"We Don't Understand this Present": Shimon Adaf's *Shadrach* and the Possibilities of Hebrew Language

« Nous ne comprenons pas ce présent » : Shadrach de Shimon Adaf et les possibilités de la langue hébraïque

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The fiction is already there.
The writer's task is to invent reality.[1]

If man is ever to solve that problem
of politics in practice he will have to
approach it through the problem of
the aesthetic, because it is only through
Beauty that man makes his way to Freedom.[2]

1   Shimon Adaf, born in 1972, is an acclaimed Israeli writer. He has published fifteen books so far: three of poetry,[3] ten of prose,[4] a book of conversations with the author Lavie Tidhar[5] and a volume of essays about Israeli Literature.[6] Adaf is renowned not only for the wide range of genres he has written in—poetry, science-fiction, detective novels and more—but, also, for his ability to combine them in an innovative way. Most of Adaf's novels encompass and blend several genres in a fusion between reality and fantasy operating on different levels. For this reason, his works are usually hard to categorize and his blurring the lines between reality and fantasy is a rare political and aesthetic stance in Israeli literature, which tends to prefer realistic modes

of writing and representations.[7] Moreover, Adaf's usage of language has always been innovative and radical.[8]

2   In this article, I intend to present Adaf's post-apocalyptic novella, *Shadrach*, and the two ways in which it represents Hebrew language: as a memory or relic of the past, on the one hand, and as a source of constant renewal, on the other. My aim is to claim that only through a meaningful encounter with an Other, a synthesis between the past and the future might occur, making thus possible the innovation of Hebrew language itself.

3   Even though it is connected to the Rose of Judea trilogy,[9] *Shadrach* is a combination of three sub-genres that are close in nature but different in their characteristics and it does not belong purely to any of them. The sub-genres are: post-apocalyptic, dystopia[10] and science fiction. Like most post-apocalyptic novels, *Shadrach* is concerned with what follows after an apocalyptic event; Adaf portrays the future of the state of Israel as a dystopia, but, in regard to Hebrew language, *Shadrach* can be read both as dystopic and utopic, as I will show further on. Moreover, its fascination with technology and speculative technological developments, alongside encounters with otherness, ties the novella to science fiction narratives.

4   At the beginning of the novella, taking place in the Future, Shadrach, who lives in "Hagola Tel Aviv," goes to visit his mother's family in "New Sderot" for the summer. While being there, a catastrophic event occurs: Israel is bombed by the Zen-Americans (the two major world powers at the time), with nano-gas, making the inhabitants crazy, zombie-like:

> Peaceful-faced Zionists, but with a gleam of madness in their eyes, attack one another, tearing with their teeth, their nails, slaughtering, and the blood, their blood, other's blood, does not stop. Flowing veins.[11]

> ציונים שלווי פנים, אבל ברק טירוף ממלא את עיניהם, מתנפלים זה על זה, קורעים בשיניים, בציפורניים, שוחטים, והדם, שלהם, של אחרים, לא עוצר, ורידים שותתים

5   The inhabitants of "New Sderot" are saved from this attack because of the protection dome that covers the city and Gaza. Shadrach is saved, but he loses his family, his parents and sister, who remained in "Hagola Tel Aviv." Catastrophes, cataclysms, the apocalypse, are all moments that create a rupture in time. They separate, as James Berger writes, "what comes before from what comes after. All preceding history seems to lead up to and set the stage for such events, and all that follows emerges out of that central cataclysm. [...] new understandings of the world are generated. Apocalypse thus, finally, has an interpretive, explanatory function, which is, of course, its etymological sense: as revelation, unveiling, uncovering."[12] After the catastrophe, Shadrach stays in "New Sderot."

6   Years go by, and Shadrach volunteers to go through a unique process called Seraphizing (from the word Seraph, *Histarfut* in Hebrew: השתרפות), so he can be sent to the past, to the simulated consciousness of another person and collect information.

7   He is sent back to 1987, to the consciousness of Hannania, a 15-year-old boy. Only, something goes wrong. He realizes this is not a simulation anymore. Shadrach actually shares Hannania's consciousness. He is trapped there and tries to understand why. The supposedly safe journey Shadrach was about to take to a simulation of the past, has become a one-way journey with an unknown destination. Not an Odyssean journey but an Abrahamic one, following the juxtaposition made by Levinas: "The Odyssean Paradigm is thus based on the return of the movement to its own origin; the Abrahamic journey is a departure from origin without the possibility of recuperation."[13]

8   The Novella tells these two stories in alternation, the story of Shadrach in the years after the catastrophe in "New Sderot," and the shared story of Shadrach and Hannania, in the past of "Old Sderot."

9   The name, Shadrach, is taken from the book of Daniel. In this context, it is the Babylonian name given to Hannania, mentioned in the book of Daniel.[14] Following this line of interpretation, Hannania and Shadrach are the same person. Here Adaf plays with the biblical story, and though, at least at the beginning, Hannania and Shadrach are separate characters, as the narrative develops Shadrach becomes a part of Hannania's consciousness and they eventually become one being, "Shadrachannania"["שדרכנניה"], thus re-creating, in a way, the biblical story.[15]

10   In "New Sderot" of the future, people live without memory of the past. "New Sderot" was rebuilt and reconstructed after a prior catastrophe as told in *Desert Generation*[דור"] a story published before, ["במדבר]*Shadrach*, being sort of a draft for the novella. "The old costumes ruined the world."[16] After that a small group of survivors, the pioneers of the moon-colonies, rebuilt the ruins, but they limited the information given to the new inhabitants, "without the terrible memory, without the old costumes."[17] The limited knowledge of the past explains why the Hebrew Language the inhabitants use is emptied from its meaning and past etymologies. They use old Hebrew names and words that for the Hebrew reader can be full of meaning, but since the inhabitants are disconnected from Hebrew texts, from the etymology of the Hebrew language, Hebrew is emptied from its fraught and burdensome history. Even when words and symbols appear from the past somehow, like the return of repressed memories, they are no longer recognizable:

> [Shadrach's] gaze was locked on the embroidered pattern on the capes of the two walking in front of them. An equilateral triangle, positioned on its vertex, crossed by a similar triangle, standing on its base. The sign showed up just recently, and it was called, Shadrach's father claimed it was an invention, Magen David [Shield of David]. Inside it, confined an eye, looking back at him from the robe. Above the sign arched an inscription: El Shaday [The Almighty]. Gods and demons, Shadrach knew, were imaginary terrors from the ancient stories that fed the old customs. In the book of chronicles they learned from at school, it said that they were some kind of reasoning for destruction, ideas of arbitrary cruelty.[18]

> מבטו היה מרותק אל דוגמת הרקמה שעל גבי גלימותיהם של השניים שהלכו לפניהם, משולש שווה צלעות, שניצב על קודקודו, צלוב על משולש דומה, שניצב על בסיסו. הסמל צץ רק לאחרונה, וכונה, אביו של שדרך טען שמדובר בהמצאה, מגן דויד. בתוכו נכלאה עין, שניבטה אליו חזרה מן הגלימה, ומעליו התקשתה הכתובת אל שדי. גם אלים וגם שדים, ידע שדרך, הם ביעותי דמיון מהסיפורים העתיקים שהזינו את המנהגים הישנים. בספר התולדות שלמדו בבית הספר נכתב שהם היו מעין סיבות להרס, רעיונות של אכזריות שרירותית.

11   It seems that the residents of "New Sderot" are living the reality of Gershom Scholem's prophecy as described in his famous letter to Franz Rosenzweig:

> Indeed, people here don't know what they are doing. They believe they have secularized the language, pulled out its apocalyptic thorn. But this is surely not true; this secularization of the language is only a *façon de parler*, a holy phrase. It is absolutely impossible to empty out the words filled to bursting, or only at the cost of the language itself. This ghostly speech [sic] that we speak here in the streets signifies precisely the linguistic world devoid of expression in which the secularization of language could alone be possible.[19]

12   It seems almost like Scholem's description is exaggerated and reconsidered through the speculative narrative Adaf creates in Shadrach.

13   Hebrew language seems to be made from hollow, empty words, used only for communication, with no past, with no religious meaning—a completely secularized language. Moreover, Shadrach and his friends, like Mishael, Eliphaz, Bildad, Kazvi and Tuval are precisely the children that Scholem describes. They seem to embody the questions raised by Scholem in the following passage:

> If we transmit to our children the language that has been transmitted to us, if we, the transitional generation, bring the language of the ancient books to life in them in such a way that it may disclose itself anew to them—must then not one day the religious force of this language break out against its speakers? And which generation will be struck by this outbreak?[20]

14   Scholem is concerned with the Secularization of Hebrew language. In his view, it cannot be secularized at all. The words carry in them their true, religious force and nature, and one day, they might break out of their shell and consume its speakers. Scholem describes this situation as walking blind on the edge of the abyss. As long as we blindly use this hollow language, we should be fine. It is the opening of the eyes that brings us to our fall:

> For us, we live within that language above an abyss, most of us with steadiness of blind men. But when we regain our sight, we or our descendants, shall we not fall into that abyss?[21]

15   Thus, underneath the catastrophe described in the novella, lies another catastrophe from long ago. The catastrophe described in the novella is the exact moment when the eyes open, staring at the abyss, while it stares back.

16   As in all post-apocalyptic literature, as Berger says: "The end itself, the moment of cataclysm, is only part of the point of apocalyptic writing. The apocalypse as eschaton is just as importantly the vehicle for clearing away the world as it is and making possible the post-apocalyptic paradise or wasteland."[22] Likewise Adaf portrays options of filling the huge loss the catastrophe created. In my interpretation, the novella suggests three main options, two of which revolve around lingual options, specifically for Hebrew, while the third evades language altogether. Post-apocalyptic and dystopic literature tends to deal with language—and its speculative changes and usages: "The centrality of language and its relationship to individual freedom and state control constitutes the most comprehensive distinction between dystopia and science fiction proper."[23]

17   The first option is turning to the past, portrayed as a political and sociological option. It has a strong connection to the now lost past. After the catastrophe in "New Sderot," there is a movement that gains power: a movement that wishes to go back and find the old texts, understand the language they speak, rebuild the old customs they have no memory of. The catastrophe raises the collective need for memory, tradition and old gestures to hold on to, and creating a dynasty which will give the unstable present roots and thus steadiness in the past. Zamir, one of the leaders of "New Sderot" and a believer in the restoration movement speaks in front of New Sderot's People, saying that in order to understand the present, they need to understand the past:

> They tell us about this present all the time. [...] But we, said Zamir, do not understand this present. Many of you came here wearing the capes of the Keepers of the Heritage of Zion [KHZ], we call our government, "the Zionist government," but what do these expressions mean? Yes, they tell us that these expressions originate in the ancient stories, but what exactly is the source? Our children infuse into them the Ten Sfirot [Ten Spheres], we say, Beit David [House of David], we say Zera Malchoot [Seed of Kings], and the words fill with gravity, concreteness,

importance. Where do they come from, if we don't actually know from our experience the gravity, concreteness, importance? [...] I think we won't know anything for sure if we don't bring back the old customs.[24]

מספרים לנו את ההווה שלנו כל הזמן. [...] אבל אנחנו, אמר זמיר, לא מבינים את ההווה הזה. רבים מכם באו הנה לבושים בגלימות של שומרי מסורת ציון, השלטון שלנו קרוי בפינו הממשלה הציונית, מה פירושם של הביטויים הללו? כן, מספרים לנו שמקורם בסיפורים העתיקים, אבל מה בדיוק המקור? ילדינו מערים לתוכם את עשר הספירות, אנחנו אומרים בית דוד, אומרים זרע מלכות והמילים מתמלאות בעבורנו כובד, משקל, חשיבות. מנין הם נובעים, אם אנחנו לא באמת מכירים מניסיוננו את הכובד, המשקל, החשיבות? [...] אני חושב שלא נדע דבר לאשורו אם לא נשיב על כנם את המנהגים הישנים.

18 And further on:

What about the history which we don't remember [said Zamir], the past that returns to us in fractions of visions and dreams? Our mourning is deeper than that, sending roots to ancient days, but we don't know what is the past which gives it depth, we mourn it today as well.[25]

ומה לגבי ההיסטוריה שאנחנו לא זוכרים [אמר זמיר], העבר שחוזר אלינו בשברי מראות וחלומות? האבל שלנו עמוק מזה, שולח שורשים אל ימים קדומים, אלא שאיננו יודעים מה העבר שמשווה לו את העומק, אנחנו מתאבלים עליו גם היום.

19 Zamir suggests an old custom he found in ancient stories: the Shivaa, and through his guidance, "New Sderot" goes through the old custom of mourning. But for Shadrach, the old-new tradition that is forced upon him feels empty and hollow. After Zamir describes what they will do:

Shadrach was filled with disappointment. What, that's it?, he thought. But what did he expect. He didn't want this custom.
[...]
Shadrach was forced to sit Shivaa. They wanted him to cry. He cried. They wanted him to tell stories about his parents and sister, so he did, he told, everything that came up to his mind without warning. Walks, conversations, small gestures. But he didn't tell the important things, the smells, the images, the textures that he incorporated in his ecological bubbles.[26]

שדרך נמלא אכזבה. מה, זהו? חשב. אבל למה ציפה. הוא לא רצה את המנהג הזה.
[...]
שדרך אולץ לשבת שבעה. רצו שהוא יבכה. הוא בכה. רצו שהוא יספר על הוריו ואחותו. הוא סיפר, כל מה שצץ ללא התראה בתודעתו. טיולים, שיחות, מחוות קטנות. אבל הוא לא סיפר את הדברים החשובים, את הריחות, התמונות, המרקמים ששילב בבועות האקולוגיות שלו.

20 Bringing up the past and its customs, without context, just for the sake of repetition, seems empty to Shadrach. He goes through the motions as it were, faking the emotions, but his actions are empty from meaning and provide no comfort. They lack the realness of his memories, the tangibility of his private memories. Shadrach is therefore unimpressed by collective memory and its possibilities and the attempts to bring back the past. Is memory not important for Shadrach? Does he simply give it up? The answer is no, but, for him, memory is something different than just reviving a past no longer connected to the present. Memory, for Shadrach is private. He returns again and again to the memories of his family. He goes back to the memories of the summer when he lost them. But instead of looking for comfort and meaning in the past, he finds them in aesthetic creation of the ecological bubbles mentioned at the end of the quote.

21 When Shadrach arrives to "New Sderot" at the age of twelve, he is fascinated and mesmerized by the ecological bubbles he sees there. They are closed ecological systems holding different organic elements which combine and alter each other in a perfect and

precise symbiosis. They are engineered and completely man-made, but the creations inside is alive, recreated again and again in each cycle. Several years after the catastrophe, Shadrach wants to create similar bubbles by himself, inserting bits and pieces from his deepest memories of his lost past and family: "[Shadrach] tried to incorporate in them details that will reflect, in some way, moments that grew more intense in his memory since the attack."[27] The creation of the ecological systems is thus the second option for dealing with the catastrophe and loss of the past which is presented in the novella.

22 After Shadrach rejects the option for dealing with memory put forth by Zamir and the attempt to revive the past with now-foreign rituals, he turns to a different, non-lingual option that it relies on private memory and experience, and it is artistic and aesthetic in its nature. It also uses relics from Shadrach's past, but in the bubbles, they are only a part of the whole, elements in a new creation, not just recreations of the past which Shadrach sees as an empty repetition. The memories from the past Shadrach inserts function as triggers, but they do not remain closed and untouched, they develop into something else, living and new, towards the future.

23 This aesthetic act can be easily seen as a metaphor for writing itself, turning the whole novella into a kind of ecological bubble, which mixes memory and past with speculations of the future, a unique combination of memory and desire, morphing them into an aesthetic creation.

24 As we saw in the previously discussed quote by Gershom Scholem describing the children—as in those who do not know any other language other than the "secularized," "empty" language they were taught. In them, Scholem sees the greatest danger and loss.[28] Adaf, however, thorough Shadrach, offers an alternative to the Scholem's bleak prophecy about the Hebrew language. Shadrach also presents another option of thinking about this "empty" Hebrew language, through his relationship with Nahardauu (נהרדעֵֵ::).

25 Shadrach meets Nahardauu, a moon inhabitant who originated from earth. Moon inhabitants have been living there for decades and developed to be non-gendered beings. In that aspect, they are completely other to humans, which are mostly gendered. Although, without religion to control their behavior, in the time of "New Sderot," the approach to sexuality is free from inhibitions and restrictions, Hebrew language is still known for being "a sex-maniac" language, as the poet Yona Volach described it.[29] Every word, every noun is gendered, either male or female, even after it has been emptied from its past meanings. How does Shadrach approach Nahardauu without being able or even wanting to define him/her as a specific gender? Before they meet, Shadrach watches Nahardauu from a distance, studying him/her. Shadrach wants to ask him/her for his/her name and sex but he decides:

> No! The name and sex need to be revealed in some other way, to be given, not in a way that will give them a grip and actuality in the inside world, without them having existence on the outside. Wait!!![30]

> לא! צריך שהשם והמין יתגלו באופן אחר, יינתנו, לא בדרך שתקנה להם אחיזה וממשות בעולם הפנימי, מבלי שיהיו להם עוד קיום בחוץ. לחכות!!!

26 Shadrach decides to respect the complete other he encounters, not labeling him/her in a way that will confine him/her in a narrow definition only for his convenience. Shadrach not only meets another person or being, but he comes to know complete otherness,[31] and falls in love with him/her.

27   In *Shadrach* and "New Sderot," sex and sexual relationships of all kinds are trivialized. It can be seen as an exaggerated situation to what is happening to love and sexual relationships in our current society according to Han:

> In recent years, the end of love has been announced many times. Love, the claim goes, is foundering because of endless freedom of choice, the overabundance of options, and the compulsion for perfection. In a world of unlimited possibilities, love itself represents an impossibility. [...] The crisis of love does not derive from too many *others* so much as from the erosion of the Other. [...] In fact, the vanishing of the other is a dramatic process – even though, fatefully enough, it largely escapes notice.[32]

28   Science fiction, when dealing with alien creatures and speculative encounters, is a perfect genre for dealing with otherness as a concept, not only "others": "The use of the Other, and the use of fundamental ability *to* other, are methods by which SF has evolved into a legitimate cultural discourse."[33] In that aspect, Shadrach's relationship with Nahardauu as an Other is truly erotic, in the sense that it transcends physical passion and keeps the Otherness of the Other intact. The other is thus truly desired: "desire is something different from both wanting and needing."[34] "Desire is always desire for the Other."[35]

29   The encounter between Shadrach and Nahardauu is similar to what Han describes as a "moment of truth:"

> Moment of "truth;" it introduces a new and entirely different way of being into the habit of *habiter*, the situation at hand. It gives rise to something that circumstances cannot account for. It interrupts the Same in favor of the Other. The essence of the event is the negativity of rapture, which allows something wholly Other to begin. Eventfulness connects love with politics and art. They all command "fidelity" to the event. This transcendental fidelity may be understood as a universal quality of eros.
> [36]

30   This unique encounter between Shadrach and Nahardauu is manifested in language. After they meet, Shadrach asks Nahardauu to teach him to speak with him/her correctly, prompting Nahardauu to give him a set of rules to modify Hebrew in an ungendered way, and Nahardauu obliges:[37]

Illustration 1

<div dir="rtl">

שדרך הביט בהוראות שקיבל.

גוף ראשון: אֲנִי, אֲנַחְנוּ.

גוף שני: אַנְתְּ, אַנְתַּן.

גוף שלישי: הֵן, הֵמָן.

כינוי שייכות: של+כינוי הגוף (הא׳ וה׳ נשמטות: שֶׁלָּנְתָ, שֶׁלָּנְתַן,
שֶׁלִּי, שֶׁלַּמָן), מלבד בגוף ראשון שנותר בלא שינוי מהעברית
הממוגדרת (שלי, שלנו).

כן הוא הדין בכינוי במושא ישיר (את+כינוי גוף שני או שלישי
בהשמטה הנחוצה) ובכינוי במושא עקיף (אל, ל), וכו׳.

ריבוי של שמות עצם בסיומת ׳ין׳ (עצין, מנורין, חלונין, ציפורין).

שם המספר תמיד בנטיית הנקבה של העברית הממוגדרת.

פעלים ותארים מוטים באותו אופן:

בעבר ובעתיד צורת הבסיס של הפועל היא גוף שלישי זכר יחיד
של העברית הממוגדרת.

בהווה צורת הבסיס של הפועל היא גוף שלישי נקבה יחיד של
העברית הממוגדרת. ת׳ וה׳ בסוף ההטיה נשמטות.

צורת הבסיס של התואר היא צורת הזכר יחיד של העברית
הממוגדרת.

לצורת הבסיס נוסף העיצור ׳ז׳ בסופה. וההברה שההתנועה שלה
נקבעת על פי היבט הנוכחות של הנושא (שאינו ניתן לשמיטה) של
הפעולה או התואר. התנועה המציינת את היבט הנוכחות מתווספת
גם לשמות הפרטיים (במקרה של שמות פרטיים התנועה מצויה
בתוך ההסגר ::. זרקָא‏ הוא טעם המקרא של השמות הפרטיים). אלו
ההברות לפי הגוף:

גוף ראשון: א, אם.

גוף שני: ת, תם.

גוף שלישי: ה, הם.

</div>

31 What Adaf actually does when inventing this speculative, non-gendered Hebrew in the novella, is a form of language invention, or "conlang."[38] The term "conlang" was coined in 1991, in the first gathering of language creators. It is a portmanteau of the words "constructed" and "language."[39] Basically, it is "any language that has been consciously created by one or more individuals in its fullest form is a conlang, so long as either the intent or the result of the creation process is a fully functional linguistic system," such as, for example, Esperanto.[40]

32 In his book, David Peterson gives a glossary of terms related to language invention. For instance—Modern Hebrew is considered a "Natlang," a natural language, "which is any of the languages that happen to exist in the world and evolved naturally […]. It also includes revitalization projects like modern Hawaiian and Modern Hebrew. […] The point of emphasis is the nature of the origin of the system."[41]

33 Peterson describes the wave of language creation which began in the 20th Century, which is "known as the artistic language (or artlang) movement. Though early works of fantasy or satire would often feature bits of supposedly fictional languages (cf. Jonathan Swift, James Cabell, [etc.]). The first widely known author to use a more or less fully constructed language was J. R. R. Tolkien."[42]

34 The non-gendered Hebrew Adaf creates in *Shadrach* can be defined as what Peterson calls "fictional language," which is "a language that's supposed to exist in a given fictional context [and] supposed to be real in their respective fictional contexts;"[43] or "artlang," "short of 'artistic language,' […] a conlang created for aesthetic, fictional, or otherwise artistic purposes."[44]

35 The difference between the conlangs Peterson describes and Adaf's Hebrew—such as Tolkien's conlang—is that the Israeli author did not create a whole new language out of nothing, such as other *a priori* conlangs. [45] Rather, Adaf inserts modifications to

contemporary Hebrew language in a way that allows it to <u>contain and include</u> the speculative conditions which Adaf sets in this novella, creating non-gendered Hebrew is "an *a posteriori* conlang [...] whose grammar and vocabulary are drawn from an existing source."[46] He expands the possibilities of Hebrew language by inventing a grammar which can be used and recognized as part of the Hebrew language.

36   Adaf creates a transformation: the ancient Hebrew language, the sex-maniac language which forgot its past, is able to renew and transform. The encounter with otherness, and a true desire to speak with it in an accurate and respectful way, leads to development of language. Erotic desire pushes Shadrach forward to creation and invention, pushing the old to re-invent itself and forget its restrictions: "the other does not mark the boundaries of intelligibility; the fact that the other 'overflows' does not impose the burden of failure upon language, but hints at his alterity with respect to language, an alterity which can leave its trace only in language. [...] Alterity does not negate language, but affirms it with all its ways of saying the other and infinity."[47] This act reaffirms the validity of language, in opposition to Scholem's claims which only sees disastrous outcomes in the modern use of Hebrew language.

37   Like in his ecological bubbles, Hebrew can also morph into the future, not only go back to its roots. Inserting the aesthetic, creative and erotic aspect (through otherness) to it enables it to become something new with new possibilities. Not just empty words which need the past to have significance, a process that happens through the deep and meaningful encounter with the Other.

38   Essentially, this becomes the third option presented in the novella, which is actually a synthesis of the former two. The synthesis only happens after the profound, significant encounter with an Other. This speculative non-gendered Hebrew is also a utopic island in this dystopic narrative, and also an answer to Scholem's grim prophecy.[48] This "hollow" language is not only a place of annihilation and destruction, but also of creation and innovation, describing a utopic locus, where a true encounter with Otherness can occur.

39   To describe this process briefly, when there is a need for meaning and comfort after a great loss or a catastrophe, the process and options are as follows: the first option is to go back to the past, to revive the old meanings and to try to find a meaning for the present by connecting to the past. This option is connected to the political realm and portrayed as artificial. The second option, the aesthetic option, is to create something new from the present and the lost, to morph them into objects of beauty. It is portrayed as personal and creative. The combination of the two, taking the old language and morphing it into something new, is the synthesis of the two. However, this can only happen through a significant meeting with an Other which allows language to evolve. This meeting is what differentiates Shadrach's aesthetic act in creating his bubbles from that of creating a language: the bubbles are closed units. They can also be broken, as the ones Shadrach saw in "New Sderot" broken,[49] yet language endures. Even though their relationship does not last, the new language, which was used for their unique relationship, remains afterwards. This enables Hebrew to be a living language.

40   The same can be said about Shadrach and Hannania: without knowledge and memory of the past, of the biblical story of Shadrach and Hannania, the futuristic and speculative story of Shadrach and Hannania lacks meaning. The whole meaning of the story is revealed only through the synthesis of past and future.

41 According to my reading of Adaf's *Shadrach* the ability to reinvent a language, to push it to its limits and transform it, doesn't come from remaining in the past, but through a real meeting with an Other or otherness, with the speculative, which demands you to cross boundaries you didn't know existed.

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NOTES

1. CSICSERY-RONAY, 1992, p. 28. Quote found *in* LEVITTE HARTEN, 2016, p. 91.

2. SCHILLER, 1967, p. 9.

3. *Icarus' Monologue* (1997); *That Which I Thought Shadow Is The Real Body* (2002); *Aviva-No* (2009).

4. *One Mile and Two Days Before Sunset* (2004); *A Mere Mortal* (2006*); Sunburnt Faces* (2008); *Nuntia* (2010); *Mox Nox* (2011); *De Urbibus Inferis* (2012), *The Wedding Gifts* (2014); *A Detective's Complaint* (2015); *Shadrach* (2017); *Tolle Lege* (2017).

5. *Art and War: Poetry, Pulp and Politics* (2016).

6. *Je suis des autres* (2018).

7. See, for instance, HAREEVEN, 2013, pp. 39-55.

8. For more about Adaf's unique use of language, mostly in poetry, see LEMBERGER, 2017, pp. 267-329.

9. Rose of Judea Trilogy: *Nuntia* (2010); *Mox Nox* (2011); *De Urbibus Inferis* (2012). Since the publication of the trilogy Adaf published several short stories and *Shadrach* which develop some ideas and narratives relating to the trilogy.

10. About dystopias in contemporary Israeli literature, see KATZ, 2015, pp. 92-112.

11. ADAF, 2017, p. 28. All translation from *Shadrach* are mine. I thank Simon Adaf for his comments on the translations.

12. BERGER, 1999, p. 5. Regarding Apocalyse in the context of modern Hebrew literature see CASPI, 2013, pp. 11-16; 38-43.

13. ZIAREK, 1989, p. 218.

14. "Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego." Book of Daniel, 1, 6-7, King James translation.

וַיְהִי בָהֶם, מִבְּנֵי יְהוּדָה--דָּנִיֵּאל חֲנַנְיָה, מִישָׁאֵל וַעֲזַרְיָה וַיָּשֶׂם לָהֶם שַׂר הַסָּרִיסִים, שֵׁמוֹת; וַיָּשֶׂם לְדָנִיֵּאל בֵּלְטְשַׁאצַּר, וְלַחֲנַנְיָה שַׁדְרַךְ, וּלְמִישָׁאֵל מֵישַׁךְ, וְלַעֲזַרְיָה עֲבֵד נְגוֹ (דניאל, א, ו-ז).

15. Aᴅᴀꜰ, 2017, p. 153. This second narrative is of course very important to the novella, but in this article, I will focus mainly on the futuristic narrative, since it is more relevant to the representations of Hebrew language and its possibilities.

16. Aᴅᴀꜰ, 2012, pp. 64-65.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Aᴅᴀꜰ, 2017, p. 12.

19. Sᴄʜᴏʟᴇᴍ, 1990, p. 431.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. Bᴇʀɢᴇʀ, 1999, p. 6.

23. Sɪsᴋ, 1979, p. 79.

24. Aᴅᴀꜰ, 2017, p. 49.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

28. "The Zionist attempt to transform Hebrew, the language that carries God's words, into a spoken and useful language, is an enterprise with horrific implications. [...] The secular amnesia that [Scholem] attributes to Zionism is 'a terrible threat', a metaphysical danger.", Sʜᴀʜᴀʀ, 2008, p. 301.

29. "Hebrew is a sex-maniac," Vᴏʟᴀᴄʜ, 1985, p. 17.

30. Aᴅᴀꜰ, 2017, p. 87. Levinas: "the relation with the Other is a relation with mystery.", Lᴇᴠɪɴᴀs, 2014, pp. 44-45.

31. In Hebrew: "התוודעות לאחרות". Aᴅᴀꜰ, 2017, p. 121.

32. Hᴀɴ, 2017, p. 1.

33. Kᴇʀsʟᴀᴋᴇ, 2007, p. 14. Adaf also makes the distinction between other-persons and the other: "other-persons are who I am not, but are already imbedded in the sociologic code, immersed in it. The other is someone who is still out of context in which he can be deciphered. (Adaf, 2018, 60) [Hebrew]"

34. Hᴀɴ, 2017, p. 37.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Hᴀɴ, 2017, p. 45.

37. Aᴅᴀꜰ, 2017, p. 98.

38. For a review of invented languages since the 12th century until the 21st century see Pᴇᴛᴇʀsᴏɴ, 2015, pp. 7-12. For a full glossary of terms related to language invention see Pᴇᴛᴇʀsᴏɴ, 2015, pp. 18-23.

39. Pᴇᴛᴇʀsᴏɴ, 2015, p. 11.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

41. Pᴇᴛᴇʀsᴏɴ, 2015, p. 19.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

46. *Ibid.*

47. Ziarek, 1989, p. 222.

48. If Scholem's prophecy is dystopic than Adaf's non-gendered language is utopic, creating an ideal possibility for Hebrew language through the meeting with otherness. There is also a connection between otherness and utopia in Levinas's thought: "since the other has no place, he is u-topic *par excellence*" (Ziarek, 1989, p. 214).

49. Adaf, 2017, p. 94.

ABSTRACTS

In this article, I wish to present Shimon Adaf's post-apocalyptic novella, *Shadrach*, and the two ways in which it represents Hebrew language: as a memory or relic of the past on one hand, and as a source of constant renewal on the other. What I would like to claim is that only through meaningful encounter with an Other, a synthesis between the past and the future can occur, making innovation of Hebrew language possible.

Je souhaite présenter dans cet article le court roman post-apocalyptique de Shimon Adaf, Shadrach, ainsi que les deux aspects sous lesquels y est représentée la langue hébraïque : d'une part comme souvenir et vestige du passé et d'autre part, comme source de renouvellement. Mon propos est de montrer que seule une rencontre significative avec l'Autre permet une synthèse entre le passé et l'avenir, rendant ainsi possible le renouvellement de la langue hébraïque.

במאמר זה אני אציג את הנובלה הפוסט-אפוקליפטית שדרך של שמעון אדף, ואת שתי הדרכים בהן מיוצגת בה השפה העברית: כזיכרון או כשריד מן העבר מצד אחד, וכמקור להתחדשות ומטאמורפוזה מצד שני. טענתי היא, שרק דרך מפגש משמעותי עם האחר ועם האחרות, יכולה להיווצר סינתזה בין העבר והעתיד, סינתזה שהופכת את התחדשותה של השפה העברית לאפשרית.

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