees living in Israel in the nineteen fifties, the analeptic motifs, the ones that return the protagonist to the time before the "narrative present", to the period of childhood or the Holocaust, are perceived in the consciousnesses of the protagonists, and at first reading, also by the reader, as indicating a situation of

postponement. They create a momentary illusion that the return to the past makes possible a kind of safe anchoring in a home port, stopping the uncontrollable flow of events. However, and this is the source of pathos and irony here, this return, which connects the protagonists to the traumatic past, crushes them, and accelerates the plot towards its end.

- 20 Thus, for example, in the excellent early story נסיין רציני ("A Serious Effort", in: עשן (Smoke), 1962), Tzimmer, the protagonist, finds seeming refuge in the home of Rozina, "who had [...] the kind of naïve simplicity of a strong daughter of peasants",²⁰ a naïve simplicity to which many of Appelfeld's protagonists repeatedly cling.²¹ Nevertheless, there is a catch: the same "naïve simplicity" is perceived by him, because of the horrors of the Holocaust, as extremely aggressive sexuality that he cannot control. He feels he is being carried away helplessly toward death: "You will come to us, to the ambulances' Rozina said from within the melody. 'Just not to transfer the dead, just not to transfer the dead', Tzimmer tried to overcome the music. 'Dead', Rozina chuckled to herself, and there was something sharp and arousing in her voice."²² "[...] and so [Tzimmer] would raise his head and again clutch her hand. Rozina sat and the spark of carnivores caught fire in her eyes and her chest breathed. 'My bird, love me strongly, strongly, strongly.'"²³ In desperation, Tzimmer attempts to find refuge in another house known to him from his childhood as "the synagogue". But this place too, like Rozina's house, is perceived by him, again, because of the horrors of the Holocaust, as a space of death. His sense of entrapment is doubled because Rozina's image takes control of him:

Toward evening, a kind of increasing chill took over [...] and Mendel held on to his arm and led him up to the opening of the synagogue...Strange, and in a certain way revolting, the room looked to him like the purification chamber in his town's cemetery, into which he had once peeked on Lag B'Omer and fled. [...] And thus he sat with a vortex spinning sharply in his head. The worshippers came together, and Tzimmer, who sat in the last row, somewhat camouflaged, attempted to remove from himself the image of the portrait of Rozina, which merged here with the flaming bronze dress.²⁴

- 21 Progressive motifs have a similar status in Appelfeld's late prose. These stories focus on characters who are assimilated Jews living before the Second World War in an urban environment replete with anti-Semitic and auto-anti-Semitic manifestations. Many progressive motifs embedded in the narrative represent the deep desire of the protagonists to abandon the decadent city and settle in a Carpathian mountain village, where, according to their fantasies, they will rest in the warm domestic bosom of rural Jewish space, which has not been contaminated by the ailments of modernization. However, as the text repeatedly implies, and this is the source of the pathos and irony here, we are talking about an ideal space, which probably never existed. And even if it did have a real existence, or even a similar existence, it has recently been erased from the world, or will be erased when the protagonists arrive at its threshold.²⁵
- 22 Thus, for example, Blanca, the central character in עד שיעלה עמוד השחר (*Until the Dawn Rises*, published in English as *Until the Dawn's Light*), imagines her future:

The thought that one day Blanca would journey to the famous Carpathian Mountains and bathe in the Prut River took shape within her while she was ill, and now it was very clear. She imagined her life in the Carpathians as a simple life, a country life, with hours of prayer that would divide the day into three sections. On holidays everyone would put on white clothes and go to pray in small wooden synagogues. The disciples of the Ba'al Shem Tov's disciples still prayed in those small synagogues. They had reached a ripe old age and dozed during most of the

day. But in the summer, in the drowsy hours of the afternoon, they sat in the doorways of the houses of study and greeted those who arrived with a blessing.²⁶

23 The Carpathian fantasies that were formed in Blanca's brain "in the days of her sickness"—and sickness here has both a physical and a psycho-cultural meaning²⁷—have no connection to the reality of her time. And yet, she sets out on a journey to the Carpathians. This journey, and, similarly, "journeys of repentance" taken by other women of her kind in Appelfeld's prose, is revealed not only as a move based on a romantic fantasy, but also, as becomes clear at the end when Blanca turns herself over to two policemen who happen to arrive, as a death wish, like suicide.²⁸ Thus, all the anticipatory motifs, which are concerned with the expected ideal time that awaits Blanca when she arrives in the Carpathians, which are perceived by readers as a retardative unit, islands of calm at the heart of the socio-political storm in which she lives, are revealed, with her arrival at her destination, as progressive motifs, which accelerate movement along the path of destruction along which she finds herself.²⁹

24 The "retrogressive motifs" in Appelfeld's work also operate along the same opposing paths. At first, they delay the plot by means of material that seems irrelevant to the main axis, and thus are also perceived as islands of calm in the heart of the storm. And indeed, since they always contain psycho-social explosives, when they set these off, they become progressive motifs and accelerate the plot towards its catastrophic end.³⁰ This type of "retrogressive motif" can be found in the character of Trude, in באדנהיים עיר נופש (Translated as *Badenheim 1939*), who is presented to us in the second paragraph of the story:

The pharmacist's sick wife, Trude, stood by the window. She looked around her listlessly with the gaze of a woman chronically ill. The light fell kindly on her pale face and she smiled. It had been a strange, hard winter. Storms had swept through the town and torn roofs off the houses. Rumors were rife. Trude lay in a delirious sleep. Martin never left her bedside. She spoke constantly of her married daughter, and Martin reassured her that everything was all right. Now the winter was over. She stood by the window as if she had been resurrected from the dead.³¹

25 Trude is a marginal, even a trivial character in *Badenheim 1939*, one of Appelfeld's collective novellas that deals with the fate of a group of Jews who arrive, as they do every year, in their resort town,³² except that this time the resort town turns into a detention camp from which they are sent, at the end, in "filthy freight cars",³³ to "the East", to an unknown destination. Trude watches these Jews from the side as they refuse to organize the abundance of anticipatory hints that bombard them into the necessary meaning: their fate of destruction has been sealed. Moreover, they create an inverted meaning: they produce a national-productive film that resembles, horrifyingly, Nazi propaganda,³⁴ according to which they are supposed to return in glory to their real homeland: Poland. The Jews vacationing in Badenheim suffer from the same fatal anachronism that I mentioned at the beginning of the section, that is, an extreme dyssynchronicity between what is presented as existence—the ontological plane of the world - and what is presented as consciousness—the epistemological plane, the way in which they perceive the reality-like world that they inhabit. The dyssynchronicity reaches its ironic and somewhat grotesque apex when their leader, Doctor Pappenheim, blurts out, before he and the others are loaded onto the filthy freight cars, into which they "were all sucked in as easily as grains of wheat poured into a funnel",³⁵ the following shocking sentence, which ends the novel: "If the coaches are so dirty it must mean that we have not far to go."³⁶

- 26 Just as in *Badenheim 1939* the narrator redirects the spotlight from the group of vacationers to Trude and her family—her husband the pharmacist, Martin, and her married daughter, Helena, about whom she is concerned—it diverts our glance from the main arena of events: the ever-tightening ring around the vacationers, which is expressed in the expansion of the authority of the “Sanitation Department” and its mysterious inspectors, to a marginal site: a family that does not belong to the community on which it is focused. Trude’s marginality in relation to the central events of the narrative also derives from what becomes clear from the way she is described the first few times she is mentioned in the text. First, she is defined as ill, a definition that is further validated by her juxtaposition to her husband, Martin, who is a healthy person and also a medical professional, a pharmacist. Second, she “lay in a delirious sleep”, while those around her, especially Martin, who “never left her bedside”, are awake. Third, she “looked around her listlessly with the gaze of a chronically ill woman”, that is, at least apparently, a gaze that has no real validity, that is not reliable.
- 27 Trude has another significant characteristic. She has hallucinations: about her family, she is convinced that her married daughter is “captive and abused”,³⁷ and also, and especially pertinent to the matter at hand, about the Jewish collective and the human condition of her time in general: “[t]he whole world looked transparent to her. It was poisoned and diseased...”³⁸ Against the background of Trude’s marginality and exceptional nature, it seems that we should relate to her as an unreliable witness, and dismiss her horrible hallucinations, at the personal and general level, as a fool’s prophecy, a curiosity, and no more. And indeed, this Trude is the only one in the story who sees clearly. Like many blind prophets in world literature, and like characters who suffer from prominent physical defects in Appelfeld’s stories,³⁹ she sees much more than those who surround her, who are sober and wide awake, whole and healthy in body and mind. The following horrifying sentence that the narrator assigns to her in the first description of her attests to this: “She stood by the window as if she had been resurrected from the dead.” This sentence also describes in the deepest and sharpest way possible the terrible end of the vacationers in *Badenheim* (who are joined by Trude and her family, including Helena, who goes back to her parents’ home after her husband abandons her), as well as their terminal experience before the expulsion, the experience of a group of people who appear to be alive, but are living-dead, dead people given flesh and blood and breath by the author. They mill around and talk, but there is no spirit of life in them. In other words, Trude, the marginal, bizarre character, does a good job of symbolizing the double internal logic of the plot of the novella before us, which is valid, as I mentioned, in all of Appelfeld’s stories; on the one hand, this is a narrative logic that creates a chronicle that exists in the shadow of a death foretold, and on the other, this is a narrative logic that creates a chronicle that exists in the shadow of a death that has already taken place. Toward the end of the novella, the narrator reports to us that: “[t]here was no end to surprises: Helena returned. She stood at the gate in a long dress with a shawl over her head like a peasant woman turned out by her husband”.⁴⁰ This is the moment when it becomes clear that, as Martin admits, “everything Trude said was true”.⁴¹ At the level of the novella’s orchestration of motif, here the process that Trude implements as a motif is completed. At first appearance, it is perceived as a retrogressive motif with the value of a curiosity, and it functions mainly as a retardative motif, as a “bizarre” and irrelevant deviation, a kind of dramatic relief or comic relief from the central axis of the plot. The announcement by Martin - the healthy, sober, medical man - regarding the ultimate truth

of Trude's words marks the completion of a dramatic change in the status of the "Trude motif" in the story, the motif that is important to the central axis of the plot, which anticipates and informs us of the catastrophic end of the story, and thus, of course, has the status of a progressive motif. Moreover, the reversal in the status of the "Trude motif" is very characteristic of Appelfeld's stories, and attests to an important feature in their composition, and, accordingly, to the author's worldview. Appelfeld orchestrates the motifs in his stories in a way that lends them an inverted character, like stories with a twist at the ending. The scenario constructed in his stories by the normative characters, in *Badenheim*, Martin, on the one hand, and the vacationers on the other, turns out to be completely wrong, while the scenario constructed by the liminal characters (sleeping, ill, handicapped, and so on) turns out to be correct. The moment of recognition of this dramatic change is reserved for a chosen few only, like Martin. The others in *Badenheim*, the whole community of vacationers, continue to hold on to the mistaken scenario up to the last minute. This is the source of the tragic gap that is the basis of the stories, and which has two sides: ironic and pathetic.

טלל ("Slowly") – A Close Reading of a Short Story

- 28 A careful consideration of the orchestration of motif and its many meanings in Appelfeld's fiction requires a close, comprehensive, and methodical examination of this central structural element in a whole story. In order to do this in a limited space, I have chosen a very short story, but one that is very meaningful in Aharon Appelfeld's literary career.⁴² This is the story טלל ("Slowly") from his first "mythological" collection ןשׁ (Smoke, 1962), whose first paragraph is presented by the first-person narrator, Appelfeld's double, in ןלשׁן לללל פללל (The Man Who Never Stopped Sleeping, 2010), as his first piece of published prose:

After a sleepless night, I took two painkillers, a cool calm came over me, and I wrote the following lines with the first light: The changes will come unseen. Growth is slow, almost imperceptible. Only sometimes at the station, in temporary parking places, on the balcony,⁴³ a head will peek out at you, wrinkles ringing its width, and you can count, as on a tree trunk, the rings of the years.

I read and reread and was amazed. From where within me did those words come and how did they connect into a paragraph? And who was that head that peeked at you, the wrinkles, the rings of years? I knew that they came out of my pen, but nevertheless, are they mine? I recopied the paragraph and my amazement was great.

- 29 This opening paragraph contains, like other of Appelfeld's opening paragraphs, the thematic, narrative dramatic, and rhythmic tonal infrastructure of the entire story. The subject of the paragraph is time, or more accurately, the changes that time conceals under its wings, whose movement here is slow, almost imperceptible, but certain. The movement of time in טלל and in all of Appelfeld's fiction is a definitive metonym for a metaphysical inertia whose development it is impossible to disrupt. Appelfeld proposes this philosophical position in this paragraph by creating a brave, yet bizarre, linkage between growth in nature and growing old in human beings. Growth, the narrator claims, is slow, unavoidable, and happens "unseen". Yet "sometimes", or, more accurately, "only sometimes," it is possible to discern this growth. This discernment is possible not in nature, and not through tracking the growth of a plant or tree, but in the urban landscape, at coincidental sites, liminal passageways ("at the station, in the temporary

parking places, on the balcony”) by way of a chance glance at a head peeking at you: “wrinkles ringing its width, and you can count, as on a tree trunk, the rings of the years”. The tree-like characteristics attributed to human beings (“the rings of the years” on “the head that peeked at you”) creates a figurative expression, a synthesis, which breaks down existing categories (human-tree), and thus undermines and threatens. This threat is amplified by the writer’s declaration that he has no idea who “that head” is or “from where within [him]”... those words c[a]me and “how [they connected] into a paragraph”. Moreover, we are talking about “growth”, this time of words, which may or may not belong to the person who wrote them, or, perhaps, as the narrator repeatedly wonders, he only serves as a pipeline, a medium, through which, or, to be exact, “out of [whose] pen”, the words “c[o]me out”.⁴⁴ The common denominator shared by the narrator’s position in “Slowly”, observing the objects he presents in the opening of the story and the narrator’s position in *האיש שלא פסק לישון* (*The Man who Never Stopped Sleeping*) observing that embryonic paragraph from a distance of nearly fifty years, is the realization that there is a tragic gap between the constant and unstoppable inertia of everything that is under the control of time and the human attempt to understand that inertia, that is, to mark and identify it, to try, even “only sometimes”, to stand against the uncontrollable flow of time.

- 30 An additional thematic focus in this paragraph is the tension between that which is permanently in its fixed place (the tree) and that which is moving (the person) and, accordingly, between the permanent place (the house, which exists here like a black hole) and temporary places (the station, temporary parking places, the balcony). This tension is also expressed in the logical grammatical pattern that organizes this paragraph: the frequent, the routine, the “usually”, in which things occur “unseen”, on the one hand, and the “only sometimes”, the rare moments, the “exceptions”, on the other. This tension between the permanent and properly in its place (the house, the tree), and the temporary (the wandering person, the immigrant, the refugee, the one who lives not in his place of birth, outside his childhood landscapes, and so on) is a basic element of the thematic infrastructure of Appelfeld’s stories that was best phrased in *העור והכותנת* (*The Skin and the Gown*): “Without houses that are inherited and without fathers, a person is only fleeting, a branch in a jar of water.”⁴⁵
- 31 The arrangement of the thematic, tonal, and structural coordinates set out in the opening paragraph of *טל* (“Slowly”) serves as a unit of lyrical philosophical background for the story of Sharfshtein, former owner of forests in the Bialystok region, and in the narrative present, owner of two apartment buildings in a suburb that is dismal, but has commercial potential, apparently in Jerusalem. This Sharfshtein is waiting calmly, in accordance with his personality and his experience from his forest-owning days, for the tenants of the buildings to evacuate voluntarily, so that he can then sell the apartments at a tidy profit, and properly support himself and his sick wife, Sonia, who “wanders from sanitarium to sanitarium”.⁴⁶
- 32 While Sharfshtein lives in Israel in the nineteen fifties, his way of thinking and behavioral patterns are constructed according to models that were (perhaps) suitable in the past, when he was a great lumber merchant, but are presented as totally irrelevant in relation to the world in which he is now attempting to survive. Appelfeld dramatizes, with brilliant rhythmic orchestration of motif, Sharfshtein’s irrelevance, that is, his anachronistic essence, and the inevitable product of this essence.

33 Sharfshtein's conscious condition, which falls between two times of existence, is hinted at in the story's title: *שאל* ("Slowly"). The word "slowly" on its own and the sentence that contains it: "The trees grow slowly" open eight of the first twenty paragraphs of the story, which includes a total of fifty-nine short paragraphs. Sharfshtein's obsessive repetition of this phrase, which creates a rhythmic mini-plot of motif, whose semantic status becomes increasingly thin, marks his desperate attempt to stop the flow of time by using a linguistic unit that links him to his past.⁴⁷ This becomes clear in all the sections where the author uses Sharfshtein's obsessive expressions in indirect speech. For example: "It was beneath Sharfshtein's dignity. Owners of forests remain owners of forests [...] true success ripens slowly, branch after branch. Patience created the sturdy trees",⁴⁸ or:

"The trees grow slowly"—after all, he has to say something to himself. The increasing pressure of the street forces him to say something. Does he mean to say that soon the houses will be given to him and again he will be able to rent them out as he pleases, to sell them, to go out into the street and say "Sharfshtein is alive?" Perhaps he means his forests in Bialystok, which certainly grew well. Soon he will have to thin them out; "even from what you thinned out you could build whole warehouses."⁴⁹

34 And indeed, the adherence to this expression, which is supposed to protect Sharfshtein, and which serves as both an analeptic motif and a retardative motif, overwhelms him. This is because this expression also serves as a progressive motif, as it creates a problematic renewed connection to the traumatic events of the past that are hinted at in the sections that the narrator juxtaposes, in indirect speech, with Sharfshtein's obsessive expressions. Such a connection is created, for example, by means of a motif that is secondary to the tree motif: the motif of the burning of the trees contained in the following lines: "Sharfshtein remained Sharfshtein. He did not become easily caught up in desperation. A tree is chopped down and new shoots will come up from within it. Sometimes a forest is burned down, and haven't we experienced that?"⁵⁰ And afterwards, in a more dramatic way: "Slowly"—he repeats—"Real change ripens slowly, but as it ripens, it bursts out like a long-suppressed fire, it spreads through the whole length of the forests."⁵¹ The analeptic motif that is perceived as retardative also becomes a progressive motif. The peak of this process is reflected in the rift that the narrator creates between the phrase "the trees grow slowly" and the character who originally uttered it, Sharfshtein. Thus, for the first time, in part twelve, a "familiar voice" is heard, which may or may not be Sharfshtein's voice, and may or may not be someone else's: "And a voice came and said: 'Sharfshtein'. Did he mean his uncomfortable way of sitting? Or was it nothing more than an irritating sound? 'Sharfshtein,' the voice repeated and disappeared."⁵² Sharfshtein answers, "There's nothing to do, the power is too great."⁵³ Later, in the middle of the story, in section 22, a parodic voice is heard: "Mr. Sharfshtein, trees grow slowly"⁵⁴—and the narrator clarifies: "Certainly one of the tenants, an arrogant voice, but not enough to provoke fury."⁵⁵ And again, in lines 50 to 52, a dialogue with no speaker or addressee is presented as a kind of mechanical echo of human speech: "The tenants are well established, no one will move then, the law protects them', the voice repeats occasionally. 'The trees grow slowly'—answers a slow and measured voice."⁵⁶

35 And again, towards the end of the story, this time it is a dialogue without clear speakers. First, "a demanding voice", perhaps the voice of Sharfshtein's conscience, "Mr. Sharfshtein, a demanding voice rose, When will he stop running away, there are debts and things must be decided, his wife is wandering the streets."⁵⁷ And another voice

answers: "Too rude a gesture."⁵⁸ This is, it seems, the voice that represents the side of Sharfshtein that is stuck in the past—the side that does not adapt to the contemporary rhythm. But here, unlike in the first "dialogue" that I mentioned in this context, the phrase "too rude a gesture" apparently can be attributed to an anonymous speaker who is answered by another anonymous voice that tells Sharfshtein that he cannot ignore it.

36 Many increasingly powerful progressive motifs join the motif that turned from retardative to progressive. Some of these touch directly upon the anticipated end of the plot—Sharfshtein's implied death—and some of them relate to this ending in a metonymical or metaphorical way. A prominent direct motif is the chain of references of the real estate agents, representatives of tomorrow in the contemporary world, who attempt to undermine Sharfshtein's confidence as he clings to times past. This chain of references creates, like the repetition of the word "slowly" and the phrase "trees grow slowly", a counterpunctual mini-plot of motif whose status becomes increasingly powerful. This process of empowerment, which is cut into sections through the caesura of a local, momentary pause, is carried out through a gradual reinforcement of the semantic field that relates to the real estate agents. This field is composed mainly of the strengthening of the metonymic natures of the agents: their movements, their dress, and so on. It becomes increasingly crowded, oppressive, and irritating.

37 In the third section of the story, immediately after we become aware of Sharfshtein and his mantra, we are informed that "suddenly, the street was found in the grip of other forces. Nimble real estate agents fly in, coats over their shoulders".⁵⁹ In section eleven we are told that: "The merchants move huddled together. And these are not the merchants of the morning. Yes, of the morning. Now they seem somehow strengthened. The heavy coats lend them power."⁶⁰ In section nineteen, an apparent pause is created: "The street is emptying. Traffic moves to the side alleys. The desire to work subsides. Night falls on its nests."⁶¹ But then comes the following: "But secretly, in the alleys, behind the buildings, some other movement arises and effervesces, entirely hidden, but hurried. There those matters come to an end in negotiations, contracts are signed, resolute arbitrators make decisive judgments, rushing real estate agents stick to their opinions."⁶² And afterwards Sharfshtein is found in the street and: "[a] man came towards him, a surprising offer in his mouth. 'Something can be done,' said the man—I would say an opportunity not to be missed'. He stood and did not relent. With his whole coat he attempted to encircle."⁶³ Sharfshtein stands his ground, "Sealing his ears to the agent's entreaties."⁶⁴ In response, the real estate agent removes his coat and takes out his papers, proving it, black on white. When Sharfshtein stays strong in his position: "The agent withdrew. 'Only iron can answer iron'—his voice echoed and did not relent."⁶⁵

38 Thus, in a clear trend towards empowerment, with repetitive movements that are momentarily cut off by a weakened retardative motif or by the local diminution of a progressive motif—Sharfshtein's anachronistic fortress is undermined, until it finally collapses, in the last section of the story:

Meanwhile, winter came. The merchants moved in heavy coats. They took over the street. The winds would not prevent them from going out. Sometimes one of them would come and hit the door with the handle as if he were trying to break in. "Sharfshtein", he called. If there was no answer he would shake the door.⁶⁶

39 The mini-plot whose central focus is the real estate agents-merchants thus defeats the mini-plot whose focus is on the expressions "slowly" and "trees grow slowly". The progressive motifs, represented by the agents-merchants, which are mainly concerned

with synchronization with the changes in time, defeat the retardative motifs, which represent Sharfshtein, whose whole existence is fatal anachronism.

40 Joining the progressive motifs, which relate directly to the central conflict in the story, the one between Sharfshtein, the merchant from the “older generation” and the agents, the merchants of the “new generation”, are analeptic motifs, those whose place is alongside the central axis of the story. These motifs create, as I have mentioned, local pauses in the uncontrollable narrative flow. And nonetheless, as in Trude’s case in *Badenheim 1939*, in “Slowly” too, the analeptic motifs are revealed during a first reading, or at most, in a second reading, as powerful progressive motifs, which navigate us to the catastrophic end of the plot. This is because they always include biological and/or psychological situations that are analogous to Sharfshtein’s situation, and which end as decided failures.

41 Scenes, repeated in various versions, whose common denominator is that at their center are characters who appear once and then disappear, who attempt, like Sharfshtein, to slow the flow of time, or at least to find a temporary refuge from it, are progressive motifs of this type. An example of such a scene is one at whose center is an anonymous peddler to whom the fourth section of the story is devoted:

And a man appears, somewhat cumbersome and managing to slow down the traffic at once. There is probably a new, amazing proposal in his mouth. Immediately they gather around him to listen, he stands in the circle, pulling something from his pocket. “New fabric”, he calls.⁶⁷

42 The fact that the man “slow down the traffic at once” and the fact that this is mentioned at the beginning of the story might indicate a glimmer of hope for Sharfshtein, who is also trying to “slow down [...] the movement”. But this hope/ illusion vanishes immediately in the beginning of the next section: “Slowly the sights move. We cannot slow down the movement. But we can watch this flow.”⁶⁸

43 Another, exemplary, instance of this compositional phenomenon is the next scene, which is entirely marked by deviation from the axis of the central plot. This, indeed, allows Sharfshtein a momentary escape from the crushing flow of time, but also contains a clear anticipation of what awaits him at the end of the story:

Meanwhile, the night falls and drops. People shut themselves in, closing shutters, gathered away from the night. “Sharfshtein does not belong here”, he says in his heart, which indeed needs an answer. “Even if he wants to he cannot. All the years he plundered them and now, in his old age, he will be like one of them. It is good to go into the tavern, and he did so. “How’s business?” says the tavern owner. “Slow”, Sharfshtein says, holding back. “Of course, I’m slowing the flow. I stop them here, I give them a night of rejoicing of the heart. Only Sharfshtein does not need it. Everyone needs it, but he can probably overcome it. How does he do it?”
“There are things you do not understand, it is beyond your area of responsibility.” Sharfshtein means living in opulence and greatness when there is money; and Sharfshtein is still Sharfshtein when there is no money. Sharfshteins have their own way. You cannot understand it. Sharfshtein can sit all day on the balcony because he does not care. He knows that nothing should be changed, but he has patience, Sharfshteins have patience. Forest owners remain forest owners. You understand, you understand. “How long?” asks the tavern owner, for his business is not flourishing either.⁶⁹

44 The entrance into the tavern and the discussion with the owner serve a significant retardative function. The tavern is a clear liminal space in which we deviate from the central and normative axis of life. This is the place of those who have no home or who do

not want to be at home, those who prefer the street and its temptations to the safe house, where they "shut themselves in, closing shutters, gathered away from the night", the "lowering night", which they perceive as a violent and dangerous entity.

45 The tavern owner grants his guests a different kind of night: a night of rejoicing of the heart, an idea not necessarily associated with taverns, but more with religious experience, perhaps even Hassidic experience.⁷⁰ It is an experience through which the owner can slow "the flow", if only for a few hours. Being in the tavern can thus serve Sharfshtein as a clear retardative unit, which strengthens the basis for hope that the catastrophic end may yet be avoided. The basis for this hope is extended in light of the testimony of the tavern owner, which grants Sharfshtein the status of a super-man, someone who succeeds in overcoming what everyone has failed to: the struggle against the tyranny of time: "Only Sharfshtein does not need it. Everyone needs it, but he can probably overcome it. How does he do it?" Sharfshtein himself does not negate the words of the tavern owner. On the contrary, he reinforces them. He is indeed a wonderful creature: "There are things you do not understand, it is beyond your comprehension."⁷¹

46 And indeed, even at the end of this unit, Sharfshtein is mythologized in a way that highlights the ironic-pathetic nature of the previous section. This is, of course, the final sentence of the scene. "How long?" asks the tavern owner, for his business is not flourishing either"—sticking a pin Sharfshtein, who is revealed as impassioned and pompous, and tossing him from the height of glory—Sharfshtein's unique existential philosophy, to the depths of degradation—the economic reality that might overwhelm him, whose nature the narrator clarifies for us in the following passage:

And there comes a day more silent than the one before. The lamps on the wall lower themselves. The two pictures [of his wife Sonia and his daughter, who are in America] fade. Everything is cloaked in silence. And the municipal clerk comes and asks to collect the money. Afterwards, the clerk from the electric company comes and collects the money. Bit by bit the savings will be used up.⁷²

47 The scene in which the peddler can "slow down the traffic at once", at least for a moment, and the parallel scene, in which the owner of the tavern tells Sharfshtein that he is "slowing the flow... giv[ing] them a night of rejoicing of the heart" both function as deviating metonymic motifs, the type that relate to the main arena of action and the main character in a parallel juxtaposition. Alongside them, Appelfeld created in the scenes of the story metaphorical motifs that function as deviating motifs, the kind that relate to the main arena of action and the main character as parallel to the imagination by means of an image or a metaphor.

48 One of the scenes that acts as a deviating metaphorical motif, that is, first functions as a retardative motif, and then reverses itself and becomes a progressive motif, is the scene of the hardy garden plants:

From inside the garden the plants become entangled, oleander and geranium bushes. Neglect did not harm them. Impervious, already beyond the exciting changes, they climb up the bars of the window. The thorns are also part of the sight. Hollow, they move near the fence, they open their wild foliage. Sometimes it is impossible to know who the real boss is in this landscape. The strong plants have already overcome the water shortage. In the distance bulldozers are already digging. It is impossible to prevent this, too.⁷³

49 At the beginning of the passage, it is possible to get the impression that the oleander and geraniums bushes represent the triumph of the Sharfshteinian position. They are described as being "already beyond the exciting changes"—a condition beyond time,

immortal, or at least a condition that indicates independence from the exciting changes in time, of which Sharfshtein is, supposedly, the ultimate human representation: "Time ripens the changes, but Sharfshtein remains Sharfshtein."⁷⁴

- 50 But the intentionally dissonant addition of thorns to the picture ("The thorns are also part of the sight."), and particularly their intimidating, strange description, cast a shadow on the option of human or vegetable triumph over natural conditions, because it deviates from the physical rules to the realm of the nightmarish-macabre. This happens because the words used to describe them allow for a double reading that signifies their natural characteristics, and as such, places them beyond a normal natural phenomenon. The word "hollow", חלול in Hebrew, can be attributed to the physical trait of the empty heads of the thorns. But it also evokes the Hebrew word חלל the dead. This connection is created by the second word in the phrase "חלולים ינועו ליד הגדר"—hollow, they move near the fence. The word *yanu'u* (will move) could signify a normal physical movement of the thorns in the wind. But in the semantic context of breaches of the laws of nature, it can also mark their movement near or along the fence, an unnatural movement of humanized living-dead thorns. This nightmarish-macabre performance is consistent both with the end of this sentence: "they open their wild foliage", which indicates the unloading a burden, and with the narrator's strange, threatening statement that "sometimes it is impossible to know who the real boss is in this landscape".⁷⁵
- 51 Either way, both sentences that end the passage—"In the distance bulldozers are already digging. It is impossible to prevent this, too."—make it clear that the geranium and oleander bushes and thorns, which are taking over the landscape, do not represent Sharfshtein, but rather his competitors: the real estate agents. Thus, the bulldozers, whose actions cannot be prevented, will demolish the old houses, and clear the way for new construction programs, which Sharfshtein is trying to prevent and which the real estate agents are accelerating.
- 52 Two scenes concerned with the link between Sharfshtein's wife and daughter, on the one hand, and a female tenant who beats her disturbed daughter, on the other, are also repeated scenes that function as deviating metaphorical motifs.

At night, by the light of the table lamp, he writes the letters to his wife, to Sonia. Sonia is ill and wanders from sanitarium to sanitarium. In winter she stays with their daughter in America. The disease does not let her go. The doctors advise caution. She may not leave the mountain climate. Some spots were found in her lungs, too.

"When will you come?", writes Sonia.

"The distance", he replies.

"Our daughter is willing to pay the costs."

"Sharfshtein cannot allow himself to stay at his daughter's place. Indeed, you know the Sharfshteins, they can't go out of their way. It's their nature, patience, Sonichka. The changes come slowly. We will meet too." The days flow by bit by bit. Time is broken down into full moments. The clock moves slowly. The upstairs tenant strikes her disturbed daughter, the shouts rising to high heaven. The rest of the tenants close their shutters. Sonichka cannot stand it, it is too powerful, so he stands and stares into the night.

- 53 We learn about Sharfshtein's sick wife and his daughter who lives in America who are reminiscent of Trude, Martin's sick wife, and their daughter, who lives far from her parents, in *Badenheim 1939* and other similar "triangles" in Appelfeld's stories⁷⁶ only towards the end of the story (sections forty two to forty-seven of fifty-nine sections). The delay in conveying this essential information is not coincidental. The narrator, reporting

on events through the consciousness of the protagonist, expresses Sharfshtein's desperate attempt to postpone dealing with the moral injustice for which he is responsible, the open wound that refuses to heal in the story before us. The nature of this desperate attempt to escape accountability for any wrongs done in the past, a fundamental theme in all of Appelfeld's work, at least until the late nineteen seventies,⁷⁷ points out to us, in a complex way, the link between the frame narrative of the passage, the story of Sharfshtein, his wife, and his daughter, and the internal narrative, that of the upstairs tenant and her disturbed, beaten daughter. This link is created here through a dual parallel: between Sonia and the disturbed daughter, on the one hand, and those who are mistreating them: the upstairs tenant who is beating her and Sharfshtein who is not ready to go out of his way and will also not give up his honor for the sake of his wife's recovery on the other. To this double parallel another dimension is added due to the juxtaposition that ends the passage: "The upstairs tenant strikes her disturbed daughter, the shouts rising to high heaven. The rest of the tenants close their shutters. Sonichka cannot stand it, it is too powerful, so he stands and stares into the night."

- 54 The question is what Sonya cannot stand. Is it the "too powerful" nature of the Israeli experience in general, the same experience that for Sharfshtein, who lives in the provinces of the past, is too powerful, or can she not stand the shouts of the disturbed daughter, "rising to high heaven"? Or could it be that both answers are correct and even connected to one another? One way or another, we are talking in both sectors about a terminal condition, which sometimes seems escapable, but this is only an illusion as clarified in the penultimate scene in the story:

"Mr. Sharfshtein," a demanding voice rose: "how long will he run away?" There are debts and things must be settled, his wife is wandering the streets. "Too rude a gesture," he replies.

"And he can ignore it."

Upstairs they are striking the disturbed daughter. Every day they beat her. She is already big and well developed, and her face is pink with good health. Sometimes she goes down to the garden, but her mother's hand will find her there, too. "What shall we do with you?" asks the mother, and runs after her.⁷⁸

- 55 Indeed, the disturbed daughter is "already big and well developed", indeed "her face is pink with good health", and indeed, "sometimes she goes down to the garden". "[B]ut [and here we can hear the voice of the place from which there is no escape] her mother's hand will find her there, too." Even here she asks, "What shall we do with you? ... and runs after her."

Syntactical Patterns & Existential Tension

- 56 The tension between the appearance of a normal, protective routine, that is, a postponement of the uncontrolled force of the plot, which is striving for the inevitable catastrophic end, and the representation of the situation as it is, that is, the overt manifestations of the narrative's uncontrolled force, are reflected in *U'at* (Slowly) at the syntactical level as well. Clear examples are in textual sequences that are based on the repetition of the same two words that form a syntactic rhythmic balance that reflects the apparent equilibrium between the conflicting forces in the Appelfeldian world, the delaying forces, on the one hand, and the progressive forces, on the other. This type of rhythmic syntactic pattern, which relies on the doubling of a word, characterizes eight out of fifty-nine segments included in the story at hand. By monitoring its development,

we can learn much about the nature and meaning of the orchestration of motif in Appelfeld's work. The first segment of this type, number six, sets out for the first time the force fields at work in the story: "Slowly, slowly, in a thick flow, negotiations will be conducted. **Sometimes** from within a dim routine and **sometimes** from an outburst, and again everything is going back, **as if** completing the path."⁷⁹

57 This linguistic pattern: "... sometimes....and sometimes" signifies a kind of status quo in the power relations: a dull routine, on the one hand, and an outburst, on the other, forces that are apparently coming to a completion. But this is a mistaken impression. This point is implied by the two words "as if", the assumption in the phrase "as if completing", which cancels out the calming quality of the statement that "again everything is going back...as if completing the path..."

58 The same linguistic pattern is repeated, with a different disposition, two sections later, in section number nine:

Sometimes he sits and curls up in a chair, and looks like a person who has been completely taken over by patience. No one can take that apathetic look away from him. Already beyond excitement, in the good provinces of acceptance. But **sometimes** some curiosity arises in him. At times of rest, in the hot afternoon hours, the street thins out, here is an old merchant, a boy selling newspapers, the stalls are empty too, the shoe-shine boy sits facing him, right in front of the pupils of his eyes, the houses are nothing but a frame for him. The pharmacy, too, belongs to the view. The old pharmacist finds time to relax. The silence stretches, everything lowers itself into drowsiness. Only down in the cellars the sewing machine strikes.⁸⁰

59 In the beginning of the section Sharfshtein is described as almost inanimate, like someone who has achieved a full degree of equilibrium, and is "in the good provinces of acceptance". This complete ease, juxtaposed with the "recess" in the street war with the real estate agents, is the outcome of the exhausting weather. It takes him out of his shell for a moment and he is able to look around at the street and its inhabitants, who are also at rest. Ostensibly, the pattern "sometimes... sometimes" functions differently here than in the first case I mentioned above. The second appearance of the word "sometimes" serves to strengthen the symmetrical pattern and reinforce the first instance. It is not used in counterpoint, but rather as a unit of confirmation, exemplification, and detailing. However, the final sentence of the text changes everything. The seemingly random phrase, "**Only down in the cellars the sewing machine strikes**"⁸¹ creates a feeling of uncertainty and threat, a sense that comes from discerning that from below, beneath the surface—literally—something else is happening. This feeling is intensified because this strange sentence is linked to two other sentences, already discussed, that also relate to an undermining and threatening event: "**Upstairs they are striking** the disturbed daughter"⁸² and "**The upstairs tenant strikes** her disturbed daughter"⁸³. Another undermining, threatening occurrence that is also further reinforced since the neighbors' response to the screams of the disturbed daughter—they "**close the shutters**",⁸⁴ is associated with that same (absurd, ridiculous) defensive act that they use against a different threat: "Meanwhile, the night falls and drops. People shut themselves in, closing shutters, gathered away from the night."⁸⁵

60 The inversion produced by the last sentence of the section—"Only down in the cellars the sewing machine strikes."—an inversion that is, as mentioned, a typical poetic move in Appelfeld's orchestration of motif, both at the level of the section and at the level of the whole story—activates all the "dormant land mines" in the previous sequence. Thus,

beginning from the description of Sharfshtein as curled up in his chair, a posture that does not precisely convey serenity (one usually curls up in bed, not in a chair), and, continuing in the second part of that sentence, “[who] **looks like a person who has been completely overtaken by patience**”,⁸⁶ a sentence that, now, on second reading, evokes discomfort. This discomfort is evoked partly because it is clear that the entire section is not marked by sharp discernment, but is rather fragile and very loose: “**and looks like**”, and partly because this seeming serenity is actually the product of violent and anxiety-evoking conquest, “**who has been completely overtaken by patience**”,⁸⁷ an allegory of a person overtaken by some *dybbuk*. In addition, the buried land mine is set off in the seemingly innocent cataloging of the people he watches, as it were, “already beyond excitement, in the good provinces of acceptance”. The existence of this mine is already signaled in the phrase “the pharmacy, **too, belongs to the view**”.⁸⁸ This linguistic pattern, which we have already encountered, emphasizes the supposed belonging of the pharmacy to the landscape, and, therefore, precisely its uniqueness—its connection to the sensitive issue of disease and cure. This uniqueness is further reinforced by a complex network of links two of whose elements appear here: the parallel between the pharmacist, who “finds time to relax”, and the owner of the tavern, who tries, without much success, to slow the flow, and the multi-channeled linguistic link between the Hebrew word *gam* (too) in the sentence whose subject is the pharmacy and the word “too” in other places in the story that all signal situations of severe distress. Here are some examples: “In the distance bulldozers are already razing. It is impossible to prevent this, **too**.”⁸⁹ “In winter she stays with their daughter in America. The disease does not let her go. The doctors advise caution. She may not leave the mountain climate. Some spots were found in her lungs, **too**.”⁹⁰ And upstairs “they are striking the disturbed daughter. Every day they beat her. She is already big and well developed, and her face is pink with good health. Sometimes she goes down to the garden, but her mother’s hand will find her there, **too**. ‘What shall we do with you?’ asks the mother, and runs after her.”⁹¹ The reinforcing function afforded to the repetition of the word “too” (*gam*) in these sentences sheds new, ironic light on the word *gam*, as it is used by Sharfshtein in the following internal monologue, which seems to radiate complete confidence and peace of mind: “‘Sharfshtein does not belong here,’ he says in his heart, which indeed needs an answer. ‘Even (*gam*) if he wants to, he cannot. All the years he plundered them and now, in his old age, he will be like one of them.’”⁹²

- 61 The third instance of this pattern is based on its predecessors. Here, the symmetrical pattern, like a scale on each of whose sides the word sits twice, is replaced by an incomplete pattern in which the word *pe’amim* (sometimes/occasionally) appears only once and the reader is supposed to fill in the missing second appearance:

“Mr. Sharfshtein, trees grow slowly”. Certainly one of the tenants, an arrogant voice, but not enough to provoke fury. The voice is familiar, patience already subdued it. But **there are times when (yesh pe’amim)** a kind of shocked desire bursts out and rises in the arteries and demands a decision. Sharfshtein knows how to answer these accusers.⁹³

- 62 This incomplete pattern, as we know from Hans and Shulamith Kreidler,⁹⁴ creates uneasiness and anxiety. We fill it in ourselves, but there remains a sense that something is damaged. This incomplete, asymmetrical pattern reinforces the progressive value of the “sometimes/there are times when/occasionally motif”. This move is balanced, at least apparently, by the next instance of the “sometimes/there are times when/occasionally” pattern: “Sometimes he sits on the front porch, overlooking the street, and sometimes on

the back porch, from where you see the bluish mountains of Moab. Evening descends upon the scene, wrapping it in **purple** and ruby hues.”⁹⁵ Sharfshtein is seen here in a comfortable position—sitting on the porch viewing the Jerusalem landscape. This serene atmosphere is enhanced by the phrase “sometimes... and sometimes”, appearing here in its complete, symmetrical form, and thus reinforcing the retardative value of this motif. This retardative value is further reinforced by the spatial symmetry, since the action takes place sometimes on the **front** porch and sometimes on the **back** porch. However, again, this is only an apparent comfort, as we can see from the two following facts. The first of these is that this rhythmic linguistic pattern appears after the parallel pattern, the first in the series, which contains, as we have seen, a mass that will go on to erupt and destroy. The second is that a similar mass is mentioned in the second instance of this phrase (“a kind of shocked desire bursts out and rises in the arteries and demands a decision”)—and still, within the framework of the incomplete pattern, evokes discomfort. These facts cast a shadow over the seemingly relaxed atmosphere of the second instance. Because of them, we bring up from the description of the sunset the symbolic elements associated with murder and death, which, it now seems, fill it: Evening descends upon the scene, wrapping it in purple and ruby hues.⁹⁶

- 63 The next section again presents a symmetrical picture between the retardative forces and the progressive forces, and thus serves as an additional milestone on the path that zigzags between the two psycho-existential options: **Sometimes** Mr. Sharfshtein seems like a man who has closed the house behind him and abandoned himself to the outside, and **sometimes** he seems like a guard, steadfast in his seat. After this section, which serves as an all-clear siren, despite the suicidal information contained in its first part (“like a man who has closed the house behind him and abandoned himself to the outside”), are three sections that are constructed on the basis of the incomplete pattern, the one that includes only one mention of “sometimes”:

1.

In the late, drowsy afternoon hours, tired, a kind of panic grips the street. You feel that soon the people will burst out or someone will try to make an astonishing, liberating announcement. The tension usually ends in an inconsequential skirmish. People gather in a circle, for a moment look like rescuers, and **sometimes** they pounce like beasts of prey and the street returns, as if after a competition, to the measured movement.⁹⁷

- 64 This section ends the circle in the sequence of the instances of the syntactic pattern under discussion. It joins the first instance “Slowly, slowly, in a thick flow, negotiations will be conducted. **Sometimes** from within a dim routine and **sometimes** from an outburst, and again everything is going back, as if completing the path”.⁹⁸ This is the case because the two sections are not concerned with Sharfshtein, as we saw in the other sections, but with the uncontrolled force of the streets, the crowd, with its hidden face, moving from side to side, alternating between the retardative pole and the progressive pole, and so forth. The closure of this circle is completed by an additional instance of the motif of the individual person who tries to stop movement, while here, as in the first instance of this motif (“And a man appears, somewhat cumbersome and managing to slow down the traffic at once. There is probably a new, amazing proposal in his mouth. Immediately they gather around him to listen, he stands in the circle, pulling something from his pocket. ‘New fabric,’ he calls”.⁹⁹) a situation is presented in which a single person creates around himself a circle that closes in on him and then disperses. And indeed, the street performance is depicted here in a very violent manner (“for a moment look like

rescuers and **sometimes pounce like beasts of prey**"¹⁰⁰) that reflects Sharfshtein's desperate condition and gives way to the appearance of the main progressive motif at the height of its power: "In the evening, in heavy winter coats, the merchants move, sated from their labor."¹⁰¹

- 65 2. In the second section, already quoted on page 23, ("Mr. Sharfshtein, a demanding voice rose: 'how long will he run away?'" etc.) we also have an incomplete pattern, indicating that progressive motifs have taken over. The location of this section, which is the penultimate section of the story, is not accidental. The impossibility of escape that screams from it is connected, as I mentioned earlier, with Sharfshtein's strong sense of guilt that he is neglecting his wife "who is wandering the streets", as he hangs onto his anachronistic mantra ("Patience, Sonitchka. Change comes slowly."¹⁰²), which indicates that he does not want and cannot adapt to the new reality in which he finds himself, and to the forces at work in it.
- 66 The conclusion that arises from this section prepares the ground for the final and decisive appearance of the syntactic pattern that serves as a sophisticated barometer that indirectly marks the force fields in the story: "**Meanwhile, winter came.** The merchants moved in **heavy coats. They took over the street.** The winds would not prevent them from going out. Sometimes one of them would come and hit the door with the handle as if he were trying to break in. "Sharfshtein," **he called.** If there was no answer he would shake the door."¹⁰³
- 67 The pastoral descriptions of Sharfshtein, sitting relaxed on his porches and watching the sunset, are founded on the double, balancing appearance of the word "sometimes", which can bring to mind the movement in a swing or hammock. Here, in the final section of the story, it is replaced by only one instance of the word "sometimes", and it relates to one of the real estate agents who took over the street. The violent real estate agent fills one side of the scale in this pattern, while the empty side of the scale contains Sharfshtein, who was always absent, but present, and now disappears, completely gone from the story.
- 68 Moreover, here, too, as in previous instances of this pattern, it is supported many links to other motifs, used in refined ways. So, among other things, the phrase "Meanwhile, winter came", echoes the phrase "Meanwhile, the night falls and drops, and draws from it its threatening animistic quality." The word "as" serves as a qualifier (that connects with other qualifying phrases, such as "kind of"), but here the quality of this potential qualifying has a sarcastic touch. After all, is it possible to describe the final scene of the story, in which one of the merchants "hit[s] the door with the handle"—a strange formulation that indicates that the handle was torn off before it was used to hit the door—with the phrase "as if he were trying to break in"? And these are joined, of course, by the additional reinforcement of the main progressive motif: the merchants, moving now "in heavy coats. They took over the street. The winds would not prevent them from going out."¹⁰⁴
- 69 A relatively comprehensive, but by no means complete, examination of the orchestration of motif $\text{in}\text{U}\text{N}\text{L}$ ("Slowly") reveals the predominance of this compositional device, that is, following Jakobson's¹⁰⁵ well-known definition, its status as a controlling stratagem, which attaches to itself to and organizes many elements of the story, and plays a central role in

the production of its meanings. The dominant status of the orchestration of motif in the story before us and in Appelfeld's stories in general highlights both the "poetic" aspect of his prose, that is, to borrow from Jakobson¹⁰⁶ again, its "poetic function" and the spatial aspect of the text, perceived in this context as a rhythmic system of coordinates, and this, of course, comes at the expense of its sequential aspect. The emphasis on the poetic aspect of the text, by means of a spatial reading that often requires intermittent "jumps" back and forth, is more typical, as it is well known, of poetry than prose, which is more limited, by its very epic-narrative nature, to linear movement in the domain of time. Even so, Appelfeld's prose can be called poetic prose also because of the manner in which it links complete works and their larger divisions. Like poetry, in Appelfeld's stories intermediate units—in poetry verses, in Appelfeld's works paragraphs and short chapters—also have prominent status that challenges the unity of the work's overall composition. This challenge, whose very nature is demonstrated by the fact that my discussion of *טאָל* ("Slowly") is based on the division of the story into paragraphs, disrupts, at least in the first stage of reading, the impression of overall unity of the story in favor of complexity and power, consistent with this of complexity and empowerment created, through various means, by the intricate rhythmic array of the stories. The poetic character of Appelfeld's prose can also be marked and validated using a closely related conceptual system that also employs the term motif, but with a slightly different meaning. At the start, I defined orchestration of motif as a kind of artistic philosophical logic responsible for the relationship between the various types of elements that recur in Appelfeld's works: marginal figures, accessories, language routines, figures of speech, figurative phrases, textual units, syntactic structures, and so on. The most important word in this definition is "recur", because it signifies the act of repetition of those components, the ultimate condition for the existence of the orchestration of motif. Boris Tomashevsky,¹⁰⁷ Jakobson's colleague in the formalist-structuralist school, also needed the concept of motif, but he defined it differently. Motif for him is a plot event that can appear in two ways. One of these is the bound motif, which he defines as an event crucial to the plot (*e.g.*, Oedipus killing his father in *Oedipus Rex* or Napoleon invading Russia in *War and Peace*) and the other is the free motif, which is not crucial to the development of the plot, and whose main importance is its atmospheric added value. Following Tomashevsky, it is possible to say that in the story *טאָל* ("Slowly") bound motifs are far less important than free motifs—a compositional fact that clearly points to the notion that what we have here is a story that can be called poetic prose.

- 70 A comprehensive look on Appelfeld's oeuvre to date from the perspective of the poetic nature of his work, as it becomes clear through the examination of the orchestration of motif, reveals the existence of three periods, a division that is consistent with divisions of his work suggested by other approaches.¹⁰⁸ The first period, which began with Appelfeld's early stories that were not published in a book,¹⁰⁹ its continuation in his short story collections,¹¹⁰ and its end and culmination in his first novel *העור והכותנת* (*The Skin and the Cloak*) (1971). This period is marked by loaded "poetic" writing. In *העור והכותנת*, which marks, as noted, the culmination and the end of this period, we can talk about the "collapse" of both the epic narrative arrangement and the dramatic arrangement, due to the immense load of the poetic/lyrical arrangement.¹¹¹ The first signs of the second period are evident in *במלוא הסתיו* (In the Fullness of Autumn) in the collection *על הארץ* (*Frost on the Ground*) (1965),¹¹² the first clear example is the early novella *כאישון העין* (*Like the Pupil of the Eye*)¹¹³ in the collection *כמאה עדים* (*Like a Hundred*

Witnesses) (1975). It continued and culminated in the novel תור הפלאות (*The Age of Wonders*) (1978).

- 71 This period, which I have called elsewhere¹¹⁴ the Austro-Hungarian period, was marked by a balance between the dramatic plot and the atmospheric plot or, in the words of Tomashevsky, by a balance between “bound motifs” and “free motifs”. The third period includes most of Appelfeld’s books from the mid-nineteen-eighties, beginning with בעת ובעונה אחת (*At One and the Same Time*) (1985) and up to his most recent novel, עד חוד הצער (*Grief to the Point*) (2012). This period is characterized by dramatization at the narrative level on the one hand,¹¹⁵ and a tendency to reduce the use of poetic language in favor of idiomatic tribal language, on the other.¹¹⁶ It is extremely important to mark the stylistic periods of Appelfeld’s artistic enterprise for a number of reasons. However, this should not obscure the overall stylistic character of this great artistic enterprise, which we may define, in its many multi-faceted versions, as poetic prose.

Appelfeld’s Poetic Prose: Conclusion

- 72 This is the place, I think, to ask what functions are served by the poetic writing mode in Appelfeld’s work, or, to put it more simply, why Appelfeld has adhered to this mode during his over fifty years of writing. This question, in both of its versions, has several answers, all of which are related to one another, support each other, and reinforce each other in one way or another. First, the poetic mode is, by its very nature, a shifting mode; that is, a literary mode that makes possible the representation of human situations by indirect means. This fact fits Appelfeld, the artist, like a glove fits a hand, for it allows him, as we saw in our discussion of *Badenheim 1939* and טל (“Slowly”) to touch on very emotionally charged areas without risking a “pathetic failing”, that is, an emotional flooding, which would distract the reader from the story. This shifting mode also suits Appelfeld in the context of the depiction of the characters in the story. This is because his characters, like Agnon’s, and unlike Brenner’s, are relatively small characters who must cope with problems that not only are more than they can endure—in this regard they are no different than Brenner’s characters—but, and this is of particular importance to the issue we are discussing, also lack the cognitive tools that could enable them to ponder their existential situations. This literary fact requires the writer, if he wants to open to us some kind of a window to the inner world of his characters, to take detours. One possible way to do this is to use an omnipotent, mediating, interpreting narrator. However, the omnipotent position was not a real artistic option from Appelfeld’s perspective, almost certainly because it was obviously untenable after the Holocaust. What remained, therefore, was a figurative way to indirectly represent the traumatic mental states with metonymies, images, symbols, and metaphors of different types of various orchestrations of motif. Second, the intricate and precise rhythmic fabric of Appelfeld’s works serves as a safety net that consolidates and preserves the stability of the world he creates, which is situated, again, as we saw in the stories examined here, inside a space that is collapsing onto itself. The fact that we are talking about a rhythmic musical safety net, as opposed to a thematic one, that is, a safety net whose internal harmony is only relatively slightly based on the world of the signified, is not accidental. It reflects the author’s ambivalent attitude—at once believing and suspicious—toward the semantic truth value of the word. In other words, the language of truth, according to Appelfeld, is the one etched onto the body, in gestures, facial expressions, and sounds that are free from conventional semantic

meaning produced by the throat: cries, whines, and so on. This is the language of truth, created, according to his testimony, by him and other children who wandered as he did, during World War II, alone or in small groups, in the fertile and wild areas of Ukraine:

The new form, if we can call it that, was brought by the children. They were child survivors, whose faces and expressions were shaped by the years of war in the forests and monasteries. Some of them were good at singing. I say good, although these voices were usually scorched, a mixture of the remnants of tunes from Jewish homes and the leftovers of organ songs of the monastery. It all combined in them into a new melody, something pathetic, garbled, and grotesque. These were blind tunes that only children in their blindness could create. I do not remember the words, but their faces I remember well. Neither innocent nor inarticulate, standing on an elevated box and singing. After the performance, they would take off their tattered hats and ask for payment. Violent agents quickly imposed sponsorship on them, and would drag them from camp to camp. There were also girls. One, whose name was Amalia, I remember well. A little girl of around ten who performed every evening. In her repertoire Jewish folk songs mixed with forest sounds. Her body was thin and bird-like, and it always seemed like she was going to fly away.

There were also child acrobats there, who amazingly walked on tightropes. In the forests they learned to climb treetops and thin branches. Among them was a pair of twins, boys of about ten, who threw wooden balls in an amazing way. And among others, there were children who mimicked animals and birds. Such children roamed the camps by the dozens. While the adults were trying to forget and be forgotten, trying to integrate into the soil of life, the children brought suffering to catharsis in a way that perhaps only a folk song can. In the children, no concrete trace remained. Only fear itself, absorbed into all the cells of the body, unnamed fear. Because it was not concrete, the children could not forget it. It was part of their beings, like arms and legs.

When they came to sing, perform imitations, or throw balls, suffering was embodied in all their movements, even in their laughter. Sometimes people expelled them in disgrace. Because even their tricks were sad.¹¹⁷

73 However, unfortunately for Appelfeld, and perhaps I should be precise, also not only unfortunately for Appelfeld, the “new form”, this language of artistic truth, was, as we can see in the examples included in the excerpt, only available to children—artists whose means of expression was the body, including the sounds it produces—and not to adults, who have a distinct language that is required of a person who writes and wants to reach a large body of readers. The solution that Appelfeld found, and which he has been working on refining for almost sixty years, is to write in a mode of poetic prose that allows him contact both with normal, normative experience and with “the language of trauma”, a private language that is pre-verbal, or, at most, at the threshold of the verbal. The poetic mode of writing, the “shifting mode”, outstanding in its musical, clearly non-semantic values, has allowed Appelfeld continuous contact with the open wound, with the experience, bared of any social-cultural construction, continuous contact with the area that is like a fontanel, still open and wounded, not yet closed.

74 Third, as mentioned above, things are connected with one another, the poetic mode opened to Appelfeld an artistic-philosophical path through which he can verbally represent his foundational territory—the wild and fertile spaces of Ukraine—as it was absorbed in his consciousness as a territory on the seam between very real reality and the unbounded space of dream and nightmare,¹¹⁸ a territory in which he saw himself, through the perspective of the pursuers, as an inferior and contemptible creature, like an insect to be trampled on, on the one hand, and as distinct, wonderful, and even sublime, on the other.¹¹⁹ The poetic prose that Appelfeld chose, which tends by its very nature to

symbolization, served him, on the one hand, as a convenient basis from which to delve more deeply into the realm of abjection, which signifies, as Julia Kristeva¹²⁰ explains, what is outcast, polluted, and degraded in human experience, and, on the other hand, to take off from it into the sublime. This combination of the poetic mode, of abjection and the sublime, is one of the characteristics typical of Appelfeld's prose, and it also explains the refusal implicit in the wording of the realistic social psychological story on the one hand,¹²¹ and its proximity to the wording of romance, in which the world represented in it is located on the boundary between the historical and the mythological,¹²² on the other.

NOTES

1. See also, among the myriad works that refer to Appelfeld's lyrical prose: Moked, Gabriel. "אומן הפרוזה השירית" (An Artist of Lyrical Prose), *Yediot Achronot*, 14.2.75: 2, 5; Kenaz, Yehoshua. "אימה ושחרור" (Dread and Liberation), *Gazit* 20, 9-12, 1962, 106; Schwartz, Yigal. הפואטיקה של האימה (The Poetics of Dread), *Davar*, 28.12.79; Ratok, Lily. בית על בלימה (House on the Edge of the Abyss: Aharon Appelfeld's Art of the Story), Heker, 1989: 65-94; Shaked, Gershon. "אימה מסוגנת נוסח אפלפלד" (Stylized Dread in the Style of Appelfeld), *Haaretz*, 6.3.64; Miron, Dan. "פנקס פתוח" (Open Notebook), *Sifriat Poalim*, 1979: 49-59; Zandbank, Shimon. "Hatzmihah Habilti Murgeshet" (The Unfelt Growth), *Amot* I, No. 2. (1963): 100-2; Hazanovitch, Naomi, "מוטיב הרכבת בתור הפלאות" (The Theme of the Locomotive in *Tor Hapelaot* by Aharon Appelfeld). n.d.; Bertana, Orzion. "In the Minority of the Majority", *Al Hamishmar*. 2.7.93: 22; Baumel, Yehudit. "שתיקה שמנסה לגעת" (Silence that Attempts to Touch), *Haaretz Literary Supplement*. 5.4. 2000: 6, 8; Hass-Segman, Tamar. "Retzef Mezukak shel Zva'a" (A Refined Sequence of Horror), *Yediot Achronot*, 3.11.95: 18; Agee, Joel. "The Calm before the Storm," *The New York Times Book Review*, 27.12.81; Josipovici, G. "Silently Mending," *The Times Literary Supplement (TLS)*, 19.11.82; Heskett, Michael, "Appelfeld: Before the Unspeakable," *Houston Chronicle*, 11.1. 81:19; Halkin, Hillel, "The Loose Pebble that Triggers an Avalanche," *Forward*, 27.11.98: 11-12.

2. Works that have addressed similar topics: Marmonchik, Pnina. הלשון הפיגורטיבית של אהרון אפלפלד (The Figurative Language of Aharon Appelfeld as a Key to Understanding his Work), PhD. Bar Ilan University. (1985); Ratok, Lily. בית על בלימה (House on the Edge of the Abyss: Aharon Appelfeld's Art of the Story), Heker, 1989: 65-94; Lehavi, Yaffa. "פרדוקס המבע ותחבולות של שתיקה ביצירת אפלפלד" (The Paradox of Expression and Strategies of Silence in Aharon Appelfeld's Work According to *The Cloak and the Stripes* and *Katerina*), Master's thesis, Tel Aviv University (1991); Dudai, Rina. "Literary Devices Used for Effects of Subtlety and Restraint in Emotion-Loaded Narrative Text", Leaflet 12 for the Literature Teacher, 1992: 50-58; Dudai, Rina "השפה הפואטית כאמצעי להתמודדות עם הטראומה ביצירת פרימו לוי ואפלפלד" (Poetic Language as a Means of Coping with the Trauma of the Holocaust in the Writings of Levi and Appelfeld). In Risa Domb, Ilana Rosen and Yitzchak Ben-Morechai (eds.), *Mikan, Journal of Hebrew Literature Studies, Special Issue: The World of Aharon Appelfeld, A Selection of Essays on his Works*, Vol. 5, January 2005. University of Cambridge, Heksherim Center, Keter Publishers, 2005, 101-110.

3. For comparison: Orian, Yehudit. "מוות ידוע מראש" (Hebrew) (A Death Foretold), *Yediot Achronot*. 2.7.93: 7.

4. See in this regard section my article “התימה בסיפורת של אפלפלד” (“The Theme in the Fiction of Aharon Appelfeld”), *Mekhkarei Yerushalyim Besifrut Ivrit* (1986): 201-214 and my book *מאמין בלי כנסייה* (*Believer without a Church*): 23-29 and 61-93.
5. For example, at the end of the novella *טמיון* (*Oblivion*) (1993).
6. For example, in the story “הגירוש” (*The Expulsion*) in the collection *על הארץ* (*Frost on the Earth*) (1965).
7. For example, at the end of the novel *פריחה* (*Wild Blossoming*) (2004)
8. In the spirit of the writings of Frank Kermode in his book *The Sense of an Ending*, Oxford University Press (1967).
9. For comparison, see Yigal Schwartz, *מקינת יחיד לנצח השבט* (*From Individual Lament to Tribal Eternity*) (1996): 141-203.
10. Appelfeld's stories can be divided according to their treatment of geographical provinces: “The Penal Colony”, the Ukrainian space in which Appelfeld wandered during the Holocaust years; “The Land of the Cattails”, the Austro-Hungarian space in the period between the two World Wars; “By the Beach”, the beaches of Yugoslavia and Italy that Appelfeld encountered at the end of the war, and “The Land of Searing Light”, the space of *Eretz Israel*. For more on this point, see my book *From Individual Lament to Tribal Eternity*: 53-139.
11. *כמאה עדים* (*Like a Hundred Witnesses*) (1975):195. Translation: Hannah Adelman Komy Ofir.
12. See footnote 4, above.
13. Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring the locusts into thy border: and they shall cover the face of the earth (Exodus 10:4, 5). And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the borders of Egypt: very grievous they were; before them there were no locusts such as they, neither after them shall there be such. For they covered the surface of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened (Exodus 10: 14, 15) (Translated by Harold Fisch, *The Jerusalem Bible*, Koren Publishers, 1989). Indeed, a similar phrase is used to describe the size of the People of Israel in a message sent by Balak ben Tzipor to Balaam in Numbers 22: 5, 11. But the description of the movement of the snowflakes is more reminiscent of the movement of locusts landing. Thus, the allusion to the size of the People of Israel provides here only a sharp ironic reference, if any.
14. On paradox as a basic structure in Appelfeld's work see Guvrin, Nurit. “הפרד” (Paradox and the Effort to Escape It), *Alei Siah* 23 (1986) 135-139; Y. Lehari, *The Paradox of Expression and Strategies of Silence in Aharon Appelfeld's Work According to The Cloak and the Stripes and Katerina*, Master's thesis, Tel Aviv University, (1991).
15. Emphases mine.
16. According to Gershon Shaked, *על ארבעה סיפורים* (*On Four Stories*), Iyunim, Jewish Agency Publications. (1963) 108: 149-152.
17. See also Afek, Edna. *מערכות מילים* (*Systems of Words: Readings in the Style of S.Y. Agnon*), Dekel Academic Publications, 1979. Mazor, Yair. *הדינאמיקה של המוטיבים ביצירת עגנון* (*The Dynamics of the Motifs in S.Y. Agnon's Work*). Dekel Academic Publications, 1979.
18. Genette, Gérard. *Figures*. Paris: Seuil. (1972): 77-182.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *עשן* (*Smoke*) (1962), p. 109. This and all following excerpts from ‘*Ashan* have been translated by Hannah Adelman Komy Ofir.
21. Among others, some of the Jewish protagonists in the following books: *תור הפלאות* (*The Age of Wonders*) 1978, *בעת ובעונה אחת* (*At One and the Same Time*) (1985), *Katerina* (1989), *טמיון* (*Oblivion*) (1993), *כל אשר אהבתי* (*All That I Have Loved*) (1999), *פתאום אהבה* (*Love, All of a Sudden*) (2001), *פולין ארץ ירוקה* (*Poland, a Green Country*) (2004).
22. ‘*Ashan*, pp. 112-113.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 113. The connection between a Gentile woman who is perceived as aggressive, engulfing, and devouring, and a weak Jewish male—whether an adult or a child—appears in other

of Appelfeld's writings (for example in *Katerina* [1989] and [1993] טמיון) and is another element that links him with other Eastern European Jewish writers from the period between the two World Wars: Peter Altenberg, Stefan Zweig, Joseph Roth, Franz Kafka, and of course also the Hebrew ones among them: David Vogel, S.Y. Agnon, and others. On this subject, see Band, Avraham. *שאלות נכבדות* (*Important Questions*). Massa Critit, Dvir, Heksherim, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev: 89-100 and my book *Believer without a Church*: 53-100.

24. 'Ashan, p. 121.

25. So it is already in the early story *לדרוביץ בין דבורנה* (The Road from Drovna to Drovicz) (1965). Later, something similar occurs in an implied manner in the novella *אחת ובעונה אחת* (At One and the Same Time) (1985) and in the novella *עד שיעלה עמוד השחר* (*Until the Dawn Rises*) (1995), and in a more explicit manner in *אל ארץ הגומא* (*To the Land of the Cattails*) (2009).

26. *Until the Dawn's Light* (translated from the Hebrew by Jeffrey M. Green) New York: Schocken (2011) 119, and in another place in the text "Blanca imagined the way to Vizhnitz as a long, illuminated tunnel. At the beginning of it there was a ritual bath where people immersed themselves and were purified. After they were purified, they put on linen garments and advanced to the next stage. At the next stage they sat in a secluded area until their souls were emptied of the dross and they no longer remembered anything. From there the tunnel twisted and turned, but walking in it was not difficult.": 224.

27. And on this issue see Harel, Maayan. *פגום גוף פגום מחלה ממארת כוונה* (*Damaged Body. Malignant Disease. Damaged Experience: Representations of Illness in the New Hebrew Literature*). PhD dissertation. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. (2008): 216-258.

28. Instead of minimizing her presence, she initiates a conversation with the gendarmes and thus exposes herself.

29. See also: Ratok, Lili, *בית על בלימה* (*House on the Edge of the Abyss*), Tel Aviv, Heker, 1989: 122-132; Barzel, Hillel, Aharon Appelfeld and S.Y. Agnon: *The Way to Jerusalem: A Comparative Analysis*, *Layish and Belevav Hayamim* (in Hebrew) *Davar*: 17/2/95; DeKoven Ezrahi, Sidra, *Booking Passage: Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000: 179-199.

30. See also in this regard Malka Shaked's article "Passing as a Bridge between Forgetting and Remembering" (in Hebrew), in *בין כפור לעשן* (*Between Frost and Smoke: Studies on the Work of Aharon Appelfeld*), Yitzchak Ben-Mordechai and Iris Parush (Eds.) *Eshel Beer-Sheva*, Occasional Publications in Jewish Studies, vol. 6, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 1997: 237-248.

31. *Badenheim 1939*, translated by Dalya Bilu. Boston: Godine, 1999, pp. 1-2.

32. The other novellas, constructed in a similar format, also in the specific context discussed here: *רצפת אש* (*Fiery Ember*) (1988) and *הפיסטה* (The Summit) (in *Bitzaron* 4, nos. 13-14 (1982): 18-88, translated by Dalya Bilu as *The Retreat*. London, Melbourne, and New York: Encounters, Quartet Books, 1985). A novella with a similar format, which takes place in *Eretz Israel* is *לילה וליילה* (*Night after Night*) (2001). Early versions of *Hapisga*, *Ritzpat Esh*, and *Badenheim, Ir Nofesh*, on the one hand, and of *Laila Veod Laila*, on the other, can be seen in short stories: "במקומות הנמוכים" (In the Low Places) in *כפור על הארץ* (*Frost on the Ground*) (1965), and *אכסניה* (in *Adnei Hanahar*) (1968).

33. *Badenheim 1939*, p. 47.

34. This matter is touched on in Alon, Ketzia, "The Hidden and Revealed Dialogue with Christianity in Appelfeld", lecture at the Conference on Appelfeld's Work upon his Reaching Age Eighty, Tel Aviv University, May 30-31, 2012.

35. *Badenheim 1939*, p. 148.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Badenheim 1939*, p. 3.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Prominent characters of this type include the protagonist of מסע אל החורף (*Journey into Winter*) (2000) and Bruno the amputee in וזהעם עוד לא נדם (*And the Rage is Not Yet Over*) (2008). See also Ben-Mordechai, Yitzhak, "Disability as Metaphor in Appelfeld's Novellas".

40. *Badenheim 1939*, p. 110.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

42. On this issue see also Dudai, Rina, "From Excess to Origin: Traversing Time Zones as an Act of Redemption in Appelfeld's 'The Man Who Never Stopped Sleeping' ", *Yod* 19.

43. The version that appears in 'Ashan reads: במקומות החניה הארעיים במרפסות (In the temporary-parking places, on the balconies) while the version here reads) במקומות החניה הארעיים במרפסת (In temporary parking places, on the balcony.) The later version contains three small changes that are significant if we are to understand Appelfeld's poetics. First, there is a preference for phrases that do not use the definite article over phrases that do (in temporary parking places instead of in the temporary parking places). This preference stems from a reluctance to use the definite article "the," and from the fact that the lack of definiteness intensifies the impression of temporariness. Second, there is a "weakness" for phrases that link plural and singular nouns ("In temporary parking places, on the **balcony**", instead of "In temporary-parking places, on **balconies**"); these phrases create semantic and grammatical defamiliarization. Third, there is the avoidance of the hyphen ("bemekomot chanaya" instead of "bemekomot-hachanaya," and according to the same logic, the use of the phrase "al gabei" (on) instead of "al-gabei", a change whose source, it seems, is the same avoidance that stands behind the deletion of "heh hayidiya" (the).

44. On the author as medium in Appelfeld's work, a prominent phenomenon in his late writings, see Schwartz, Yigal. (2009): 101-135.

45. *Ha Or Vehakutonet*, p. 84 (translation: Hannah Adelman Komy Ofir).

46. 'Ashan, p. 84.

47. The attempt to stop the flow of time, always perceived as the enemy that threatens to flood consciousness, by the obsessive repetition of phrases is characteristic of many of Appelfeld's protagonists, in particular those who survived the Holocaust. So it is in many of the stories in the collection עשן, especially in the language of Tzimmer in נסיין רציני (A Serious Effort), Mrs. Traum in פיצויים (Compensation), and Berta in "Berta". A repetitive obsession of a similar kind also characterizes various protagonists in the *Eretz Israeli* novellas of Appelfeld: העור והכתונת (*The Skin and the Cloak*) (1971), מכוות האור (*The Scorch of Light*) (1983), and ברטפוס בן אלמוות (*The Immortal Bartfus*) (1988).

48. 'Ashan, p. 82.

49. 'Ashan, p. 81.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.*

59. 'Ashan, p. 79.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 81

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

65. *Ibid.*

66. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

68. *Ibid.* This is a repeated pattern at the level of the construction of space as well a person around whom a circle is created for a moment, and once again scatters. Thus, for example: In the late, drowsy afternoon hours, tired, a kind of panic grips the street. You feel that soon the people will burst out or someone will try to make an astonishing, liberating announcement. The tension usually ends in an inconsequential skirmish. People gather in a circle, for a moment look like rescuers, and sometimes they pounce like beasts of prey and the street returns, as if after a competition, to the measured movement. *Ibid.* p. 85.

69. 'Ashan, p. 83.

70. This is apparently the first Hassidic or Hassidic-like hint in Appelfeld's writings. See on this issue Rachel Elior, התדעו מאין נחלתי "Do You Know From Where I Inherited my Song? The Hassidic Landscapes of Infrastructure in Appelfeld's Work" lecture at the Conference on Appelfeld's Work upon his Reaching Age Eighty, Tel Aviv University, May 30-31, 2012.

71. This is perhaps the place to clarify that Sharfshtein is an embryonic representation of the merchant Bartfuss in the novella *The Immortal Bartfuss*.

72. 'Ashan, p. 83.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

75. A similar deviation of plants from the laws of nature, which has a fatal meaning for the protagonist, takes place in several stories in the collection בגיא הפורה (*In the Fertile Valley*) (1963), particularly in המעשה האחרון (The Last Refuge) and "Kitty" and in almost all the stories in the collection הקרקע בקומת הקרקע (On the Ground Floor) (1968).

76. For example in *Bartfuss* (The Immortal Bartfuss) in הכותנת והפסים (*The Cloak and the Stripes*) (1983) and הזעם עוד לא נדם (*The Rage is not yet Over*) (2008).

77. This holds true for many of the poems and stories that Appelfeld published in the nineteen fifties and chose not to compile in a book. So it is in the stories in his early anthologies, for example, in the famous story of "Bertha" in עשן (*Smoke*), the story מסע (Journey), which opens בגיא הפורה (*In the Fertile Valley*) and in the last story מוכר (Familiar) in the same book. It is also true in העור והכותנת (*The Skin and the Cloak*) (1971), in כאישון העין (*Like the Pupil of the Eye*) (1973), תור הפלאות (*The Age of Wonders*) (1978) and other works.

78. 'Ashan, p. 5.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 80 (emphasis mine).

80. *Ibid.* (emphasis mine).

81. *Ibid.* (emphasis mine).

82. *Ibid.*, p. 85 (emphasis mine).

83. *Ibid.*, p. 84 (emphasis mine).

84. *Ibid.* (emphasis mine).

85. *Ibid.*, p. 83 (emphasis mine).

86. *Ibid.*, p. 80 (emphasis mine).

87. *Ibid.* (emphasis mine).

88. *Ibid.* (emphasis mine).

89. *Ibid.*, p. 84 (emphasis mine).

90. *Ibid.* (emphasis mine).

91. *Ibid.*, p. 85 (emphasis mine).

92. *Ibid.*, p. 83 (emphasis mine).

93. *Ibid.*, (emphasis mine)

94. Kreitler, Hans and Shulamith (1972) *Psychology of the Arts*. Duke University Press.

95. 'Ashan, p. 84.

96. The flood of violent elements in this scene stands out even more for readers familiar with the figurative laws of Appelfeld's poetic world; every place in his writings in which heaven and earth are described as connected to one other—either by a component that descends from heaven to earth, or through a component that rises from the earth to heaven - is a site of extreme violence. An example of this phenomenon can be found in the short story שלושה (Three) which opens the collection 'Ashan: "And so began the journey, the stay, the walking. Spring was back, showing the play of sound and color. The grass was sprouting, the journey heated their backs, the forest revealed its hiding places, which sometimes seemed like secret caves and from which sometimes blackening foggy vapors spread." (p. 9). Later: "The forest was thin and exposed the sky, a mixture of redness and clouds that were wrestling as if before an eruption [...] then a deep gloom descended, darkness you could feel with your hands. The tangle of roots impeded their progress. Rain began to beat down upon them." (p. 10). And later, "the heavens began to descend, heavens so red until that you could feel their cold burning." (*ibid.*)

97. *Ibid.*, p. 85 (emphasis mine).

98. *Ibid.*, p. 80 (emphasis mine).

99. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 85 (emphasis mine)

101. *Ibid.*

102. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 85 (emphasis mine).

104. *Ibid.*

105. Jakobson, Roman, "The Dominant", in: Matejka Ladislav and Pomorska Krystyna (Eds.): *Readings in Russian Poetics, Formalist and Structuralist Views*, The University of Michigan, 1978, pp. 82-87.

106. Jakobson, Roman, "Linguistics and Poetics", (in Hebrew) in Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury (Eds.): *Semiotics, Linguistics, Poetics, a selection of articles*, the Porter Israeli Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Press, 1986, pp. 138-166.

107. Tomashevsky, Boris, "Thematics" in *Russian Formalist Criticism, Four Essays*. Translated by Lemon Lee, T. and Reis, Marion J., University of Nebraska Press, 1965, pp. 61-95.

108. See Miron, Dan, 1979. פנקס פתוח (An Open Notebook), Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim: 49-59; Schwartz, Yigal, *Believer without a Church*: 101-135.

109. Holtzman, Avner, "Aharon Appelfeld's Path to the Collection 'Ashan'" in כפור לעשן: *Mechkarim al Yetzirato shel Aharon Appelfeld*, 1997: 83-97. Schwartz, Yigal, *From Individual Lament to Tribal Eternity* (1996): 13-51.

110. עשן (Smoke) (1962), בגיא הפורה (In the Fertile Valley) (1963), כפור על הארץ (Frost on the Ground) (1965), בקומת הקרקע (On the Ground Floor) (1968), אדני הנהר (The River Banks) (1968), and כמאה עדים (Like a Hundred Witnesses) (1975).

111. See also: Friedland, Yehudah, "An Intermediary Stage on the Way to the Novel *Haor Vehakutonet* by Aharon Appelfeld" (in Hebrew). *Davar*, October 1, 1971; Fishler, Brakha, "Silencing the Sound of Language—*Haor Vehakutonet* and *Timyon*: Two Language Choices" *Eshel Beer Sheva*, vol. 6, Between Frost and Smoke: Studies on the Work of Aharon Appelfeld, vol. 6, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 1997: 213-236; Scharf Gold, Nili Rachel, "Appelfeld's Novel *The Skin and the Gown* as a Text of Enigma," in: *Eshel Beer-Sheva*, vol. 6, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 1997: 195-203. Schwartz, Yigal, *From Individual Lament to Tribal Entity* (1996): 195-203; Goldvicht, Michal, *From the Loss of Language to the Language of Loss: Music, Stammering, and Dream in Appelfeld's Work and their Religious Meaning*, doctoral dissertation, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2008: 82- 88

112. See Yigal Schwartz, באין רואה תבואנה התמורות (The Changes Will Come Unseen). *Alei Siyach* 23, 1985: 175-181.

113. See also Hertz, Dalya. "כאיִשון העין, מיטב הספרות" ("Keishon Haayin: Literature at its Best"), *Davar*, December 9, 1972; Gorfein, Rivka. 1981. "כאיִשון העין" in *Le'ever Hof 'Alum*. (Toward a Hidden Shore). Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad: 70-81.
114. Schwartz, Yigal, 1996. *From Individual Lament to Tribal Eternity*: 139-141; Schwartz, Yigal (2009) *Believer without a Church*: 101-135.
115. One of the ways that this dramatization is revealed is the large number of murders by Jews and converts to Judaism (*Katerina*, 1989; מסילת ברזל (The Iron Tracks), 1991; עד שיאיר עמוד השחר (Until the Dawn Rises), 1995; מים אדירים (Mighty Waters), 2011, a phenomenon that has no parallel in his early writings, with the one exception of the story שלושה (Three) in the collection 'Ashan (Smoke) (1962).
116. See also Schwartz, Yigal. *Believer without a Church*, 101-135; Oppenheimer, Yochai. "Sooner and Later in Appelfeld's Writing," lecture at the Conference on Appelfeld's Work upon his Reaching Age Eighty, Tel Aviv University, May 30-31, 2012.
117. Appelfeld, Aharon. מסות בגוף ראשון (Essays in the First Person) Jerusalem, *Hasifriya Hatzionit*, 1979: 47-49 (translation: Hannah Adelman Komy Ofir).
118. Appelfeld has explained this in several places. See, for example, Appelfeld, Aharon, *Essays in the First Person* Jerusalem, *Hasifriya Hatzionit*, 1979: 9-49, and others.
119. See also, *Ibid*. Appelfeld, Aharon, בנתיב היסורים אל המקור (The Path of Suffering to the Source). *Hadoar*, 5 Iyar 5738/1978: 426-28; Hafi, Rahel, עשן קודר וטראגי ('Ashan: Gloomy and Tragic) (interview with Appelfeld, in Hebrew), *Maariv*, November 23, 1962; Schwartz, Yigal, Interview with Aharon Appelfeld, in Hebrew, מילים ודמויות (Filmed In-depth Interviews with the Major Jewish Authors and Thinkers of our Day, December 1992, and others; Roth, Philip, "Walking the Way of the Survivor—A Talk with Aharon Appelfeld", *The New York Times*, February 28, 1988.
120. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, Translated by Leon S. Roudiez, 1982.
121. See also, in this regard, Kremer, Shalom, 1962. "Aharon Appelfeld: Reality and Legend in His Stories" In ריאליזם ושברתו (*Realism and its Destruction*): 203-13. Ramat Gan: Masada and Agudat Hasofrim; Rav Ata, Devora, 1997. יסודות מיתיים ביצירת אפלפלד (*Mythical Foundations in Aharon Appelfeld's Writings*), Doctoral Thesis. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University; Barzel, Hillel, 1974. עולם המראות של אהרון אפלפלד (Aharon Appelfeld's World of Mirrors), In *Metarealistic Hebrew Fiction*: 125-48. Ramat Gan: Masada. Ynon Wygoda, "On Silence: A Journey between the Banks of the Helta River", lecture at the Conference on Appelfeld's Work upon his Reaching Age Eighty, Tel Aviv University, May 30-31, 2012.
122. See also in this context the comments of Ralph Freedman on the affinity between what he calls "the lyrical novel" and the symbolic hero in the allegorical novel. Freedman Ralph, *The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Herman Hesse, André Gide, and Virginia Woolf*. Princeton University Press, 1963: 42-94; Schwartz, Yigal, "Holocaust Literature: Myth, History and Literature" in *Literary Responses to Mass Violence*, Brandeis University Press. 2004: 97-107.

ABSTRACTS

Many researchers and critics have employed the notion of "lyrical prose" in order to describe Appelfeld's style, yet nobody so far attempted to critically examine this description. In my

intervention, I shall attempt to re-examine the notion of "lyrical prose" by relating it to different levels in Appelfeld's prose as well as to his general poetics and worldview.

Des nombreux chercheurs et critiques ont employé le syntagme « prose lyrique » pour décrire le style d'Aharon Appelfeld, mais personne n'a fait l'effort de soumettre cette idée à un examen critique. Dans cet article, je me propose de réexaminer la notion de « prose lyrique » en relation avec les différents niveaux d'écriture, ainsi qu'en relation avec l'*ars poetica* et la conception du monde d'Appelfeld.

“לאפיון סגנונו של אהרן לירית פרוזה” רבים הם המבקרים וחוקרי הספרות המשתמשים במושג אפלפלד ואולם עד כה לא נעשה שום נסיון לבדוק הנחה זו באורח ביקורתי. מטרתו של המאמר “שלופואטיקה ארס” הוא לבחון את המונח ביחס לרמות השונות של כתיבתו של אפלפלד, ל ולתפישת עולמו.

INDEX

Subjects: littérature

Mots-clés: Appelfeld Aharon (1932-), prose lyrique, motif, chronique d'une mort annoncée, Fumée, Badenheim 1939

אפלפלד, מוטיב, פרוזה לירית, כרוניקה של מוות ידוע מראש, עשן, לאט, באדנהיים **מילות מפתח:**

עיר נופש

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