Poetry and Poeticity in Joyce's "The Dead," Baudelaire's *Le Spleen de Paris*, and Yehuda Amichai[1*]

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In this article I analyze various aspects of poeticity in James Joyce's "The Dead," especially in its concluding paragraph. To illustrate my general argument about the multi-faceted relationships between poetry and prose, I also examine three paragraphs from Baudelaire's *Le Spleen de Paris* and two poems by Amichai, which deliberately problematize the conventional distinction between poetry and prose. Whereas the notion of poeticity is difficult to define, it is still a useful term for analyzing a variety of poetic texts, and it is especially pertinent to different kinds of "amalgamation" of poetry and prose. The term poeticity refers to the place in which certain linguistic patterns of parallelism and/or tense semantic relations of incongruity and paradoxes meet an attentive reader tuned to these textual characteristics. Thus, it is a complex notion that involves formal, semantic, and pragmatic aspects. If certain textual qualities are lacking, it will be difficult for a reader to experience the text's poeticity; without an attentive reader, the text's poeticity could be lost despite the fact that the text contains certain formal and semantic features. The term refers to the complex process by which a string of words is endowed with a poetic "aura," and can thus help us understand how prose is "transformed" into poetry.

   When Roman Jakobson describes poeticity, he leaves, at one point, straightforward language and turns to an analogy that I find quite suggestive:

> For the most part poeticity is only a part of a complex structure, but it is a part that necessarily transforms the other elements and determines with them the nature of the whole. In the same way, oil is neither a complete dish in and of itself nor a chance addition to the meal, a mechanical component; it changes the taste of food and can sometimes be so penetrating that a fish packed in oil has begun to lose, as in Czech, its original genetic name, *sardinka* (sardine), and is being baptized anew as *olejovka* (*olej-*, oil- + *ovka*, a derivational suffix). Only when a verbal work acquires poeticity, a poetic function of a determinative significance, can we speak of poetry. (Jakobson, "What Is Poetry" 378)

The heterogeneity of the examples chosen in the following discussion illustrates how poeticity "emerges" from texts differing in language and specific literary traditions as well as in their formal framing: a long short-story (Joyce), a self-declared hybrid of poetry-in-prose (Baudelaire), and texts printed as half poems and half prose paragraphs (Amichai). Still, all these modern texts evoke (or, at the very least, attempt to evoke) a poetic effect that challenges traditional distinctions of poetry and prose. To paraphrase Jakobson's analogy: all these texts turn prosaic *sardinka* into poetic *olejovka*. Furthermore, as I will show, they all use two kinds of "oil" to produce poeticity: linguistic patterns of parallelism and deep semantic contrasts, notably paradox. In many cases, we encounter both of these two textual elements, but sometimes one of them is dominant. When deep semantic contrasts are developed in a text, the role of an attentive reader becomes more important for detecting the poetic effect, i.e. poeticity. In other words, these two kinds of "oil," especially the one that involves deep semantic relations, need an attentive reader to activate them.[2] Thus, in the following discussion about the meeting ground of poetry and prose, I attempt to integrate the work of Jakobson (1960) about the important role of linguistic patterns of parallelism for creating poeticity with Brooks's emphasis on the place of deep semantic contrasts, notably paradox, in the language of poetry, and, finally, with an awareness of the active role played by readers (Culler) in producing the mysterious, yet quite familiar effect of poeticity.

Poeticity in the Conclusion of Joyce's "The Dead"

Anyone who has read Joyce's "The Dead" will have noticed that it is full of music and poetry: characters play the piano, listen to music, sing popular songs, talk about the opera, prepare to recite lines from a poem, and reminisce about a song associated with a young, dead lover. The text itself is also rich in alliteration, repetition, figurative language, recurring motifs, and parallelism, at least some of which are considered poetic devices and associated with the poetic function because they call attention to the text qua text rather than to the fictional world created in the text (cf. Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics").[3] Furthermore, despite the fact that "The Dead" is a relatively long short-story, not much happens in the present time of the story, and the action that does happen is quite disconnected and episodic : there is a Christmas party in the house of two elderly sisters, Kate and Julia Morkan; their nephew Gabriel Conroy and Gretta, his wife, attend the party and meet several old acquaintances; there are exchanges of words between different characters; music is played; participants dance; sit down to eat; Gabriel delivers his welcome speech to the gathering; he and Gretta return to the hotel in which they are staying; they have a short conversation about an episode from Gretta's youth: she was in love with a young man (Michael Furey), and, despite the fact that Furey was very sick at the time, he came to part from her before she went into a convent in Dublin, and he died soon afterwards.

The fact that no dramatic event takes place during the present story time, and the fact that the story focuses on Gabriel's inner world, together with the poetic qualities of the text mentioned above—all encourage the reader to further concentrate on minute textual details and on small emotional and semantic nuances, characteristics that are traditionally associated with lyric poetry (see Freedman; Todorov, "A Poetic Novel"). This specific combination of a minimally developed plot and poetic qualities has made the story not only a masterpiece of

modernism but can also teach us something about the meeting ground of poetry and fiction.

I would like to argue that, in addition to several formal and structural qualities that are usually associated with poetry, there is another element that contributes to the story's overall poetic effect. This element lies in the unexpected semantic relationships suggested between two contrasting poles, inviting the reader to see one pole through the lenses of its opposite, and ultimately merging the two into a unifying, paradoxical whole. When we discuss the poeticity of fictional texts we need to distinguish between these two elements: formal and structural devices, on the one hand, and deep semantic relationships, on the other. These two elements are frequently connected and reinforce one another, as in Joyce's "The Dead." Nevertheless, an overall poetic effect, in verse or in prose fiction, can sometimes emerge without a conspicuous use of formal devices or a noticeable poetic structure.[4] In a complementary manner, the use of certain poetic forms (e.g. meter, rhyme) does not guarantee, in and of itself, attaining an overall poetic effect.[5]

These two related but autonomous dimensions can be found in the concluding paragraph of Joyce's "The Dead." Let us first read it carefully, preferably even read it out loud:

> A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead. (Joyce, *Dubliners* 223-24)

Many critics have discussed the "epiphany" and the symbolism of the conclusion of "The Dead."[6] The fact that the narrator does not offer a comment or clue leaves room for different ways to interpret the concluding scene: we could interpret the conclusion as Gabriel's moment of redemption, a moment in which he transcends his personal feelings, frustrations, and limitations and connects to the universe. However, we could also suggest a more skeptical or cynical reading: instead of facing his true, hurt feelings after discovering Gretta's love for Michael Furey, Gabriel escapes to the vague, metaphysical generalizations presented in the concluding paragraph. Regardless of our specific interpretation of Gabriel's psyche, I would like to argue that the story's conclusion evokes a distinct sense of poeticity, a feeling that transcends a regular, "prosaic" mode of narration.[7]

What is the source of the poetic effect of this passage? First, we can detect in these lines several patterns that are many times associated with poetry, first and foremost intensive patterns of repetition and parallelism: repetition of sounds or alliteration (e.g. the sound /s/ is repeated thirty times, the sound /f/ twenty-two times); repetition of words (e.g. "falling"—seven times; "snow"—three times; "dark"—three times); repetition of phrases in chiastic form: "falling softly/softly falling," "falling faintly/faintly falling." Verbal repetitions, especially those of complete words and strings of words, help establish the *rhythm* of the text. The *cumulative* effect created by repetition of sounds, words, and phrases is usually observed in poetry and poetic texts.

The "Yes" in the concluding paragraph of "The Dead" ("Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland") indicates Joyce's use of free indirect style, i.e. the narrator integrates into his narration elements that are part of Gabriel's thoughts and words. This "Yes" may remind us of another place in which the word was used by Joyce: the conclusion of *Ulysses*. In the culmination of Molly Bloom's interior monologue, the "yes" plays a major part in creating the text's rhythm. As we approach the very last sentences of the novel, the

repetition of "yes" creates a rapid, intense, almost ecstatic rhythm of incantation:

> and the glorious sunsets and the figtrees in the Alameda gardens **yes** and all the queer little streets and the pink and blue and yellow houses and the rosegardens and the jessamine and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a girl where I was a Flower of the mountain **yes** when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red **yes** and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again **yes** and then he asked me would I **yes** to say **yes** my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him **yes** and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume **yes** and his heart was going like mad and **yes** I said **yes** I will **Yes**. (Joyce, *Ulysses* 704; my added emphases)

The units (or "building blocks") used to create rhythm in poetry, notably in structured patterns of meter, are syllables. In prose, on the other hand, the linguistic units used more often to create rhythm are larger: words and sentences. Needless to say, these two options for creating rhythm are not mutually exclusive: a poem that uses a regulated metric pattern (e.g. iambic pentameter) can also employ the repetition of larger units (e.g. words and sentences) to achieve different rhythmic and semantic effects (e.g. to emphasize certain themes, etc.). In a complementary manner, we can sometimes detect in prose fiction a pattern formed by syllables (e.g. a paragraph written in iambic pentameter), but such cases are relatively rare, and when they occur they will probably be perceived as "poetic."

As we have seen, the concluding paragraph of "The Dead" is rich with linguistic patterns of repetition that create its rhythm. These linguistic repetitions, however, are not necessarily structured sound patterns associated with poetry (i.e. meter and rhyme). In addition to the repetition of sounds, of words, and of strings of words, there are also interesting repetitions on the semantic level. These can be described as building up the motif of death or, in linguistic terms, of the occurrence of words that are associated with the semantic field of death. Before the actual word "dead" appears as the story's final word ("upon the living and the dead"), there are several words in the para-

graph that are linked metaphorically or metonymically to death, either directly (e.g. "dark," "buried," "barren") or indirectly (e.g. "falling"—seven times, "treeless").

Thus far, we have established that the passage is replete with repetitions (of sounds and words), and with words associated with the semantic field of death, and we can describe these formal and semantic forms of parallelism as one source of our sense of the text's poeticity. There is yet another, more elusive source of the text's poeticity which lies at a deeper semantic level and requires a more active reading. The fact that this layer is below the text's surface does not, however, make it less effective: it stems from a latent invitation to readers to consider how death might be related to its antonym, life; in other words, the passage juxtaposes life and death in ways that unsettle this well-entrenched opposition.[8]

The story's concluding phrase—"upon all the living and the dead"—explicitly states two poles of a binary opposition. Words associated with the semantic field of death not only pervade the passage before the word is stated but also "color" neutral words that are associated to them in the continuum of the text. Thus, for example, the image of "spears of the little gate" acquires deadly overtones because it is interpolated between a graveyard's "headstones" and "barren thorns." Furthermore, since snow is portrayed in the paragraph as "the great equalizer" (i.e. death), since snow can freeze life, and since its color, white, may also symbolize death—the sense of death seems to engulf the entire passage and the whole universe.

This intense sense of death, however, is not the whole story. An attentive reading may also detect several elements in the paragraph that are associated—directly or indirectly, literally or metaphorically—with life. It is true that these elements are scarce, but nevertheless they are there. The "*mutinous* Shannon *waves*" (my added emphases), for example, connote something rebellious, and vital, which is definitely the opposite of deadly stagnation. Note also that, while snow is freezing (hence death), because water and snow are the same natural element, differing only in (physical) state, we can realize that the over-

whelming blanket of white snow that falls upon Ireland will eventually turn into fresh water, i.e., a source of life and growth (perhaps even adding strength to the "mutinous Shannon waves"). Thus, the deadening snow can also be perceived as one stage in the overall *cycle of life*.

The most intriguing element in creating unpredictable, paradoxical relationships between life and death can be found in the mentioning of Michael Furey. Needless to say, as far as Michael's body is concerned, he is definitely dead. But is he indeed dead? The startling discovery that Gabriel makes during the evening about the place that Michael still has in Gretta's heart suggests that physical death is not necessarily the end. A dead person (perhaps especially a dead person?) can be very much alive in the minds and hearts of the living. Thus, the binary opposition of life and death is questioned and reshuffled. The text suggests that we see the two terms of the opposition (life and death) as part of something larger than both, wherein life is followed by death, which is then followed by life. Furthermore, we are invited to see the two opposing terms as co-existence: every moment of life is also a moment of death, and every moment of death is also a moment of life, with no "pure life" followed by "pure death."

A recurrent theme in "The Dead" and in *Dubliners* in general is that of the different forms of death-in-life: the unauthentic, frightened, paralyzed, stagnated mode of life is associated with many characters in *Dubliners*, Gabriel included. In a complementary manner, perhaps in a minor key, there are also moments when we are invited to consider the possibility of its opposite, namely life-in-death, and the conclusion of "The Dead" is one such moment, especially if we read the story's ending as a turning point in Gabriel's consciousness and existence. Joyce invites us to entertain the paradox of death-in-life and, at certain rare moments, also to ponder on life-in-death; and this fresh perspective on the deeply entrenched binary opposition of life and death is, I believe, another source of the text's poeticity. It was Cleanth Brooks (1947) who suggested that the language of poetry is the language of paradox, and the concluding paragraph of "The

Dead" illustrates this kind of paradoxical language. Note, however, that the term "language" in Brooks's discussion does not refer necessarily to explicit paradoxical formulations (e.g. "the last shall be the first, and the first last") but, rather, to a deep semantic layer that underlies, and generates, the text (when a poem "is based on a paradoxical situation," Brooks 4). Thus, even when no explicit paradoxical statements are present, the best way to construct the meaning of the text is by seeing it as emerging from a deep, underlying paradox—like in Brooks's analysis of Wordsworth's "It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free" or, as I suggest, in the conclusion of Joyce's "The Dead."

One may argue that paradox is but one semantic instance of the general principle of parallelism in which a term is followed by its opposite, hence the text continuum is built on the principle of similarity and contrasts (i.e. parallelism), just like any other phenomenon discussed by Jakobson. Consequently, thus goes the argument, we do not need two relatively independent principles (parallelism and paradox) responsible for producing poeticity, only one (parallelism). This argument is probably valid when explicit, direct oppositions are introduced one just after the other (e.g. "The last shall be the first"), but it will hardly apply to more complex, subtle and indirect paradoxes discussed here. These paradoxes (a) do not necessarily consist of direct oppositions, and (b) they require an active act of interpretation that integrates a variety of semantic elements, some of which are scattered in different places of the text. Thus, there is a good reason to maintain the distinction between the two principles, especially because the one associated with paradox is sometimes responsible for creating poeticity in cases that lack conspicuous patterns of parallelism.

Poeticity in Baudelaire's *Le Spleen de Paris*

To illustrate how poeticity can emerge from conspicuous parallel structures but also from paradoxical relations on the deep semantic

level, I present three short passages from the modern *locus classicus* of the juxtaposition of poetry and prose: Baudelaire's *Le Spleen de Paris* or *Petits Poèmes en prose*. Thanks to the prominent position of its author in modern literature, this collection has probably become the prototypical attempt to combine poetry and prose fiction. The first passage is the opening to the first text of the collection, entitled "L'Etranger" [The Stranger]:

> Qui aimes-tu le mieux, homme énigmatique, dis? ton père, ta mère, ta sœur ou ton frère?
> —Je n'ai ni père, ni mère, ni sœur, ni frère. (Baudelaire, *Œuvres Complètes* 162)

> [Tell me, enigmatic man, whom do you love best? Your father, your mother, your sister, or your brother?
> —I have neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor brother.] (Baudelaire, *The Poems and Prose Poems*)

In these opening lines we immediately notice a very distinct structure: the list of four family members is doubly organized in pairs: in terms of generations, we have two pairs organized in an AABB pattern: two parents (father, mother) and two siblings (sister, brother); when we consider the list from the point of view of gender, another, a competing pair emerges, this time organized in a chiastic pattern of ABBA: masculine (father), feminine (mother), feminine (sister), masculine (brother). The rich parallelism does not stop there: the question presented to the stranger is responded to with an exact repetition of the four terms, with one negating word ("ni") prefixed to each of these terms. Thus, we have condensed patterns of parallelism on both the formal and the (surface) semantic levels, patterns which Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss liked so much to analyze in Baudelaire's poetry (Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss, "Baudelaire's Les Chats"). Such patterns are undoubtedly responsible for creating the poetic effect or poeticity in Baudelaire's collection of poetry in prose.

Not all the texts of *Le Spleen de Paris* contain explicit patterns of parallelism (cf. Todorov, "Poetry without Verse"). Let us, for example,

take a look at a short paragraph from the text entitled "Les Foules" (Crowds):

> Multitude, solitude: termes égaux et convertibles pour le poète actif et fécond. Qui ne sait pas peupler sa solitude, ne sait pas non plus être seul dans une foule affairée. (Baudelaire, *Œuvres Complètes* 170)

> [Multitude, solitude: identical terms and interchangeable by the active and fertile poet. The man who is unable to people his solitude is equally unable to be alone in a bustling crowd.] (Baudelaire, *Paris Spleen* 20)

Here, too, can we detect different forms of parallelism: the paragraph opens with an indirect opposition that also rhymes ("Multitude, solitude"), it has two words closely related in meaning ("égaux […] convertibles"),[9] the second sentence is structured as two parallel halves ("ne sait […] ne sait"), and there is a network of partial synonyms and antonyms: "multitude," "peupler," and "foule" form a group which is contrasted to "solitude," "solitude," and "être seul." I would like to argue, however, that grammatical or linguistic parallelism plays only a secondary role in creating a poetic effect in this paragraph. What Baudelaire tells us is that, from a certain point of view, that of the poet (!), to be alone and to be in a crowd should not be considered any longer as opposition; rather, they should be treated as interchangeable (or synonymous) in the "language" of the poem. Someone who is alone (physically) can still have company (mentally); and someone who is (physically) part of a crowd can still be very lonely (mentally). In other words, Baudelaire invites us to reshuffle an ordinary opposition and to see loneliness-in-company and company-in-loneliness; and he explicitly links this invitation to the mind of "the active and fertile poet," i.e., to a "poetical" perspective that the reader is invited to share.

Finally, let us take a look at another famous passage from Baudelaire's *Le Spleen de Paris*: the opening lines of "Enivrez-vous" ("Intoxication" in the 1919 translation):

> Il faut être toujours ivre. Tout est là: c'est l'unique question. Pour ne pas sentir l'horrible fardeau du Temps qui brise vos épaules et vous penche vers la terre, il faut vous enivrer sans trêve.
>
> Mais de quoi? De vin, de poésie ou de vertu, à votre guise. Mais enivrez-vous. (Baudelaire, *Œuvres Complètes* 197)

> [One must be for ever drunken: that is the sole question of importance. If you would not feel the horrible burden of Time that bruises your shoulders and bends you to the earth, you must be drunken without cease.
>
> But how? With wine, with poetry, with virtue, with what you please. But be drunken.] (Baudelaire, *The Poems and Prose Poems*)

These emphatic sentences strike the reader twice. First, the opening categorical declaration that one must be forever drunken ("Il faut être toujours ivre") might raise objections, guided by common wisdom and moral principles: to be drunken occasionally is acceptable, even forgivable, but to recommend a permanent mode of being (i.e. drunkenness) that is inappropriate, degrading, and possibly dangerous is outrageous. To lessen the shock of the opening declaration, Baudelaire introduces the existential motivation behind his recommendation: one should get drunk to soften the acute distress that stems from the "horrible burden of Time" that "bends you to the earth," i.e. to death. In light of this "background information," the readers' initial shock is reduced: what was first perceived as outrageous now appears more understandable.

The specific list of ways to get drunk offered by Baudelaire creates yet another surprise: whereas the first element in the list (with wine) is quite predictable, the second (with poetry) is a bit puzzling. How does one get drunk on poetry? To make sense of this phrase we may call to mind images and ideas that associate poetry with high emotional intensity and the transcendence of oneself. These ideas, which can be traced back to Plato's portrayal of poets as possessed by divine madness in *Phaedrus*, suggest a semantic bridge between getting drunk and being "intoxicated" with poetry.[10] The third element presented as a means for getting drunk (with virtue) is quite perplexing. At face value, the two juxtaposed notions—to get drunk with wine and to be absorbed in virtuous activity or to promote virtue—seem

opposites, at least from a social, normative point of view: the former is a debased form of behavior wherein one indulges; while the latter is a commendable form of behavior wherein one devotes oneself to high moral principles existing beyond oneself. By creating this surprising sequence, a zeugma with a tense, conceit-like quality (i.e. the yoking together of different ideas under the same grammatical construction), Baudelaire compels us to view virtuous activity (or the advocacy of virtue) as a form of intoxication. We are invited to perceive a person deeply absorbed in virtuous activity as a drunk: both of them go beyond themselves, they both forget themselves, and they are both engrossed in an intense, out-of-the-ordinary emotional state. Furthermore, according to Baudelaire, these two seemingly opposite modes of behavior are basically the same: they are both *forms of escape* from the frightening awareness of death.[11]

True, in addition to the invitation to reshuffle our cognitive and moral categories and to see one notion through the lenses of a totally different one (i.e. poetry and virtue as modes of intoxication), one can also find in Baudelaire's "Enivrez-vous" several forms of linguistic parallelism.[12] I would like to argue, though, that the passage's most powerful effect stems precisely from this innovative, even provocative invitation. This invitation makes Baudelaire's text so memorable: we note the text's highly suggestive phrasing which compels us to go back and forth from its chosen words to the provocative ideas they convey. This unorthodox invitation, produced by the mind of "the active and fertile poet," is the special "ingredient" from which poeticity emerges.

Amichai's Complication of the Poetry-Prose Distinction

During the 1980s the highly regarded (and widely translated) Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai published several texts that challenge the distinction between poetry and prose. Although these texts appeared in volumes of poetry, framed by "regular" poems, they did not use the

conventional, truncated layout of verse but rather were printed as paragraphs of prose. Amichai did not, however, abandon in these texts all markers of poetry: modern Hebrew poems are usually printed with vowel marks (*niqqud*), and Amichai retained these also in the justified-margins, prose-like, paragraphs, thus sending mixed signals as to the text's "true" nature: published in a collection of poetry and using vowel marks, but printed in a typical prose layout. Moreover, in several texts Amichai deliberately calls attention to the distinction between poetry and prose by printing one part of the text in verse form (truncated lines with *niqqud*) and another part in prose layout.

Amichai's "Tourists," for example, effectively illustrates this mixture. In this text Amichai addresses experiences and phenomena familiar to anyone who has either lived in Jerusalem or has visited the city as a tourist:

1
So condolence visits is what they're here for,
sitting around at the Holocaust Memorial, putting on a serious face
at the Wailing Wall,
laughing behind heavy curtains in hotel rooms.
They get themselves photographed with the important dead
at Rachel's Tomb and Herzl's Tomb, and up on Ammunition Hill.
They weep at the beautiful prowess of our boys,
lust after our tough girls
and hang up their underwear
to dry quickly
in cool blue bathrooms.

2
Once I was sitting on the steps near the gate at David's Citadel and I put down my two heavy baskets beside me. A group of tourists stood there around their guide, and I became their point of reference. "You see that man over there with the baskets? A little to the right of his head there's an arch from the Roman period. A little to the right of his head." "But he's moving, he's moving!" I said to myself: Redemption will come only when they are told, "Do you see that arch over there from the Roman period? It doesn't matter, but near it, a little to the left and then down a bit, there's a man who has just bought fruit and vegetables for his family." (Amichai, *Selected Poems* 137-38)

The first section (stanzas? paragraphs?) depicts a series of "mandatory" tourist photo ops in Jerusalem. The common denominator of all these tourist stops is death, i.e. places associated with ancient and modern wars, destruction and bereavement: be it the Holocaust Memorial (*Yad Vashem*), the remnants of the ancient Temple (Wailing Wall), a fierce battlefield of the Six-Day War of 1967 (Ammunition Hill), a tomb from biblical times (Rachel's tomb), or of modern times (Herzl's tomb). The tourists are satirically exposed here, firstly, as moving through a series of sites in which they display a "standard" serious appearance, as opposed to showing genuine interest and authentic, individual reactions. Secondly, and more importantly, Amichai exposes the contrast between the tourists' façade and their true, hidden feelings and likings: between the way in which they "put on a serious face" at the Wailing Wall and their "laughing behind heavy curtains in hotel rooms," between weeping "at the beautiful prowess of our boys" and lusting "for our tough girls." Amichai does not necessarily satirize the tourists' hidden behavior as such (which reveals, after all, authentic feelings) but rather their hypocritical behavior, the gap between their displayed demeanor and their hidden genuine feelings.

The second section (paragraph?) develops another contrast. This time Amichai does not refer to tourists in general ("they") but, rather, focuses on a specific situation with a specific group of tourists, their guide, and the speaker himself (probably representing Amichai). If the first section creates the impression that Amichai is critical only of the tourists, the second broadens the scope of the poem's satire and now includes tourist guides. Tourists and tourist guides alike seem to participate in and perpetuate the official and artificial approach towards Jerusalem. This approach puts at its center "solemn" monuments, sacrifice, death, and stones, as opposed to the quotidian lives of real people in ordinary Jerusalem. The speaker in the poem openly calls for a total reversal of values: the trivial, day-to-day actions of a man who takes care of his family, who brings home fruit and vegetables (i.e. providing for life's basic needs), should be "put on a pedes-

tal," rather than the official monuments. Simple life should be cherished and consecrated rather than the glorified sites of death and destruction.

According to Amichai, redemption is not an extraordinary, miraculous event that transcends worldly affairs; it is embedded in ordinary, mundane actions—but only when the latter are recognized to be the most significant because "a man who has just bought fruit and vegetables for his family" represents caring for his family and providing it with basic needs of life. Note that Amichai chose to express this surprising, paradoxical idea about redemption not in "solemn" poetic form, but rather in the section that resembles plain prose.[13] Thus, in addition to openly challenging our notions about what constitutes important places and about what redemption will or at least should look like, Amichai also challenges the regular hierarchy between poetry and prose. In our regular expectations poetry is associated with the elevated, the spiritual, and the profound; and prose with the low, the material, and the mundane. While the text's first section with its truncated lines, conventionally associated with poetry, focuses on places and practices that are usually perceived as important or profound, this section in fact exposes these places and the social practices associated with them as shallow, superficial, and stained with hypocrisy. It is the second, prose-like section that unexpectedly addresses profound metaphysical and existential questions. Thus, Amichai simultaneously challenges our set of social values and the conventional hierarchy between poetry and prose.

I would like to conclude with another text by Amichai that also deliberately plays with different aspects of poetry, prose, and poeticity, "On the Day My Daughter Was Born No One Died":

> On the day my daughter was born not a single person
> died in the hospital, and at the entrance gate
> the sign said: "Today *kohanim*[14] are permitted to enter."
> And it was the longest day of the year.
> In my great joy
> I drove with my friend to the hills of Sha'ar Ha-Gai.

> We saw a bare, sick pine tree, nothing on it but a lot of pine cones. Zvi said trees that are about to die produce more pine cones than healthy trees. And I said to him: That was a poem and you didn't realize it. Even though you're a man of the exact sciences, you've made a poem. And he answered: And you, though you're a man of dreams, have made an exact little girl with all the exact instruments for her life. (Amichai, *Selected Poems* 131-32)[15]

I will not go into a detailed analysis of Amichai's text. But I would like to call attention to the way he challenges or problematizes the conventional typography of poetry and prose in this text: the first section, which is printed in the form of a poem, tells in a prosaic manner a sequence of events; while the second section, which is printed in the form of a prose paragraph, contains poetical and meta-poetical statements. Amichai further complicates the opposition between poetry and prose, because in the seemingly prosaic first section (which uses a poetic layout), he touches upon personal, emotional moments—notably giving birth—which are frequently associated with poetry or at least with lyrical poetry. The first section indirectly but persistently evokes the charged opposition of life and death: while referring to his daughter's birth (hence life) it also evokes death when he mentions that "not a single person *died* in the hospital"(my emphasis). Furthermore, the seemingly neutral mention of Sha'ar Ha-Gai, a place on the way from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, reminds readers (at least Israeli readers) of scenes of war and death: a memorial composed of burnt-out armed vehicles is deployed along Sha'ar Ha-Gai to commemorate the people who were killed in an attempt to reach the blockaded Jerusalem during Israel's War of Independence in 1948.

Thus, through its very unorthodox mix of "poetic" and "prosaic" typography, and through the introduction of "poetic" and "prosaic" elements into both sections, Amichai invites us to reconsider the fixed boundaries between poetry and prose and the conventional expectations associated with these two forms or modes of expression. Furthermore, when Amichai labels his friend's botanical observation ("trees that are about to die produce more pine cones than healthy trees")—a "poem," we may wonder what triggered him to say this. I suggest that Amichai detected in his friend's words *a poetic quality*

because they offer an unexpected, paradoxical relationship between life and death: "trees that are about to die" can nevertheless exhibit a final burst of fertility, which is associated with life. The connection between an invitation to reshuffle fixed oppositions and a sense of poetic quality or poeticity can be found, yet again, also in Amichai's text.

Parallelism, Paradoxes and Poeticity—Conclusion

I began my article with Joyce's concluding paragraph of "The Dead," in which one can detect several linguistic patterns of repetition and in which the reader is invited to see death-in-life and life-in-death. I then moved to examine selected passages from Baudelaire's *Le Spleen de Paris*, in which the author uses conspicuous patterns of parallelism, and the reader is also invited to reshuffle accepted semantic and cognitive oppositions. I concluded with Amichai's texts which openly challenge the conventional layouts of poetry and prose and invite us to reconsider several fixed oppositions: important places and actions against mundane ones, life and death, a newborn child and old age, scientists and poets. In some of the discussed texts, linguistic patterns of parallelism accompany an overt or a covert invitation to reshuffle deep semantic oppositions and both seem to join forces in creating the text's poeticity (e.g. the conclusion of Joyce's "The Dead"; Baudelaire's "Les Foules"). In some cases, however, the role of linguistic parallelism seems minor—relative to the role played by an unorthodox invitation to reconsider and reshuffle accepted semantic oppositions (e.g. Baudelaire's "Enivrez-vous"). In other cases yet, the poetic effect emerges almost entirely from an explicit invitation to consider the poeticity embedded in a seemingly prosaic, botanical statement, in which a paradox is embedded (e.g. Amichai's "On the Day My Daughter Was Born No One Died"). Thus, when the two elements—linguistic parallelism and an invitation to see anew deep semantic oppositions—are detected, they seem to reinforce each other in creat-

ing a poetic effect. An author can, however, create a poetic effect even without using conspicuous linguistic patterns of parallelism—by directing the reader's attention to interesting, unexpected, paradoxical relations between the two poles of a familiar semantic opposition, as Amichai does in his texts.

By using poetic and prosaic layouts in the same text, Amichai forcefully reminds us that the conventional opposition of poetry and prose is by no means fixed or static.[16] There may be prosaic elements in poetry, and there may be a poetical quality in fiction, or in prose, or in everyday speech, or even in certain scientific observations; a poetic quality created by unexpected, paradoxical relationships between ordinary oppositions. All it takes to detect that poetic quality in such texts is the attentive mind of a poet or a critic.

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NOTES

[1]I would like to thank the participants in the discussion following my paper at the 12th International *Connotations* Symposium in 2013 for offering useful and enlightening comments, the two anonymous readers of the article whose critical comments spurred me to clarify my argument and, last but not least, Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker for their eagle-eyed reading of the manuscript.

[2]For the active role played by the reader in detecting and sometimes even construing such poetic qualities, see Culler, especially 188-209.

[3]Jakobson's formulation in his "Linguistics and Poetics" about the linguistic principle ("the projection of the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination" 358) for attaining the poetic function has raised several objections (e.g. Riffaterre, Ruwett). Critics point out that not every linguistic parallel participates in creating the poetic function (i.e. focusing readers' attention on the text qua text). Furthermore, according to the critics, the poetic function can be achieved in ways other than the one pointed out by Jakobson (hence, it is not a necessary condition), and that not every occurrence of the principle of equivalence achieves the poetic function (hence, it is also not a sufficient condition). Despite such valid objections, Jakobson's formulation captures a very important principle underlying a wide variety of poetic devices that create the poetic function (but not necessarily its dominance).

[4]In an empirical test conducted with a group of students (Fishelov "The Institutional Approach"), I showed that readers recognize a text's poeticity (or its "poetic qualities") even when the text is presented as a paragraph of prose fiction.

[5]Aristotle already pointed out that a treatise on medicine or natural science can be written in verse but this does not make it a poem, i.e. an artistic text (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1447b). The notion of poeticity developed in this essay differs from Aristotle's concept of a poem: the former is associated with the dominance of the poetic function and/or the offering of "poetical," paradoxical insight, whereas the latter is grounded in the notion of mimesis. In both cases verse alone is not sufficient for constituting a poem or for attaining poeticity.

[6]See, for example, the essays by Allen Tate, Kenneth Burke, C. C. Loomis, and Florence L. Walzl in Joyce, *Dubliners*.

[7]There is interesting indirect evidence for the existence of such a poetic effect in a YouTube video of the conclusion of John Huston's adaptation of "The Dead," which is closely based on Joyce's text, with only a few small alterations (e.g. introducing phrases from previous paragraphs into the concluding paragraph; see Hollymarg). The person who put this video on YouTube added subtitles that do not use their conventional format; instead, he or she animated the subtitles in verse-form, i.e. the lines are truncated with changing length, position, and size (even color), so that we watch a text that looks much like a poem. Whereas I came across this YouTube video by sheer accident, the animator's decision to present Joyce's text as a poem is probably no accident: unless we assume that he or she acted on a whim, it seems likely that it is an attempt to express typographically the text's poetic qualities, i.e. that the text has a strong poetic quality, and hence "deserves" poetic typography.

[8]From a broader perspective, this invitation to reconsider and reshuffle established semantic categories can be described as another illustration of art's function to "make strange" common concepts, phenomena and modes of presentation (Shklovsky).

[9]These words are not synonyms in the strict sense of the word, but they still can be treated as partial synonyms (cf. Lyons 60-64).

[10]"And a third kind of possession and madness comes from the Muses. This takes hold upon a gentle and pure soul, arouses it and inspires it to songs and other poetry, and thus by adoring countless deeds of the ancients educates later generations" (*Phaedrus* 245a).

[11]Baudelaire's zeugma in "Enivrez-vous" can be described (see Glucksberg and Keysar) as creating an ad hoc category (i.e. metaphor, according to their theory) of "intoxication" that consists of three members: drinking wine, and being immersed in poetry, or in virtue.

[12]Todorov expands on the thematic contrasts in Baudelaire in *Le Spleen de Paris* and points out that they can be grouped under three headings: implausibility, ambivalence, and antithesis (Todorov, "Poetry without Verse" 63-64). I believe

that the term paradox should also be introduced in discussing the poetic effect in Baudelaire's work, perhaps as a variation of antithesis.

[13]For Amichai's use of conceit and paradox in his poetry, see Fishelov, "Yehuda Amichai: A Modernist Metaphysical Poet," and Fishelov, "Poetic and Non-Poetic Simile"; for a detailed analysis of his poetry-in-prose texts, see Fishelov *Like a Rainfall*, especially 164-71.

[14]Jews whose family name is Cohen, considered to be descendents of priests in the Temple, were forbidden to be in proximity to the dead.

[15]For the original Hebrew, see Amichai, *Selected Poems* 44.

[16]For a dynamic perspective on other literary forms and genres, see Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*.

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