

Souls Wrapped in Sandpaper: Yiddish Poet Avrom Sutzkever and the Mother-Tongues of Hebrew

Dory Manor (Israeli Poet, Essayist and Editor)



MONDAY
FEB 4, 2019
5:15 pm

3335 Dwinelle Hall
UC Berkeley Campus

RSVP by email to:
jewishstudies@berkeley.edu

This event is open and free to
the public

For ten years Dory Manor lived in Paris and wrote poetry in Hebrew. Early on in his stay in France he debated trying to shift into French, but soon realized that poetry—as opposed to other sorts of writing—was an art he could perform only in his mother tongue, Hebrew. This is not surprising: as opposed to authors and playwrights, very few modern poets have written in an acquired language. Even poets who were immigrants and exiles generally clung to their mother tongues. The German-language poet, Paul Celan, took it a step further and asserted that, “Only in the mother tongue can one speak one’s own truth.”

But why in the annals of modern Hebrew poetry is this not the case? Why did so many Hebrew poets write their verse in a language that was their second and third and at times fourth and fifth language? From a socio-historical perspective the answer is clear: it is the result of modern Jewish history and the Zionist movement specifically. But if we take a closer look, and examine it from the perspective of poetry, we will find a singular and fascinating phenomenon, which cast its influence upon Hebrew poetry in the past and continues to shape it to this very day.

Dory Manor, born in Tel Aviv, is an Israeli poet, translator and editor. He is the founder and editor of the literary magazine *Oh!*. In 2008 Manor was awarded the Tchernichovsky Prize for best translations of world masterpieces. In 2015 he received the prestigious Yehuda Amichai prize for his poetry. Manor has published four collections of poetry. In 2012 he published a volume of his collected poetic works, *The Center of the Flesh*, edited by Prof. Dan Miron. In 2015 Manor co-edited (with Ronen Sonis) *Niflaata*, the first Hebrew language anthology of LGBTQ poetry. His Hebrew translations include masterpieces by Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valéry, Apollinaire, Verlaine, Flaubert, Descartes, Voltaire, Lorca and many others.

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