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Abstracts

An Outlined History of Theatre Research in Israel

Gad Kaynar

The first part of this article outlines the unexplored history of theatre research in Palestine and the State of Israel. During the early period scholars and writers confined themselves almost exclusively to the subject of relations between the Bible, drama and the histrionic art. The majority of second generation scholars (1950s and 1960s) – with a few notable exceptions – investigated drama as a purely literary genre, and dramatic art as a hermeneutic metaphor in the service of extra-aesthetic fields. Their students expanded theatre research through an inter-disciplinary approach, merging aesthetic considerations with other perspectives, retaining their performative disposition while claiming social and political standpoints.

The second part of the article explores those publications that constituted milestones in the development and orientation of Israeli theatre research, from analysis of historical Hebrew drama in the early 1970s; through various attempts to overcome the problems of conceiving a historiography and generic exploration of Hebrew drama and theatre; up to representation of the polyphonic character of contemporary research in the mid 1990s; followed by the latest studies of specific theatrical fields in Israel.

Habima in between Studio and Theatre: The Lack of Artistic Leadership

Elena Tartakovsky

This article presents Habima's collective organization between 1928 and 1969, and analyses the problematic lack of artistic leadership in that period. Habima began as a Jewish drama studio in Moscow in 1917, whose artistic, organizational and ethical foundations were established in the context of the collectivist ideology of the Studio Movement that developed in Russian theatre at the beginning of the 20th century. Habima's status as an "exemplary studio" contributed to its extraordinary artistic successes. Later, however, the collectivist ideology conflicted with the theatre's professional interests, preventing delegation of authority to relevant individual professionals. This

article discusses the three ways (leadership by Russian, German or resident directors), in which Habima confronted the problem of artistic leadership, and analyses the reasons for its limited success.

Two Voices in the Same Habitat: Habima as Seen through the Works of Baruch Tchemerinsky and Zvi Friedland

Dorit Yeroushalmi

The early research on Habima gave pride of place to local plays and flag performances, while the issue of directors and direction was pushed aside. However, during the period of the British Mandate only a few local plays found their way to Habima's stage; and it was not these works that established the image of what was "theatre", but rather the work and directorial approaches of the directors. This article deconstructs the "old-fashioned" image that has long adhered to Habima's narrative. In terms of the works of Baruch Tchemerinsky and Zvi Friedland, it was not "old-fashioned", but, rather, a theatre that spoke in different voices – voices that constituted part of the ongoing cultural engineering processes.

"And the comrade faced the steel" – Is 1948 Drama a Recruited Literature?

Zahava Caspi

This article attempts to examine from a new perspective the dramatic works written during and immediately after the 1948 War of Independence, such as *He Walked in the Fields* and *In the Plains of the Negev*. I contend that the plays themselves do not in fact reflect their generally perceived image as representative of the normative and consensual ideological stand of the Israeli collective at that time. I further deconstruct the common viewpoint of the plays as aesthetically shallow, and reveal instead their poetic complexity. This new reading of the plays exposes the ambivalent stand of their authors towards the reality represented in them. Moreover, their heroes are not exclusively the young *Sabras*, but also the generation of the founding fathers, who have been the main target of criticism. I suggest, for example, that the reflexive structure of a play-within-a-play in *He Walked in the Fields* exposes an ideological inner tension: while the outer play functions as a mythical text within the

framework of the dominant Israeli ethos, the inner play subverts and ironizes this idealization by revealing the falseness of the mythic perpetuation of its hero, Uri. Thus the play's structure is shown to deepen and complicate its messages and enhance its aesthetic complexity.

The Israeli Radio-play: Towards a Socio-thematic Analysis

Shimon Levy

This article presents an outline for a socio-thematic analysis of 40 years of radio-plays in Hebrew. The examined corpus comprises 1850 works, some of which are originally radiophonic and others adaptations from other media, broadcast by the Israeli radio-drama department between 1954 to 1992. Although clearly influenced by European radio-drama, Israeli radio-plays have developed their own unique blend of "form and content". Through a selected number of radio-plays, this first-of-its-kind survey offers a thematic approach to the repertoire, in dealing with topics such as the Holocaust, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the image of the Israeli-born "Sabra".

"Where is the gang from the old days when we screwed Rina in the sycamore garden": An Image of the First Hebrew City in the Neighbourhood-plays of Hanoch Levin

Omri Yavin

This article examines the relationship between space as represented in Hanoch Levin's neighbourhood plays and the actual space identified with Tel Aviv. It shows that the familiar Tel-Aviv is subjected, by Levin, to a fictional-heterotopic landscape portrayed by the use of three major strategies. First, Levin dissociates Tel Aviv from both its actual surroundings and its Israeli (geographical) context and juxtaposes it with the outside (mostly European and American) world. Second, he superimposes the neighbourhood space onto the overall municipal space of the city, thereby forming a new space, that of a "city-neighbourhood". He thus challenges the natural relationships between the city itself and the neighbourhood contained within it. Finally, Levin introduces into this "city-neighbourhood" space an additional space that can be

identified with the Jewish–European *shtetl*. Through a strategy of interpolation, he inlays the first Hebrew city with elements of the Jewish core space, that of the Diaspora. Levin thus presents the city of Tel Aviv as a global city, a city–neighbourhood, and an East–European island within the Mediterranean Sea.

Human Suffering as a Multi-perspective Theatrical Image: Hanoch Levin's *The Dreamer*, a Study in Writing Contemporary Tragedy

Nurith Yaari

This article focuses on Hanoch Levin's *The Dreamer* (1983), written between *Everybody Wants to Live* (1982) and *The Lost Women of Troy* (1984). Analysis of the central scene of the play (Act I, sc. vii) reveals Levin's use of three interchanging points of view for his theatrical image of human suffering: the inter–personal point of view that links the victim and his torturer; the metaphysical point of view that links human beings to the metaphysical powers that define human destiny; and the theatrical point of view that links spectators and actors into a “here and now” experience – the performance. As all three points of view are activated in Ancient Greek, Christian and Modern tragedy, it is suggested that *The Dreamer* can be read as a contemporary tragedy.

The Heterotopic Motherland of Nissim Aloni

Avraham Oz

The work of Nissim Aloni is constantly courting the inconstant. At the outset of his dramatic career he explored the functions of alienation between man and his place, and from there he proceeded to the homeless existence of the exiles of *The American Princess*, until settling permanently in the heterotopic twilight zone of his later plays. The collective hegemony in Aloni's plays is nothing but a façade, and the family infiltrates the historical narrative as a decisive answer to the false national community. The nation does not play any material role in Aloni's work: it is placed beyond the conceptual horizon of the characters. Its traces can be recognised in narrower communities, such as that of the family, which in turn is also a game in which everyone loses, and first and foremost – family unity. The biological family is shown as nothing but an

Oedipal nest of wasps; and the Mafia family as nothing but an organisation of beggar–murderers. On a deeper level, however, Aloni’s families are far from being ultimate, final concepts, but are, rather, metonymies of the imagined community inhabiting the national motherland: an ideological association disguised as a coherent genetic community. Thus the historical narrative of Aloni’s clowns constitutes an imaginary world of illusions, counterfeit and worthless plots, a narrative of comedy and melodrama, not based on any conventional reality, but bursting into the world by virtue of ritual and myth.

“I am the heart? I am only a nail, growing on a dead body”: Individuality Destroyed and Rebuilt in Yitzhak Laor’s *Ephraim Returns to the Army*

Tali Latowicki

This article follows the intertextual character of the play *Ephraim Returns to the Army*, and reads it through other works mentioned in it or alluded to, along with Laor’s works in other genres. The intertextual strategy has a clear political function of de–mystification. However, it also carries a powerful emotional potential, derived from the correlations it draws between the hero of the play and the implied playwright, encouraging the reader to identify both of them with Yitzhak Laor himself. Precisely because of the obvious link between the author and his hero, it is meaningful that the political ending of the play, with its utopian alternative to the current power relations, is realized only after the disappearance of the male protagonist from the stage. Only then is a new subjectivity constructed – out of the female character whose traits greatly resemble the attacked female addressee in Laor’s erotic poems. Thus the stage seems to supply Laor with the utopian space necessary to realize the political and sexual ‘Other’, but only at the price of the metaphorical death of the male hero.

**Theatricality and the Canonization of Performance:
A Foreword to Josette Feral’s Article**

Jeanette R. Malkin

This article examines the diachronic changes in Josette Feral’s thinking about theatricality and its relation to performance, from her first article on the subject in 1985, up until 2002. These changes are viewed

in light of the developments in theatre research over the last three decades in the United States and Europe, and in particular in light of the academic canonization of Performance Studies. While elaborating upon the meaning of her strategic move from an “Americano-centric” ideology toward a more “European” aesthetic discourse, Malkin draws correlations between current trends in performative culture and early 20th century European, and especially German, avant-garde theatre theory. The “Foreword” presents Feral’s axis of thought – theatrical/performative – as dynamic and sensitive to cultural developments. Feral’s original binary position developed into a synthesis that allows her to encompass both terms under the enlarged, Kantian-inflected category of “theatricality”. In the end Feral posits performance – which she had originally described as “a deconstruction of theatrical codes” – as one of the fundamental components of theatricality itself. This theoretical “shift” has disciplinary implications since it questions the benefit of the academic separation between theatre and performance studies. Malkin consequently contends that the development in Feral’s theoretical approach to performance has been paralleled by simultaneous shifts in both its artistic practice, as well as in its changing academic status.

Theatricality: The Specificity of Theatrical Language

Josette Féral

The concept of “theatricality” appears in many and widely differing disciplines – theatre, anthropology, sociology, psychology, management, economics, politics, psychoanalysis, to name but a few. In these the concept is expressed either metaphorically or as an analytical tool, in various and sometimes even contradictory ways. Moreover, outside the field of theatre, this concept appears to be returning us to its widespread linguistic use; but precisely where is it returning us to? This is the question discussed here. The article aims to bring the nature of theatre itself into focus against a background of individual theatrical practices, theories of stage-play and aesthetics. It attempts to delineate those parameters shared by all theatrical enterprises from time immemorial. Despite the vast scope of such an enterprise, its pertinence requires at least a first step in the direction of arriving at such a definition. This article is such a step, seeking to establish points of reference for subsequent reflection.

Between Identity and Renewal: On Arab-Israeli Theatre Today

Antoine Shulhut

The current state of Arab-Israeli theatre and the challenges it faces must be understood against the background of Palestinian literature and art since the 1948 war that dispossessed most of the Arab nation of its land. Poetry constituted – and still does today – the majority of Arab-Israeli literature. Its central theme has been the question of identity. The birth of the Arab theatre in Israel too can be characterized by the title “Between Identity and Renewal”. This article briefly surveys those issues linked to the tension between problems of identity and existence and those of renewal and growth, including: the place of the Arab-Israeli theatre and the question of its “Arabness” against the background of the broader Middle East and the modern Arab on the one hand, and the local space in which the Hebrew-Jewish culture dominates on the other; a reduction in audience numbers; traditional spectator habits; “dictatorship” of the director and lack of a dramaturge; the increasing number of one-man shows due to lack of resources; and – against and in spite of all these – the phenomenon of increasing activity of Arab-Israeli theatre in recent years, focused on children’s theatre and on developing a culture of festivals in order to renew the Arab theatre and return its audiences.

List of Contributors

Dr Zahava Caspi is a lecturer in the Hebrew Literature Department at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. She is the editor of the journal *Mikan* and a member of the management committee of the Lari and Lilian Gudman Acting School in Beer Sheba. Her fields of interest encompass Hebrew literature, theatre and drama, and postmodern theory. Her book, *Those who Sit in the Dark: The Dramatic World of Hanoch Levin*, was published in 2005. Her published articles include: "It's Like a Kaleidoscope, Go Grab Something Essential and Real in this Colors Game': Poetics and Pastiche in the Play *American Princess* by Nissim Aloni", in *On Kings, Gypsies and Actors: The Theatre of Nissim Aloni* (in Hebrew, 2006); and "A Lacerated Culture, A Self-Reflective Theatre: The Case of Israeli Drama", in *The Play within the Play* (forthcoming).

Prof. Josette Féral is a full professor at the Ecole Supérieure de Théâtre at the Université du Québec in Montréal. She has published several books, including *Teatro, Teoria y practica: mas alla de las Fronteras* (2004), *Mise en scène et jeu de l'acteur* (1997/1999), dealing with both European and North American stage directors, and *Rencontres avec Ariane Mnouchkine* (1995), and *Trajectoires du Soleil* (1999), both on Mnouchkine's work. She has edited several collective works, including *Theatricality* (special issue of *SubStance*, 2002), *Mnouchkine und das Théâtre du Soleil* (2003), *L'Ecole du jeu, former ou transmettre* (2003), and *Les chemins de l'acteur* (2001). She was President of the IFTR (International Federation for Theatre Research) from 1999 through 2003.

Michael Gurevich is a playwright and director, and has served as the artistic director of the Jerusalem Khan Theatre since 2001. He studied at Nissan Nativ's Acting Studio, where he also teaches today, and completed his studies in drama teaching and directing in London. He was Habima's resident theatre director for six years, and has directed over 50 plays in Israeli theatres. His own plays include: *Angels are not Forever*, *Stanislavski*, *Journey to the Sea*, *Orpheus*, *The Stone and the Lilies*, *The Tiny Distance between Love and the Body*, and *The Sleep and the Fire*; as well as *I*, *Yehuda*, and *the Chief of Staff's Sister* and *Much Water* (both with Daniel Lapin). He has directed his own works at the Jerusalem Khan Theatre (*Passing Shadow*, *A Word of Love*, *We*

are the Cavalry, and Happiness), as well as *Fighting for Home* (by Ilan Hatzor), *The Miser* (by Moliere) and *Life is a Dream* (by Calderon de la Barca). He won the Finkel Prize for direction of *Riki's Garden*, the Tel Aviv Museum Dr Gamzu Prize, and the Margalit Prize, as well as awards for Director of the Year for his staging of *Passing Shadow* (1999) and *The Miser* (2004), and again in 2005 for *Happiness*. In 2004 he was awarded the Landau Prize, and in 2005 he received the EMET Prize.

Prof. Gad Kaynar is an associate professor at the Theatre Department, Tel Aviv University. He is head of the directing, writing and dramaturgy section, and director of the university theatre. He has authored numerous articles on Jewish, Israeli, German and Scandinavian theatre, dramaturgy, performance analysis, theatrical rhetoric and reception theory, and his book *The Reality Convention in Hebrew Theatre* is due to appear in 2007. He has recently obtained a major grant from the "Israel Science Foundation" for basic research on applied dramaturgy. For the last 25 years he has been the dramaturg of Habimah Theatre, The Cameri Theatre and The Jerusalem Khan Theatre, as well as artistic director of several monodrama festivals. He is also a drama translator, actor and director.

Tali Latowicki submitted her MA thesis on "Rhetoric of Aggression: Femininity and Soul in Yitzhak Laor's early poetry", to the Department of Hebrew Literature at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. She is an editorial board member and coordinator of the journal *Mikan* and the "Critical Mass" book series, published by Ben-Gurion University and Keter Publishing House.

Prof. Shimon Levy is a full professor at the Tel Aviv University Department of Theatre, serving until recently as its head. His books include *The Bible as Theatre* (2002), *Samuel Beckett's Drama* (1997) and *Samuel Beckett's Self-referential Drama* (1990/2002) and works on Hebrew drama: *Theatre and Holy Script* [ed.] (1990) and *Hanoch Levin: The Man with the Myth in the Middle* [ed.] (2004); as well as *The Israeli Theatre Canon* [ed.] (2002), in addition to numerous articles in Hebrew, English and German. He has been dramaturg for Habima Theatre and the Jerusalem Khan Theatre, and has translated over 150 plays into Hebrew, as well as directing plays for both theatre and radio.

Dr Jeanette R. Malkin is a senior lecturer and former head of the Department of Theatre Studies at The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. She is a board member of The Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History. She has published the books *Memory-Theater and Postmodern Drama* (1999), and *Verbal Violence in Contemporary Drama: From Handke to Shepard* (1992), and edited (with Freddie Rokem) *Going Public: Jews and the Emergence of Modern German Theater* (forthcoming). Her articles on contemporary German and Austrian theatre, on Heiner Müller, Thomas Bernhard, Samuel Beckett, Robert Wilson, and on postmodernism, have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies.

Prof. Avraham Oz teaches drama at the University of Haifa and the "Beit Zvi" School of Performing Arts. He served as head of the Department of Theatre at Tel Aviv University and founded and headed the Theatre Department at the University of Haifa. He is a visiting lecturer at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and at Sapir College and Seminar Hakibbutzim College, as well as co-artistic director of the Cameri Theatre and chief dramaturg of the Haifa Municipal Theatre. He has edited and presented cultural TV series, is the general editor of the Hebrew edition of the Works of Shakespeare, and President of the Israeli Association for Theatre Research. His numerous books and articles deal with Shakespeare, political theatre, and theory. He has translated many plays and operas for all the major Israeli theatre companies, including works by Shakespeare, Brecht and Pinter.

Antoine Shalhath is a critic and translator, living in Akko. He has published a number of books in Arabic on Palestinian literature, including Palestinian literature in Israel. Among the literary works he has translated from Hebrew to Arabic are: *The Way to Ein Harod* by Amos Kenan, *The Conflict* by K. Zetnick, *Ghetto* by Jehoshua Sobol and *Queen of Bathtub* by Hanoach Levin.

Dr Elena Tartakovsky holds an MA in theatre arts from the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts (GITIS), Moscow; and a Ph.D. from Tel Aviv University. Her doctoral thesis explores "The contribution of the Russian theatrical heritage to the growth of the Hebrew theatre: The Russian roots of the dramatic art of Habima".

Dr Nurith Yaari is head of the Department of Theatre Arts at Tel Aviv University. Her book *Contemporary French Theatre* was published in Hebrew (1992) and English (1994). She is editor of *On Interpretation in the Arts* (2000) and of *On Kings, Gypsies and Actors: The Theatre of Nissim Aloni* (2006). She co-edited (with Shimon Levy), *The Man with the Myth in the Middle: The Theatre of Hanoch Levin* (2004). She has published articles on ancient Greek tragedy, modern French drama and Israeli theatre. She served as a member of the artistic board of Habima Theatre, and since 1997 has served as the artistic advisor to the Jerusalem Khan Theatre.

Omri Yavin is a doctoral student at the Department of Hebrew Literature at Ben-Gurion University. His dissertation deals with time and space in Hanoch Levin's neighbourhood plays. His book *Tel-Aviv – a City of Legends*, a collection of original tales of Tel Aviv, was published in 1989. In 2001 he won the "Outstanding Playwright" award at the Haifa International Children's Theatre Festival for his play *Operation Gazzo*, inspired by the stories of Nahum Guttman. His most recent play, *Ziona's Trip*, dealing with the Zionist narrative through Jaffa's mythology, was staged this year by Hasimta Theatre.

Dr Dorit Yerushalmi teaches at the Theatre Departments of Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and was the recent recipient of a Dan David scholarship (2005). Her fields of interest include Israeli theatre, directing and acting approaches and performance analysis. She has published articles in journals on various aspects of Israeli theatre, and in books such as *Hanoch Levin: The Man With The Myth In The Middle* (2004), *On Kings, Gypsies and Actors: The Theatre of Nissim Aloni* (2006), and *Between Two Homelands: The "Yekkes"* (2006).