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Writing in a Time of an Epidemic

Prima facie, so far it has been and still is impossible to offer a proper study of the literary manifestation of covid19 – the epidemic is not over yet; one doesn't have yet an historical perspective of it; writing, and moreover publishing, require time.

However, there are early sprouts of writing on covid19. We shall discuss Dana Freibach – Heifetz's book, *In the Desert of Things* ("Numbers, Deuteronomy"), which was written in Hebrew during the first two months of the epidemic (2 – 3/2020).

The book is composed of 113 fragments in various genres, which spread a fan of voices, sights and feelings of life under the epidemic – from everyday details (e.g. the engagement with food) to more cultural and philosophical layers (like concepts of inside and outside), combining realism with a world of dreams and fantasy. These micro – stories create a collage of images that captures the new reality. The book was published in two versions: one is only textual, and the other includes 36 color photographs by the artist Yoram Kupermintz, that create a rich dialogue with the texts. The book was self – published, and financed by a Headstart project.

Our talk examines the relation between the stylistic characterizations of this book – the form of fragments, various genres, and the combination of the texts with visual images – and its nature as a book which was written right in the eye of the Covid's storm. We will also relate to the book in the context of the changes in the book industry and the literary market and their cultural implications,

This talk is a collaboration of the author, who is also a philosopher, and a literary researcher, who aim together to bring new perspectives of literature under Covid 19 and the unique attributes it brings.