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‘MISTAKE’ BY RIVKA ALPER / ‘SUFFOCATED VOICES’

Orian Zakai and Ilana Szobel

The story ‘Mistake’ by Rivka Alper, published here in full for the first time, is probably the first rape story in Modern Hebrew literature depicted from the victim’s perspective. The essay ‘Suffocated Voices’ by Ilana Szobel and Orian Zakai, featured alongside the story, sheds light on the poetic and political mechanisms at play in the story, in the hopes of highlighting the importance of Alper’s voice for the study of gender in Modern Hebrew literature. ‘Mistake’ unfolds the story of Dina, a young woman-pioneer, raped by a young man from Tel Aviv, while she is visiting the city. By sensitively representing the dynamics of exploitation, objectification, and traumatic dissociation, as well as the victim’s feelings of shame and guilt, her social marginalization, and her inability to find healing within the patriarchal pioneer community, Alper offers a poignant and critical perspective on Zionist rape culture. Dina’s gendered perspective allows her to represent the rape, on the one hand, as a shocking terrible experience, but also, on the other hand, as part of a wider spectrum of various instances of sexual violence and harassment that she and other women-pioneers experience frequently. Hence, while Dina’s personal experience of rape may not directly confront the Zionist project, it uncovers concealed problematic facets of that project, which aimed to create a secure haven for the Jewish people but ultimately fell short in safeguarding the well-being of women’s bodies, leaving them vulnerable to persistent gender-based and sexual violence.

‘A FEELING OF LIFE, REAL LIFE’:
THE DRAMA ON THE SURFACE OF THE TEXT
IN ZERUYA SHALEV’S *LOVE LIFE*

Yael Berry

This article offers an affective reading and an examination of body and mind in the work of Zeruya Shalev. This reading stems from the dominant patterns of autonomous, pre-linguistic, physical-emotional becomings, that emerge from Shalev’s novels. From the protagonists’ characteristics, through the plots and the texts, this sensory intensity is found in every aspect of the books and is difficult to ignore. Indeed, while earlier research noticed those vibrations, they were usually perceived as symptoms of something. Those readings divided the texts into visible and hidden layers. They perceived the text and the various occurrences in it as overt phenomena, behind which lies the core of interest. However, I focus on the visible layer, to describe how the powerful autonomous patterns operate, and to formulate new thoughts about Shalev’s poetics. The phenomena that had been perceived as signposts pointing toward the goal are placed at the center of my reading and reveal the drama that is situated on the surface of the text.

This article presents a reading in *Love Life* (1997), Shalev’s best known work. Movement forms on the plane of immanence and is related to the affects that rise from it, the protagonist’s movement in space between frenzy and stagnation, grotesque occurrences that provoke disgust and laughter, and liminality in the text in general. My discussion in *Love Life* revolves around a protagonist who is motivated by forces of creation, productivity for the sake of vitality and continuity. The protagonist devises a new way for herself to live, and she finds it in literature.

CITY AND MOTHER: GHASSAN KANAFANI
AND SAMI MICHAEL WRITE HAIFA

Chen Bar-Itzhak

This article examines the dialogue between Sami Michael's novel, 'Pigeons at Trafalgar Square', and Ghassan Kanafani's novella, 'Returning to Haifa', from the perspective of the representations of the city and urban space in these works. Through a spatial reading, the article offers a new interpretation of each of these works, and of the dialogue between them. Reading the urban space in Kanafani's novella demonstrates that at its core is a poetic-political mechanism more complex than researchers have previously noted – a symbolic chain of reflections that all refer to the homeland: the city, the building, the home and the son.

A spatial reading of Michael's novel illustrates that at the basis of this work is a sophisticated mechanism that deliberately disassembles Kanafani's symbolic mechanism, and transfers all the emotional weight attached to the homeland onto another vehicle – that of the mother. The article exposes the ways in which these works employ the urban space within specific aesthetic-political mechanisms, and argues that understanding these mechanisms is crucial for understanding the dialogue between the nationalist-militant ethos and the humanist-universal ethos in these works, both constructed through an engagement with the urban space of Haifa.

THE HORROR OF THE HOMECOMING:
READING OF 'LET IT BE MORNING' BY SAYED KASHUA

Batya Shimony

'Let it be Morning' by Sayed Kashua, describes an apocalyptic reality and reflects the existential anxiety of Israeli Arabs about being expelled from the Israeli space. The article discusses the novel using two concepts: the Uncanny by Freud and the Abject by Kristeva. These terms are connected through a sense of a threat to identity, meaning and order. Kashua is known for his journalistic writing, and direct report of the harsh situation of Arabs in Israel. In the paper, I present two layers of meaning: the local-political layer that is presented in journalistic style, and the universal primordial layer that is revealed as the normative order collapses. This collapse leads to an onslaught of the Abject – when everything that was removed from the body or expelled from it with disgust now floods the village and threatens its residents. Besides the description of the actual secretion, in direct language, the Abject is a metaphor for the village itself as a repulsive body that is expelled from the Israeli borders. This is the horror of the double homecoming: the return of the narrator to the village of his birth, and the return of the Arab village itself to the bosom of Palestinian sovereignty.

‘AND THAT’S THAT? JUST THAT?’—
DEMONSTRATIVE AND PERFORMATIVE INSINUATIONS IN POETRY

Reut Ben-Yaakov

This article focuses on the ways in which modern Hebrew poetry uses the demonstrative pronoun ‘zeh’ (this, that or it): an everyday and efficient word that relies on shared understandings or the illusion of shared understandings between speakers, and in which a long text is often condensed into the act of pointing. The extensive usage of ‘zeh’, sometimes as the poem’s subject or as its main interest, is a poetic phenomenon that needs to be examined and characterized. The article traces various uses of this word in Hebrew poetry, and classifies and examines the insinuation, that is, what is implied, in poems by Rachel Bluwstein, Nathan Zach, Yona Wallach, Mois Benarroch, Dahlia Ravikovitch and Hedva Harechavi. In these poems, the demonstrative – a deixis always implying a context or a frame of reference – is essential and central, and the article shows how the immediate act of pointing in daily language is transformed by the poems for their own purposes.

The article contains four sections, each examining a different usage of ‘zeh’. The first section examines uses that are existentialist in nature, some of which relate to suspicion and its activation in readers; these uses also tend to function as a shibboleth, splitting readers into those who understand and decipher what is implied and those who don’t, the insiders and the outsiders. The other three sections describe uses of the demonstrative ‘zeh’ that can be interpreted as standing against or in opposition to the former ones; poems that use the insinuations to produce different identifications with alternative groups, signal being “like that” [‘ka-zeh’]; poems that point at what is implied and naming it, debunking and ridiculing the very act of implying or insinuating; and lastly poems that point out the powerlessness of poetry and language, doing this by an act of pointing that tries to achieve the impossible in the poems, and to allegedly, revive the dead.

‘THE GREAT SIN OF THE RUSSIAN ZIONIST WOMAN WHO
WENT TO WORK WITH MEN IN THE FIELDS’: BLAME FOR
DEATH IN THREE ZIONIST WOMEN’S MEMOIRS

Yael Ben-Zvi Morad

This paper examines a fascinating similarity among three memoirs from different periods of the Yishuv – Zionism before the establishment of the State of Israel. The three memoirs are those of Sara Malkin of the second Aliya, who was recognized as a leading woman pioneer; of Henya Peckleman of the third Aliya, who lived with her mother in conditions of economic hardship and became one of Israel/Palestine’s first female construction workers, though she never gained honour or social status, and committed suicide at 35; and the memoirs of Netiva Ben-Yahuda, one of the first female fighters in the Palmach. In these three different life stories, the author identifies a similar social pattern: all three women were excluded from the centers of Zionist activity in which they were involved; in periods marked by life-threatening dangers (such as a war or plague), these women, who transgressed gender boundaries, were all falsely accused of causing death; and this accusation was in turn used as a pretext to remove them from the group and restore gender-order.

The article suggests that contradictory definitions of femininity characterize Zionist ideology and practice. This inner contradiction is manifested in the gaps between ideology and practice during the second and third Aliyas, as well as in the status and roles of women in the Palmach. This paper points out and analyzes the intriguing connections between literary devices and social-gendered conditions.

A RIDDLE: JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND THE HOLOCAUST
IN THE RESEARCH AND POEMS OF DAN PAGIS

Hadas Shabat-Nadir

This article analyzes the poems of Dan Pagis, particularly 'Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway Car', as verse composed in the 'neck-riddle' genre, which Pagis, a scholar of medieval poetry, analyzed in his book *A Sealed Secret* (1976). This article argues that the riddle that Pagis subverts in that poem continues to hover over other poems by him, and at its basis is a game of identities, gazes between Cain and Abel, and between German and Jew. Within this intricate system, Pagis attempts to restore the Jewish narrative.

A meticulous reading demonstrates that the murderous relationship between Cain and Abel reflects a clash between two perspectives: The Jew reflected in the Christian's gaze, signifying him as inferior - one who must be exterminated in a 'sealed railway car', and the Jew and the Christian reflected in the Jew's gaze as an attempt to escape the murderous Christian's gaze and overturn the relationship. Pagis, as this article demonstrates, seeks to save himself from the murderous glance of the German/Christian, to be extricated from that 'sealed railway car', and to return to Jewish History. However, despite his attempts to overturn the relationship between the Christian and the Jew, he does not succeed in solving the riddle. Rather, an infinite chain of murders occurs between Christian and Jew and between Jew and Christian, which unveils a chain of semiotics of the game of historic and private murder. this chain penetrates till the question of Pagis' original name.

UNHEARD SOUNDS AND TRAVELING VOICES:
READING LEAH GOLDBERG'S 'FROM THE SONGS OF MY
BELOVED LAND' AS AN ACOUSTIC MAP

Yoni Livneh

This article delves into Leah Goldberg's cycle 'From the Songs of My Beloved Land', offering a different perspective on depth as a literary experience rooted in an embodied and musical engagement with the written text. Departing from previous readings, which are focused on the debate about the obscure identity of 'My Beloved Land', the present article proposes an alternative approach, claiming that the poems use poetic devices that invite exploration of this land's proximity, reality, or metaphorical nature to transform the reading experience into interaction with a resonating body in motion. This interpretation treats the poem not as a static object but as an agent that prompts readers to experience a spatial realm beyond 'here' and 'there', bridging tangible and imagined places and sounds.

BA'AL HA-AZHAROT: S.Y. AGNON READS
SOLOMON IBN GABIROL

Uriah Kfir and David Rotman

S.Y. Agnon's story *Hasiman* (*The Sign*) is probably the author's most explicit literary reaction to the Holocaust and the destruction of Buczacz. Strangely enough, the story also weaves in and out of the *Piyyut* tradition and specifically centers on Solomon Ibn Gabirol. At the climax of the story, the deceased medieval poet reveals himself to the protagonist (modeled after Agnon's own character) while he is reciting Ibn Gabirol's *Azharot* for *Shavu'ot*. The article presents a new interpretation of the story and Ibn Gabirol's role in it, based on the Foucauldian concept of 'the name of the author', which aims at expanding the obvious connection between authors and their oeuvre to an array of images that have become associated with them in different discourses. By discussing several literary references to Ibn Gabirol throughout the generations – including by Maimonides and his followers, as well as in folk stories and belles-lettres, *piyyut* exegesis and *halakhic* writings – the authors argue that Agnon's Ibn Gabirol is a link in the chain of a rich tradition which sees him first and foremost as *Ba'al ha-azharot* (the author of the *Azharot*). This tradition emphasizes the structure of the *Azharot* and sometimes highlights its double acrostic (*siman* or sign) which is a distinctive mnemonic device. The authors suggest that Agnon's choice of Ibn Gabirol in a story about the destruction of Buczacz and its memory is related to Ibn Gabirol's 'author name' (in Foucault's terms), which portrays him as *Ba'al ha-azharot*, a craftsman whose signs can create a literary monument for the demolished city and give shape to it.

English Abstracts

THE TREASURE WHICH IS NOT IN PRAGUE –
AN INTER-HASIDIC THEMATOLOGY

Zeev Kitsis

One of the best known Hasidic stories is the one about the treasure that is not under the bridge in Prague but in Karkov, in the seeker's home. Four different versions of this story appear in Hasidic sources, and these have only been partially researched until now. This article proposes an internal Hasidic reading of the story of the treasure, which, rather than emphasizing the general values of the movement, seeks to highlight dramatic differences among sub-groups of the Hasidic movement. A synchronic and diachronic reading of the versions of the tale reveals fundamental differences, present throughout the years, and various traditions formulated separately from each other within the larger movement. As a result, the critical role of each transmitter in the culture of Hasidic hagiography is reevaluated in a new light that not only reflects his world view but demonstrates the presence of sub-groups, internal tensions, and manifold internal facets of this spiritual-narrative tradition.

TURNING THE HEARTS OF THE CHILDREN TO THEIR PARENTS:
THE EDUCATION OF R. ELAZAR SON OF R. SHIMON
(*PESIQTA DE RAB KAHANA* 11)

Ido Hevroni

This article reassesses the significance of the compilation of stories about R. Shimon bar Yochai and his son, R. Elazar, within the context of *Pisqa* 11 of *Psiqta de Rav Kahana*. While earlier scholars argued that this compilation has little connection to the *pisqa*, this article highlights the integral role of the compilation in relation to the *pisqa*.

The article identifies key themes in the *pisqa*, including the hidden Divine apparatus governing the world, the appropriate relationship with foreign authorities, and the challenge of maintaining parental traditions in exile. It also uncovers motific and thematic connections between the compilation of stories and other parts of the *pisqa*, examining their structure and contents.

At the heart of the compilation is the story about the education of R. Elazar, son of R. Shimon, arranged in three acts. Each act presents an authority figure employing a particular educational approach toward the son who deviates from ancestral footsteps. Through these stories, readers are invited to contemplate the main concerns of *Pisqa* 11.

LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE MAQAMA ‘THE BRIGAND’, BY
YEHUDA AL-ḤARIZI (COMPARED WITH THE ORIGINAL ARABIC
‘MAQAMA OF THE LION’ BY AL-HAMADHANI)

Idit Einat-Nov

This paper proposes a close-reading of ‘The Brigand’, one of the best-known maqamas in Yehuda Al-Ḥarizi’s *Sefer Taḥkemoni*, in comparison with Al-Hamadhāni’s Arabic ‘Maqama of the Lion’. This reading proposes that some of the well-known medieval rhymed Hebrew stories are based on uncertainty as a poetic principle and that this principle can explain (and be explained by) the frequent use of contradictory elements and varied forms of the ironic, the grotesque, and the ambiguous.

‘THUS, I RECEIVED IT FROM THE HOUSE
OF MY FATHER’S FATHER’.
THE SOURCES AND STRUCTURING OF THE LEGEND
OF YEHONATAN, MOSES’ GRANDSON

David Sabatto

The young Levite identified as Yonatan ben Gershom, Moses’ grandson, is at the center of the narrative of Micah’s Idol (Judges 17–18). One of the greatest midrashic scholars of the Land of Israel – Rabbi Shmuel Bar Nachman – developed the figure of Yonatan in an impressive Talmudic exegetical narrative that provides a rare glimpse into this scholar’s methods. Indeed, it reveals how he skillfully employed an exceptional range of Midrashic tools, hidden biblical traditions, early aggadic materials, and even unique phrasing. These traditions served as raw material in the hands of the author of the midrash, who combined them in a complex narrative, endowing them with a new character. The main innovation of the midrash is that it offers an alternative continuation, moving on a path parallel to the life of Yonatan in the Bible. Via this parallel life path, Rabbi Shmuel imagines other options and enriches the one-dimensional biblical presentation. In addition, the Talmudic narrator presents the process of creating the midrash by portraying the discussion between Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman, the skillful exegete, and sages who adhere to the written biblical text. The connection between these two levels of the narrative becomes clearer when this midrash is compared to a similar hagiographic story about Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman himself. This parallel reveals Rabbi Shmuel’s self-awareness as an exegete, which influenced both the layered manner in which he read the written sources and his resulting complex moral judgement.

ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

‘HE WHO SEEKS OUT GOOD: THIS IS DAVID’: THE OPENING UNIT OF MIDRASH PSALMS AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Arnon Atzmon

This article focuses on the literary nature of Midrash Psalms by offering a careful study of the opening section of the Midrash. We show that this section is a highly structured unit whose purpose is to present the Psalm, ‘Blessed is the Man’, as a title encapsulating the themes of the entire Book of Psalms.

The proems [petihtaot – opening derashot] placed at the beginning and end of this midrashic unit both emphasize the Psalm’s connection with David, characterized as a prophet mediating between God and His people. The first proem signals the overall theme of the unit which understands ‘Blessed is the man’ as David’s blessing of the people of Israel, whereas the concluding proem reads ‘Blessed’ as David’s praise of God. The rest of the proems continue to develop the concept initially presented in the first proem and display a variety of general insights regarding the concept of blessing and how David formulated such a blessing.

This finding enhances our understanding of the literary nature of Midrash Psalms. Although it might appear to be an indiscriminate, random compilation of all the traditions known to the midrashic editor, it is a carefully considered and edited composition whose editor shaped its structure to convey a particular message and reading of the Book of Psalms.

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