Reading Candide, and the Talking Raven in the Dream: Trying to Make Sense of an Episode in Agnon's *Ad Henna* (*To This Day*)

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1. People Calling Like a Raven

Nissan (2011) discussed three Jewish folktales, in a forum in humour studies. The second of these tales is a *Predigtschwank:* the setting is apparently Baghdad (the original locale of the tradents of the tale) is a prankster rabbi, Ḥakhām Zambarṭūṭ. He once bet with friends of his, that on the next Saturday, the congregation would be crowing like crows. He kept his word. That Saturday, he read in public the pentateuchal weekly portion, which was *Qedoshim,* and when he got to *Leviticus* 19:28, which proscribes having oneself tattooed, he read the word for 'tattoo', *qa'aqá'* (קַעֲקַע), as though it was *qa'qá'* (קַעֲקַע). Immediately, the congregants shouted to correct him: *Qa'aqá'! Qa'aqá'! Qa'aqá'!* Bear in mind that both /q/ and /'/ are pronounced back in the throat (respectively, the voiceless uvular stop, and the voiced pharyngeal fricative), and that in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic, the name for 'crow' is *bqē'*.

2. Bird Calls Interpreted as Human Utterances

The crowing congregants in the folktale instantiate a reversal of the motif of bird speech, [1] and in particular, of bird calls being understood as an utterance of one or more words in the same language of the speech community in whose midst a tale is told. There are instances of bird calls being understood as an utterance in one's own language, within a spectrum spanning from texts by learned authors, to the common sense of rural people.

Discussing Latin *cras* 'tomorrow', Leo Spitzer pointed out (Spitzer 1944, p. 156, fn. 3): "Spanish *cras* survives in the fourteenth-century *Libro de buen amor* thanks to a pun with the onomatopeic *cras* (= the 'cawing' of the raven)." Perhaps the Latin word *cras* was used, rather than an obsolete Spanish word *cras.* It must be said however that already in late antiquity, the crow was to Christians a symbol for such persons who, lusting after this-worldly pleasures, keep putting off their conversion. Such pro*cras*tination was likened to the cowing of a crow, onomatopoeically rendered as *Cras, cras* ("Tomorrow, tomorrow").

The interpretation of bird calls has on occasion even resulted in a literary work, to which spiritual significance has been ascribed. The calls of various bird species were interpreted as Tibetan utterances. They appear in a Tibetan sacred text of teaching ascribed to birds, *Bya chos rin-chen 'phreng-ba,* of which there exist translations into English, French, German, and two into Italian. [2] For example, the Wagtail utters: "gTing-ring", i.e., "Very deep". The peacock utters: "Kog-go", i.e., "One is deprived". The red-beaked *'jol-mo* (either *Leiotrix lutea,* or *Hypsipetes madagascariensis,* both of them from the Himalayas) utters "bCud long" (pronounce: "Čü lon"), i.e., "Seize the

essence". That book purportedly incorporates the teaching of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Mercy, who had taken the form of a cuckoo and instructed the birds on the Himalayas in the Buddhist way of living and thinking.

Different cultures and languages sometimes approximate the calls of given birds quite differently. Take the entry for *Koukouriakos* (i.e., the cock, usually *Alektōr*) in Geoffrey's Arnott's (2007) glossary of ancient to Byzantine Greek bird names: "According to Du Cange's glossary [of 1688], this was a Byzantine word for a male domestic Fowl (Alektōr, q.v.), presumably based on its 'Cock-a-doodle-doo' call" (Arnott 2007, p. 119). What children in Israel learn to refer to by *kukuriku,* English-speakers know as *Cock-a-doodle-doo* indeed. Some practical guides for birdwatchers still approximate bird calls as words. Such is the case of the *Collins Field Guide [to] Birds of Britain & Europe* (Peterson et al. 1993, 5th edition)". Rendition in words of bird-calls is subjective and language- and culture-bound; it is still found in some field guides, yet ornithological papers have turned to objective recordings as diagrams.[3]

British folklore goes further, and identifies with some utterance divided into separate words, preferably an English utterance, the calls of given bird kinds (we are not talking about Linnaean species, in folk-zoology). For example, Cocker and Mabey's (2005) *Birds Britannica,* at the entry for the Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), states on p. 355 that this bird delivers its song "with a bold, loud, bell-like clarity" interpreted as happiness. "In the 1920s Lord Grey noted that one common phrase resembles the words 'did-he-do-it'." Cocker and Mabey further remarked (*ibid.*): "The resemblance to human phrases

compounds the sense of a bird almost directly communicating with us."

The entry for the Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*) in *Birds Britannica* claims on p. 362:

> *The first bird ever to be seen in Britain was thought to be saying, 'is it safe? is it safe? see what you mean, see what you mean', but the version that best expresses its personality was coined by George Yeates: 'What-yer ... what-yer ... what-yer ... come-and-see-me-bet you-don't ... bet you don't'.*[4]

This penchant for approximating bird calls as verbal utterances in English is sometimes also reflected in poetry. The entry for the Wood lark (*Lullula aroborea*) in *Birds Britannica* mentions on p. 308 that *The Woodlark,* a poem by Gerald Manley Hopkins, starts: "*Teevo cheevo cheevio chee:* / O where, what can that be?", and ends: "With a sweet joy of a sweet joy, / Sweet, of a sweet, of a sweet joy / Of a sweet — a sweet — sweet — joy." On p. 375, in the entry for the Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), *Birds Britannica* states that in John Clare's poem *The March Nightingale,* it is claimed that a listener cannot distinguish the nightingale's from the backcap's call, rendered as 'Sweet-jug-jug-jug'.

3. Ascribed Human Utterances, vs. Hebrew Imitation of the Call of the Raven

Some members of Corvidae are known to be able to emulate some simple human utterances albeit nowhere as well as the parrots and the mynas would do (the latter two are the subject of Nissan, in press).

Cocker and Mabey's (2005) *Birds Britannica,* p. 410, quotes from an email contribution by John Cooper, who related about a man who had a jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*) in a town near Scarborough: "The bloke there had a tame jackdaw and when you knocked on the door it would hop up to your feet and I swear it would say, 'Door Jack, Jack door'. It caused us great mirth [...]".

Consider however the raven's own calls. In Scotland, a rook (*Corvus frugilegus*) is called *Craa* (Cocker and Mabey 2005, pp. 411, 415). Thus, the name for the bird resembles its call. This is also the case of a few regional or historical names from Britain for various species of the family *Corvidae,* reflecting particular calls associated with them (Cocker and Mabey 2005). *Cràula* is an Italian regional name for *Corvus corone* — the carrion crow, which in standard Italian is called *cornacchia nera* — and *Corvus frugilegus,* i.e., the rook, which in standard Italian is called *corvo*. The base of the rook's bill is bone-coloured, whereas the bill of the carrion crow is black, making this bird entirely black. Also in English, rooks and [carrion] crows have often been confused for each other; for example, the idiomatic phrase *as the crow flies* befits rooks, as pointed out by Cocker and Mabey (2005, p. 412). They also remarked (*ibid.,* p. 413):

> *'Caw' is invariably used to describe the calls of both birds, but rook and carrion crow have strikingly different vocalisations. Rook, derived from an Old English word hroc, is onomatopoeic in origin, but 'krah' is a better transliteration of the principal note and is perfectly rendered in the Scottish vernacular name 'Craa'. It captures something of the drawn-out nasal 'r'*

> *sound that is som much a part of the rook's voice. Yet the species also has a wider repertoire — Edmund Sealous claimed to identify 30 different notes — and in concert the deep sonorous calls have a euphonious quality that is hardly ever associated with the carrion crow's harder tones.*

Within American literature, consider Edgar Allan Poe's 1845 poem *The Raven.* Ze'ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, the Revisionist Zionist leader, translated that poem into Hebrew. Poe's raven's call of doom, "Nevermore", was rendered by Jabotinsky into Hebrew as *'Ad ein dor,* i.e., literally, "Until there will be no more generations". This is not imitative of the call of the raven. Quite simply, a raven is made to say a human utterance of particular significance.

This is rather like when the poet Ḥaim Naḥman Bialik, in his famous poem 'Between the River Euphrates and the River Tigris' (בין נהר פרת ונהר חדקל, *Bein Nhar Prat u-Nhar Ḥiddekel*) has these lines, given here along with my own transliteration and translation:

רִיפַת דִּיפַת וּמוֹרִיפַת —
כָּכָה שָׂחָה הַדּוּכִיפַת:
לַיְלָה אָטוּס אֶל בֵּית דּוֹדֵךְ
וַאֲגַלֶּה לוֹ אֶת־סוֹדֵךְ.

Rífas, Dífas u-Morífas —	"Riphath, Diphath, and Moriphath" —
kókho sókho hadikhífas:	Thus spoke the hoopoe:
láylo ótis él bays déydeykh	"By night I'll fly to your beloved's

vágaléy ley es séydeykh.	house and I'll discolose to him your secret".

Bialik quite deliberately departed altogether from any attempt to imitate lexically an actual call of a given bird kind (here, the hoopoe). *Muriphath* or *Moriphath* is a word in an incantation, found in the Munich MS of tractate *Shabbat,* 67a, of the *Babylonian Talmud.* Riphat is a people mentioned in the Table of Nations (*Genesis,* 10:3), and is called *Diphath* in the parallel passage in *1 Chronicles,* 1:6. Cf. in the *Book of Josippon* (from the tenth century): "Riphat are Britannos (בריטנוס) who dwell in the land of Bretagne (ברטניא) on the River Leire [i.e., Loire] (לירא)".[5]

Sadan (1989, pp. 353-354) discussed how, in the first published version of that same poem, Bialik was apparently inspired by a Yiddish folksong, and instead of "*Rífas, Dífas u-Morífas — / kókho sókho hadikhífas:*" those two lines were

לַחַשׁ־נַחַשׁ כּוֹס שֶׁל בְּרָכָה

הַדּוּכִיפַת כָּכָה שָׂחָה

Lakhash-nachash, kos shel brokhc	"Spell of divining, a cup o:
—	blessing" —
hadikhífas kókho sókho	The hoopoe thus spoke:

In Modern Hebrew literature, on occasion one finds the raven's call adapted into *Raq ra'*! ("Only evil!"). An adaptation that would perhaps come more "naturally" is to *qra'*, for 'tear up!' (cf. "Tear up the evil decreed against us!", in the Jewish New Year's Day and Day of

Atonement prayers). As we are going to see in the Sec. 5, Agnon has some less obvious elaboration on the call of the raven.

4. Agnon's *'Ad Henna / Thus Far m/ To This Day*

Shmuel Yosef Agnon is known by the acronym of his Hebrew initials as Shai Agnon. He was born Samuel Josef Czaczkes in Buczacz, Galicia, in 1888, and died in Jerusalem in 1970. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1966. Agnon lived in Germany in 1913–1924, and in Palestine both before that (in 1907–1913) and afterwards. Agnon's book *'Ad Henna* (*Thus Far,* עד הנה) is a collection of stories, including 'Thus Far', 'As the Day Begins' (עם כניסת היום), 'Tehillah' (תהלה), 'One Night' (לילה מן הלילות), 'Oath of Allegiance' (שבועת אמונים), 'Solomon Was Very Wise' (ותרב חכמת שלמה), 'The Garment' (המלבוש), 'Fernheim' (פרנהיים), 'He of the Bull' (אבי השור), and 'Iddo and 'Enam' (עידו ועינם).

As to *'Ad Henna / Thus Far,* the first item in the collection, a short novel, it is concerned with the narrator wandering among Germany's cities — and inside Berlin: the narrator wanders from rented room to rented room in a city with a severe wartime housing shortage — and both his own routine and the persons he is confronted with reflect the disintegration of German social life because of the First World War. The plot ends with the narrator going to Palestine. Once published, *Thus Far,* which unlike Agnon's other writings was organised as reporting, was likened to the writings of Franz Kafka, James Joyce, Robert Musil, and Hermann Baruch (cf. Laor 1998, pp. 457-459). The 2008 English translation by Hillel Halkin is entitled *To This Day.*

Bear in mind that when eventually Agnon went back to Palestine, in October 1924, this was after on 6 June 1924 in Bad Homburg a fire (apparently set by a neighbour in order to cheat his insurer) totally destroyed the manuscripts of Agnon's writings from the German period, as well as his library of about 4000 books. A novel that was about to be published was lost. Afterwards that trauma coloured his perception of his German period, which started in 1912, four years after his first immigration to Palestine. (Actually his Jerusalem house and his writings found there, have been damaged again by the 1929 riots.) The presence of Germany in Agnon's writings is the subject of Weiss et al. (2010).

5. Agnon's Raven in the Dream

Sometimes, the narrator in Agnon's narratives reports a dream. For example, in *Ba-Chanuto shel Mar Lublin*, the autobiographical narrator relates at one point that he is kidnapped from his room in Saxony by two men who bring him into the presence of a well-disposed Charlemagne, who talks to the narrator about the elephant the the Caliph in Baghdad had sent to him with a Jewish emissary (which is a historical fact).

In Agnon's *'Ad Henna* (*To This Day*), there is a dream about a raven, highly symbolic and befitting what has been called Agnon's magic realism. The passage appears on p. 129 in the 1952 and 1953 edition. I give it in my own translation:

> *Once I came into my room, I sat down and read Voltaire's book on the best of [all possible] worlds. Reading brought about sleep, and sleep brought about a*

dream. In my dream, I saw myself strolling about in a little valley under Baalbek, and I saw an old crow perched on top of a tree, taking out his head from under his wings, and calling: "'Arb, 'arb, 'arb", the [letter] 'ayin open [= with the diacritic mark pataḥ for an "a"; it can also be understood as "an open eye"], the [letter] resh with a schwa [i.e., the r is not followed by any vowel], and the [letter] beit with a dagesh [thus, causing it to be pronounced as b instead of a v]. And even though that old one resembled Voltaire, I knew he was not Voltaire. He put forth his beak/nose, and told me: "Did you hear how I call? I call 'Arb, 'arb, 'arb, whereas you, you figured out I call arp, arp, arp, therefore I tell you, 'Arb, 'arb, 'arb, the 'ayin open, the resh with a schwa, and the beit with a dagesh, and it was because of those calls that Adam named me 'oreb. Therefore, they do well, those who pronounce the fricative beit at the end of a syllable as though it had a dagesh [thus, a b, not a v]. Incidentally, how come one never sees you either on the Sea of Galilee, nor on the River Jordan, nor [for that matter] on any of the waters of the Land of Israel? Do you find you are so [ritually] clean, that you do not need the waters of the Land of Israel?

לכניסתי לחדרי ישבתי וקראתי בספרו של וולטיר על מיטב העולמות. הביאה עמה הקריאה את השינה, והשינה הביאה את החלום. ראיתי עצמי בחלומי מטייל בבקעה אחת למטה מבעל בכי וראיתי עורב זקן עומד בראשו של אילן ומוציא ראשו מבין כנפיו

וקורא ערב ערב ערב, עין פתוחה, ריש שוואית, בית דגושה. ואף על פי שאותו הזקן דומה לוולטיר יודע הייתי שאינו וולטיר. הוציא את חרטומו ואמר לי, שמעת היאך אני קורא, קורא אני ערב ערב ערב, ואתה הוי אתה דמית שאני קורא ארפ ארפ ארפ, ובכן אומר אני לך, ערב ערב ערב, עין פתוחה ריש שוואית ובית דגושה, ועל שם אותן הקריאות קרא לי אדם הראשון עורב. מכאן שיפה עושין אותם שמבטאים בית רפויה שבסוף התיבה כבית דגושה. אגב, מה זה שאין רואין אותך לא בכנרת ולא בירדן ולא בשום מים ממימי ארץ ישראל, כל כך אתה מוצא את עצמך טהור שאין אתה צריך למימי ארץ ישראל.

Hillel Weiss discussed this passage, about the raven in the dream, in an article (Weiss 2002). Nitza Ben-Dov provided a discussion of this passage in a book of hers (1997). In her book about Agnon's fiction, *Unhappy / Unapproved Loves* (**אהבות לא מאושרות**), three chapters (starting on p. 11) are about Agnon's *'Ad Henna.* She discussed the passage quoted above on pp. 96-97. This is within a chapter entitled 'A Dream about a Home: The Zionist Home' (**חלום של בית, החלום הציוני**).

6. The Raven's Expounding Hebrew Spelling

The call "'Arb, 'arb, 'arb" of the raven in the passage about the dream is written by using the three Hebrew letters *'ayin, resh,* and *beit,* whereas the name for 'crow' is written as a sequence of the letters *'ayin, vav, resh, beit.* Agnon avoids resorting to diacritic marks for vowels, and prefers to describe those diacritic marks in the text.

Now consider "whereas you, you figured out I call *arp, arp, arp*". This is spelled with the letters *aleph, resh,* and *pe.* It could be taken to be the shortened form of the future tense, first person singular, for "I shall release my hold". There is no need to thing of La Fontaine's raven's releasing its hold of the cheese once flattered by the fox into singing. Agnon's raven is by no means stupid. Rather, the raven in the dream may be claiming "whereas you, you figured out I call *arp, arp, arp*" in order to disabuse him of the hope or expectation of being released from his current predicament. His predicament is his being stranded in Germany. Nevertheless, the raven suggests to the narrator that going back to the Land of Israel should be on his mind indeed. He needs to cleanse himself (says the raven, a ritually unclean bird). Right before the pssage quoted earlier, Agnon's narrator claims he read Voltaire's book because the smell of dog excrements dissuaded him from concerning himself with his own manuscripts (in Hebrew, the holy tongue). We know that eventually Agnon would go back to Palestine, but without his manuscripts, burnt in a fire.

The sentence "Therefore, they do well, those who pronounce the fricative *beit* (see below) at the end of a syllable as though it had a *dagesh*" (thus, a *b,* not a *v*) has already been discussed in the literature, e.g. by Ben-Dov (1997). Among the Jewish pioneers of Jewish modern resettlement of the Galilee, there was for a while a trend to pronounce Hebrew differently from how it was pronounced in Jerusalem or Jaffa. This was in order to create a regional variety. They used to abolish the [v] allophone of the Hebrew phoneme /b/, so that its only phonetic value could be [b]. Therefore, they would pronounce the word for `flies' (the plural noun) as *zbubím* instead of *zvuvím* in Israeli Hebrew, or *zvívim* in the old Ashkenazi pronunciation, or *zebubím* in the

traditional, liturgical Iraqi pronunciation of Hebrew, or *zevuvím* in the traditional Sephardic pronunciation, or *zevuvímme* or *zevuvímə* in the traditional Italian pronunciation.

The Hebrew letters *beit* and *pe,* corresponding to the phonemes /b/ and /p/, when between two vowels and not doubled, or when at the end of a syllable, respectively yield the allophones [v] and [f] (these are fricative consonants — respectively the voiced labio-dental fricative, and the voiceless labio-dental fricative — as opposed to the phonetic values [b] and [p], which are the voiced and the voiceless bilabial stops). The "Galilean" pronunciation with which Jewish pioneers from Eastern Europe experimented in late-Ottoman Palestine did away with the allophone [v], so that the phoneme /b/ always had the phonetic value [b], whatever its position inside a word.

Perhaps they were influenced by Arabic, that only has the phonetic value [b] for its phoneme /b/. Arabic does not possess the phonetic value [v]. The same is also true of the Iraqi Jewish liturgical pronunciation of Hebrew, which does not possess the phonetic value [v], because the phoneme /p/ always results in the phonetic value [p], and because the phoneme /w/ is pronounced as [w], the voiced bilabial semivowel, whereas the Israeli Hebrew pronunciation of the phoneme /w/ is [v].

7. The Locale Where the Raven's Dreamed Scene is Set

"I saw an old crow perched on top of a tree" is fairly realistic, as crows and magpies tend to perch on the top of a tree or a roof. When Agnon situates the tree with the raven in a valley under Baalbek, he resorts to the Mishnaic name for that Lebanese town, *Ba'al Bekhi* (actually, an

adjective: *shum ba'al bekhi,* "garlic from Baalbek", traditionally understood as "garlic that brings about tears", as though it was an onion). As the raven suggests to the narrator that it is high time he should be back in the Land of Israel, it is remarkable that the tree with the raven is outside the Land of Israel, even though close enough (and actually, in the same late Ottoman Province of Beirut as the Galilee). There is some ambiguity here. The crow is referring to the narrator's being away from Palestine is because during the First World War, Agnon was in Germany: he lived there in 1912-1924, having moved there from still Ottoman Palestine. He travelled to Germany when Arthur ruppin invited him to accompany him there, but Agnon remained there when Ruppin went back to Palestine. The Great War caused the writer to be stranded in that country, rather than remaining by his own choice.

8. The Reference to Voltaire

The most obvious reference in the given passage is to Voltaire's satirising — through the character of ever-optimistic Dr. Pangloss in his 1759 short novel *Candide, ou de l'Optimisme* — of Leibniz's claims concerning this being the best of all possible worlds. Pangloss often uses the phrase "the best of all possible worlds". Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz had introduced the phrase "the best of all possible worlds" (*le meilleur des mondes possibles*) in his 1710 work *Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal* (*Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*). Pangloss is the mentor of Candide, the protagonist of Voltaire's novel. Candide slowly becomes disillusioned, once he is confronted with great hardships experienced out there in the world by

others as well as by himself. The Seven Years' War and the 1755 Lisbon earthquake are frequently referred to, in this *conte philosophique.*

As can be seen, to Iraqi Jews (see our Sec. 1 above) the call of the crow sounded like that bird's name in their Judaeo-Arabic vernacular, and like the word for 'tattooing' in Biblical Hebrew. To Agnon, born in Eastern Europe, the call of the crow was amenable to quite different lexical items, such as the Hebrew name for 'crow', as well as to *arp, arp, arp,* which according to the morphology of Biblical Hebrew, is a shortened form of *arpe,* 'I shall release my hold', 'I shall let go'.

The distinction between *intentio auctoris* (what the author intended), *intentio operis* (what the work itself intends), and *intentio lectoris* (what the reader intends) is famously the subject of an essay by Umberto Eco (1990). This distinction is unexceptional in literary studies. Overintepreting texts (the subject of Eco 1992) was defended by Jonathan Culler between the same two covers (Culler 1992).

There is no need to determine whether Agnon himself thought of French *vol* 'flight' (or 'theft'! — but his crow is not a magpie, *'orév laqḥán,* or, to the zoologists, *'orév hanneḥalím*), and of Arabic *ṭayr* (*ṭēr*) 'bird', as a wordplay on *Voltaire,* even though as a Jerusalemite Agnon probably knew the Arabism *ṭayyāra* (at present in standard Modern Arabic, especially 'airplane') in substandard Hebrew for 'kite' (a toy children would fly: Standard Israeli Hebrew calls this toy *'afifón*), for us, the readers, to better savour

Voltaire "=" *vol* 'flight' + *ṭayr* 'bird'

This mock-equation makes it apt that Voltaire is said by Agnon's narrator to resemble the bird perched on top of the tree. This exempts Agnon from persisting in an identification with Voltaire: arguably, the world Voltaire decries, as well as Voltaire himself, are ugly, like a raven. The raven in the dream is however explicitly stated to only resemble Voltaire. But the raven in the dream turns out instead to be a Jewish character conversant with Hebrew spelling, with the prioneers' pronunciation of Hebrew in the Galilee, and with the narrator's need for purification, *qua* Jew.

9. Is How Voltaire Actually Looked Like, Relevant for Agnon's Statement?

Agnon's narrator claims he knew that the crow wasn't Voltaire, while admitting that it resembled Voltaire. Perhaps this alludes to Voltaire's rather prominent nose, being likened to the beak not of an eagle (it wasn't aquiline), but of a crow. Contrast Figures 1, 2, and 3. There is no need for us to assume that Agnon was aware of any of those images, but based on the internal evidence of the passage considered, it is safe to assume that he knew Voltaire's likeness.

Concerning Charles Le Brun's studies of human and animal heads, Gerald Blaney explains (1999, pp. 61-62):

> *From René Descartes, Le Brun appropriated the physiological structure of his theory — the reduction of the passions to a formula. Descartes believed that the soul which was ethereal worked in the pineal gland in the centre of the brain. The soul controlled the reactions of the body through the motions of the pineal gland. Being near to the brain, the face should then be the*

index of the mind. Charles maintained that the concupiscible and irascible passions were the same as the simple and mixed passions, including: Love, Hate, Desire, Aversion, Pleasure and Pain. Le Brun's ideas were flexible and not prescriptions to be followed to the letter. They are prototypical expressions — the signs that characterise a face at the apex of pure emotion. J. Montagu writes:

> *Just as the description of prototypical emotions are intended to aid recognition of the most intense emotion, but also of lesser degrees of the same emotion, so Le Brun's descriptions were intended as an aid to representing them ... the prototypical emotions are always extreme, so too are Le Brun's.*

However, these are not models from which no deviation is allowed. In medicine, one had to know the essential temperament of a patient because the disease acted differently according to the individual; the same with the passions and according to age, rank and character. Le Brun's theory was based both on the heads of ancient rulers and philosophers (whose characters were weli known) and the comparison of the heads of men and animals. His ideas may have corne from Giovanni Battista della Porta's Della fisionomia dell'huomo, and the pseudo-Aristotelian theory which attempted to divine the character of man £rom his resemblance to an animal

whose character is given by ancient lore, bestiaries, etc., for example Le Brun's Horse and Horse-Man [...]

Interests in human shape distortion resulted in the Neapolitan Giambattista della Porta (1535–1615) drawing plates portraying an animal and alongside, a human face that resembles it. His main continuator in drawing such plates was to be Charles Le Brun (1619 – 1690) indeed.

Giambattista della Porta was an eclectic author. He was a dramatist (mostly authoring comedies), as well as a writer on natural magic, that is to say, the study of the inexplicable forces of nature — a popular subject in the Renaissance — and the borders between natural magic and science were blurred. He wrote e.g. on topics in physics. He was also was also interested in automata: he presented his own original contribution to the subject, as well as discussing ideas from the writings of Hero of Alexandria in his *Pneumaticorum Libri Tres* (Naples, 1601). Hero's writings became available during the Renaissance indeed.

The Middle Ages showed interest for the monstrous and the deformed (Williams 1996). This was different from the early modern interests that resulted in cabinets of curiosity. Art historian Jurgis Baltrušaitis[6] (1989) has described the evolution, in Western art after the Middle Ages, of drawings that try to mediate between human and animal physiognomy. Baltrušaitis (1989) rather resorts to the term 'aberration' (as in 'astronomical aberration') to indicate the discrepancies between images which in morphing would be the first one and the last one in the sequence of frames (also see Anamorphic Art by Baltrušaitis 1976). The early modern era saw some authors draw lion-like human faces (Leonardo da Vinci did), or quite

literally sheepish human faces, or eagle-like human faces, and so forth: Giambattista della Porta produced several such images.

By the end of the eighteenth century, interest arose about drawing tables of evolving faces: Petrus Camper in 1791 drew a table titled "Change in facial angle, from monkey to Apollo" (Fig. 27, pp. 40-41 in Baltrušaitis 1989). Then in 1803, Johann Caspar Lavater drew a table titled "From frog to Apollo"[7] (Fig. 30, pp. 46-47 in Baltrušaitis 1989). Camper's idea can be linked to both the later ideas of species evolution,[8] and the visual idea of phantasmagoria (Robinson 1991) as a precursor of cinematography.[9] As Baltrušaitis points out, from the early nineteenth century human animalisation often made its appearance in the visual arts, such as in political cartoons.[10]

10. The Wordplay *Candide* vs. the Black Raven, with a Digression on the Crow in the Pseudo-Clementines

As already mentioned in this article, the book by Voltaire to which the passage from Agnon refers — the one the narrator was reading before he fell asleep and dreamt up the scene with the crow — is *Candide.* In fact, that is Voltaire's work that takes issue with the theodicy of Leibniz. The literal sense of the French adjective *candide* is 'white' as well as 'candid'. Arguably it is important to realise that the blackness of the raven is in contrast to the literal sense of *candide.*

The blackness of the crow is sometimes contrasted to whiteness, across cultures. For example, take the fourth-century Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies.* Annette Reed (2008) has discussed its treatment of heresiology.[11] "The *Homilies* also treat pre-Christian

and non-Christian traditions as 'heresy', but they do so according to different principle. This is the Law of Syzygy (esp. 2.15-18; 3.59), a concept central and distinctive to the *Homilies*" (Reed, *ibid.,* pp. 283-284). *Syzygy* means pairing, or pairs[12] (the Hebrew rendition would be *zivvúg,* but Reed also remarks about its being a technical astronomical term as well, e.g., in Ptolemy's *Almagest,* 5.1, 10). Reed (ibid., p. 285) provides an example, excerpted here, from the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies,* 2.16-17; Peter is said to have told his followers that just as the Creator "made the heavens first and then the earth, so also He constituted all the syzyges [*tas suzugias*] in order"; furthermore:

> *Therefore from Adam [...] there sprang first the unrighteous Cain and then the righteous Abel. Again, from him who amongst you is called Deucalion [i.e., Noah], two forms of spirit were sent forth, the impure and the pure, first the black raven and then the white dove.*[13] *From Abraham also, the patriarchs of our nation sprang, Ishmael first, then Isaac [...]. And from Isaac himself, likewise, there were two again: Esau the profane, and Jacob the pious. So too, first in birth [...] was the high priest Aaron, then the lawgiver Moses.*[14]

The black raven is considered in the Pseudo-Clementine homilies to have been the syzygetical counterpart for the white dove. Of course, I am not claiming that Agnon knew anything about the Pseudo-Clementines. Nevertheless, it stands to reason that after his narrator's claiming to have been reading a book letting us understand that it is *Candide,* Agnon had a raven character appear in contrast to the whiteness literally conveyed by the name *Candide.* It is significant

that the narrator says: "And even though that old one [i.e., the raven] resembled Voltaire, I knew he was not Voltaire. He put forth his beak/nose, and told me" and so forth.

11. The Raven Putting Forth Its Nose, and the Alleged Identity with Freud: How Far Would This Let Us Go?

The evolution of Agnon from realism focussed on the traditional Jewish lifestyle, into a truly modern writer departing from realism (starting with his collection of five surrealistic short stories, *Sefer Hamma'asim,* ספר המעשים — first published in the nespaper *Davar* in 1932), is typically ascribed to the influence (which he himself denied) of Franz Kafka's and Sigmund Freud's books, which his wife used to keep in her personal library.

Ben-Dov's identification of the crow in Agnon's passage which is the subject of the present study, with Sigmund Freud, calls for some elaboration. The following considerations clearly depart from hers. Consider again: "And even though that old one [i.e., the raven] resembled Voltaire, I knew he was not Voltaire. He put forth his beak/nose, and told me" and so forth.

Should we choose to elaborate about an identification of the raven with Sigmund Freud, what are we to make of "He put forth his beak/nose"? Katz (1999, pp. 455-457), relying upon Gilman (1993, pp. 93–99), discussed Freud's belief in male menstruation (an ailment ascribed in the Middle Ages to the Jews, as an effect of their guilt for the Passion, a parallel to Eve's menstruation following the Fall in the Garden of Eden). Cf. Nissan and Shemesh (2010).

In the early modern period, the ascription of male menstruation persisted, in European culture, being however transferred to the ascription of a prevalence of piles among male Jews (Kassouf 1998). To Freud, male bleeding expressed itself in nosebleeding. That much emerged in the context of Freud's exchange of ideas with his bizarre friend Fliess. It was a belief that was in turn grounded in the nineteenth-century "quite vigorous pseudo-scientific discussion about the size of noses and the relation of this organ to racial types" (Katz, *ibid.,* p. 457). The nose, and the Jewish nose in particular, have been discussed by Sander Gilman in a few of his publications (Gilman 1994, 1999, 2001a, 2001b).

Wilhelm Fliess (1858-1928), the Berlin-based ear, nose and throat specialist best known for his correspondence with Sigmund Freud, developed in about 1897 ideas about "a periodic cycle in both men and women, and, even more bizarrely, a connection in all humans between the nose and the genitalia" (Katz, *ibid.,* p. 455). The principle of recapitulation from nineteenth-century embryology was at the root of such ideas, and was itself in some relation to the theory of evolution. Freud carried observations on his own somatic phenomena, and in his correspondence with Fliess ascribed them to male menstruation. "Freud therefore not only identified male menstruation in himself, but also premenstrual tension" (Katz 1999, p. 456). "As with the nose question, here too Freud could cite the authority of learned contemporaries. A number of learned articles had appeared in French, English, Italian, and German, all attesting to male menstruation." (*ibid.*). Moreover (Katz, *ibid.,* p. 456): "The notion of Jewish male menstruation, as we have seen, was hardly new, and was even a commonplace. The innovation of Freud and

Fliess was to argue that, far from being a unique bodily peculiarity of Jews, it was a common, if usually unrecognized, physical characteristic of men everywhere."

12. Laban, "the White One", as the Epitome of Wickedness According to Agnon

There is one more point I would like to make, and here, too, I differ from Ben-Dov's identification of the crow in Agnon's given passage with Sigmund Freud. Consider that the literal sense of the name of Laban, Jacob's wily uncle, father-in-law, host, exploiter, and persecutor, is 'white'. Agnon elsewhere made Laban into the epitome of wickedness. This was in *Ha'esh ve-ha-'etsim* **האש והעצים** - **ספר תכלית המעשים** (*The Fire and the Wood:* a reference to Isaac's questioning Abraham before his sacrifice). That heavily symbolic book has rabbis engaged in conversation on a train, whose last stop eventually turns out to be an extermination camp). In its part entitled *Yissurei haddá'at* **יסורי הדעת** (*The Torments of Knowledge*), on p. 229, one reads:

וידעו שצרה ממשמשת ובאה שכל הרשעות כולה
מרשעותו של לבן היא יונקת.

And they knew that dire straits were about to happen,
because all wickedness suckles from the wickedness of Laban.

13. A Smoking Gun: Agnon's Enmeshing in Environmental Coprology. His Treatment of Books by Voltaire and by Schiller

In *'Ad Henna,* the narrator lives in various places, but he conveys the idea of uncomfortable lodging:

> *During the Great War, I used to reside in the western part of Berlin. In a little Bed & Breakfast, in the street of the B&Bs, I found for myself a room and a balcony. The room was small, and likewise the balcony. But a person like me, who knows how to contain his expectations, finds there a home and lodging.*
>
> **בימות המלחמה הגדולה דרתי במערבה של ברלין. בפנסיון קטן ברחוב הפסיונים מצאתי לי חדר וגזוזטרא. קטן היה החדר, כיוצא בו הגזוזטרא. אבל אדם שכמותי שיודע לצמצם עצמו מוצא בהם בית ודירה.**

It is important to consider where, earlier in the context of the episode of Voltaire's book and the raven in the dream, Agnon's first-person narrator mentioned Voltaire's book. The time is the First World War, and the place, in Germany, is the room that Agnon's autobiographical narrator rented from a couple who keep fighting, and this results in violence between those spouses; sometimes, the narrator intervenes when they use implements which could lead to manslaughter. For example, their son, an interior designer, fallen during the war, had bought furniture for himself, and the seller tries to repossess it. The wife wants the husband to commit perjury, stating he saw his son make payment, but the husband refuses, lest he would go to prison. His wife insults him, and says it would bother nobody if he rots in prison, and the man beats her.

This is reason enough for Agnon to ironically invoke the theme of the best of all possible worlds, and Voltaire's response to it in *Candide.* Agnon however first mentions the book along with the smell of dog excrements:

> *While a clean breeze comes in from outside, the smell of dog excrements comes in from the house. I still did not know that the landlady used to raise small dogs in order to sell them. Because of that smell, I stopped being concerned with my own writings, and I took one of Voltaire's books I found in the room, and read in it about the best (lit.: the most suitable/nicest) of [all possible] worlds. This is not the title its author gave the book, but it is rather I who, because of its subject, called it that way.*
>
> **עד שרוח צחה מנשבת מן החוץ ריח של צואת כלבים בא מן הבית. ועדיין לא ידעתי שבעלת הבית מגדלת כלבים קטנים למכירה. ומחמת אותו הריח סילקתי דעתי מכתבי ונטלתי לי ספר מספרי וולטיר שמצאתי בחדר וקראתי בו על היפה שבעולמות. לא זה השם שקרא המחבר לספר, אלא אני על שם עניינו קראתי לו כך.**

Mention of excreta along with a book is most certainly Agnon's taking revenge on Voltaire because of the latter's notorious antisemitism. This is also what Agnon did to Schiller, for the very same reason. The Alexandrine Hellenistic counterhistory of the Jews so pleased Schiller, that he made a book of his own out of it. Hebrew novelist Agnon, in whose writings mentions of Schiller occur about thirty times, most often pointing to Schiller's poetry embodying the

pride of German culture (and often involving a very positive attitude to Schiller on the part of Jewish characters, and arguably also of the narrator),[15] took his revenge on Schiller because of the latter's book inspired by Apion. Agnon had Herbst, the German-born, Jerusalem-based professor who is the male protagonist of the novel *Shira,* refer to an episode when he was in the trenches during the First World War, and pages torn from the first edition of that work by Schiller were used as toilet paper by a soldier. The passage occurs on p. 434 in the 1949 edition of the novel:

> **ומעשה פעם אחת ראה שתלש חייל דפים מספר לשם צרכיו. נסתכל וראה שהספר שליחות משה הוא לשילר הוצאה ראשונה. גער בו וצעק אידיוט שכמותך עד כדי כך אתה מזלזל בפייטננו הגדול שילר. אמר החייל, סבור הייתי מספרי היהודים הוא מאותם שהרבינרים עושים. בפתאום ניטלה כל שלוותו של הרבסט והחווירו פניו ורגזו כל עצביו, שמא כשהוא מטפל בקלסיקונים בשביל כריכותיהם יכולים להתעלם ממנו דפוסים ראשונים לספרים יקרי המציאות.**
>
> *Once he [Herbst] saw that a soldier had torn some pages from abook to use them as toilet paper. He had a look, and realised that it was the book Moses' Mission by Schiller, first edition. He reprimanded him and shouted: "You idiot! Such is the contempt you have for our great poet, Schiller!" The soldier retorted: "I thought that is was some Jews' book, one of those that rabbis write." Out of the blue, Herbst lost his peace entirely, his face paled and his nerves were irked, how come while he was concerned with the classics for their covers, first editions of rare books may escape him.*[16]

Of course, here Agnon was poking fun at Herbst, not only Schiller: one may have expected to read, following "Out of the blue, Herbst entirely lost his peace, his face paled and his nerves were irked", that it dawned upon him that he was risking his life for a Germany that could never accept him as a Jew, and that what is most sacred to the Jews is worth at most for use as toilet paper. By contrast, one discovers that Herbst cultural and professional makeup is such, that his concern rather was with the ruined first edition of Schiller's book, and what this implied about Herbst's own proficiency as uncovering such rare books.

Gerschom Schocken, in an essay mainly devoted to leprosy as being a theme in Agnon's novel *Shirah* and in his short story 'Forever' (*'Ad 'olam*), remarked in Hebrew (Schoken 1992 [1978], p. 393):

> *This is one out of hundreds tales by Agnon about books, about collecting books, and about the fate of books. A book, an author, and a tale. [The latter is the title of one of Agnon's books: a collection of anecdotes.] But what has Moses' Mission by Schiller to do with the present context? At first sight it would appear to be the case that this is a randomly chosen bibliographical entry, in whose place Agnon may have as well mentioned some other book. On closer examination of that awkward work by Schiller, a different picture emerges.*
>
> *Friedrich Schiller, as known, had problems making the ends meet, during most of his life. When, at the age of thirty, he was made untenured professor of history at the University of Jena (with no salary from the university), his meagre income from students' fee wasn't enough for*

him to eke a living for himself and the young woman he was then about to marry. Therefore, Schiller found himself forced to do some supplementary job in order to raise his income. The work Moses' Mission (which originated from a lecture he gave at the university) is one such jobs. It was written at one swoop and brilliantly, like everything Schiller wrote, but it is not original at all. Schiller himself did not claim it to be original, and cited another German work, published just one year earlier, from which he had drawn "ideas and data". It seems even the work upon which he drew wasn't original, and merely repeated the antisemitic libels by Hellenistic Egyptians including Manetho and others who claims, as known, that monotheism wasn't Moses' innovation, but had always been the belief of the Egyptian priests, who had kept it away from the ignorant masses. Moses would have learnt that belief when he was educated as an Egyptian priest, but being a perfidious Jew he revealed that esoteric belief to the Children of Israel, by popularising it and adding dramatic effects, so that the covenant at Mt. Sinai was just staged.

What matters for our present purposes, which is the reason why Agnon mentioned that text, is that Schiller repeated there extensively the antisemitic Egyptian libel, that leprosy was the national illness of the Children of Israel in Egypt, and that it was because of that illness that the Egyptians isolated and repressed the Children

of Israel. Schiller related that with no reservation at all on his part. He even implied that it was an illness widespread among the Jews up to the present, that is to say, up to Schiller's own times.

This example and others of the appearance of the theme of leprosy in Shirah bear witness to the great importance of that motif for the plot of that novel. And these examples — along with other ones found in other stories by Agnon — also reveal that Agnon had acquired, during his eleven years of residence in Germany, extensive and disparate knowledge of German literature through the ages, of history, and generally speaking of European art.

14. More Benign Passages by Agnon Concerning Schiller

On occasion, Agnon's narrator relates about a conversation he has, and both interlocutors know by heart some poems by each of a number of German poets, starting with Schiller (in the tale Our Young and Our Old, on p. 339 in the 1920 edition of *Kappot haMan'ul*). A given character allegedly knows Schiller's poems by heart even when he is asleep, even though he hasn't read them for years, in the novel *A Guest for the Night,* set in Galicia after the First World War (on p. 315 in the 1938, 1939, 1950, and 1953 editions). A grotesque character is translating the *Pentateuch* from Hebrew into German verse, and keeps on his table an open *Pentateuch* and an open book of Schiller's poems. That same character has in his room an image of Moses with the Tables of the Law, with the Ten

Commandments represented by Roman numerals (*ibid.,* pp. 380-381).

Schiller is quoted along with Heine by a character to the newlyweds and the guests, in Agnon's *A Simple Story* (p. 109 in the 1935 edition of *Kappot haMan'ul*). A couple in love would read poetry to each other, e.g. verse by Schiller (*ibid.,* p. 123). After some doggerel verse in Hebrew, Agnon comments: "Schiller was right: Who didn't write verse when young?" (**יפה אמר שילר, מי לא חיבר שירים בימי נעוריו.** *ibid.,* p. 267); Agnon concedes that perhaps Schiller did not mean a poem like that one, but at any rate it was better than "Orphan", by which Hirschl was used to address his little boy. Agnon pokes fun at acculturation in the following (*ibid.,* pp. 175-176):

> **קורץ בן טובים היה, אלמלא לא הניח מעשי אבותיו היה מגיע למקום אבותיו, אלא שיצא חוץ לשיטה מפני שלמד שילר הרבה. ברם חכמי הגויים שושבינים עצלנים הם והניחוהו באמצע הדרך. אלמלא קצת תורה שלמד בקטנותו ונעשה מלמד תינוקות בבית ספר של הברון הירש לא היתה לו תקומה בעולם.**
>
> *Kurz came from a good family. Hadn't he abandoned his ancestral model, he would have risen to his ancestors' level. But he forayed, because he had much studied Schiller. But the learned ones among the Gentiles are lazy, and left him half way. Hadn't it been for some Jewish learning he had acquired in his young age, and hadn't he become a teacher at Baron Hirsch's [Jewish] school, he would have been lost forever.*

In the short novel *In Mr. Lublin's Shop* (on p. 85 in the 1962 and 1968 editions), an old uncle is made to feel better and is excited at being offered a ticket for a play by Schiller: "A ticket (*peteq*) for the theatre is better than a recipe (*peteq*) of the doctors." This uncle has always loved Schiller, and is familiar with his poetry and plays. But then this uncle becomes very anxious lest they would be late, and once inside the theatre he is anxious lest all seats be taken, lest the play by Schiller was going to be replaced with a play by somebody else, lest he could not see well from his seat, lest somebody sitting in front of him would stand up and hide the performance, and lest people would chat and not let him listen properly:

יפה פתק של תיאטרון מכל פתקין של רופאים. שמעו לעצתה וסובבו עמו את העיר והראו לו כל מחמדיה. אותו היום העלו על הבימה מחזה של שילר. ידעו בו בדודנו שאוהב הוא מנעוריו את שילר וכל שירי שילר ומחזותיו שגורים על פיו. אמרו נלך עמו לתיאטרון ויראה מחזה של שילר. שמע והיה שמח. מרוב שמחתו שכח את מכאוביו. ראה בית גדול ראה ארמון נאה אמר, אין זה כי אם בית התיאטרון וכאן מעלין מחזותיו של שילר. וכשאמרו לו לא כי אלא בית התיאטרון רחוק מכאן היה מתייירא שמא נאחר ולא נראה את המחזה.

הגיע הזמן והגענו לבית התיאטרון. התחיל דודנו מתייירא שמא כבר תפסו את כל המקומות ולא הניחו לו מקום או שמא חזרו בהם השחקנים והחליפו מחזה של שילר במחזה של אחר. אין קץ לכל מיני שמא שהחרידו את לב הזקן. וכשהושבנו אותו במקומו התחיל מתייירא שמא אין מקומו יפה לשמיעה או לראייה, או שמא זה שיושב לפניו יעמוד על רגליו ויסתיר לו, או שמא יסיח אדם עם חבירו ולא ישמע את השחקנים.

In *The Sand Hill,* an awkward pattern on behaviour on the part of one of his characters prompts Agnon to remark: **שילר לא היה כותב את שיריו אלא לריחם של תפוחים רקובים.** "Schiller would only write his poems while smelling rotten apples." (p. 356 in *Kappot haMan'ul,* 1920 edition). In *Till Here* (*'Ad Henna*), Agnon remarks (pp. 165-166 in the 1952 and 1953 editions):

> **לא לחנם משתבחת גרמניא בבתי ספר שבה, שאפילו נשים שמשכירות חדרים מחמת דוחקן יודעות כתב ולשון וחשבון, ויש מהן שיודעות חצי שילר בעל פה, ויודעות לדקלם בכח [עמוד 166] וברגש. יודע היה שילר פייטנם של הגרמנים להשגיר בפיהן של בנות עמו דברים על אומן וצדק ויושר, עד שהן רואות את עצמן כאילו כל המדות הטובות נתונות בידיהן ואין לשום אומה ולשון חלק בהן.**
>
> *It's not for nothing that Germany prides herself in her schools, as even such women who rent rooms because of their limited means are literate and numerate, and some of them known half Schiller by heart, and know how to declaim forcefully and with passion. Schiller, the Germans' poet, knew how to make the women of his people used to utter things about trustfulness, justice, and honesty, so much so that they consider themselves as though they, and no other nation, possess all virtues.*

Schiller was wrong to have Mary Stuart let the commoner Mortimer fall in love with her, Herbst thinks in *Shira* (p. 285 in the 1949 edition); it was so because Schiller only knew German duchesses and princesses, and no real queen (such as the Byzantine empress Herbst

referred to before, and a fabled Norwegian queen to whom he referred right afterwards).

15. Concluding Remarks

We began with a Levantine Jewish folktale about a prank at a synagogue: it causes congregantsd to call out like a raven (Sec. 1). We then discussed how, in various contexts across human cultures, bird calls are sometimes interpreted as human utterances (Sec. 2). We contrasted such literary works, in particular from Modern Hebrew literature, which feature a talking bird but do not try to imitate the call of that bird, to the acription of imitative wording (Sec. 3). We then introduced Agnon's *'Ad Henna* (Sec. 4), and considered in particular a passage therefrom, in which the narrator falls asleep after reading Voltaire. He dreams about a raven resembling Voltaire, but explicitly stated not to be identical with Voltaire (Sec. 5). The raven explains its own calls by suggesting alternative Hebrew spellings (Sec. 6). It then reminds the narrator that he would better cleanse himself in the waters of the Land of Israel (Sec. 5).

We then discussed the symbolism of the scene of the dream being set in Baalbek (Sec. 7), then the reference to Voltaire (Sec. 8). We consider whether Voltaire's looks as traded down are relevant for Agnon's statemement concerning the crow looking like Voltaire, but not being Voltaire; we then digress about Charles Le Brun's study of crow heads and the heads of a man resembling a crow (Sec. 9). We then turn to the contrast between whiteness and a raven's blackness

(with an example from the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*), and note the wordplay Candide vs. the black raven (Sec. 10).

Remarkably, Agnon's narrator refers to Voltaire's book about the best of all possible worlds, and remarks that this is not how Voltaire entitles it. The narrator avoids mentioning the title *Candide.* This makes sense, because Agnon is ironising about the deteriorated relations between the landlady and her husband, even as their son has fallen in the war: a creditor is about to repossess furniuture that the son had bought, and the husband refuses to perjure himself as per his wife's request. Therefore, it makes sense for the narrator to words his reference to Voltaire's book by mentioning the theory Voltaire covered with ridicule, namely, this being the best of all possible worlds. Nevertheless, the appearance of the raven in the dream right after the mention of Voltaire's book, which we know is *Candide,* makes it quite relevant to reflect about the colour of the raven vs. the colour which is the literal sense of the personal name *Candide* (Sec. 10).

As in literary criticism, an identification of the raven with Sigmund Freud was proposed, we probe into such an identification, by considering in particular the text's stating that the raven put forth its nose (i.e., its bill). The raven turns out to be quite Jewish, based on what it tells the narrator. Now, Freud had definitely something to be about noses, and it has been shown in scholarship to be imbued with myths from the history of ideas not only about the Jewish nose, but also with about Jewish male menstruation, which Freud in his correspondence with Fliess tried to universalise (as male nose bleeding: a result of Freud's experimenting with narcotics?), rather than confining it to the Jews (Sec. 11).

We noted moreover that Candide resonates tantalisingly with Agnon idea, stated elsewhere, that Laban (literally, White) is the epitome of wickedness. Agnon's *'Ad Henna* is about the disintegration of the social texture in Germany during the Great War, and throughout his work, Agnon has been concerned with wickedness (*rish'ut,* or rather, in Ashkenazic pronunciation, *rishes*), a concept and a term which according to Agnon often occur in the discourse of German Jews (Sec. 12).

And finally, we uncovered "the smoking gun": Agnon's autobiographical narrator in *'Ad Henna* states that he neglected his own (Hebrew) writings (we know that in 1924, these would have been destroyed by a fire, before Agnon's going back to Palestine). He neglected them after his renewed interest in them, because the smell of dog excrements dissuaded him. Apparently more suitably, the narrator read Voltaire's works he found in his rented room. What stands out, is that excrements are juxtaposed with a work by Voltaire (a sometimes antisemitic author), but this is also what elsewhere Agnon did with a book by Schiller (a likewise, on occasion antisemitic author: in particular, in his book described as being used as toilet paper by a soldier). Was Agnon taking revenge on Voltaire, in the manner he did with Schiller? (Sec. 13). We also enumerate passages by Agnon in which he relates favourably to Schiller's works (Sec. 14).

All in all, this article probes into some apparently thus far untapped aspects or unexploited potential of the episode of the talking raven in the dream, from Agnon's *'Ad Henna.* Agnon is deservedly well-researched. Mopre so than fcan be said about any other modern

writer in Hebrew, Agnon's *opus* is a well that is not going to dry up anytime soon, as far as scholars are concerned.

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Notes:

[1] In the international folklore standard classification of motifs, the motif of bird language is B215.1. Cf. motifs B216 (Knowledge of animal language), J1811.0.1 (Owl's hoot interpreted), K1969.5.1 (Person pretends to know the language of animals: birds, insects, etc.), and J816.1 (King brought to sense of duty by feigned conversation of birds), the latter being the central motif of tale type 908A (the King asks "What is the owl saying?", and a wise minister interprets it so as to show the King the ruinous effects of his policies). There is such a tale in *The Thousand and One Nights.* See Thompson (1955–1958), El-Shamy (2004, 2006).

[2] The English translation is by Edward Conze (1955). Eberhard Julius Dietrich Conze was later known as Edward Conze. His translation was based on Tibetan text edited by Satis Chandra Vidyabhushana, published in Calcutta in 1904, and on the French translation by Henriette Meyer (1953). The German translation is by Otto von Taube (1957). Otto Adolf Alexander Freiherr (i.e., baron) von Taube (b. 1879 in Reval, i.e., Tallinn, in the Estonia, d. 1973 in Gauting, near Munich) was a German novelist, poet, and translator (of Calderon de la Barca, Francis of Assisi, William Blake, Stendhal, and Gabriele D'Annunzio), as well as a jurist, art historian, and biographer (of Rasputin, and eventually of himself). The two Italian editions are by Erberto Lo Bue (1998) and by Enrico Dell'Angelo (1989).

[3] Recorded vocalisations (songs or calls) of birds are analysed by ornithologists by means of *bioacoustic* techniques, which are not metaphorical other than in the sense that *sonagrams* (i.e., diagrams based on frequencies) are graphic metaphors that stand for sounds. There also exists an approach (not normally pursued by biologists) that adopts ethnomusicology as a metaphor; ethnomusicologist and biologist "Peter Szöke [...] met with ornithomusicology. He began recording bird voices [...] as he had been used to collecting folk songs, comparing and analysing them. [...] [W]hat Szöke has found by slowing them down is that bird songs have the same musical structures as known in the music of man [i.e., in folk music or contemporary music]. The record's highlights, I would say, are the slowed down songs of Wood Lark and Hermit Trush, not only sung by the birds themselves but also by the Hungarian opera singer János Tóth without changing the original melodic shape of the bird song" (Auzinger 1988,

p. 245, reviewing the review of a record, Szöke 1987, *The Unknown Music of Birds*).

[4] 'Yer' is dialectal English for 'you' or for 'your'. The following is quoted from the section entitled 'Prosodic Constraints' in Nissan et al. (in press):

> Ethel Rudkin (1938) contributed to the study of English folklore about demonic dog apparitions. In particular, she related: "In 1936, I was attending a course of lectures on Local History at Kirton Lindsey [in Lincolnshire, north of Lincoln]. One evening during the discussion after a lecture, the Black Dog was mentioned, because he has often been seen at Belle Hole, a farm about a mile west of the town." (*ibid.*, p. 114).

Here is one of the episodes she was told by Mrs S. Moore, from Kirton (Rudkin, *ibid.*, pp. 116-117):

> Some thirty years ago, the monthly nurse had been required at Belle Hole. Her time was up and she was returning to Kirton when she had put the other children to bed. As she was giving them their supper, they were talking of the Boggart [= the supernatural Black Dog] — "Aren't yer o' meetin' 'im, miss?" they asked and "wot'l yer do if yer *does* meet im?" and the nurse replied, "I shall put 'im I' my pocket." Later on she was returning to Kirton in the dark, when the Dog appeared and ran round her saying, "Put me in yer pocket, put me in yer pocket." This is the only record of the Dog speaking, and the explanation had probably to do with the railway and the direction of the wind, for if the wind were blowing from the north or the north-west, the wheels on the line possibly accounted for the "put-me-in-yer-pocket, put-me-in-yer-pocket."
>
> It is onomatopoeia, and many alternatives are possible. Trying to rationalize, Rudkin felt able to explain why on the given occasion the babysitter ("monthly nurse") had heard the dog utter repeatedly the given challenge. This is because its stress prosody onomatopoetically matched the sound made by trains. It is a fairly loose constraint, relatively easy to satisfy: it accepts a multitude of alternatives, provided that the sequence of stressed and unstressed syllables is the pattern required. Obviously, there are many more onomatopoeic alternatives to the sound of trains than, say, in the phonetic matching

of Japanese *Do-itashi-mashite* ('you're welcome', responding to 'thank you!') as English *Don't touch a moustache.*

[5] In medieval Italian, France's river Loire used to be called *Lera* (but now, *Loira,* stressed on the *o*). Dante Alighieri, however, called that river *Era.* It was so, because he (or his environment) took the initial [l] to be the definite article. This phenomenon occurs in Romance languages, and is known as the discretion, or deglutination, of the definite article. For example, the standard Italian name for 'nigthtingale' is *usignolo,* cf. Latin *lusciniolus.* The opposite phenomenon (of concretion, or deglutination, of the definite article) also occurs, with a form form with an initial [l] originating from a noun that begins by a vowel, by mistaking the Italian definite article *l'* for the initial consonant of the noun. Both phenomena found also in Romance languages and dialects other than Italo-Romance. For example, in French, 'the ivy' is *le lierre,* which developed by concretion from an older form *l'ierre* (from Latin *hedera*). Rohlfs (1966, §341, pp. 477-478) lists many examples of concretion from Italian dialects, and moreover points out that in Neapolitan, Egypt is called *Naggitto,* by concretion with the preposition *in* for 'in'. Also the opposite phenomenon, i.e., discretion or deglutination of the definite article, occurs rather frequently thoughout the history of Italian and its dialects, with the initial part of a noun being taken to be an adjective or a preposition (*ibid.,* §342, pp. 478-480).

Rohlfs mentions the example of *Era* from Dante, on p. 479. Consider moreover that Dante was from Florence, thus, from Tuscany, and that there is a river called *Era* in Tuscany. It is 60 km long, and is a tributary of the River Arno from the left side. This may have made it easier for him and other Tuscans to assume that the name of the French river was the same. This is a fallacy in which the *Josippon* does not incur, and its author probably pronounced the name of the river as either *Lera,* or *Leira*; the Hebrew transliteration לירא is compatible with both forms.

There exists a Tuscan proverb, criticizing people who all too often refer to the past nostalgically: *L'Era, mal fiume,* i.e., "Era is a bad river", presumably either a river tricky to cross, or one that tends to overflow. This is based on a pun: *era* is also a verbal form, for '[it/he/she] was'. The Israeli writer, translator, and poet Shlonsky exploited such puns in a poem, in which he described a situation as being "between Kvar and Ulay", these being two Mesopotamian rivers mentioned in the Bible, yet whose names

also respectively mean 'already' and 'perhaps' in Hebrew. The name of the river, or channel, Chebar (כְּבָר) is variously folk-etymologized in *Genesis Rabba,* 16; e.g., "because its fruits are large and do not go into the basket" (כְּבָרָה), as translated in Jastrow (1903, p. 619, s.v. כְּבָר I).

[6] The Sorbonne-educated Lithuanian art historian Jurgis Baltrušaitis [Jr.] (1903–1988) lectured at Western universities including the Sorbonne, Yale, and Harvard. His father, Jurgis Baltrušaitis [Sr.] (1873-1944), was a well-known Lithuanian- and Russian-language Symbolist poet and Lithuanian diplomat.

[7] "And having treated separately, albeit on the same level and by employing the same analytical systems, the physiognomy of men and the physiognomy of animals, Lavater ends up by constructing an evaluatory theory. The last, posthumous volume [French version, 1803] shows the successive changes in species, analogous to Camper's table [...] And he proposes his own scale of facial angles, which he dubs 'the line of animality', on which one can see a development that also ends with Apollo, but that begins not with the monkey but with a frog, and that goes through twenty-four rather than eight stages [Fig. 30 in Baltrušaitis 1989]. The creatures that follow the first batrachian head [...] undergo a progressive humanization [...] We are no longer, as in Camper, witnessing a rigorous demonstration based on working drawings from life. Evolution occurs capriciously, with invented creatures, but it includes the same kaleidoscope of human and animal forms" (Baltrušaitis 1989, pp. 44, 46, 48).

[8] We may note that a visual concept of evolution that we are accustomed to associate with Darwinism, and which shaped natural history as well as social views in the age of positivism, actually had its origin in a kind of exercise in art in the age of the French Revolution and Napoleon. The same visual concept can also be linked to the precursors of cinematography (and ultimately with computer animation, and morphing in particular).

[9] This example is given by David Robinson (1991, p. 10): "Most extraordinary however are the three remaining discs, on which Plateau achieves startling three-dimensional illusions. On the simplest of the three a spiral of coloured circles, growing larger as they approach the outer edge of the disc gives a quite psychedelic impression of balls changing colour as they emerge from the centre of the disc to bombard the viewer [...]. On another, snakes wriggle out of a dark hole at the centre of the disc and

disappear over its outer edge [...]. Plateau's masterpiece though is a disc on which demonic green death's heads appear to emerge from an infinite hole, growing larger as they approach and pass the viewer [...]. As a piece of Gothic horror it compares with the Phantasmagoria showpieces of Plateau's fellow-countryman, Etienne Robertson."

[10] "Around 1825 D.-F. Boissey began to specialize in 'singeries', monkeys and apes with human characteristics and vice versa. Then the great artists born at the turn of the century began to make their debuts: Grandville [1803–47], Gavarni [1804–66], Daumier [1808–97], who were all haunted to varying degrees by the bestiality of man and the irruption of political fauna. 'Ménageries' and 'Cabinets d'histoire naturelle' appeared, filled with marvels. Germany, led by Kaulbach, joined the parade. In England, Cruikshank published his 'Zoological sketches' [1834]. The century's 'animal mania' was no passing fashion in satire. It was an obsession that corresponded to a way of thinking and feeling about nature and about life" (Baltrušaitis 1989, p. 37).

[11] "In the history of scholarship on the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions,* heresiological sources have played a pivotal role. The *Homilies* and *Recognitions* offer two different versions of a novel about Clement of Rome, which recounts his conversion, his travels with the apostle Peter, their debates with Simon Magus and his followers, and the providential reunion of Clement's long-lost family. In their redacted forms, the *Homilies* and *Recognitions* both date to the fourth century" (Reed 2008, p. 273). "It is often assumed that these texts were produced and read only on the margin of Christianity, by the Ebionites and groups like them. But, despite Epiphanius' comments about the Ebionite use of similar writings, our ample evidence for the *Nachleben* of the novels speaks to their broad circulation and appeal. By the early fifth century, forms of the Pseudo-Clementine novel had been translated from their original Greek into both Latin and Syriac, and epitomes are now extant in Greek, Arabic, Georgian, and Armenian" (Reed 2008, p. 277).

[12] In ancient Greek, συζῠγία denotes 'pair', 'union', 'company', 'branch bifurcation', 'vein bifurcation', 'couple of leaves', 'marital union', as well as: 'conjugation' or 'declension' (in grammar), 'conjunction' (in astronomy), and 'dipody' (in the metrics of poetry).

[13] There are Christian as well as Jewish traditions which ascribe Noah's crow's behaviour as having been evil. In particular, Christian tradition blames the crow's mission having been unsuccessful on that birds feeding on carrion, and that tradition actually departs from what *Genesis* states, in that it is denied that the crow returned to the Ark (whereas *Genesis* claims it did). See Nissan (2008, note 68):

> An example of chronological conflation in pictorial representations from the Middle Ages is provided by an illustration in the Holkham Bible Picture Book (Holkham MS 666 from the British Library), from the 14th century, a manuscript in which the illustrations are captioned with notes in Anglo-Norman French. We are concerned with a particular image, reproduced in black and white in Fig. 9, and showing Noah in his Ark with extended arms, and looking to his right (i.e., leftwards, in the picture). In his left hand, he is holding a crow he is about to release. A dove stands on his right hand. Even more to the left in the picture, facing that dove there is an image of the same dove, flying back, and carrying a little branch in its beak. Under the Ark, under a wavy line with a blue contour, hoofed animal legs point upwards, the pale brownish animal having drowned. More to the right, a pale pink drowned person is floating. Further down in the picture, another human corpse is seen, as well as (further to the right) a drowned dapple brownish horse, its eye perhaps about to be gouged: the crow is showed beaking the head of that horse. This is the same crow that appears above, also in the rightmost part of the picture, but at the top, while about to be released by Noah. In contrast, on the left side of the picture, at the bottom, below the dove at the top, about to reach the Ark while holding an olive branch in its beak, that same dove is shown while she detaches that branch from a tree on an emerged spot of land. Pale bluish water alternates with darker blue wavy lines, but the emerged spot of land is painted dark brown, with a pale brownish green, tiny, slender tree on top of the tiny island.
>
> Within that same picture, a sequence of six moments in time is conflated: (1) the outcome (floating bodies) of the drowning of living creatures not in the Ark, (2) the release, by Noah wearing a hat with a red front, of the crow, whose mission's eventual outcome was disappointing, (3) the crow behaving like a crow, with the extra-biblical detail of this crow feeding itself on a carcass, (4) the release of the dove, (5) the dove finding

emerged land with an olive tree on it, from which the dove detaches a branch, and (6) the return of the dove to the Ark with a branch of olive in its beak. A medieval or later onlooker could be expected to possess the conventions for deciphering the picture, and decomposing it into the different moments of the given narrative depicted.

Consider the crow perched on the head of the drowned dapple horse. Perhaps the horse's eye is already inside the crow's beak, with the ocular nerve dangling out of it. There is a contrast (reflected in the symmetrical positioning inside the picture) between the dove being portrayed as dutiful, and the crow being portrayed as seeking repulsive advantage from the universal calamity. The original biblical text does not imply that much.

[14] It is easy to see how this line of reasoning was convenient for the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies in order to promote the Christian doctrine of the supersession of Judaism and the Jews, being the unworthy precursor. Concerning Aaron, Reed suggests (2008, p. 285, fn. 44): "The inclusion of Aaron in the evil line may be related to the polemic against sacrifice that pervades the Pseudo-Clementines". In the Homilies, Peter considers himself to be the syzygetical counterpart of Simon Magus.

[15] The narrator relates about a conversation he has, and both interlocutors know by heart some poems by each of a number of German poets, starting with Schiller (in the tale Our Young and Our Old, on p. 339 in the 1920 edition of *Kappot haMan'ul*). A given character allegedly knows Schiller's poems by heart even when he is asleep, even though he hasn't read them for years, in the novel *A Guest for the Night,* set in Galicia after the First World War (on p. 315 in the 1938, 1939, 1950, and 1953 editions). A grotesque character is translating the *Pentateuch* from Hebrew into German verse, and keeps on his table an open *Pentateuch* and an open book of Schiller's poems. That same character has in his room an image of Moses with the Tables of the Law, with the Ten Commandments represented by Roman numerals (*ibid.,* pp. 380-381).

[16] My translation from Hebrew. My thanks to Prof. Hillel Weiss, who on 22 March 2010 kindly sent me by email all occurrences of references to Schiller by name from Weiss's own textual database of Agnon's writings.