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Finally the collection's fourth section features essays by Sheila Jelen and Naomi Seidman exploring how Baron challenged the canonical boundaries of Hebrew and Yiddish literatures. Miron's observation about the uprooted figure's almost complete absence in Baron's fiction serves as Jelen's starting point. She argues the intentionality of this absence. With the Hebrew canon preoccupied with the uprooted figure's employment in efforts to masculinize both Jewish men and the Jewish nation, the voicing of Jewish women's condition required alternative character types such as one Baron developed. In an essay meshing well with Bernstein's aforementioned work, Seidman points to the chained wife's previously unrecognized importance in the *shtetl's* literary depiction, specifically in scene's portraying individual departure. While these scenes typically employ elements drawn from the Exodus to provide a positive spin, the presence of chained wives conveys ambivalent feelings of the male characters and authors. Alongside newfound freedom, abandonment of the *shtetl*, like abandonment of a wife, involved loss and a sense of betrayal. Rather than privileging these departing men and their feelings, Baron, Seidman argues, challenges their perception. In the story "Fedka," for example, Baron presents a *shtetl's* abandoned women as sexually vibrant as a way of questioning the necessity of Jewish exile's abandonment.

This compelling volume provides a polyphonous introduction to early twentieth century Hebrew literature, pointing to Baron's work's ability to contribute to scholarship in diverse areas, and justly ensconces her as one of the period's leading figures. Yet, while intended for undergraduate use, some of its essays seem unsuited for this aim. Nonetheless, it can serve as a model for future volumes that could greatly contribute to undergraduate instruction in Hebrew literature in America.

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והיא תהילתך : עיונים ביצירות ש"י עגנון, א"ב יהושע ועמוס עוז
(Ve-Hi Tehilatekha: Studies in the works of S. Y. Agnon, A. B. Yehoshua,
and Amos Oz). By Nitza Ben-Dov. Pp. 336. Tel Aviv: Schocken, 2006.
Paper.

In his book *The New Wave in Hebrew Literature*, published in 1971, Gershon Shaked described the developments in Hebrew literature during the

1950s and 1960s. Shaked's book was the first to explore the ties between the writing of A. B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz and the generation of literary "grandfathers,"—S. Y. Agnon and M. J. Berdichevsky. Shaked's aim was to give "an interim summary, not a closing account." Indeed, the early 1970s marked the end of the first decade of the work of Oz and Yehoshua, who were still at the beginning of their creative path. Over three decades later, Nitza Ben-Dov has chosen to return to that trinity. With a skilled hand, eloquent language, and wide-ranging knowledge, she reexamines the links between the three authors and furnishes a sweeping panoramic perspective on the ties between the authors as found in their entire oeuvres.

When the first stories by Oz and Yehoshua were published, it was a breakthrough and a new trajectory. According to the basic assumption that dictated the norms prevailing among the "1948 generation," literature had to contribute to structuring Israel's nascent society by describing reality faithfully and realistically in order to produce a native-born, authentic literature rooted in the collective Israeli experience. The generation that started writing in the 1960s, and whose definitive representatives are Oz and Yehoshua, was alienated from the societal role of creating and from its commitment to shape reality with a specific character that reflected a clear-cut, optimistic position regarding society and values. The change was reflected in new aesthetic attributes such as symbolic and ironic writing, revealing psychological experiences of individual protagonists, fashioning passive protagonists, and a tendency towards existentialist thematics. In a certain sense, those authors sought to replace realistic optimism with "worlds of shadows" illuminating individualism, skepticism, pain and trauma, and ideological criticism. The revolution against the previous generation led straight back to "grandfather Agnon," from whom they absorbed realistic, symbolic, and allegoric foundations. This literary and historical shift is the starting-point of Ben-Dov's book and she sets out from it on several fascinating literary and interpretive journeys.

Ben-Dov's introduction describes a man moving through shadows, with three or four others shadows moving along with him, in front, on his right, and behind him. It is the figure of Agnon in *Sipur al ahava vehoshech* (A tale of love and darkness) by Oz, a symbolic picture hinting at "the dramatization of human and literary variety, flickering elusively and enriching the images of Agnon himself. It is also a theatrical demonstration of Agnon and the "authors he overshadows" (p. 16). The ties between Yehoshua, Oz, and Agnon are principally understood and interpreted in the context of Yehoshua's early works, most specifically in the connection between Yehoshua's story "Mot hazaken" (Death of the old man) and Agnon's *Sefer hama'asim* (The book of deeds). However she presents the relationships between that group of shadows as more complex, with explicit and implicit

strata, aesthetic and intellectual ties, and a deep connection imprinted in the psychological realm.

Ben-Dov weaves an absorbing example of the connection between Agnon's "Bedmi yameha" (In the prime of her life) and works by the two authors that explicitly address the Agnonic novella. She reveals how Yehoshua unconsciously adopts the work of Agnon in the novel *Molcho* (Five seasons) through her interpretation of the scene where Molcho, on the steps of the Berlin Opera, lets go of the legal adviser's arm and indirectly causes her to fall and sprain her ankle. The incident allows the protagonist to reconstruct his relationship with his sick wife. The attempt to do so, as well as the fear of a woman, is common to Yehoshua and Agnon.

There is a deeper connection between "In the Prime of Her Life" and Oz, and it is associated with Ben-Dov's journey in search of the female characters in the three authors' works—a journey with traces in almost every chapter of the book. Ben-Dov intends to show that much of Oz's work was created as a synthesis between the novella "In the Prime of Her Life" and the story of the suicide of Oz's mother in the prime of her life. It is not a matter of a simplistic synthesis, representing all the mothers who leave—from Eva in *Makom aher* (Elsewhere, perhaps), Hannah in *Michael sheli* (My Michael), and Ruth from *Har ha'etza hara'a* (The hill of evil counsel), by way of the mothers in *Kufsa shhora* (Black box) and *Oto hayam* (The same sea), up to *Sipur al ahava vehoshech* (A tale of love and darkness)—in the same costume—that of Leah in "In the Prime of Her Life." Ben-Dov shows that the novella's influence is intense. Sometimes it is hinted at through the fathers and the clothes glimpsed in *Elsewhere, Perhaps*, through the reasoning of the narrative in *My Michael*, or by seclusion in the home and obsessive reading in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*.

To understand the place of the women, Ben-Dov chooses a new reading technique. She suggests starting at the end, from the final line of the events—"and they lived happily ever after," or in most cases by violating that line and revealing the flaws. Examining Agnon's vibrant female characters takes Ben-Dov on a journey of reading "In the Prime of Her Life," "Harofe ugrushato" (The doctor and his ex-wife), "Kisui hadam" (The covering of blood), and *Shira*.

The paradigm of Ishtar accompanies Ben-Dov's analysis of the works of Yehoshua, from "The Death of the Old Man," *Esh yedidutith* (Friendly fire), *Hashiva mehodu* (Open heart), and up to *Hakala hameshaheret* (The liberated bride). She maintains that the women in Yehoshua's works are both charismatic and judgmental, and actually represent the drive and the law. Through this paradigm, Ben-Dov shows the ties between Yehoshua and Agnon that are inherent in the figure of the disdainful opinionated madam.

Space is the destination of Ben-Dov's third journey. Again, it links up the three authors and reveals a world of shadows. They are the shadows of Jerusalem in *The Liberated Bride*, hinted at in *Ore'ah nata lalun* (A guest for the night), and in *Shira*, those who conduct a dialogue with the shadows of Jerusalem in *My Michael* and in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*. But all three of them contain other spaces that threaten to erupt into every home—the spaces outside the land of Israel that are ever-present and sometimes threaten even the kibbutzim in Oz's stories.

The Israeli spaces and the private ones, the threatened and threatening spaces, come together for the fourth journey that Ben-Dov takes, though sometimes in an implied manner. When Ben-Dov outlines the breakthrough of Yehoshua and Oz into Hebrew literature, she presents a paradox: at that time, both authors denied any ties between Hebrew literature and ideological and historical baggage. Their focus was on universal questions, ostensibly detached from political and social contexts, and on the human condition. From a later perspective, though, it transpires that both authors paradoxically “continue to a great extent the Hebrew tradition of the author as an observer of the Jewish people” (p. 150). Ben-Dov analyzes that absorbing paradox between the local and universal, between specific values, ideology, and philosophy. She demonstrates perfectly that the Agnonic shadow world is not devoid of space or context. The world of Yehoshua and Oz does in fact violate the ideals of the authors of the 1948 generation. Yet their shadowy figures, the disturbed, unworldly people who do not fit in, the figures of the female judges and the dead women, the spaces of Jerusalem, the European spaces, the kibbutz spaces invaded by evil spirits—all of these were always connected to the Israeli condition and, together with an aesthetic option, offered a trenchant ideological gaze.

The book sets out from the point when a new literary generation was taking shape in the 1960s and continues until the present time, where its world of shadows seems more relevant than ever. It is an interpretive work with depth and breadth, perspective and understanding of the world of literature and Israeli reality.

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