

ultimately consign the creature to oblivion. Even in Agnon's novel, which presents a relatively sober account of the early failures of Zionism, the gratuitous obliteration of Isaac's death by means of natural occurrences implies a principle of natural-historical selection in which the weak are weeded out from the strong in the course of the adaptation to life in the Land of Israel. Those who fall away from the historical process return to nature without leaving a trace. In the poetry of Celan, by contrast, nature itself is exposed in its artificiality in order to allow the trauma to resurface from oblivion, and thereby effect a "breathturn" [Atemwende] in which authentic being is manifested. But this authentic mode of being, which is identical with the creature, owes nothing to a native land and lies "outside all enrootedness and all dwelling."²⁹ Under such conditions of statelessness a new poetry, which has outlived the human, must begin to establish itself.