

EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF
S. Y. AGNON'S
ᲘᲚᲗ᲏Თ ᲏ᲗᲗᲗ ᲗᲗᲗ᲏, 1938–1939¹

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Introduction

While commemorating Agnon's centenary, 1988 will also mark the first half-century since the initial publication of his chief novel, *ᲘᲚᲗ᲏Თ ᲏ᲗᲗᲗ ᲗᲗᲗ᲏*.² Serialized initially in the daily *HᲗᲗᲗ᲏Თ* in 1938–39, it was subsequently published by Schocken in 1939 as volume seven of Agnon's

1. In the what follows, most references to the novel's various editions will be made within the text of the paper. The serialized *HᲗᲗᲗ᲏Თ* edition (and see Agnon, 1938–39) will be noted in abbreviated form by the number of the installment—corrected to eliminate duplication of issue numbers—followed by the column number and then the line number. Thus, for example, 1/2/3 would refer to the first installment, second column (of four), third line. This notation may be followed by an "equals" symbol and a number, referring to the parallel page(s) where the wording may be found, or would have been located, in the novel's 1939 Schocken edition (and see Agnon, 1939). For the convenience of those holding the last edition and/or the English translation (see Agnon, 1966c and 1968), page numbers referring to them will, at times, follow the above-noted numbers. They will be separated from them by a semicolon, in which the first number will refer to the last, 1953, Hebrew edition, followed by the parallel page number in the English translation, again separated from the former by an "equals" symbol.

In referring to the unpublished manuscripts and typescript, I shall be using the archival reference numbers assigned at *YᲗᲗ ᲘᲗ᲏᲏*, the Agnon Archives. Thus, 1:695 will always refer to the manuscript itself, 1:566 to another small manuscript fragment, while 1:1 is the number of the typescript. When referring to English translations of chapter titles, character or place names, I shall frequently rely on the spelling of the translated edition (see Agnon, 1968).

At this point, I also wish to express by deep appreciation to the Agnon Archives of the Jewish National and University Library at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, its able staff and particularly to Mr. Raphael Weiser, its director, for making all their holdings available to me in conducting this study. I am also indebted to the Indiana University Office of Research and Graduate Development, without whose encouragement and support this project could not have been possible.

2. Coincidentally, 1988 also marks the twentieth year of Arnold Band's work (see Band, 1968), the most influential English language study of Agnon's literary output.

collected works. A revised and final edition appeared in 1953 as the fourth volume of the author's collected works (see Band, 1968, p. 283).

Inspired by Agnon's 1930 visit to Buchach, the principal protagonist describes a visit to his hometown of Shibush (spelled "Szibucz" in the translation; see Agnon, 1968) in the wake of the first World War. Fleeing the Arab riots, which destroyed his Jerusalem home, the Guest witnesses the physical, religious, economic and cultural demise of Jewish life in Shibush. After accepting the futility of any attempt to revive the past in town, he finally returns to ³*Ereṣ Yiśrā'el*. By this act the hero demonstrates that ³*Ereṣ Yiśrā'el* has become the sole remaining physical and spiritual haven for himself and, by analogy, for his fellow Jews.

As may be ascertained from the extant manuscript, composition of the novel did not begin before 1938. By then, the author's sense of the impending demise of East European Jewish communities was undoubtedly reinforced by events in Germany. Composition and publication of this novel at such a crucial period in Jewish history, the power of its narrative and the fact that this work was written in the midpoint of the author's literary career underscore its centrality in our investigation of Agnon's fiction. And since three different published versions of the novel have come out over the years, we may rightfully inquire about the nature of its transformations from inception through the last edition.

The following discussion will illustrate the evolving character of ³*Ōrēah nāṭā lālūn* in its early forms: the manuscript, typescript, including the initial, serialized version of 1938–1939, and its first published edition in book form in 1939. One approach would have been to describe and enumerate the major emendations and alterations made in the case of each rewriting of the novel. The advantage of this method is to simulate for the reader an examination of each manuscript and published version. It, however, falls short of presenting the total picture. That overview is facilitated by a thematic approach which primarily disregards the readers' linear absorption of changes while pointing out their overall effect. Thus, our discussion will focus on the thematic considerations which seem to have prompted the revisions in bringing about the desired effects.

The procedure we employ is undertaken with the understanding that literary scholarship views with some skepticism the process of referring to unpublished writings or manuscripts in an analysis of a published work. The author himself, goes this argument, elected to delete, alter or otherwise refashion the contents of the earliest unpublished versions before allowing his work to see the light of day. The very fact, however, that Agnon has so carefully preserved his manuscripts, typescripts and

all unpublished works, implies his recognition of the value of these documents, and a willingness to have all forms of his writings read, studied and examined.³ This approach provides us with insights into this author's art of fiction, including direction of themes, characterization, use of language and editing of the text for publication. Also, an examination of these primordial pages brings the reader face to face with the workings of the artistic imagination, which exhibits the flow of ideas and initial impulse. This writing later comes under the author's own critical scrutiny, as he bears upon it his considered, organized plan, which also constitutes a necessary and proper field of investigation.

As demonstrated below, the emendations, deletions and additions made to the novel appear to be grouped around several central issues. The predominant categories which emerge may be said to lend the novel an air of deeper despair, grayness of atmosphere and tone. A number of other, and intimately related themes, are the increased tendency to color favorably all aspects of the Zionist enterprise in *ʾEreṣ Yiśrāʾel*, the narrative's more forgiving attitude toward religion and the more circum-spect references to matters of sexuality.

Pessimism Enhancing Additions and Deletions

The most notable addition found in the typescript is the subplot concerning Freide the Kaiserine, earlier named Riql. This addition is a significant one in that this character becomes one of the central players in the life of the Guest. She personifies and represents the hero's memory and the world of the past in its final decline. Psychologically, Freide serves as the Guest's mother-image and represents the world of piety, faith and innocence. By including her, Agnon has intensified the polarity between the memory of bygone days and the reality which has come to replace the past. All events, episodes and situations associated with her were added only at the typescript stage.⁴

3. Also, as Oakman (1980, pp. 113–138) and Tanselle (1981, pp. 28–52 and 1976, pp. 167–211), to name but two, have demonstrated, the study, description and examination of manuscripts is a valid discipline in the realm of literary theory and criticism. An investigation of Agnon's earlier editions, and at times even of his unpublished manuscripts, may be a rewarding exercise. This has been demonstrated repeatedly and with regard to many of Agnon's works, by Band (1968, for example, pp. 57–63, 68, 115, 130–132, 283), Barzel (1975, pp. 13–51), Holtz (1973, p. 300), Šabiṭ (1979) and Šewīq (1984 and 1985), to name but a few.

4. Thus, chapters 37 (the Guest's visit to Freide's house) and 40 (his initial meeting with her, her death, his despondency and hallucinatory encounter with Elimelech and David the Beadle) are both additions.

Another character seemingly absent from the original plan was the Guest's friend, Aaron Schutzling. The manuscript still lacks any account of the meetings, walks, talks and reminiscences between this character and the protagonist. Also, the visit to Schutzling's sister Genendel, their meeting with Leibtche Bodenhaus, reports of Schutzling's children and the circumstance of his daughters' deaths, none of these are to be found in the manuscript. These characters have become links between the past and the present. In each case, their view of the here and now falls short of the richness of life as it was, its culture, ideals and commitments.

Schutzling's past commitments to ideals of social reform have been made naught by the War. The postwar youth are portrayed as being more concerned with themselves than with lofty ideals. Genendel, as Freide the Kaiserine, is a vestige of the Guest's past. Her deteriorating condition indicates the decline of the world of plenty (she hails from a family of famous bakers) left by the protagonist some decades ago. Leibtche Bodenhaus, her tenant, parodies the *maškil*, the enlightened scholar of the nineteenth century, in his steadfast desire to render the Torah into poetic verse in German. The tales of Schutzling's children, and the spiritual or physical deaths of some, serve as an indicator of the tenuous life of the generation of the children still living in the Diaspora. These additions stand as variations on the leitmotif of the despair which is so prevalent in *Shibush*.

By deciding to include Raphael Bach⁵ in the novel (some time after composition of the manuscript), and the Guest's story to him of the Jews beyond the Sambatyon (321-6 = 344-350), Agnon has posed a puzzle about the significance of this ill child, who may be the symbolic objective correlative of the physical and spiritual state of his generation.

Other episodes added at the typescript stage include the Guest's encounter with Yeruham, his visit and dinner with him and Rachel, and the ensuing discussion concerning *ʿEreṣ Yiśrāʾel* (most of chapter 50 of the last edition). Rachel and Yeruham stand in marked contrast to the generation of the past and its values. These additional episodes foreground the development of personalities whose imprint on the reader's imagination assures them a place among the principal protagonists of the novel.

In conjunction with development of the chief theme discussed below, the inclusion of new episodes and deletion of others affects the extent by which characters are fleshed out in the plot. When the narrative opens a window into the thoughts and opinions of characters the reader may gain additional insights into matters which affect them and their sur-

5. In the manuscript, Bach has two daughters, one of whom is said to be ill.

roundings. Such is the case with the episode exposing the feelings of members of the Zommer family about the possibility of Riegel the traveling salesman marrying Babtchi (chapter 51 of the last edition). Similar overviews are created when the Guest meets with an unsavory Zionist activist, with the Widow Sarah, the Rabbi and in the story about the elderly Jew who has come to town on legal matters (originally chapter 48, 317–8 = 340–1).

One of the suppressed chapters, chapter 50 of the manuscript, presents an account of the engagement between Erela Bach and Kuba Milch, the Guest's childhood friend. Evading an answer as to whether he has heard of the good news Kuba is about to tell him, our hero replies playfully that, "I heard many things, but the thing which you mean I have not heard." The ensuing discussion reveals Kuba's inner doubts about the wisdom of the engagement. The reader is asked to remember that Kuba, who has been divorced from the ideal woman whom he still loves, has just been set aback again when his divorcee remarries.

In the following chapter (also not published), the Guest meets and congratulates Daniel Bach on the occasion of his daughter's engagement. Bach, also skeptical about the match, asks the Guest for a loan for the wedding. The latter, whose funds are running out, hesitates to assist his friend. This attitude then precipitates feelings of guilt and doubt about his conviction that he is a philanthropist to the residents of Shibush. These regrets evoke memories of the two dreams he had on the previous night, an account which was excised, re-written and published as the 1941 tale, "*Lēḥēyt ʿabbā*." At the conclusion of this episode, the Guest again meets Bach and, resolved to make the loan, hears that someone has meanwhile pre-empted him.

Deletion of the engagement account was done for several valid reasons.⁶ The planned marriage of another couple would have shed too much optimism on the future prospects of the Jews in Shibush. A happy

6. A number of brief and passing references to what has happened in the deleted episodes may yet be discerned in the few instances wherein the narrative refers to the interest Kuba Milch has in Erela Bach. The most outstanding example is the note in the epilogue telling of the engagement and impending marriage plans of the two, who will then immigrate to ²Ereṣ Yiśrā'ēl (443–4 = 475–6). In addition to this we find at least two references to Kuba's interest in Erela located in a place which would have followed the lengthy and deleted engagement account. Both examples exist in all published versions of the novel, from that of *Hā'āreṣ* to the final edition. This realization leads us to suspect that they were not mere oversights left by Agnon when excising the larger episode, but subtle foreshadows. The first of these presents a dialogue between Kuba and the Guest. One of Kuba's sentences concludes with the question "what do you think of Bach?"

I laughed and said, 'You'd better ask about his daughter Aniela first.' 'Why?'

'Because her name begins with *aleph*' (129/2/5–8; 401 = 428).

occasion of this magnitude would have altered the message of the story. The novel's tone, however, is not altered significantly by the epilogue's brief announcement of this couple's engagement, since their plans are to leave Shibush and settle in *ʔEreṣ Yiśrāʔēl*.

In addition, by having postponed news of the marriage, the narrative need not be redirected to follow this development with additional plots, particularly at a time when the protagonist's plans are to prepare for his return to *ʔEreṣ Yiśrāʔēl*. For that reason, the engagement episode leads to a dead-end. The parties involved appear to be less than enthusiastic about their upcoming marriage. The chapters are left in the manuscripts as if in a state of isolation, without further development, implying that, shortly after composing them, the author dismissed the idea and discarded all related episodes.

Also, the engagement account is unsatisfactorily motivated. Although one would understand it as Erela's wanton and capricious reaction after losing Yeruham to Rachel, nothing in the narrative prepares the reader for such a turn of events. Nor is there any indication that Kuba's final loss, when his divorcee remarries, is the motivating factor behind his desire to remarry. The engagement's delayed announcement in the epilogue is at least an indication of the passage of time, allowing for a possible flowering of a more positive relationship between these two characters.

The air of hopelessness of a revitalized Jewish society in Shibush, in all its aspects, is embodied in the prevalence of its present material poverty and spiritual bankruptcy. Underscoring the tenuousness of Jewish existence in town, the narrative emphasizes the material deprivation of its inhabitants. Chief among them is Freide the Kaiserine. Due to alterations in the narrative's description of Freide's attempt to keep warm in her home, her state of poverty is made more acute in the published edition. Whereas before she says that she placed straw *on* her window sills, in the *Hāʔāreṣ* version she tells how she *fills* her window(s) with straw; implying that she is too poor to have glass window panes (79/1/22; and cf. Agnon, 1966, p. 42).

Whereas in the above it is Guest who implies that something is taking place between his friend and Aniela (i.e., Erela) Bach, the next example represents an eye-witness report:

More than anyone else I was in the habit of visiting Daniel Bach. Sometimes Kuba would come to his house to see what his friend was doing. He would find Erela sitting with piles and piles of copybooks in front of her, correcting spelling mistakes. She did her work with rigid honesty, ferreting out and correcting every error (136/1/14-18; 422 = 451).

Others in Shibush have also fallen victim to the harshness of a life of poverty. The published text is altered to inform the reader that only two coachmen are left in town, whereas the manuscript implies that there are many more. Broadening this theme and applying it to others is the added description of the market place at the onset of winter. There, emphasis is placed on the hero's observation that the sour and salty odors of winter have overcome the pleasant and positive smells of millet boiled in honey, an association which the Guest has with the past (13/2/23, 14/1/2; 44 = 42, 46 = 44, and see Katz, 1980, pp. 93–106).

As a reaction to their life of poverty, Shibush residents escape their present deprivation by telling tales. Deleted from the published edition is the comment that the kinds of stories the people of Shibush are fond of telling concern the past glory of the city, the good life in it, and the triumph of good over evil. The sole tale to be retained and published tells of Shifrah Puah the midwife (139, 142 = 145, 148). By not repeating any of the glorious tales, and by specifically retaining the latter, containing the pessimistic prophecy about hard times to come, which she makes on her death-bed, the narrative is restricted to reflecting a gloomy vision of this society. The single category of tales told by Shibush residents is that of woe and misfortune. The tales told by the men are not of their own afflictions. Those affected by the War, observes the narrator, tell of the pogroms, and those hurt by the pogroms tell of the War (37/3/25; 116, 126 = 119, 130).

In addition to the harshness of material life in town, its residents' spiritual state is also devoid of substance. In editing the manuscript, the author preferred depicting most characters as living in a vacuum, deprived of a valid substitute for their formerly stable lifestyles.

In pursuit of this notion, the published version omits noting what is being read by each of those who study at the old *Bēyt Midrās*, 'House of Study'. By providing such a list, the unpublished narrative creates the impression of a thriving, active group, immersed in a large impressive array of texts; such as "... *mišnāyôt* . . . *ēyn ya'āqôḥ* . . . *šulhān 'ārûk* . . ." By omitting this detail, the published version suppresses the caliber and content of their studies (37/2/14; 115 = 118). And, as the Guest learns shortly, their motivation to study stems more from the need to keep warm on cold winter days than out of a love of learning and respect for tradition.

A number of other omissions contribute to further widen the chasm between the shallowness of spiritual life in present-day Shibush and its glorious past. The depiction of those at prayer on *Yôm Kippûr* has the potential of indicating the continuity of tradition. Yet much has changed

when we realize that a key sentence was deleted from the episode. The sentence ascribing to the congregants deep devotion and contrition follows immediately upon the sound of sighs the Guest hears but cannot interpret:

The silence did not last long; sighs that did not make up any speech or any language began to rise. Only He who knows all secrets understands this language (5/4/17 = 28; 21 = 17). [1:695: And they bent their bodies and contracted themselves evermore so as to show the Almighty how lowly and harmless the sinner is, so that He should have mercy upon them and accept their contrition.]

Without these words, the image of these Jews at prayer is revealed as being vestigial, mechanical and meaningless. Their wordless sounds place in question the efficacy of the written word as a mode of conveying the felt emotion. In striking out the bracketed words, the narrative leaves the reader with the impression that a considerable chasm has opened between these supplicants and a Creator whose motives are incomprehensible.

Also, in place of the manuscript's assertion that a considerable number of congregants participate in the blessing over the moon after *Yôm Kippûr*, the novel, in *Hā'āreš*, makes no mention of them. The impression left is that but a mere handful of the pious remain in Shibush—Reb Shlomo Bach, his son Daniel and the Guest—to perform this traditional rite, while the other congregants leave and go home (6/3/17).

In pursuit of the central theme, the Guest's tendency to come to the defense of the justice meted out by God is modified. His experiences and observations while in Shibush generate a measure of change in his character. This is indicated by the addition of a comment recognizing that it is the Creator who is the source of calamities, and not just of goodness. The conclusion underscores the protagonist's altered view of God as being the sole source of good as well as of evil (61/3/5–6).

In later versions of the tale, the cruelties of war are more sharply depicted by the introduction of more themes of personal misfortune and death than are found in the manuscript. This appears to be the motive behind the alterations in the account of the tragic fate which befell the family of the old man who comes to town on legal matters. Whereas previously he and his wife are said to have been subjected to financial losses, their grief is magnified immeasurably when an addition to the narrative—after the typescript was already complete—focuses on the deaths of their sons in the War (17/3/19 = 73; 56–55). Another instance where the theme of death is employed to shatter the hopes for a resurrected past is when the Guest realizes that the singers of bygone days, who entertained the populace in Shibush before the first World War, have also fallen victim (64/2/24–5 = 260; 201 = 215).

Among the more notable of categories of alterations made in the manuscript, as revised in the typescript and in the *Hāʕāreš* edition, is that of name changes. Some of these appear to aim for more authentic-sounding names, whereas others provide greater insights into the characters. Thus, the railroad dispatcher Rubberovich (*Gûmôbyiṣ*) is initially called Rubber (*Gûmî*). The addition of the familiar Slavic patronymic suffix, “vitch,” does not alter the name but merely lends it a greater semblance of authenticity. Daniel Bach was originally called Abramson. While the reason for the new name remains obscure, it has not prevented scholars from attempting to offer interpretations of his last name, which is noted in Hebrew with the familiar abbreviation symbol. His name, notes Leiter, “is an ironic acronym for ‘BAYit CHadash’—‘New House’” [sic] (1967, p. 10).

Whereas several name changes are evident in the pre-published manuscripts, the most notable name change of the published editions is that of the character Zecharia Rosen who, in all editions prior to the Schocken of 1939, and even in parts of the *Hāʕāreš* version, is called Gaḅriʕel Samotani. The change in first name, from Gaḅriʕel to Zecharia, marks a diminution of the ironic tone directed at this character, whose pride, or monomania, is in proving his family’s aristocratic ancestry. Implied in his original first name is the notion of manliness, power and redemption, for it is the angel Gabriel who is associated with Messianic days. The meaning of the name Zecharia is “God remembers.” And, were we to consider the book of the prophet with this name, it indeed becomes one of consolation. Named so at a time of impending war and catastrophe in 1939, this character’s appellation could very well point to the essence of the prophet’s message, and particularly the promise of a return to Zion.

In altering this character’s last name, though, very little change seems to occur in terms of its meaning or ironic connotations, implying that this character was originally designed as a bearer of a particular significance. The name Samotani stems most likely from the Yiddish term (at times also used in Hebrew) *Samet*, meaning a fine cloth, velvet.⁷ His new name, Rosen, or Rozen, denotes an aristocrat in Hebrew. Being more

7. The Yiddish term *Samet*, from the French *Samit* (ʕEḅen-Šôšān, 1967, p. 1812), ‘velvet’ (see Weinreich, 1977, p. 352, for “velvet” or p. 269 for the Yiddish *Samet*) which is transcribed in a slightly altered fashion into the Hebrew (ibid.). It may also be read as the Yiddish *Smutaneh* (‘lonely, sorrowful’, and see Weinreich, p. 517 for the Yiddish term, pp. 191 and 302 for the English), which closely approximates Agnon’s use of the Hebrew letters *smotny*. The reason for altering this name does not appear to be wholly motivated by a desire to use a Hebrew term, since the novel retains this very term, *sāmût*, when the Guest’s mother is said, by Freide, to have had “velvety hands” (79 = 79), and in describing Schutzing’s “crumpled . . . velvet hat” (360 = 385).

authentically Hebrew, the latter may be the justification for the alteration. Yet it is the more ironic meaning of this name which best serves the plot in pointedly serving as the contrast with its object, the poverty-struck foodstuffs merchant himself, who is obsessed with amassing evidence to prove his direct lineal descent from the House of David through Rabbi Hai (85, 164 = 85, 174). This character's *raison d'être* is his futile, tragi-comic attempt to gain respect and statue. However, not being a man of wealth, his attempt to do so is by association with a glorious past.⁸

The propensity for amplifying the novel's pessimistic tone, which characterizes the transition from manuscript to typescript to the initial, *Hā'āreš* publication, is an observable feature of the first Schocken edition as well.

In one instance, the depth of poverty in Shibush is underscored by presenting an account of the Schusters. In it, the store-keeper's wife tells of Mrs. Schuster, whose husband "puts his cloth under her head, for all the pillows he has are not enough" (53 = 52). In order to intensify the hopeless atmosphere, the Schocken text is altered slightly to state that she does so "because she has no pillow for her head." Not even one (92/4/18 = 373). The grayer tones by which the Schuster household is depicted, remind the reader of the above-noted similar situation in the life of Freide the Kaiserine.

Casting the pall of poverty over all Jews of Shibush, the narrator explains why they are so fond of seeing and telling him stories. By inviting him, he explains, people are not motivated so much by their fondness for the Guest, rather, they do so because not much occurs in town, and they wish to spend their time in conversation; their only remaining wealth is that of words, filling the vacuum left by the loss of material, economic wealth. When debating whom to visit, the Guest's decision is to see Schuster the tailor because, first, he promised him and, second, because he wants to bring some joy to his wife Sprintze. In this manner he admits that visiting both Schusters is preferable to the Rabbi, who is also mentioned as a possible destination earlier in the *Hā'āreš* edition (105/4/4-6 = 426).

Considering the possibility of finding a proper match for Yekutiel Rosen, son of Zecharia Rosen, the Guest notes that although Erela Bach

8. Pēnina Meyzlīš (1985, p. 35, col. 1) in citing R. Weiser claims that in the typescript, Yeruham Ḥopšī ("Freeman") was called Yonah Ḥopšī. In my reading of all extant manuscripts and typescripts, however, I have not come across this name. The name Yeruham Ḥopšī appears unaltered in all manuscripts and editions.

is a likely candidate, she is older by a number of years. The chief problem, though—and those are the words added to underscore the main point—is that both are poor. Their poverty, and that of all Shibush, touches the populace in every way, affecting the potential for its future. The young, representing the basis for the future generation, are unable to marry.

Another addition immediately following, and arising out of the same subject, sheds light on the Guest's propensity for judging people. As we learn, he sees them not merely from an economic standpoint, but also from a religio-traditional one: these two young people cannot even be introduced to each other, he thinks, because no one can pay the requisite match-making fee for bringing them together. Implicit in these words is the Guest's desire for the institution of match-making to continue (107/3/13 = 434).

No longer retained in the Schocken edition is also a listing of all people from whom the Guest takes leave upon returning to ²Ereṣ Yiśrā²el. Instead, the Schocken narrative refers to them collectively as, "all those I had known in town" (425 = 455). Added there, however, and in all subsequent editions, is the narrator's comment that he has not told about all those he met in Shibush because there is nothing good to tell, for God has not benefited them, and they still live in poverty and sorrow:

That day I began preparing for my journey and went to take my leave of all those I had known in town, . . . If God had blessed them with a little happiness, a little light in their faces, I would spin out my story; but since they lived in sorrow and their faces were black as kettles, why should I make the story any longer? Poverty has many faces, but no matter which face it turns toward you, it looks in pain and suffering (137/1/16–20 = 554; 425 = 455).

The reasons, then, that the narrator avoids telling of more Shibush residents is explained by his reluctance to ponder the issues of poverty in Shibush and the absence of any Divine assistance to his people. In underscoring this as a central message of his novel, Agnon has consistently altered many episodes to make them ominously more hopeless and despairing.

In addition to these, over forty other episodes of note have not been written when composing the manuscript. Many of these either serve to enrich the principal theme or advance others. Overall, the effect of these additions and deletions, attained primarily by the more notable revisions in theme and plot, is to paint life in Shibush in increasingly grayer, harsher and more pessimistic tones, whereas the fate of Zionism and the

Zionist enterprise in *ʿEreṣ Yiśrāʿel* are accorded greater sympathy and support.

Defending Zionism and ʿEreṣ Yiśrāʿel

The *ʿEreṣ Yiśrāʿel* orientation of the novel, the narrator's expressed fondness for the Land of Israel and Zionist ideals, have been buttressed by a series of deletions which reinforce this theme. As the protagonist sees it, *ʿEreṣ Yiśrāʿel* has become the sole and proper refuge for Jews who have survived the cultural and physical destruction of their civilization in Eastern Europe. Therefore, he frequently praises those living there, identifies himself as a Jerusalemite who is briefly away from his home and defends the Zionist enterprise in the Land.

For this reason, he omits mention of the internal tensions between Jews and (Jewish) Communists in *ʿEreṣ Yiśrāʿel* and deletes all reference to this issue (95/2/16). Similarly, by deleting the suggestion that the Revisionist Zionists may have been the mischief-makers who damaged the Gordonia club house (31/1/8), all infighting among Zionist factions is glossed over.⁹

By way of avoiding any excessive criticism of the Zionists, a portion of the narrative has been modified before publication. The alteration strikes out a number of poignant remarks which may have been taken as a direct belittling of past Zionist activities in Shibus. Since the achievement of the Zionist ideal was then primarily in the realm of ideas, its followers were portrayed as offering people an easier path for feeling involved than the requisites made by the socially committed Knabenhut and his Socialists. The text was published with an emendation leaving the term "ideals" where "Zionists" or "Zionism" appeared before. The effect of the change is to direct the criticism at a more general, and vaguely defined target:

It cannot be said that Szibucz lacked idealists [1:695: such as our comrades the Zionists], but between ourselves, how much did it [1:695: Zionism]

9. Although the narrative appears to aim at a more benevolent attitude toward the Revisionists, it does not exonerate them completely. In a later episode, they are accused of having thrown the Gordonia club house steps into the river (72/3/15-17; 227 = 243). Another motivation for the milder treatment appears to be the desire for historical accuracy. For, as Laqueur (1976, p. 369) and Schechtman (1971, p. 129) assert, the followers of Revisionism, which was founded in 1925, began to clash seriously with other Zionist groups only after 1931, and these did not become severe until after the 1933 murder of Arlosoroff. The plot in this novel, as may be surmised from internal evidence (Katz, 1985, pp. 13-14), appears to take place in the years 1929-1930.

cost? A man who bought a share in a Zionist bank, and took the shekel as a sign of membership, and paid a monthly contribution of twenty-five groschen to a Zionist society, was called a loyal comrade. And if he gave [1:695: once in his lifetime] half of a zloty for the people of Mahanayim he was called a good Zionist. But Knabenhut . . . (98/2/14; 304 = 326).

By striking out the two direct references to Zionists and Zionism, and replacing them (in the Hebrew texts especially) with the more general notion of idealism, Agnon manages to couch his condemnation in vaguer terms. In so doing, his narrative also distinguishes between the merit of true Zionist activities and the acts of the uninvolved who feel that their contributions release them from further responsibility.

An added segment reports the narrator's talk of the history of the three periods of Jewish exile. These he equates with the names after the three Patriarchs. The present age, named after Jacob, will be resolved in accord with the idea contained in a verse evoking his name from Isaiah 2:5: "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk. . . ." This serves as the motto of the Bilu organization (whose name is an acronym of that verse), and is credited with initiating the first modern *ʕālyyāh*, or wave of Zionist immigration to the Land of Israel (41/4/15–22; 129 = 134).

Another episode presenting the Land in a positive light was deleted for uncertain reasons. When told of the route he is to take on his journey to ^ʔEreṣ Yiśrāʕēl, Reb Shlomo Bach is described as listening intently and, in the manuscript and typescript, licking his lips:

So long as I was describing his journeys outside the Land, he did not seem to be listening but as soon as I mentioned Jaffa, he [licked his lips] fixed his eyes on me and repeated my words [Jaffa ^ʔEreṣ Yiśrāʕēl] (35 = 32).

This act evokes a similar one, performed by Rubberovitch when uttering the name Shibush, a word meaning a defect or impediment:

After Rubberovitch had got the name of Szibucz out of his mouth, he licked his mustache as if he had been munching sweetmeats . . . (7 = 1).

Although the reason for deleting the former is unclear, it may be prompted by the negative association brought about through its analogy with the behavior of Rubberovitch, which may be construed as less than dignified (10/2/15, 11/1/22–3, 13/2/23). On the other hand, the act may have been motivated by the association made with the latter, for Rubberovitch is the (grotesque) image of the handiwork of God and man.

In editing the manuscript, Agnon appears to have striven toward a moderated tone, even adding to the criticism of the Zionist movement (102/2/20). Such considerations are evident when the narrator seems to be avoiding the appearance of being overly supportive of the pioneering

movement. This is particularly the case when the narrative is altered so as not to promote the secular, Zionist ideology by placing the pioneers' merit above that of the *Ṣaddiqīm*, the "Righteous" or "Pious" of the diaspora. By deleting the statement that the pioneers coming to *ʿEreṣ Yiśrāʿēl* will be the first to see the Messiah, rather than the *Ṣaddiqīm*, living and buried in the diaspora, the narrator confirms the traditionally accepted criteria for virtue and resurrection in Messianic times. Demonstrating the possibility for combining the two, the plot uses Reb Shlomo Bach, the man of faith who moves from Shibush to live in Kibbutz Ramat Rachel (32/1/21). Still placing the study of religious books in a secondary position to physically living in the Land, the narrative deletes a brief legend whose moral is that whosoever studies Talmud in the diaspora is considered to have been living in *ʿEreṣ Yiśrāʿēl* (136/3/25; 424 = 453). By this deletion, the narrative indicates the greater value which living in the Land has over the vicarious means made possible via Talmud study.

And, as if to defend the Zionist ideal from any adversely harsh criticism, the narrative modifies the manuscript's account of the sharp, belligerent view of Zionism taken by Shibush residents. Zionism, they claim, is prohibited by the Torah. These words are replaced by an assertion that the Zionists merely do not await the coming Messianic redemption in order to bring their hopes to pass (43/1/11).

Seen against the background of a dispirited outlook about the future of Diaspora Jewish life, the enhancement of the theme of the love of Zion is to be seen as an expression of hope. The experiences of the Guest, the Schusters, Schutzling and others have indicated the disappearance of any valid center of Jewish life in the Diaspora. The remaining alternative for those wishing to preserve their heritage is a return to *ʿEreṣ Yiśrāʿēl*.

Diffusing Criticism of Religion

At one point in the novel, the narrator observes that the singers who used to sing in Shibush, and who have died in the War, have not been replaced. His conclusion is that the present-day generation is not disposed to seeking the kind of joy, merriment and pleasure provided by singers. This observation of the spirit of the times represents a softening of the narrative's critical tone as found in the *Hāʿāreṣ* edition. There, the narrator observes that "The handiwork of the Holy One, Blessed Be He, are in distress and captivity and are not singing," [. . . "but Rubberovitch calls, as is his way, melodiously, 'Szibucz'" (64/2/26 to 64/3/2 = 260)]. The Schocken edition deletes the bracketed words, which may be con-

strued as a blasphemous tone directed against the Almighty. This sharp criticism is replaced with less harsh, and indefinite references by telling how “Jews are entangled in troubles and wander from one exile to another and no one seeks songs . . .” (201 = 215).

Similarly, when telling of those Jews who come to the old *Bēyt Midrāš* on cold days, the published narrative treats them more kindly than previously planned. By omitting an earlier, veiled criticism asserting that, although praying, they no longer comprehend the intents of the blessings they recite (37/2/26), the narrator’s attitude and tone become significantly altered.

Another softening of criticism against faith in the ways of God is achieved by altering the wording, found in the unpublished sources (i.e., 1:566 and 1:1) pertaining to matters of the suffering of the just: “We are commanded to doubt the ways of the Almighty.” Instead, the new words read,

we are entitled to have our doubts about His ways. For what difference would it have made to Him if Yeruham had lived? (5/1/17; 19 = 14).

Additional emendations made during the various stages of this novel’s evolutionary history are of lesser significance. They too, however, serve as a measure of Agnon’s art, craft and implicit views. Among the more notable is the editing process affecting the image of the Guest-Narrator. This was done, at times, in order to render his personality and responses less conspicuous in the plot. At other times, it appears to have been necessary to increase the distance between him and Agnon. In one such instance, the names of the hero’s children, identified in the manuscript as Emuna and Hemdat, have been struck from subsequent texts.

An interesting detail which has survived in the *Hāʔāreš* version, only to be subsequently deleted from all following editions of the novel, is the inclusion of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935) in the legend of the Jews beyond the Sambatyon which the Guest tells Raphael Bach (105/1–2/24–2; 105/2–3/22–3; 321–326 = 344–50). In addition to the desire to lend a semblance of authenticity to the tale, early inclusion of Rabbi Kook in the novel may have been motivated by a number of reasons: Agnon’s special fondness for the first Ashkenazi chief Rabbi of *ʔEreš Yiśrāʔēl*, his known admiration for Rabbi Kook’s spiritual standing and impact, as well as an attempt to associate the Zionist message of Rabbi Kook with the tale and the novel all serve to legitimize this inclusion.

Nevertheless, one may point to a number of compelling reasons for striking out all references to Rabbi Kook. Without having to involve a recognizable contemporary who passed away only a few years before,

the legendary aspects of the Guest's tale are reinforced. Adding Rabbi Kook in this episode may have been viewed by some as a slighting of a great man and religious representative by placing him in the context of a fable. A clearer delineation is thereby created between the world of concrete, experienced reality and that of the legend. In this way, the author appears to strive toward the deletion of spatio-temporal references from episodes or tales in the novel containing strong traces of the legend or the folk-tale.¹⁰

The above deletion appears to stem from motives of respect for a great man whose love of Israel brought him honor from pious and secular corners alike. The Rabbi of Shibush, expressing great intolerance for any compromise with secularism, is the novel's villain. The Guest, who has promised to visit the Rabbi of Shibush, Schuster the tailor and Sprintze his wife, cannot at one point decide where to go first. Since the reader has already been made aware of the protagonist's dislike for the Rabbi, he is certain that the visit will be to one of the Schusters. However, by deleting the *Hā'āres* edition's mention of the Rabbi, while the Guest indeed goes to the Schusters, the Schocken edition eliminates an opportunity for another bitter confrontation between the protagonist and the representative of tradition and the faith. Instead, the latter version merely states that the Guest has promised to visit "many people." The Schocken edition notes that the Guest's decision is to visit both Schusters because, first, he made a promise to the tailor and, second, because he wants to bring some joy to his wife Sprintze. In this manner the narrator circumvents the need to admit that visiting both Schusters is preferable to seeing the Rabbi (105/4/4-6 = 426).

By exhibiting a more forgiving attitude toward religious values, the persona of the narrator, and perhaps even of the implied author, ap-

10. Such as "Agūnôt," and "Aggadat hassôpēr," among others (and see Band, 1968, pp. 93-125). This assertion may find support in another instance wherein the mention of a place has been struck, lending it, too, an aspect commonly found in legends. When telling Rachel of his meeting with a true princess, the Guest, in the manuscript, notes their meeting place:

Now, Rachel, let us leave this princess, whom I have seen only twice, that time I spoke of and a second time [when she stood by the *Qeren haqqayyemet* building] (23/2/23 = 92; 74 = 74).

The deleted words have the effect of firmly anchoring the account in a definite spatio-temporal setting, which narrows and restricts the broader possibilities of who the princess may be. Had these words been retained, the mysterious princess would have been identified as either representing all young Jerusalemite women or, more likely, pioneer women whose ideals correspond with the mission of *Qeren haqqayyemet*.

pears to have become more pious. Since this effect runs through the editing process of the novel, one is tempted to consider whether Agnon himself, in light of the Holocaust and subsequent establishment of a considerably secular Israel, has not become more positively disposed toward religion. His own deeply immersed intellectual and cultural background in the realms of these traditional sources could certainly motivate a nostalgic, and possibly a more veiled and ironic, posture vis-à-vis this issue. In keeping with such a possible change, it is likely that his approach to issues of sexuality in his fiction had also become sufficiently modified so as to leave a discernible track in the process of his editing and re-editing of earlier works. Since it is difficult at this juncture to substantiate such a broad generalization as it may apply to Agnon's overall literary scheme, I shall only illustrate the case as it manifests itself in the development of *ʿŌrēah nāṭā lālūn*.

Circumspect References to Sexuality

While quantitatively modest in size, the category of alterations characterized by a greater restraint in the use of offensive language merits some attention. Such restraint, discernible even at the manuscript stages, may be seen as promoting a more discreet treatment of sexual matters, often by resorting to delicate, indirect and at times euphemistic modes of expression. It may also have been done for the purpose of dealing more delicately with matters involving harsh criticism of religious practices, with the Creator's ways, or in order to make the Guest's emotional reactions, and therefore his involvement¹¹ seem less conspicuous and more detached. The latter has the effect of placing the protagonist in the role of an observer rather than as a participant in some episodes of the plot.

When sexual matters are presented, the act of self-censorship protects the reputation and image of the character involved. That is the case when more explicit language was struck from the manuscript in the description of the illicit reputation of the inn run by Reb Hayim's divorcee:

But when business got worse, she stopped being too careful about her guests, and the house became a rendezvous for sinners (9 = 3) [1:695: . . . who come with their mistresses].

11. The issue of the role of the protagonist as narrator of the novel as well as Guest has been explored particularly by Šāqēd (1973, pp. 228–278) and Katz (1985, esp. p. 23, n. 21).

This deletion indicates the narrator's attempt to appear less critical of current social wrongs in town. Most importantly, though, it protects the reputation of Reb Hayim's former wife. Nonetheless, while the account is rendered more delicately, seeming to remain circumspect about the exact intention of the reference, it remains but a thinly disguised generalization which conveys the intended message (1/3/25).

The episodes which most closely deal with matters of sexuality and desire encompass the narrator's accounts of Rachel. In an encounter between her and the Guest, the deleted narrative shows him speaking more directly to Rachel about her looks and hair. In the published version, this episode is presented by means of indirect speech rather than the direct, dramatic discourse previously planned, thereby marking a more distant relationship between the narrator and this character (23/2/9-11; 74 = 73).

Another deletion in this regard is the Guest-narrator's observation that long before her wedding, Rachel was in the habit of staying out and spending her nights in Yeruham's room. Since this behavior may be construed from later accounts of the extant published novel, the reader is led to suspect the narrator's Puritanical attitudes. That, and his fondness for Rachel appear to be the root cause prompting him to conceal, by omission, the morally questionable behavior of this young woman (29/1/15). This includes her habit of participating in activities of the local Community organization, an act apparently motivated more by her friendship with Yeruham than her ideological sympathies (23/3/5). The narrator thus remains circumspect about matters which soon enough become obvious to the reader.

In a like manner, the current version of the narrative no longer mentions that Babtchi's dress was torn as a result of an attempted sexual assault by her employer. What remains is but a veiled reference to the condition of her dress, while the reason for its appearance is left out (96/1/9-10). And, apparently, in order to promote the narrator's Puritanical, discreet image, his account omits the tale of an old Shibush custom whereby women would not accompany the casket of a deceased man. The anecdotal tale behind this practice recounts that, once, a group of morally loose women accompanied the coffin of a deceased man. Since their presence cast shame on him and all other women present, the subsequent practice was adopted to protect the dead and the living (131/1/9).

Lastly, in order to present a more discreet and delicate treatment of the circumcision ceremony, a detailed aspect of the rite, recorded in the manuscript, is omitted from the published version (138/2/19).

Summary and Conclusion

An examination of this novel's manuscripts, typescript, and early published editions demonstrates its development and evolution in form and meaning. In doing so, we witness more closely the actual act of novel-writing in terms of the author's early experiments with plot, style and form. Most important, though, is the realization that an increased pessimism appears to govern a large number of changes. The relatively late addition of accounts telling about Freide the Kaiserine and Aaron Schutzling, to name only the most notable additions, combined with the many smaller episodes and comments added at various stages, clearly indicates the direction and tone sought for this work. This effect was certainly part of the earliest ingredients in the novel's conceptual framework, but must have only become a more compelling one as the author followed the fate of German Jewry and witnessed the increasing tensions between Jews and Arabs in ^וEreṣ Yiśrā'el (Band, 1968, p. 285).

The addition of the Sambatyon tale told to Raphael, an indirect and subtle tale of faith, hope and national salvation, offers a measure of optimism. Though only Raphael, the ailing child with the dreamer's imagination, is willing to accept the plausibility of the Sambatyon tale—a message also implied in the final episode of Agnon's 1908 tale "*Agūnôt*," as observed by *Tā-šēma*^c (1967, p. 159)—the episode's symbolic significance is the ray of hope. At the time of the greatest test to the survivability of the Jewish people, and while still depicting the younger generation as ailing, it appears that Agnon maintained a steadfast faith in the power of the word in firing the imagination of the young and persuading them of the attainability of the impossible.

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