מכון הֶקְ?ים והמחלקה לספרות עברית,
אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב

דביר

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Theory

Portrait

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"Two Faces See Whoever Looks at Him": The Appearance of "The Mythic Other" in the Play *Beyond the Boundaries* by J. H. Brenner

Israel Hameiri

The first part of this article presents J. H. Brenner's play *Beyond the Boundaries* (London, 1907) as an important dramatic experiment. Although quite neglected by Israeli theatre and literary criticism, the play creates a unique style which can be defined as realistic–symbolic, a terminology used in the play by the protagonist writer Yohanan. Later, the article deals with some ethical and poetical ideas of Emmanuel Levinas as a basis for establishing the definition of a dramatic character, or type of character, which I call "The Mythic Other". In order to clarify the rhetorical and stylistic implications of the Mythic Other appearance, some Shakespearean characters are examined, as well as the "Rat Wife" which appears in Ibsen's play *Little Eyolf* (1894). The comparison with Ibsen's play accompanies the discussion of the Mythic Other in Brenner's *Beyond the Boundaries*, Yohanan's friend Eliyahu Hezkuni. Hezkuni portrays a combination of psychological and sexual otherness with mythic traits, which reflects the hero's hidden self, and exposes the entire play as dealing with salvation through otherness.

A Tombstone for Two: Thematic and Poetic "Doubleness" in the Novel *Temol Shilshom (Only Yesterday)* by S. Y. Agnon

Shlomit Zarur

This article suggests that the novel *Temol Shilshom (Only Yesterday)* by S. Y. Agnon is a "double novel" ("Doppelroman") whose plot embraces two different and very opposite stories: One relates to the adventures of Isaac Kumer during the Second "Aliyah" (1903–1914) and is basically a story of rebirth and regeneration; the second is a story of events contemporary with the writing of the novel itself, i.e., World War II (1939–1945) and is basically a story of destruction. The central argument of this article is that it is necessary to perceive the simultaneous existence of the two stories in order to understand the novel as a whole

and to interpret the world–view of its author. The article examines the "double–ness" of the novel while pausing to look at thematic and poetic intersections central to the scholarly discourse on the novel, including the question of fragmentation, the deconstruction of reality, and the nagging question of the relationship between the protagonist, Isaac Kumer, and the story about the dog Balak. By revealing the novel's covert dialogue between two such foundational periods of history, we discover complex literary mechanisms and an intriguing world–view of Agnon vis–á–vis literature and history.

It Is Indeed for the Protocol: "Hadrashah" by Haim Hazaz as a Protocol Text

Michal Wosner

This paper focuses on a hitherto undefined textual genre — protocol texts. The genre is based on the extra–literary model of protocols (in the sense of minutes or records) with it own specific distinguishing characteristics from other genres. I argue that protocol texts place the reader in a quasi–judicial position toward the text, calling for specific reading strategies enabling the reader to fulfill his / her judicial role. The argument is demonstrated by a close reading of the short story "Hadrashah" by Haim Hazaz, written in the protocol genre. The story is analyzed by the protocol reading strategy and interpreted as the vain attempt by the individual to raise a puny personal problem at a time devoted to great historic moves.

A Mizrachi Perspective on Arabs: Yehuda Burla's Fiction 1920–1931

Yochai Oppenheimer

Yehuda Burla (1886–1969) used to present himself as a "Sephardic writer" and focused his literary writings on the Jewish Sephardic community in the land of Israel and throughout the Middle East. Literary critics stressed the anthropological–social aspect of his literature and his naïve, non–modernistic poetics; assuming that he uncritically represented the Zionist Orientalist ideology concerning the Arab which was shared by most Hebrew writers of the pre–state era. This article, however, delineates three different stages in Burla's writings about the Arab.

The first Orientalist stage (till 1920); the second stage (and the most revolutionary) in which he dismissed Zionistic hegemonic perspective, trying to develop a new Mizrachi ethnical and non–national narrative, for the first time in modern Hebrew literature (till 1929); the third stage, after the increasing national conflicts of 1929 and the 30's, where he fully adopted Zionistic national perspective and adhered to it even after 1948. This inner polarization in the writings of Burla, as well as the first shift between ethnical and national perspectives, remained unnoticed in literary criticism.

The Problem of Spontaneous Gestures in the Bible: A Case Study of Gestural Poetics

Roman Katsman

The books of the Old Testament are full of descriptions of gestures. In addition to non–verbal elements of behavior such as dress, jewelry, colors and smells, gestures too have quite an important function in the ethics and aesthetics of the "Book of Books". However, biblical gestures have thus far been only inadequately studied (such studies as the work by Uri Ehrlich on gestures in the Jewish rites and the work by Mayer I. Gruber on non–verbal communication in the ancient Middle East made an important though insufficient contribution to the discussion of the issue). This analysis shows that the two manifestations of gesticulation in the Bible, the standard and the spontaneous, are not balanced. The article demonstrates that there is a tendency to de–legitimize and discredit spontaneous gestures. A number of test–cases presented in the paper highlight the varied roles which the poetics of gesture have in the Bible: they establish paradoxical characters and situations, activate the cultural mechanism of making the body disappear, create various narrative levels (by splitting the narrative voice and originating different implied readers), shape the ethical and aesthetic features of saint and sinner, bolster the theological and anthropological positions of monotheism and, ultimately, connect the issue of crime and punishment with an ethical–anthropological conception of the body.

"The Fall of Icarus" according to Peter Breughel, Marc Chagall and Tuvia Rübner

Shahar Bram

"The Fall", the poem that opens Tuvia Rübner's *Pesel U–Masekhah* (literally "Effigy and Mask", 1983), is divided into two stanzas and describes two paintings. In the first stanza, the poet describes Chagall's painting *The Fall of Icarus* (1975) while in the second the eponymous Brueghel painting (c. 1554). The essay explores the relationships between poetry and painting, and offers an introduction into the poet's traumatized world through a close reading of this exphrastic poem.

Whose Sacrifice Is It, Anyway? The Rise and Fall of the Binding Father in the 1950s

Yael S. Feldman

"With our own hands we have murdered you," Liova Shamir, the bereaved father of Elik, wrote in 1948. Within a decade, his son Moshe declared that "Isaac is a passive object of the experiment", while his peer S. Yizhar had his 1948 hero proclaim: "I hate father Abraham for going to bind Isaac". Half a century later it is time to investigate the "first sons" of the Zionist revolution, especially their slowly evolving use of the "Aqedah" and other sacrificial narratives as tropes for their own ideological predicaments. Based on my forthcoming study, *On the Cusp of Christianity: Rewriting Isaac in Tel Aviv,* this article analyzes the role of several frames of reference — from Jewish post-biblical traditions and Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling,* to 19th–century Russian radicalism, Freudian psychology, and the Hebrew Crusade Chronicles — in shaping the discourse on sacrifice in Israel's most "Zionist" period, its first decade. It argues that these perspectives were employed by the authors of the "Palmach generation" in a dual process, one that signaled both a *critique* of sacrifice and a psychological *defense against* such critique. This 1950s defense, which sought to present Jewish / Zionist sacrifice as morally *different* and historically justifiable, no less than the critique that had triggered it, ultimately culminated in the contemporary debate between the upholders and rejecters of the Zionist (but also traditionally Jewish) position toward the "Aqedah", the "Binding" of Isaac.

Anti-Hero Sabra Characters (Ha'tsabar-Ha'talush) in the Early Prose of the "Dor Ba'arets" Group (In the Works of S. Yizhar, Moshe Shamir and Hanoch Bartov)

Heddy Sha'yit

The goal of this article is to introduce a new form of the "Talush" (uprooted) as it appears in modern Hebrew literature in the works of Israeli writers of the 40s and 50s. The new character, called in this article "Ha'talush–Ha'sabra", is a product of an oxymoronic union of the character of the Sabra and the Talush. Both characters represent two opposites of the Jewish existence — the Sabra and the uprooted Jew. Ha'talush–Ha'sabra character creates a new model in which "rootless–ness" is viewed as a transition period from which one can leave and rebuild oneself, but is also based on previous models and traits of the Talush character. Like the twofold character of this new model of the Talush, the writers had two major roles in creating it: On one hand, they viewed rootless–ness as an essential experience in reshaping the young hero. On the other, they used it to criticize and illuminate the defects of the society as well as to present the youths as damaged by the society which raised them. This research examines the character of Ha'talush–Ha'sabra in the following works: S. Yizhar — *Misholim Ba'sadot* (*Trials in the Fields*, 1938), Moshe Shamir — *Hue Halakh Ba'sadot* (*He Walked in the Fields,* 1948) and Hanoch Bartov, *Ha'kheshbon Veha'nefesh* (*Soul and Reckoning*, 1953).

Two Friends Went on a Journey: Yizhar Smilansky and Yechi'am Weitz

Avi Ma'apil

S. Yizhar writing is known for the appropriation of social–historical materials. This is particularly true in *Days of Ziklag* (1958), his grand epos on the War of Independence, and other war stories such as "The Story of Hirbet Hiz'ah" or "The Prisoner". However, the central axis of S. Yizhar's fiction is in fact explicitly autobiographical. One example of this is the dominant and continued presence of Yechi'am Weitz in S. Yizhar's stories. Yechi'am, Yizhar's cousin and close friend, was killed in the summer of 1946. Already several months after his death Yizhar wrote about him an elegiac and charged story, "Rainy Road", which has not yet been compiled into a book. At the same time, Yizhar was

working on editing *The Letters of Yechi'am Weitz* (1948). Even before Yechi'am's death, Yizhar wrote a wild farce about him entitled "Uncle Yechi'el is Hunting Thieves" (1950). S.Yizhar returned to the figure of Yechi'am in his war story "Before Leaving" (1959) and in his children's story "Tarazinas" which was included in the compilation *Bare Footed* in the same year. S. Yizhar "planted" Yechi'am's thinly veiled character, under the name "Amichai", within the group of fighters in *Days of Ziklag* (1958). Yechi'am is presented also in several oblique but meaningful references in *Stories of the Plain* (1963). 1993 saw the publication of Yizhar's book *Zalhavim* in which Yizhar returned to his good friend Yechi'am in his youth and reconfigured it in loving detail. The two friends, Yechi'am and Yizhar, went on a long journey. Almost fifty years separate *Zalhavim* and "Rainy Road". Through careful observation of the way in which Yizhar attempted to grasp the inner life of Yechi'am Weitz and the personal and social dilemmas which shaped him, it is possible to learn about the world of S. Yizhar himself.

What is Political Literature? Adorno and Marxist Aesthetics

Amir Banbaji

This article explores some of the main tenets of Theodor Adorno's aesthetic theory. As an introductory essay to Hebrew translation of Adorno's 1962 "Commitment", the article is mainly concerned with his complex understanding of the nature of the political in artistic production. Following a brief elucidation of the dialectical nature of his writing, the article situates Adorno's definition of the political vis-à-vis with that of his main opponents, J. P. Sartre, Georg Lukács, and Bertolt Brecht. The article then attempts to anchor this quadruple constellation in Adorno's moral and epistemological commitment towards the "non-identical," as well as his defiance of the existentialist "jargon of authenticity." It is suggested that Adorno's philosophical "obligation toward the object" (as it is stated in "Commitment" and elsewhere in his writings) is replicated in his literary theory, thus producing a fascinating call for a *negative* literary knowledge of the world, as well as a non-thematic politicization of the literary work. Thus, Adorno's theory provides a specific alternative to Lukács and Brecht's realism on the one hand and Sartre's existentialist stance towards literature on the other. The essay ends with a discussion of Adorno's relevance to theoretical issues tackled by contemporary Hebrew literary critics. In

this context a question is raised regarding the relevance of Adorno's injunction against writing poetry after Auschwitz. To what extent is Adorno's famous statement compatible with the post-holocaust attacks aimed at the classical works of Sh. Y. Abramovich's (*Mendele the Book-Peddler*)? An "Adornian" reading of Abramovich's representation of the Shtetl, it is suggested, could be a way out of the bind.

Commitment

Theodor Adorno

Translated by Danit Dotan, edited by Amir Banbaji.
A Hebrew translation of Adorno's Essay — "Engagement" (1962). An English translation of the essay can also be found in *Notes to Literature*, vol. 1, Shierry Weber Nicholsen (trans.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, pp. 76–94.

Dr Amir Banbaji is a lecturer in the Hebrew Literature Department at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and in Sapir College. His first book, *Mendele the Book–Peddler and the Dialectic of Jewish Enlightenment* is due for publication in the coming year (Heksherim Institute and Dvir press). He is currently researching the history of Hebrew literary criticism and theory in the years 1720–1880.

Dr Shahar Bram teaches at the Hebrew and Comparative Literature Department at the University of Haifa. He is the author of *Charles Olson, Alfred North Whitehead and the Long Poem: An Essay on Poetry* (Bucknell University Press, 2004) and *The Backward Look: The Poetry of Israel Pinkas, Harold Schimmel and Aharon Shabtay* (The Hebrew Magnes Press, 2005, in Hebrew). His articles appeared in such journals as *Word & Image, Connotations* and *Partial Answers*. He is also the author of two poetry books in Hebrew.

Prof. Yael S. Feldman is the Abraham I. Katz Professor for Hebrew Culture in the Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at NYU and an associate of the Departments of Comparative Litrature and Cultural and Gender Studies. She has been awarded various fellowships and has been published worldwide. She was Associate Editor of Journals *Prooftexts* and *Hebrew Studies* and serves on the advisory board of *Contemporary Women's Writing*s (Oxford UP). Her latest study: *No Room of their Own: Gender and Nation in Israeli Women's Fiction* was published by the Columbia University Press in 1999. The Hebrew version, *Lelo Heder Mishelahen* (Hakibbutz Hameuchad Press), was awarded the Friedman Prize for Hebrew Literature for 2003. The present article is based on a study of Hebrew sacrificial narratives, forthcoming from Stanford UP.

Haim Gouri, poet, writer, documentary filmmaker, member of the "Palmach". He has published 25 books in various fields of poetry, prose and journalism to date. Among his books are *Flowers of Fire, Years of Fire, Till Dawn, Compass Rose, Facing the Glass Booth, The Chocolate Deal, The Crazy Book, The Interrogation: The Story of Reuel, Summer's End, Late Poems* and *Words in My Love–Sick Blood*. His collected poems are published in a book titled *Poemes* (The Bialik Institute). His books have been translated into various languages.

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With his colleagues, Gouri created a documentary film trilogy about the Holocaust and the Jewish Resistance. He has been engaged in journalist writing for well known papers such as *Lamerhav* and *Davar*. He has won various awards for his creative work, including: The Usishkin Prize, The Sokolov Prize, The Bialik Prize, The Uri Zvi Greenberg Prize and The Israel Prize. He was awarded the Yitzhak Sadeh and The Silver Eagle awards for his film series and was nominated for the American Academy Film Awards.

Dr Israel Hameiri teaches drama and dramatic writing at the Hebrew and Comparative Literature Department of the University of Haifa and at Oranim College. His doctoral thesis deals with appearances of the "mythic other" in plays by J. H. Brenner, Nissim Aloni and Hanoch Levin. Hameiri is the author of nine published novels. His latest novel is *Actors* (Even Hoshen Publishing House, 2006). Five of his plays have already been produced. Hameiri's adaptation of Brenner's *Beyond the Boundaries* is to be produced by the Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv next season.

Dr Roman Katsman is a senior lecturer in the Department of Literature of the Jewish People, Bar–Ilan University. He has published two books on myth creation in literature. His third book is devoted to the study of gesture in Modern Hebrew literature (*At the Other End of Gesture: Anthropological Poetics of Gesture in Modern Hebrew Literature*, 2007). Additional studies on gestures not included in the book comprise papers on the poetics of gesture in the writings of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Milorad Pavić, and a paper on the gestures which accompany Torah learning / recital among Yemenite Jews. In addition to modern Hebrew literature (he has published studies on S.Y. Agnon, Meir Shalev and Etgar Keret), his areas of interest include Slavic literature, theory, literary anthropology, mythopoeia, non–verbal communication, rhetoric and poetics.

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Dr Yochai Oppenheimer teaches at the Department of Literature at Tel Aviv University. He has published a book on the poetry of Avot Yeshurun

(Hakibbutz Hameuchad press, 1997, in Hebrew), and on political poetry in Israel (The Hebrew Magnes Press, 2003, in Hebrew). The present article was taken from his forthcoming book on the representation of the Arab in Hebrew fiction (Am Oved Press).

Dr Heddy Sha'yit teaches at the Hebrew and Comparative Literature Department of the University of Haifa. Her research deals with the male image of the "Talush" (the uprooted "Old Jew") and of the "Sabra" (the native Israeli "New Jew"), and with the changes in reflections of masculinity in Israeli literature. Publications include: "'*Talush*', or Alienation, in an Impressionistic–Expressionistic Space: David Vogel's 'Married Life'", in *Dappim Research in Literature* (in Hebrew, 2005); "The Rise and the Fall of the New Israeli Man: Masculinity, Militarism and the Question of Israeli Male Identity", in *Masculinity in Middle Eastern Literature and Film*, co–authored with Dr Adia Mendelson–Maoz (in press).

Michal Wosner is a doctoral student at the Hebrew Literature Department at Ben–Gurion University of the Negev. Her dissertation investigates a literary genre which has not yet been defined — protocol texts, and creates an interface between law and literature. She is the author of two books in Hebrew: *Three Women in a Boat* (Keter, 2000) and *Sight Unseen* (Prague, 2004). She is a lawyer and has her own column, "The Feminine Eye", in the *Makor Rishon* weekly.

Shlomit Zaarur is a doctoral student at the Department of Hebrew Literature at Ben–Gurion University of the Negev. Her research explores the connection between emigration, "aliya" and poetics in Hebrew and Jewish American literature at the beginning of the twentieth century. Her M.A. thesis was on impressionism in early twentieth century Hebrew literature, with a focus on the author Dov Kimhi and his book *Sefer Hacilyonot*.