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*JEWISH LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP
AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR*

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If scholarship can be likened to an ancient city where one builds and rebuilds on existing foundations of knowledge, then the study of modern Jewish literature can be likened to condominiums constructed along a geological fault. Whatever formidable buildings had existed there before have already been razed by a series of earthquakes. Only the blueprints remain. Meanwhile, those who inhabit the ultramodern structures nervously monitor the Richter scale.

As I see it, there are three reasons for the discontinuity in the study of modern Jewish literature. The first is the general revolution in the study of literature. As everyone who reads *Newsweek* and the magazine section of the *New York Times* knows, the once stodgy and static field of literary criticism has been taken over by a dizzying array of literary theories, each with its own European hinterland, competing departments of literature, and specialized journals. Where once professors of English could comfortably dedicate their lives to a single author and not worry about anything more ominous than the "intentional fallacy," nowadays they need to negotiate among Russian formalists, Czech and French structuralists, the deconstructionists, the German reception-theorists, the feminists, and poststructuralists—taking care, all the while, to pronounce their names correctly! Where once the objects of literary scholarship were self-evident, now one must begin by asking (with Paul Ricoeur), What is a text?; (with Michel Foucault) What is an author?; (with Wolfgang Iser and Umberto Eco) Who is the

reader? And since one center of this worldwide upheaval is Tel Aviv University, it is no wonder that the field of *Jewish* literary scholarship is in perpetual turmoil.¹

The second reason is familiar to all students of Jewish culture. As a result of the mass immigration to America, the Bolshevik Revolution, two world wars, and the return to Zion, the old heartlands of the culture have been abandoned; the old ideologies have been rendered obsolete either by failure or success, and, most important for the study of literature, the multilingual character of Jewry has been replaced almost everywhere by monolingualism, often to the accompaniment of functional Jewish illiteracy. Whereas the founders of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* had the good sense to conduct their research in German, a language that enjoyed some currency both in Jerusalem and on American college campuses, there was hardly a place to go after the war where one could study Hebrew and Yiddish, Polish and Russian, French and German, even before embarking on graduate work in the field of modern Jewish literature. To be sure, both in Israel and America there were still a few survivors—both actual and vicarious—who bridged the historical and cultural abyss and who tried to reshape Jewish literary scholarship for a postwar generation. But whatever personal integration such men as Simon Halkin, Dov Sadan, and Barukh Kurzweil achieved between their severed past and their present situation, between literary scholarship and cultural politics, could not be translated into a methodology that their students were willing or able to follow. Instead, these bridge figures became the measure of the break.

Third, the object of study—modern Jewish literature—was itself an ongoing chronicle of all the ruptures that had taken place. Here the concept of deconstruction comes in especially handy, in the sense that modern Jewish literature willfully and systematically *decentered* the civilization of the Jews. Since this literature was coterminous with the Emancipation and its checkered career, everything that was up for grabs in life was only magnified on the page of prose, poetry, or drama. One school of writers refracted all experience through the individual consciousness rather than through the life of the collective; another placed work on the land over life in the city and created a gallery of down-to-earth heroes (the *ba'al-guf*, the *haluts*, the *kolkhoznik*) who championed brawn over brain; another school, reacting to the trauma of catastrophe, recast the entire culture into a culture of memorial and disavowed all the achievements of Jewish literary modernism. How, then, could one ever know what the normative culture had looked like in order to gauge the thrust of its literary deconstruction?

Take something as obvious as Tevye's use and abuse of Scripture. Even if one knows that Sholem Aleichem's Tevye belongs to a folk aristocracy discovered by east European Jewish writers in response to romantic nation-

alism; and even if one can prove, through careful rhetorical analysis, that Tevye's mistakes are all intentional, that he knows precisely what he's doing,² we will never know how much of this wordplay originated with the folk and how much was Sholem Aleichem's own invention.³ Without this data, our theories about Jewish folk irony and about the semiotics of Jewish folklore will forever remain theoretical.⁴

Yet despite all methodological and historical odds, a composite portrait of modern Jewish culture was pieced back together. This is the abridged story of how it was done and of what still remains undone in that well nigh impossible task.

In 1949, Simon Halkin took over the professorship of modern Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University from Yosef Klausner. At that time, the basic tenets of Jewish literary history were the Great Men approach and a periodization lifted out of European textbooks. Klausner had built his *History of Modern Hebrew Literature* on minibiographies of the Haskalah Hall of Fame, then pressed this motley of maskilim into a grand movement from neoclassicism to naturalism—the precise sequence followed by French and Russian literature over a 150-year time span.⁵ Halkin, in contrast, saw the struggle for Jewish self-emancipation as the nexus of Hebrew literary creativity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To illustrate this internal dynamic, he focused on the genres and themes, the heroes and antiheroes of modern Hebrew writing. In this scheme, the problems of Jewish existence, of the universal and particular, were to forge the experiential link between the Hebrew Haskalah, the literature of Hibbat Zion and the students in Halkin's seminar. But when, under the influence of New Criticism, French existentialism, and other recent imports, Israeli students stopped reading Hebrew literature as a chronicle of the Jewish collective fate,⁶ Halkin's historicism became as great an obstacle as Klausner's biographical and bibliographical data. It would take a whole generation for the first volume of Halkin's *Trends and Forms in Modern Hebrew Literature* to be edited and published by his students.⁷

For Sadan, the What of literature was the language of the text and the How was the closest possible scrutiny to matters of rhyme, rhythm, meter, allusion, and wordplay, aided by the insights of Freudian theory. The heroes were Bialik and Brenner. Unfortunately, for reasons never adequately explained, Sadan disavowed his Freudianism of the late thirties and early forties, never published his magnum opus on Bialik's poetics, and never reprinted his "Chapters on Brenner's Psychology," let alone his more journalistic appreciations of Freud.⁸

What Sadan offered up instead—in response to the Holocaust and the ingathering of Jews to the nascent State of Israel—was a global theory of

Sifrut Yisrael, a multilingual, ideologically diverse, but internally coherent modern Jewish literature.⁹ Countering Klausner's and Halkin's one-track model of Jewish literary history, which legitimated only secular humanism and nationalism as the vehicles of Jewish creativity in the Hebrew language, Sadan proposed a far more complex model in which Hebrew would be viewed as only one axis in a triangular relationship consisting in its other two parts of Jewish diaspora languages (notably Yiddish) and of what Sadan called *la'az*, non-Jewish languages used to address a Jewish reader. Secular humanism, he proposed, should be viewed as only one axis within an ideational triad made up of rabbinic-misnagdic Judaism, Hasidism, and the Haskalah. Since all three movements, to a greater or lesser degree, had recourse to all three linguistic options, the result was a constant dialectical tension that cried out for synthesis.

Despite the great advance that such a theory made in Jewish literary history, tripling its holdings, as it were, in one fell swoop, Sadan himself applied the theory in an idiosyncratic way that required the total recall of all of Jewish culture—ancient, medieval, and modern—in all the languages of the Jewish dispersion. Thus Sadan ultimately defeated his stated purpose, for although both his medium and message projected a sense of wholeness, of cultural integration, the actual effect was to render him obsolete to all but a handful of loyalists.¹⁰

By default, therefore, the field was left open to Barukh Kurzweil, who was to dominate Hebrew literary criticism throughout the fifties and sixties. As Sadan saw the integration of Jewish culture, both religious and secular, in Hebrew, Yiddish and *la'az*, as the central task of Jewish literary scholarship, Kurzweil dedicated his formidable talents to the crisis of faith and the fragmentation of language that had been left in the wake of modernity.¹¹ In Kurzweil's scheme, modern Hebrew literature was the detritus of that metaphysical disaster and its major writers were children of the *hurban beit hamidrash* (the Destruction of the House of Study). As Sadan looked to Bialik as the arbiter of cultural synthesis, Kurzweil championed the apocalyptic vision of Uri Zvi Greenberg and even devised a periodization of modern Hebrew literature that culminated with Greenberg—its one and only occupant.¹² Though Kurzweil had many disciples and even spawned a school of Hebrew literary studies at Bar-Ilan University, his all-out condemnation of secular Zionism and his appeal to metahistorical issues left no room for the real developments in Israeli poetry, prose, and drama.¹³

To move from the vibrant—and almost violent—literary-critical scene in Israel to the other center of postwar Jewry, America, is to see in bold relief just how little still remained. The world of Yiddish was permanently traumatized by the Holocaust and the revelations of Stalin's terror. Building

pious and politically expedient memorials to the past is what the surviving intellectuals saw as their central task. The most prolific among them was still the critic S. Niger, who produced, in short order, an unwieldy survey of Yiddish *Short Story Writers and Novelists* (1946), semicritical biographies of Leivick (1951) and Peretz (1952), plus numerous collections of essays on Yiddish literature old and new.¹⁴ Jacob Glatstein's emergence as the most urbane Yiddish literary critic in America was the one bright light in the immediate postwar era. In the four volumes of *In tokh genumen* [Sum and Substance, 1947–60], Glatstein not only provided contemporary Yiddish literature with its ideal reader but also provided the literary tradition—the *hob un guts*, as he called it—with a much needed critical revision.¹⁵ In a more scholarly vein, Glatstein's former comrade-in-arms, the poet N. B. Minkoff, retrieved the *Pioneers of Yiddish Poetry in America* (1956) and even pieced together a Yiddish critical "tradition" from Alexander Zederbaum to S. Niger.¹⁶ In creating a usable past, albeit for an ever-dwindling group of Yiddishists, these poet-critics carried out almost single-handedly a task that is normally the province of a collectivity of teachers, scholars, students, publishers, journalists, and ordinary readers. Unfortunately, this positive revision did not extend to their own past as leading modernist poets. Glatstein's readers could respond to his defense of beauty in Holocaust poetry,¹⁷ but they could not countenance the cosmopolitan personae of the young Glatstein, just as they had no interest in the modernist poetry and poetic manifestos of A. Glanz-Leyeles.

The rediscovery of *that* past began in a scholarly publication called *The Field of Yiddish* (1954), the brainchild of Uriel Weinreich, who occupied the Atran Chair of Yiddish Language, Literature and Culture at Columbia University. Here Benjamin Hrushovski (Harshav) published the first study in historical poetics in the annals of Jewish literary scholarship. Modestly titled "On Free Rhythms in Modern Yiddish Poetry," Hrushovski began by defining the concept of free rhythms, then proceeded to rewrite the history of Yiddish poetry based on the development of its stanzaic and rhythmic structures.¹⁸ For our purposes, it is important to note that Hrushovski saw the brilliant culmination of this process in the free dynamic and "speaking" rhythms used by the Yiddish modernist poets in America. They alone, Hrushovski demonstrated, fully exploited the rhythmic possibilities inherent in the language.

Even at the risk of disturbing my neat chronology, I must draw out the implications of Hrushovski's achievement. First, his breakthrough was methodological. By charting the evolution of free rhythms from the folk song through modernist poetry, he provided an objective model for others to follow. A Jewish literary phenomenon, in other words, provided a key to the general study of prosody.

His second achievement was cultural. Because Hrushovski later went on to found the first journal and department of poetics in Israel; because he was to write the definitive survey of Hebrew prosody; because he was to make the manifestos and poetry of Jewish modernism accessible to Hebrew and English readers alike, besides issuing his own manifestos in Hebrew, Hrushovski achieved a monumental rescue operation.¹⁹ Thanks to his translations and scholarship, modernism emerged as a grand tradition in Jewish literary history, and Tel Aviv became, for a brief moment in time, the critical heir of St. Petersburg and Prague.²⁰

Another closed book of Jewish literary creativity was Soviet-Yiddish culture, which had been strangled and then suppressed under Stalin. Reclaiming that lost legacy was the singular achievement of Khone Shmeruk, who also made his first scholarly appearance in the 1954 volume of *The Field of Yiddish*.²¹ Shmeruk's bibliography of Soviet-Yiddish publications and his contribution to *A shpigl oyf a shteyn* [A Mirror on a Stone], a landmark anthology of Soviet-Yiddish poetry and prose, laid the groundwork for all subsequent studies (and translations) of this literature.²²

Shmeruk reclaimed Soviet-Yiddish culture in the name of Jewish values and in this he proved himself a disciple of Sadan. Just as Sadan opposed the manifest-destiny-of-Hebrew approach to Jewish literary history, Shmeruk rejected all claims (Soviet, Bundist, or otherwise) to the self-sufficiency of Yiddish culture. Shmeruk adapted Sadan's triple-axis model as follows.

Yiddish culture, from the fifteenth century until the twentieth, only flourished when it drew from the wellsprings of the past and remained open to the surrounding non-Jewish environment. By unraveling the textual history of the works that he studied, by focusing on their allusive layers, and by locating each writer within a confluence of three intersecting cultures—the Yiddish, the Hebrew-Aramaic, and the coterritorial—Shmeruk showed how even the most avowedly secular writers were operating within a sanctioned cultural pattern. Thus his pantheon was occupied by those writers who fully exploited the triangular relationship between Yiddish, the religious tradition, and the surrounding cultures and did so often in the face of mounting political pressures. Foremost among them were Soviet-Yiddish writer Der Nister; the classical writers before him—Abramovitsh ("Mendele"), Peretz, and Sholem Aleichem—and a few Polish-Yiddish writers who followed, such as Itzik Manger, Uri Zvi Greenberg, and I. B. Singer.²³ The message of Shmeruk's method was that when Yiddish lost those multiple resources, whether by choice or through coercion, the culture was doomed.²⁴

I have chosen to dwell at such length on Shmeruk's scholarly contribution not because it has had so profound an impact on the field as a whole—the Balkanization of Jewish studies at Israel's universities has severely hampered such interpenetration—but because it best illustrates one pole in

the methodology and meaning of Jewish literary scholarship since the Six-Day War. The binary opposition that we see at work today is not, as my colleague Alan Mintz has suggested,²⁵ between poetics and interpretation—that is, between those who are concerned with the universal laws governing the literary text as against those who are concerned with its meaning—but rather between the horizontal and vertical approach to modern Jewish culture. While Hrushovski animates the Jewish literary text horizontally, making it part of a worldwide movement toward greater freedom and complexity, which in turn sheds light on universal laws of poetics, Shmeruk reads the same literature along a vertical line of legitimation, that is, in terms of Jewish tradition.

Squared off in one corner are the modernists—many, but not all, associated with the Tel Aviv School of Poetics—who are concerned with the exact nature of the Mendele persona, with semantic dynamics in the text continuum of Bialik's poetry, or with unreliable narrators in Agnon's fiction.²⁶ Facing them in the other are the traditionalists, concerned with Abramovitsh's translations of psalms, with folkloristic elements in Bialik's poetry, or with the midrashic layering in *Agunot*.²⁷ What makes the present moment in Jewish literary scholarship so exciting is that the binary opposition has broken down, that one increasingly finds the same scholar engaged on both fronts simultaneously. Whether because the modernist revolution has run its course, with everyone now seeking a traditional anchor in a secular world gone awry, or because its impact has been so pervasive that even the most conservative minds have adapted its teaching—whatever the reason, the combination of forces has made possible for the first time the reintegration of modern Jewish culture, if not in life, then at least in scholarship.

For the remainder of this essay I will describe and evaluate the various methodologies currently in use that create a semblance of wholeness, and I will point to the one area of Jewish literary scholarship that persists in its glorious isolation from the larger concerns of the field—American Jewish literature.

The most ambitious and potentially most productive scheme to create order out of chaos is Itamar Even-Zohar's theory of the literary polysystem.²⁸ Acknowledging his debt to Russian formalism, Even-Zohar views literature as a coherent system that always combines a center, or canonized literature, with a periphery, or popular literature. The former is the seat of innovation and the latter is the seat of preservation, but one cannot exist creatively without the other. Applying this theoretical construct to modern Hebrew literature, Even-Zohar discovers it to be—the phrase is positively barbaric—a "defective polysystem." That is to say, until World

War I, Hebrew lacked a popular or noncanonized literature of its own and therefore maintained its symbiotic relationship with Yiddish, while even the canonized literature in Hebrew maintained its dependency on Russian and Soviet models well into the period of statehood. This is Sadan's and Shmeruk's theory turned inside out. For whereas they argued that neither Hebrew nor Yiddish culture could be viable unless it continued to draw on all its internal, Jewish resources, Even-Zohar maintains that *every* literature legitimately strives for self-sufficiency. The fact that Israeli Hebrew literature has finally achieved this status is only to be welcomed. As for the idea of a multilingual "Jewish literature," Even-Zohar has this to say:

Thus, Heinrich Heine, Boris Pasternak, Osip Mandelstam, Jakob Wasserman, Arnold Zweig . . . or Nelly Sachs . . . belong to the very centers of the various national literatures whose languages they use. Only a nationalistic Jewish approach, or a racist antisemitic one, or ignorance . . . would adopt the term "Jewish literature" on the basis of the origin of writers. It is not enough that a writer be a Jew or even use a "Jewish" language to entitle us to speak of a Jewish literature, if we mean a literature whose core has been Hebrew literature. Thus, Shalom Aleichem still belongs to "Jewish literature"; Isaac Bashevis Singer no longer does.²⁹

As a tool of *Jewish* literary analysis, then, polysystem theory can be ruthlessly discriminating—in both senses of the word—even as it broadens the field of inquiry to include areas never taken seriously before. Right now it is the latter, integrationist aspect of the theory that I emphasize. Since Even-Zohar first formulated his theory in 1970, it has already inspired research into such diverse areas as Yiddish popular and sensational literature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries;³⁰ the development of the Hebrew crime story in the 1930s;³¹ Hebrew children's literature;³² the shifting norms of Hebrew fiction from the Palmach generation to the generation of the sixties;³³ and most notably, the manifold studies of Gideon Toury on the theory and function of literary translation.³⁴

Despite the rebuttal polysystem theory delivers to the ideological presuppositions of Sadan and Shmeruk, it can potentially add new methodological rigor to what I view as their central contribution to the field: the study of the Hebrew-Yiddish symbiosis. Thanks primarily to Shmeruk and his students, we can now see how Yiddish and Hebrew-Aramaic were used in all aspects of Ashkenazic literary culture—halakhic, exegetical, ethical, historical, liturgical, poetic, hagiographic, and fantastical—according to clearly defined but highly flexible rules.³⁵ Polysystem theory may be especially helpful in explaining how the rules and the rationale for this internal

Jewish bilingualism were transformed with the rise of competing ideologies—Haskalah versus Hasidism, Zionism versus the Bund—that effectively broke Jewish society into warring camps. Meanwhile, an impressive modern bilingual corpus has already been retrieved, ranging from Yosef Perl's Hebrew-Yiddish parody of Nahman of Bratslav,³⁶ to Sholem Aleichem's Hebrew fiction;³⁷ to the Yiddish prose writings of Agnon, Berdichewsky, Brenner, Gnessin, and Yaakov Steinberg;³⁸ to the stunning discovery of Uri Zvi Greenberg's Yiddish poetry spanning forty-six years.³⁹ The most recent contribution to the field—a work unthinkable even fifteen years ago—is Yael Feldman's study of modernist poet Gabriel Preil, subtitled "Gabriel Preil and the *Tradition* of Jewish Literary Bilingualism" (my emphasis).⁴⁰

Polysystem theory is ostensibly impervious to the ideological fallout of battles lost and won. Paradoxically, however, it has done for Jewish literary scholarship of the 1970s and 1980s what Marxism did for the 1930s: it deparochialized some of the most hermetic and anomalous aspects of modern Jewish culture, and it reversed the cultural priorities. Periphery became center, and the structural complexity of the literary "system" became a measure of its greatness. As systemic consciousness replaces class consciousness among scholars of Jewish literature, it remains to be seen what unifying vision will emerge at the other end of time and space.

Another "modernist" horizontal approach to Jewish literary history is the study of genres, since it correlates formal innovations in the Jewish sphere with generic models in the surrounding, dominant cultures. The chief exponent of this approach is Dan Miron, who has written major studies on the emergence of the novel in Hebrew and Yiddish fiction from Abraham Mapu until Berdichewsky and has recently applied genre criticism very productively to a reevaluation of Bialik and Alterman.⁴¹

Miron has led the way in using genre theory to rescue from oblivion the literature of the Haskalah.⁴² Having fallen from its pedestal as the source of everything vital in modern Jewish culture to being a subject of antiquarian research, Haskalah literature needed its prince in shining armor. Despite the tireless efforts of Shmuel Werses and Yehuda Friedlander to keep the interest in Hebrew satire alive,⁴³ it required scholars of the radical young guard, such as Miron (and Gershon Shaked before him) to effect an aesthetic rehabilitation.⁴⁴ Henceforth, whenever a genre is studied—whether historical drama, the novel, the allegorical story, the ballad, the feuilleton, the autobiography—its roots in Haskalah literature are carefully unearthed.⁴⁵ The fact that Uzi Shavit, a student of Hrushovski's, has traced the development of Haskalah prosody and, most recently, of its ideological poetry is the surest sign that the subject has "arrived."⁴⁶ Aiding in this

search for progenitors is the superbly edited series of the Dorot Library that reinstated many Haskalah classics within the larger corpus of Jewish writing.⁴⁷

Thus some of the major advances in the field of Hebrew literary scholarship have come about by dismantling the great theoretical and practical edifices erected by the founding fathers: Klausner, Halkin, Sadan, and Kurzweil. Scholars of the post-1967 generation—except when they're formulating grand theoretical schemes of their own—write "studies in" a particular genre or "a contribution to" a specific period, as if to say: "the time for synthesis is yet to come." Those literary-historical surveys that have been attempted, notably by Shaked and Miron, define their turf accordingly. Gershon Shaked has undertaken to write the history of Hebrew prose fiction from 1880 to 1970; the first volume is situated entirely in "the diaspora," the second primarily in Palestine.⁴⁸ Miron has carved out an even narrower turf, subjecting to minute scrutiny the changes that did and did not occur in Hebrew poetry and prose at the turn of the century.⁴⁹

These new, if more modestly conceived, literary-historical reappraisals have come about thanks to two developments in the scholarly arena. The first is that the amount of text-critical and extraliterary material available to the literary historian has increased exponentially over the past few years: the editions of literary correspondence, the descriptive bibliographies of books and journals published in any given period, the comparison with earlier text variants or with uncollected texts, the analysis of essayistic and polemical writings.⁵⁰ The second, more profound change, one affecting all aspects of Israeli intellectual life, is the renewed interest in Zionist ideology.⁵¹

Both published volumes of Shaked's literary history begin with the stern moralist and most anguished critic of modern Jewish culture, Yosef Hayyim Brenner. Brenner's characterization of a literature created *'af-'al-pi-khen*—despite all odds—becomes for Shaked the key to the miracle and the anomaly that is modern Hebrew fiction. Similarly, it is Brenner who bequeathes to Hebrew fiction in Palestine its most enduring legacy: the distinction between the "Palestinian genre" and the "antigenre," that is, between the sentimental and the critical depiction of Jewish life in Palestine. Because it is safe to assume that Shaked's fourth volume will conclude with Amoz Oz and A. B. Yehoshua, two outspoken critics of Israeli society whose careers Shaked has done more to launch than any other writer, we have the makings of a perfectly symmetrical literary history. My point is not to question the validity of this model but simply to note that Brenner could only assume such symbolic status with the coming of age of Israeli culture, with its renewed confrontation between art and politics. If it is now possible, thanks to the explosion of Brenner studies in Israeli academe, to

reconstruct almost every day in this tragic writer's life, it speaks volumes about the current generation's own search for a hero.⁵²

One measure, then, of cultural reintegration in Hebrew literary scholarship is the degree to which engagé writers are coming back into vogue. Dan Miron has taken this revisionism one step further by constructing a new literary-historical schema out of Zionist politics. Called "From Creators to Builders without a Home of Their Own," his monograph-length essay charts the interplay between Hebrew literature and Zionist politics through seven fairly distinct periods, from 1881 until the present.⁵³ In Miron's retelling, informed by his own political agenda, some of the old controversies, such as Natan Alterman's "sellout" to David Ben-Gurion, are made to seem as timely as ever.

Like Brenner, Alterman is enjoying a spectacular comeback, both in terms of his modernist poetry (given the New Critical concern with the existential and formal aspects of literary art) and (given the renewed interest in politics) on the basis of his publicistic verse, the famous *Tur hashevi'i* column.⁵⁴ Indeed, Alterman's return to eminence augers the formation of a new modern Hebrew literary canon.

Miron, I think, comes closest to articulating the operative criteria. In the preface to *Bo'a, layla*, he introduces his subjects as follows: "Both Bialik and Berdichewsky were, as creative artists, close to the type of the conservative revolutionary or the revolutionary conservative. Both were people who, on the strength of their attachment to [literary] traditions, engaged in an ever fiercer struggle with these very traditions. These they subjected to the most ruthless scrutiny precisely because they valued them so and treated them with the utmost seriousness" (p. 14). This "conservative-revolutionary" formula, reminiscent in its Oedipal overtones of Harold Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence*, explains not only Miron's abiding fascination with such writers as Bialik, Berdichewsky, Gnessin, and Alterman but also the vast output of Agnon studies. The latter were most recently summarized by Shaked in a long chapter that locates the roots of Agnon's writing in "Tradition and Revolution."⁵⁵

Occupying the "center" of the Hebrew literary "system" are those writers schooled in past traditions who abuse that past as an object of parody or use it as intertextual landscape.⁵⁶ What makes this sense of pasthood so compelling and useful a measure of greatness to a new generation of Jewish literary scholars is that it comes supported by an impressive body of practical criticism that itself has become a critical tradition. Now, for the first time, there are critical compendia that provide an immediate overview of an author's "reception" over time. The most impressive is the series called *Penei Hasifrut*, twenty-one volumes of which have appeared to date.⁵⁷ Each is devoted to criticism and scholarship on a single author,

presented in chronological order, with an introductory survey essay and a bibliography. In addition, Miron has shown that one way of entering the closed world of the text is through its critical readings. In some of his best essays,⁵⁸ Miron begins by submitting all the critical opinions on a given author or work to minute scrutiny; then he isolates their major assumptions, reveals the contradictions between them, and arrives at a new synthetic reading based on these very same categories. Thus the "revolutionary-conservative" formula works as well for the critic as it does for the writer.

Of the schemes outlined thus far—polysystem theory, genre studies, the history of literature and of criticism—all are grounded in time and place. There is one remaining school, favored by scholars of Jewish literature writing in English, that is thoroughly ahistorical. I speak here of the archetypal school of Jewish literary scholarship that combines Kurzweil's metaphysical concerns with Northrop Frye's theory of modes. Harold Fisch is its most sophisticated exponent. The idea is to find Jewish archetypes that transcend any given period, language, or genre and to see them as the vessels of Jewish distinctiveness and cultural continuity. In Fisch's recent collection of essays, *A Remembered Future*, he argues that Jewish archetypes are ultimately grounded in historical experience as opposed to the myths that Christian writers operate with.⁵⁹ More recently, Nehama Aschkenasy has employed the same method to isolate the various archetypes of women that operate in Hebrew literature across time and place.⁶⁰

Archetypal and thematic studies are particularly well suited for the English reader who is generally unacquainted with Hebrew or Yiddish literature either in whole or in part. Perhaps this explains why it is hard to find an English-language work of Jewish literary scholarship that is not thematic, including my own book on responses to catastrophe in modern Jewish culture.⁶¹ One might even argue that the very fragmentation of Jewish culture in the diaspora makes a synthetic approach so necessary. Even when such studies *are* grounded in history, however, there is no guarantee that the thematic connections one finds aren't the thematic connections one seeks.⁶²

This brings me, finally, to that hybrid of subfields in Jewish literary scholarship: American Jewish literature. It is a field rich in biobibliographical materials and poor in literary-historical synthesis.⁶³ Its pantheon of writers is known to any undergraduate major in American literature, yet its place in Jewish cultural history has hardly been examined even by its most celebrated scholars. If we take the Malin and Stark anthology of 1963,

which advertised itself as a *breakthrough* at canonization, then the field is barely twenty-five years old.⁶⁴

In the past quarter century little, if anything, has been resolved. There is still no consensus as to what context to study this literature in, whether in terms of "assimilation and the [Jewish] crisis of identity" or strictly in literary terms.⁶⁵ If the latter, then to which literature does it belong—American or Jewish? Most scholars, given their particular training, have chosen the American route and have identified Jewish-American literature with the American Left.⁶⁶ The first to have taken the Jewish route, given *her* particular training, is Ruth Wisse, who charted the fortunes of the schlemiel from Eastern Europe until America.⁶⁷ To succeed, each scheme must also supply its own genealogy. Those who think in sociological categories need not find a literary common ground between Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, and Mary Antin. It's enough that all these writers started out somewhere in the "ghetto" and reached the shores of America during the period of mass immigration. For those who equate Jewish with leftist, one can either begin or end with the *Partisan Review*.⁶⁸ Indeed, the *Partisan Review* provides a sexy myth of origins, for it calls to mind all those bright young men, born out of radical politics, hanging out in the Village with nothing but Dostoyevsky, Freud, and Marx on their minds. But consider the revisionary impact if one were to start with another, equally self-conscious group of Jewish-American intellectuals—with those who grouped themselves in the twenties and thirties around the *Menorah Journal*.⁶⁹ This would conjure up an entirely different image: of bourgeois academic types spread out across America who take Zionism and religion seriously. Will the real American-Jewish literature please stand up?

If American-Jewish literary scholarship is having such a hard time defining its center, how much more so if it begins to confront its periphery. It is from the periphery that the most serious challenges have come of late: Canadian-Jewish scholars have rediscovered a major poet-critic in the person of A. M. Klein,⁷⁰ and Benjamin Hrushovski-Harshav has issued the first anthology of American-Yiddish modernist poetry.⁷¹ If, until now, the center has been dominated by non-Jewish Jews, it will be extremely difficult to place, on the one hand, a true writer of *la'az*, someone who used English to address a Jewish reader and possessed more Judaic knowledge than all the American-Jewish novelists combined. Perhaps it will be argued that Klein's aborted career is proof that no *real* Jewish writer can survive in an English-language or diaspora environment. If, on the other hand, the argument for beginning the story of American-Jewish literature *ex nihilo* is based on the view of the Jewish immigrant masses as barbarians, semiliterate butchers, tailors, peddlers, and shopkeepers, then where does one place

a Yiddish modernist movement—the child of the same immigration—that was thoroughly in touch with American urban rhythms and with the latest developments on the literary scene? Perhaps it will be argued that we are dealing with two entirely separate organisms—three, if we include American-Hebrew literature as well—and that America is the ultimate burial ground for any global theory of Jewish literature.

It is to this last that I return, in conclusion. As someone who teaches in the first Department of Jewish Literature ever established (in 1975), and as founder and coeditor of a journal of Jewish literary history, I obviously have a vested interest in defending an integrationist viewpoint. I am also the first to admit that I and my colleagues have devoted precious little effort to thinking through the practical and theoretical implications of such a field. How does one go about teaching it? Where does one draw the line? Does every book about the image of the Jews in this literature and in that also constitute a part of the corpus?

It may be that in the end we will discover that there is no connection between Yiddish, Hebrew, and Anglo-Jewish writing in America; that the historical fate of the Jews does not bring the disparate parts of the culture together; that with the fragmentation of modern Jewry, Jewish collective memory has ceased as well. But before we answer all these questions in the negative, there is a larger challenge to confront. Now that we are sophisticated enough to study Jewish literature as a system or, better yet, as a polysystem, it behooves us to look at Jewish *culture* as a system, one that includes overt and displaced forms of religious self-expression, not only the avowedly secular forms that have been studied thus far. What Sadan argued for the nineteenth century makes sense all over again for the last quarter of the twentieth. We live at a time when the Lubavitcher Hasidim broadcast their *farbrengen* on cable TV; at a time of messianic upheaval in Israel; at a time when Soviet Jews have become the vanguard of cultural liberation. At such a time, when everything is up for grabs again, the field of Jewish literary scholarship, so long accustomed to building on a geological fault, is ideally situated to create a sturdy, flexible structure to withstand the unforeseen tremors still to come.

Notes

1. The best anthologies of twentieth-century literary criticism and literary theory are: *20th Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (London, 1972) and *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee, 1987), a sequel to their *Critical Theory Since Plato* (New York, 1971). The most readable surveys are Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1975), and Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, 1983).

2. For a preliminary study in this direction, see Michael Stern "Tevey's Art of Quotation," *Prooftexts* 6 (1986), pp. 79–96. This study informed Hillel Halkin's superb translation of *Tevey the Dairyman and Railroad Stories* (New York, 1987).

3. On this question, see S. Niger, "Elements of Sholem Aleichem's Humor Before Sholem Aleichem," *Pinkes* 1 (1927–28), pp. 1–12 [in Yiddish]; Yudel Mark, "Sholem Aleichem's Sayings—Created or Inherited?" *Di tsukunft* (May 1946), pp. 379–82 [in Yiddish].

4. On Jewish folk irony, see Ruth R. Wisse, *The Schlemiel as Modern Hero* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 47–48. This analysis is based, in turn, on Nokhem Oyslender, *Gruntshtrikhn fun yidishn realizm* [Major Trends in Yiddish Realism] (Vilna, 1928), pp. 24–25. On the semiotics of Jewish folklore, see H. Binyamin [Benjamin Hrushovski], "The Deconstruction of Speech: Sholem Aleichem and the Semiotics of Jewish Folklore," afterword to Sholem Aleichem, *Tevey hehalban vemonologim* (Tel Aviv, 1983; in Hebrew), pp. 195–212.

5. Yosef Klausner, *Historiya shel hasifrut ha'ivrit hahadasha*, 3rd ed. (Jerusalem, 1960), 6 vols.

6. On this generational shift in attitude, see Nurit Gertz, *Hirbat Hiza'a vehaboqer shelemohorat* [Generational Shift in Literary History: Hebrew Narrative Fiction in the Sixties] (Tel Aviv, 1983), esp. chaps. 1, 7. This was originally her doctoral dissertation written for Hrushovski in 1978.

7. Simon Halkin, *Zeramin vetsurot basifrut ha'ivrit hahadasha* [Book 1: Chapters in the Literature of the Haskalah and Hibbat Zion], ed. Zippora Kagan (Jerusalem, 1984). For a preliminary, popular version of Halkin's approach, see *Modern Hebrew Literature from the Enlightenment to the Birth of the State of Israel: Trends and Values* (New York, 1950), based on his doctoral dissertation for Hebrew Union College. See also Gershon Shaked, "The Teller as Critic: On Simon Halkin's Approach to Hebrew Fiction," in S. Halkin: *Mivhar ma'amarim 'al yetsirato*, ed. Dan Laor (Tel Aviv, 1978; in Hebrew), pp. 204–11.

8. On Sadan's Freudianism, see Shmuel Werses, "Our Literature in the Eyes of Dov Sadan," in *Biqqoret habiqoret* [Criticism of Criticism: Evaluations in Development] (Tel Aviv, 1982; in Hebrew), pp. 235–42. For a complete bibliography of Sadan's writings, see G. Kressel, *Kitvei Dov Sadan: Bibli'ografiya* (Tel Aviv, 1981), and Joseph Galron-Goldschläger, *Kitvei Dov Sadan* [The Works of D.S.: A Bibliography, 1935–1984] (Israel, 1986).

9. Dov Sadan, "On Our Literature: Introductory Essay" [in Hebrew, 1950], reprinted in *'Avnei-bedeq* (Tel Aviv, 1962), pp. 9–66.

10. For the most thorough reappraisal of Sadan's theory to date, see Dan Miron, "The Literatures of the Jews: A Return to Reality," *Im lo tihye Yerushalayim* [If There Is No Jerusalem: Essays on Hebrew Writing in a Cultural-Political Context] (Tel Aviv, 1987; in Hebrew), pp. 143–62. My own essay on the state of Jewish literary scholarship should be read in the light of this debate.

11. See James S. Diamond, *Barukh Kurzweil and Modern Hebrew Literature*, *Brown Judaic Studies* 39 (Chico, Calif., 1983); Stanley Nash, "Criticism as Calling: The Case of Barukh Kurzweil," *Prooftexts* 5 (1985), pp. 281–87, and *Baruch Kurzweil Memorial Volume: Essays on Criticism*, ed. M. Z. Kaddari et al. (Tel Aviv, 1975).

12. Diamond, *Barukh Kurzweil*, pp. 101–5.

13. On Kurzweil's impact, see Gershon Shaked, "Literature and Its Audience: On the Reception of Israeli Fiction in the Forties and Fifties," *Prooftexts* 7 (1987), pp. 207–23. On his failure vis-à-vis contemporary Israeli literature, see, among others, Dan Miron, "Modern Hebrew Literature: Zionist Perspectives and Israeli Realities," *Prooftexts* 4 (1984), pp. 60–68.

14. S. Niger [Samuel Charney], *Dertseylers un romanistn 1* (New York, 1946) [no subsequent volumes appeared], *H. Leyvik 1888–1948* (Toronto, 1951), and Y. L. Perets: *zayn lebn, zayn firndike perzenlekhkayt, zayne hebreishe un yidishe shriftn, zayn virkung* (Buenos Aires, 1952).

15. Jacob Glatstein, *In tokh genumen: eseyen* [Sum and Substance: Essays], 1 (New York, 1947); 2 (New York, 1956); 3–4 (Buenos Aires, 1960).
16. N. B. Minkoff, *Pionern fun yidisher poezye in Amerike: dos sotsyale lid* (New York, 1956), 3 vols.; *Zeks yidische kritiker* [Six Yiddish Critics] (Buenos Aires, 1954).
17. Jacob Glatstein, "May One Enjoy a Dirge?" *In tokh genumen* (New York, 1947; in Yiddish), pp. 428–34.
18. Benjamin Hrushovski, "On Free Rhythms in Modern Yiddish Poetry," in *The Field of Yiddish: Studies in Yiddish Language, Folklore, and Literature*, ed. Uriel Weinreich (New York, 1954), pp. 219–66 (now available through Lexik House Publishers, Cold Springs, N.Y.).
19. Benjamin Hrushovski, "Prosody, Hebrew," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 13, pp. 1195–1240. As translator, see, for instance, "The Poetry of the Young Glatstein and the Intro-spectivist Manifesto," *Siman kri'a* 8 (April 1978), pp. 73–100 [in Hebrew]; "Poetry and Prose from the Expressionist Journal *Albatros* ed. by Uri Zvi Greenberg," *Siman kri'a* 9 (May 1979), pp. 103–43 [in Hebrew]; and, above all, *American Yiddish Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology* (Berkeley, 1986), ed. in collaboration with Barbara Harshav-Hrushovski. As an author of manifestos, see the manifesto to *Liqrat* [Internal Organ for a Group of Young Writers] 1 (1952), reprinted in *Manifestim sifrutiyim* [Literary Manifestos: A Selection of Manifestos from Hebrew Journals and Newspapers in the Years 1821–1981], ed. Nurit Govrin (Tel Aviv, 1984), pp. 122–23, and "A Quarterly for the Study of Literature in Israel," the editorial in the inaugural issue of *Hasifrut* 1 (1968) [in Hebrew].
20. On this link, see Ziva Ben-Porat and Benjamin Hrushovski, *Structuralist Poetics in Israel* (Tel Aviv, 1974); Alan Mintz, "On the Tel Aviv School of Poetics," *Prooftexts* 4 (1984), pp. 215–35; and Yael S. Feldman, "Poetics and Politics: Israeli Literary Criticism between East and West," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 52 (1985), pp. 9–35.
21. Khone Shmeruk, "The Earliest Aramaic and Yiddish Version of the 'Song of the Kid,'" in Weinreich, *The Field of Yiddish*, pp. 214–18.
22. *A shpigl oyf a shteyn: antologye* [A Mirror on a Stone: Anthology of Poetry and Prose by Twelve Murdered Yiddish Writers in the Soviet Union], ed. Khone Shmeruk, with the collaboration of Benjamin Hrushovski and Abraham Sutzkever (Tel Aviv, 1964); *Pirsumim yehudiyim bivrit hamo'atsot 1917–1960* [Jewish Publications in the Soviet Union 1917–1960], ed. Khone Shmeruk, with intros. by Y. Slutsky and Khone Shmeruk (Jerusalem, 1961).
23. Khone Shmeruk, "Der Nister: His Life and Work," intro. to Der Nister, *Hanazir vehagediya* (Jerusalem, 1963; in Hebrew), pp. 9–52; "Der Nister's 'Under a Fence': Tribulations of a Soviet Yiddish Symbolist," in *The Field of Yiddish: Second Collection*, ed. Uriel Weinreich (The Hague, 1965), pp. 263–87; *Peretses yiesh-vizye* [Peretz's Vision of Despair: An Interpretation of I. L. Peretz's *Bay nakht afn altn mark* and Critical Edition of the Play] (New York, 1971); "Introduction" to Sholem Aleichem, *Ketavim ivriyim* [Hebrew Writings], ed. Khone Shmeruk (Jerusalem, 1976), pp. 13–46; "Medresh Itzik and the Problem of Its Literary Traditions," intro. to Itzik Manger, *Medresh Itsik*, 3rd rev. ed. (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. v–xxix; "Uri Zvi Greenberg's Yiddish Work in Erez Israel," *Hasifrut* 29 (1979), pp. 82–92 [in Hebrew]; "The Use of Monologue as a Narrative Technique in the Stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer," intro. to Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Der shpigl un andere dertseylungen*, ed. Khone Shmeruk (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. v–xxxv.
24. Khone Shmeruk, "Yiddish Culture in the Soviet Union," *Gesher* 47–48 (1966), pp. 58–80 [in Hebrew]; *Sifrut yidish: peraqqim letoldoteha* [Yiddish Literature: Aspects of Its History] (Tel Aviv, 1978); *Sifrut yidish befolin* [Yiddish Literature in Poland: Historical Studies and Perspectives] (Jerusalem, 1981); *The Esterke Story in Yiddish and Polish Literature: A Case Study in the Mutual Relations of Two Cultural Traditions* (Jerusalem, 1985) and "The Jewish Trilingual Press in Warsaw," *Hasifrut* 30–31 (1981), pp. 193–200 [in Hebrew].

25. Mintz, "On the Tel Aviv School of Poetics."
26. Dan Miron, *A Traveler Disguised: A Study in the Rise of Modern Yiddish Fiction in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1973); Menakhem Perry, *Hamiivne hasemanti shel shirei Bialik* [Semantic Dynamics in Poetry: The Theory of Semantic Change in the Text Continuum of a Poet] (Tel Aviv, 1977); Gershon Shaked, *Omanut hasippur shel Agnon* [Agnon's Narrative Art] (Tel Aviv, 1973), pp. 228–78.
27. Khone Shmeruk, "Mendelev's Translations of Psalms," *Di goldene keyt* 62–63 (1968), pp. 290–312 [in Yiddish]; also in Hebrew in *Hasifrut* 1 (1968), pp. 327–42; Ziva Shamir, *Hatsratsar meshorer hagalat* [Poetry of Poverty: Folkloristic Elements in Bialik's Works] (Tel Aviv, 1986); Gershon Shaked, "Midrash and Narrative: Agnon's 'Agunut,'" in *Midrash and Literature*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven, Conn., 1986), pp. 285–303. Avraham Holtz's work on the Hasidic and folkloristic sources of *Hakhnasat kalla* also belongs firmly in this camp; see *Ma'aseh reb Yudel hasid* [The Tale of Reb Yudel Hasid: From a Yiddish Narrative in Nissim V'niflaot to S. Y. Agnon's *Hakhnasat Kalla*] (New York, 1986).
28. Itamar Even-Zohar, *Papers in Historical Poetics* (Tel Aviv, 1978).
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 80–81.
30. David G. Roskies, "The Medium and Message of the Maskilic Chapbook," *Jewish Social Studies* 41 (1979), pp. 275–90; Khone Shmeruk, "To the History of *Shund* Literature in Yiddish," *Tarbiz* 52 (1983), pp. 325–54 [in Hebrew]; Yaakov Shavit, "Warsaw/Tel Aviv—Yiddish and Hebrew: Between Mass Literature and Mass Culture," *Hasifrut* 35–36 (1986), pp. 201–10 [in Hebrew].
31. Zohar Shavit and Yaakov Shavit, "On the Development of the Hebrew Crime Story during the 1930s in Palestine," *Hasifrut* 18–19 (1974), pp. 30–73 [in Hebrew].
32. Uriel Ofek, *Sifrut hayeladim ha'ivrit: hahathala* [The Beginnings of Hebrew Children's Literature] (Tel Aviv, 1979); *idem*, *Gumot hen* [Dimples: Bialik's Contribution to Children's Literature] (Jerusalem, 1984); Zohar Shavit, "The Function of Yiddish Literature in the Development of Hebrew Children's Literature," *Hasifrut* 35–36 (1986), pp. 148–53 [in Hebrew].
33. Nurit Gertz, *Hirbat Hizah*.
34. The one most pertinent to Jewish literary studies is *Normot shel targum vehatargum hasifrut le'ivrit bashanim 1930–1945* [Translation Norms and Literary Translation into Hebrew in 1930–1945] (Tel Aviv, 1977).
35. In addition to the studies already mentioned, it is important to add: Alexander ben Yizhak Pfaffenhofen, *Sefer massa umeriva*, ed. with intro. by Chava Turniansky (Jerusalem, 1985); Sarah Zfatman, *Hasipporet beyidish mireishitah 'ad 'Shivhei haBesht' (1504–1814)* [Yiddish Narrative Prose from Its Beginnings to 'Shivhei ha-Besht' (1504–1814): An Annotated Bibliography] (Jerusalem, 1985). This bibliography complements Zfatman's doctoral dissertation on the same subject.
36. *Ma'asiyot ve'igarot mitsadiqim amitiyim um'e'anshe shelomenu* [Joseph Perl: Hasidic Tales and Narratives], ed. Khone Shmeruk and Shmuel Werses (Jerusalem, 1969). See also Shmuel Werses, "Between Three Languages (On Joseph Perl's Yiddish Writings in the Light of New Materials)," *Di goldene keyt* 89 (1976), pp. 150–77 [in Yiddish].
37. Sholem Aleichem, *Ketavim ivriyim*.
38. S. Y. Agnon, *Yidische verk*, with an intro. by Dov Sadan (1977); M. J. Bin-Gorion (Berdycewski) *Yidische ksovim fun a vaytn korev*, ed. with an intro. by Shmuel Werses (1981); and Jacob Steinberg, *Gezamlte dertseylungen*, ed. with an intro. by Aharon Komem (1986). These three volumes form part of the series of Yiddish literary texts issued by the Yiddish Department of the Hebrew University. Yitzhak Bakon has also issued two poorly edited and translated volumes published by Ben-Gurion University: Y. H. Brenner, *Haketavim hayidiyim / di yidische ksovim* (1985) and *Brenner veGnessin kesoferim du-leshoniyim* (1986).

39. Uri Zvi Greenberg, *Gezamlte verk*, ed. Khone Shmeruk (Jerusalem, 1979), 2 vols.
40. Yael S. Feldman, *Modernism and Cultural Transfer: Gabriel Preil and the Tradition of Jewish Literary Bilingualism*, Monographs of the Hebrew Union College, no. 10 (Cincinnati, 1986).
41. Dan Miron, *Bein hazon le'emet* [From Romance to the Novel: Studies in the Emergence of the Hebrew and Yiddish Novel in the Nineteenth Century] (Jerusalem, 1979); *Kivun orot* [Back to Focus: Studies in Modern Hebrew Fiction] (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 17–105; *Mipperat el 'iqqar* [Parts into a Whole: Structure, Genre and Ideas in Nathan Alterman's Poetry] (Tel Aviv, 1981); *Bo'a, layla* [Come, O Night: Hebrew Literature between the Rational and the Irrational at the Turn of the Twentieth Century] (Tel Aviv, 1987).
42. In addition to *Bein hazon le'emet*, see "Rediscovering Haskalah Poetry," *Prooftexts* 1 (1981), pp. 292–305; "Between Precedent and Happening: Y. L. Gordon's Epic Poetry and Its Place in Hebrew Haskalah Literature," *Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature* 2 (1983), pp. 127–97 [in Hebrew].
43. Shmuel Werses, *Sippur veshorsho* [Story and Source: Studies in the Development of Hebrew Prose] (Ramat Gan, 1971); *Mimendele 'ad Hazaz* [From Mendele to Hazaz: Studies in the Development of Hebrew Prose] (Jerusalem, 1987); "Echoes of Lucian's Satire in Hebrew Enlightenment Literature," *Biqoret ufarshanut* 11/12 (1978), pp. 119–85 [in Hebrew]. Yehudah Friedlander, *Peraqim basatira ha'ivrit* [Studies in Hebrew Satire: Hebrew Satire in Germany, 1790–1797] (Tel Aviv, 1979); *Bemisterei hasatira* [Hebrew Satire in Europe in the Nineteenth Century] (Ramat Gan, 1984).
44. Gershon Shaked, *Bein tsehoq ledema'* [Between Parody and Pathos: Studies in the Work of Mendele Mokher Sefarim] (Ramat Gan, 1965).
45. Gershon Shaked, *Hamahaze ha'ivri hahistori bitqufat hatehiya* [The Hebrew Historical Drama in the Twentieth Century: Themes and Forms] (Jerusalem, 1970) (based on his doctoral dissertation for Simon Halkin); Ruth Shenfeld, *Min hamelekh hamashiab ve'ad lemelekh basar vadam* [From King Messiah to the King of Flesh and Blood: The Hebrew Historical Novel in the Twentieth Century] (Tel Aviv, 1986); Uri Shoham, *Hamashma'ut ha'aheret* [The Other Meaning: From Allegorical Parable to Pararealistic Story] (Tel Aviv, 1982); Shlomo Yaniv, *Habalada ha'ivrit* [The Hebrew Ballad: Chapters in Its Development] (Haifa, 1986); Zvi Karniel, *Hafeliton ha'ivri* [The Hebrew Feuilleton] (Tel Aviv, 1981) (based on his dissertation for Hillel Barzel); Ben-Ami Feingold, "Autobiography as Literature: A Study of Moshe Leib Lilienblum's *Hat'ot ne'urim*," *Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature* 4 (1983), pp. 86–111 [in Hebrew]; Alan Mintz, "Guenzburg, Lilienblum, and the Shape of Haskalah Autobiography," *AJS Review* 4 (1979), pp. 71–110.
46. Uzi Shavit, *Hamahapeikha haritmit* [The Rhythmic Revolution: On the Threshold of Modern Hebrew Prosody] (Tel Aviv, 1983); *Shira ve'idiyogiya* [Poetry and Ideology: A Contribution to the Evolution of Hebrew Poetry in the 18th and 19th Centuries] (Tel Aviv, 1987).
47. They are, in alphabetical order: I. Bershadsky, *Be'ein matara*, ed. Yosef Ewen (1967); M. D. Brandstetter, *Sippurim*, ed. Ben-Ami Feingold (1974); R. A. Braudes, *Hadat vehahayim*, ed. Gershon Shaked (1974), 2 vols.; Ayzik-Meyer Dik, *Reb Shm'aya mevarekh hamo'adot vedivrei sippur 'aherim*, ed. and trans. Dov Sadan (1967); Abraham Goldfaden, *Shirim umahazot*, ed. R. Goldberg (1970); Ezra Goldin, *Sippurim*, ed. Yosef Ewen (1970); Abraham Baer Gottlobler *Zikhronot umasa'ot*, ed. R. Goldberg (1976), 2 vols.; Yosef Ha'efrati, *Melukhat Sha'ul*, ed. Gershon Shaked (1968); Yehudah Leib Levin, *Zikhronot vehegyaronot*, ed. Yehudah Slutsky (1968); Moshe Leib Lilienblum, *Ketavim 'otobiyografiyim*, ed. Shlomo Breiman, (1970), 3 vols.; Joshua Heschel Schorr, *Ma'amarim*, ed. Ezra Spicchandler (1972); Peretz Smolenskin, *Qevurat hamor*, ed. D. Weinfeld (1968); Eliezer Zvi Hacohen Zweifel *Shalom 'al yisrael*, ed. Abraham Rubinstein, (1972), 2 vols.; and two anthologies: *Hashira ha'ivrit*

bitqufat Hibbat Zion, ed. Ruth Kartun-Blum (1969); *Nitsanei hare'alizem basipporet ha'ivrit*, ed. Yosef Ewen (1972).

48. Gershon Shaked, *Hasipporet ha'ivrit 1880–1970* [Hebrew Narrative Fiction, 1880–1970], vol. 1: *In Exile* (Israel, 1977); vol. 2: *In the Land of Israel and the Diaspora* (1983).

49. Dan Miron, "Some Background on the Twentieth Century," *Simon Halkin Jubilee Volume*, ed. Boaz Shahevitch and Menahem Perry (Jerusalem, 1975; in Hebrew), pp. 419–87; *Hapereida min ha'ani he'ani* [Taking Leave of the Impoverished Self: Ch. N. Bialik's Early Poetry, 1891–1901] (Israel, 1986); and *Bo'a, layla* (1987). The central figure in all three of these major studies is, of course, Bialik.

50. These are reviewed by Shaked in "The Study of Modern Hebrew Literature," in *Mehqarim bemada'ei hayahadut* [Studies in Jewish Scholarship], ed. Moshe Brasher (Jerusalem, 1986; in Hebrew), pp. 294–306.

51. A turning point came in 1980 with the publication of Anita Shapira's two-volume biography of Berl Katznelson. For an English abridgment of this landmark study, see *Berl: The Biography of a Socialist Zionist* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984).

52. These, in chronological order, are the most notable items: Dan Miron, "On Stylistic Problems in Brenner's Fiction" (1961), reprinted in *Kivun 'orot*, pp. 357–68; Gershon Shaked, *Lelo motsa'* [Dead End: Studies in Y. H. Brenner, M. Y. Berdichewsky, G. Shoffman and U. N. Gnessin] (Tel Aviv, 1973), pp. 57–118 (articles written over a fifteen-year period); Yitzhak Bakon, *Brenner hatsa'ir* [The Young Brenner: His Life and Works until the Appearance of *Hame'orer* in London] (Tel Aviv, 1975), 2 vols.; Yosef Ewen, *Omanut hasippur shel Y. H. Brenner* [Y. H. Brenner's Craft of Fiction] (Jerusalem, 1977); Yitzhak Bakon, *Hatsa'ir haboded basipporet ha'ivrit 1899–1908* [The Solitary Youth in Hebrew Fiction] (Tel Aviv, 1978); Menachem Brinker, "Y. H. Brenner's Ideology as a Literary Critic: The Emergence of a Genre in Hebrew Criticism," *Hasifrut* 29 (1979), pp. 23–33 [in Hebrew]; Hagit Matras, *Hame'orer: ketav 'et ve'arikhato* [Hame'orer: A Journal and Its Editing] (Jerusalem, 1984); Adi Zemach, *Tenu'a banequda* [A Movement on the Spot: Y. H. Brenner and His Novels] (Tel Aviv, 1984); Nurit Govrin, *Me'ora' Brenner* ["The Brenner Affair": The Fight for Free Speech, 1910–1913] (Jerusalem, 1985); idem, "In Praise of the 'Genre': Brenner as the Supporter of the 'Palestinian Genre,'" *Dappim: Research in Literature* 3 (1986), pp. 97–116 [in Hebrew]. This, in addition to the *Mahbarot leheqer yetsirato shel Y. H. Brenner* series, 4 vols. (1975–), ed. Yisrael Levin et al.

53. In *Im lo tihye Yerushalayim*, pp. 11–89.

54. See, for example, Boaz Arpaly, *Avotot shel hoshekh* [Bonds of Darkness: Nine Chapters in Natan Alterman's Poetry] (Tel Aviv, 1983); Ruth Kartun-Blum, *Bein hanisgav la'ironi* [The Sublime and the Ironic: Trends and Perspectives in the Poetry of Natan Alterman] (Tel Aviv, 1983); Dan Laor, *Hashofar vehaherev* [The Trumpet and the Sword: Critical Essays on the Writings of Natan Alterman] (Tel Aviv, 1983); Dan Miron, *Mipperat el 'iqqar*, and the 4 volumes to date of the impressive *Mahbarot Alterman*, ed. Menachem Dorman et al. (1977).

55. Shaked, *Hasipporet ha'ivrit*, vol. 2, pp. 157–69.

56. On Gnessin as grand master of intertextuality, see Miron's "Hooks in the Nose of Eternity," in *Uri Nissan Gnessin: Mehqarim ute'udot* [U. N. Gnessin: Studies and Documents], ed. Dan Miron and Dan Laor (Jerusalem, 1986; in Hebrew), pp. 231–368. Miron dedicated this groundbreaking essay to Shaked.

57. In alphabetical order: S. Y. Agnon (ed. Hillel Barzel, 1982), Natan Alterman (ed. Ora Baumgarten, 1976), Dvora Baron (ed. Ada Pagis, 1974), M. J. Berdichewsky (ed. Nurit Govrin, 1973), I. D. Berkowitz (ed. Avraham Holtz, 1976), Y. H. Brenner (ed. Yitzhak Bakon, 1972), Yehuda Burla (ed. Avinoam Barshai, 1975), Yaakov Fichman (ed. Nurit Govrin, 1971), Amir Gilboa (ed. Avraham Balaban, 1972), U. N. Gnessin (ed. Lily Rattok, 1977), Leah Goldberg (ed. A. B. Yoffe, 1980), Uri Zvi Greenberg (ed. Yehuda Friedlander, 1974),

Hayyim Hazaz (ed. Hillel Barzel, 1978), Simon Halkin (ed. Dan Laor, 1978), Yonatan Ratosh (ed. Dan Laor, 1983), Gershon Shoffman (ed. Nurit Govrin, 1978), Shin Shalom (ed. Shraga Avnery, 1981), Yitzhak Shenhar (ed. Hillel Weiss, 1976), Avraham Shlonsky (ed. Aviezer Weiss, 1975), Saul Tchernichowsky (ed. Josef Ha'efrati, 1976), and S. Yizhar (ed. Chayim Nagid, 1972). All the volumes were published by Am Oved, Tel Aviv, under the revolving editorship of Dan Miron, Yehuda Friedlander, and K. A. Bertini. An anthology of critical essays on Bialik, selected according to different criteria, was edited by Gershon Shaked (Jerusalem, 1974).

58. Dan Miron, *A Traveler Disguised: "Fishke the Lame" by S. Y. Abramovitsh: The First Version of the Story, Its meaning at the Time and Its Place in the Controversy over Its Expanded Form.* in *Bein hazon le'emet*, pp. 335–411 [in Hebrew]; "Bouncing Back: Destruction and Recovery in Sholem Aleykhem's *Motl Peyse dem khazns*," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 17 (1978), pp. 119–84.

59. Harold Fisch, *A Remembered Future: A Study in Literary Mythology* (Bloomington, Ind., 1984). For Fisch's view of literary criticism, see "The Transvaluation of Values in Literary Criticism," in *Baruch Kurzweil Memorial Volume*, pp. 128–38 [in Hebrew].

60. Nehama Aschkenasy, *Eve's Journey: Feminine Images in Hebraic Literary Tradition* (Philadelphia, 1986).

61. David G. Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984).

62. See, on this question, my review essay, "The Holocaust according to the Literary Critics," *Prooftexts* 1 (1981), pp. 209–16.

63. Ira Bruce Nadel, ed., *Jewish Writers of North America: A Guide to Information Sources*, American Studies Information Guide Series, no. 8 (Detroit, 1981); Daniel Walden, ed., *Twentieth-Century American-Jewish Fiction Writers*, vol. 28 of *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (Detroit, 1984).

64. *Breakthrough: A Treasury of Contemporary American-Jewish Literature*, ed. Irving Malin and Irwin Stark (Philadelphia, 1963). Malin also edited the first collection of critical essays on *Contemporary American-Jewish Literature* (Bloomington, Ind., 1973).

65. See Allen Guttman, *The Jewish Writer in America: Assimilation and the Crisis of Identity* (New York, 1971). The best of the literary-sociological studies I know of is Stephen J. Whitfield, *Voices of Jacob, Hands of Esau: Jews in American Life and Thought* (Hamden, Conn. 1984).

66. Marcus Klein, *Foreigners: The Making of American Literature, 1900–1940* (Chicago, 1981); Mark Shechner, *After the Revolution: Studies in the Contemporary Jewish-American Imagination* (Bloomington, Ind., 1987).

67. Wisse, *The Schlemiel as Modern Hero*. Most recently in *The Shadows Within: Essays on Modern Jewish Writers* (Philadelphia, 1987). Gershon Shaked has looked at American-Jewish writing from a comparativist German-Jewish and Hebrew perspective.

68. Shechner begins with the *Partisan Review*; Klein ends on the eve of its formation.

69. For the first study in that direction, see Elinor Grumet, "The Apprenticeship of Lionel Trilling," *Prooftexts* 4 (1984), pp. 153–73.

70. They are, in order of publication: *The Collected Poems of A. M. Klein*, ed. Miriam Waddington (Toronto, 1974); Usher Caplan, *Like One That Dreamed: A Portrait of A. M. Klein* (Toronto, 1982); A. M. Klein, *Beyond Sabbation: Selected Essays and Editorials, 1928–1955*, ed. M. W. Steinberg and Usher Caplan (Toronto, 1982); A. M. Klein, *Short Stories*, ed. M. W. Steinberg (Toronto, 1983); Solomon J. Spiro, *Tapestry for Designs: Judaic Allusions in the Poetry and the Second Scroll of A. M. Klein* (Vancouver, 1984); and A. M. Klein, *Literary Essays and Reviews*, ed. Usher Caplan and M. W. Steinberg (Toronto, 1987).

71. See n. 19 above.



13

RESPONSE

Gershon Shaked

I

The issues I shall raise in response to Roskies's remarkable presentation will be historical, methodological, and metapoetical ("metapoetical" designates the questions that Jewish literary scholarship should ask here and now in both Israel and America).

Two of the major historical questions Roskies raises are the problem of continuity and revolution in literary scholarship and the polarity of horizontal and vertical research. There are some cross-connections between these two issues; modern scholarship seems to be "horizontal" (influenced by "imported" disciplines and analyzing the text from a general universal point of view), whereas conventional approaches are "vertical" (trying to understand the inner development of Jewish texts). I have reservations about the way the theme of continuity and revolution was handled, but I should emphasize first and foremost that rather than speak of a contrast between horizontal and vertical scholarship, I will speak of a contrast between historical positivism and poetics. Both methods of research and criticism are of foreign origin, and positivism—high and low text criticism, bibliography, and biography—is neither more nor less Jewish than the various systematic and applied theories of poetry in modern Hebrew criticism. For example, M. H. Luzzatto's eighteenth-century introduction to rhetorics, *Leshon Limudim*, was influenced by conceptions of poetics of the late Ital-

ian Renaissance and Baroque. Shlomo Levinson's *Melitsat Yeshurun*, published at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was influenced by German Romantic poetics, especially by Herder and his contemporaries. The very sophisticated interpretation of medieval poetry, *Kashoresh 'Etz*, by the Israeli New Critic Adi Zemah, was influenced by the American New Critics I. A. Richards, W. Empson, and W. K. Wimsatt. Hrushovski's formalist poetics of Hebrew prosody was influenced by the Russian formalists. We will have to consider the fact that historical positivism, which achieved certain ends in Klausner's history of Hebrew literature and Zinberg's history of Jewish (Yiddish and Hebrew) literature, is anything but dead. Conservative or neoconservative positivistic trends exist all over Europe and in the United States. These trends have become quite sophisticated and are influenced by the theory of reception (for example, H. R. Jauss, W. Iser), neo-Marxism (W. Benjamin, L. Goldmann, T. Eagleton, F. Jameson), the sociology of literature (G. Sammons, Duncan), and the "literary" historians (Hayden White).

In modern Hebrew and Yiddish scholarship one finds more and less sophisticated applications of some of these theories. Werses, Shmeruk, Szeintuch, Turniansky, Zfatman, Govrin, Shamir, Friedlander, Weiss, Bakun (compare his volume on Brenner) in Israel, and Barzilay, Holtz, Peli, Nash, Spicehandler, and Band (in his own way) in the United States, are adherents of positivistic research. There are some positivistic elements in most of Dan Miron's and my own work.

Both critical trends have different functions in different times, and what seems to be a guarding of the walls of the intellectual ghetto in one time could be an opening up in another time. To give only one example from a different area: there are few scholars who have used positivist methodology in a more sophisticated way than Gershom Scholem. He himself commented on the present meaning of his scholarship in his well-known article "Mitsva haba'ra be'avera" [Redemption through Sin, 1937]. Kurzweil, who did not share Scholem's Zionist interpretation of history, actually followed in Scholem's footsteps by discussing the meaning of the positivistic approach of his *Wissenschaft des Judentums* forerunners.

When we turn to the more concrete side of criticism, by changing our concepts we may come to appreciate in a less evaluative way different trends and various trajectories of continuity. We may conclude that Jewish literary scholarship has been quite traditional. The fact that we still use, by standards of most Western literary criticism, a somewhat obsolete methodology is not surprising. Israeli and American-Jewish scholarship are both regressive and progressive. They are at once conventional, according to the norms just mentioned, and at the forefront of all modern critical trends.

Think for instance of the formalistic Tel Aviv school (Hrushovski, Perry, Even-Zohar), of Miron's modern critical approach, Yosef Ewen's formalistic volume on Brenner, my structuralist book on Agnon, and the psychoanalytic studies of Yehoshua, Feldman, and Ben-Dov. *Midrash and Literature*, published by Yale in 1986, was supposed to be a contribution to deconstructive criticism; according to the Weinreich-Roskies terminology, it was vertical in concept but actually functioned horizontally.

The problem in Jewish criticism, as in Jewish fiction and poetry, is that it did not develop normally. Jewish literary scholarship and criticism always followed Western patterns but did not do so consistently, so that different schools and scholars were influential at the same time. Within their own traditions, Jews had only two major trends of criticism—the contextual commentary of *peshat* and the acontextual or esoteric midrash of *remez*, *drash*, and *sod*. These modalities found parallels in the Christian and Islamic interpretations of holy texts, but they basically formed an indigenous tradition. The question to be posed, therefore, is not if or when these horizontal influences occurred, or if they enlarged Jews' intellectual horizons, but rather what function these different modes of interpretation had in their specific time and place.

Positivism is a "must" for a scholarly tradition that has not yet created its own classical legacy—for instance, academic publication of the major classics of Hebrew literature. But there are also some scholarly achievements from Mekhon Katz in Tel Aviv, Shmeruk and Werses in Jerusalem, Friedlander at Bar-Ilan, and Holtz in New York, in addition to the publication of bibliographies and literary histories by Shavit, Govrin, Gilboa, and Matres. Of this type, too, are the scholarly editions of the Dorot series of Mossad Bialik and the Yiddish series of the Hebrew University. Positivism enriches the literary repertoire and the stockpile of data, and thus functions alongside and in conjunction with structuralism, New Criticism, and the other critical schools. It has not yet fulfilled its task.

II

Returning to the history of new trends in modern Jewish literary scholarship, we see that Roskies has accepted more or less the mythology created by one of its major exponents, Hrushovski, who, with one of his students, Ziva Ben-Porat, published in 1974 an introduction to a bibliography of structuralism in Israel. The contents of this bibliography blur the borders between pure structuralist essays, prestructuralist New Critical interpretations, and work done on the margins of the "school." Shmeruk, for instance, was mentioned as part of the new tradition of scholarship. The

organizational and public effect of the "new" critical establishment is immense. Witness the impact that *Hasifrut* and the department for the theory of literature at Tel Aviv University have had on scholarship and criticism in Israel.

Any history of criticism has to pay tribute to the late Ludwig Strauss, who began New Criticism (the German school) in Israel, and to the remarkable impact of one of those whom Roskies calls the bridging figures: Dov Sadan. Ludwig Strauss, Martin Buber's son-in-law, was a German poet and critic before he immigrated to Israel. He was part of the intellectual establishment in the Weimar Republic. In Israel he taught literature in the town of Ben Shemen and later in the Youth-Aliya teachers seminary. In 1950 he started teaching courses in general literature at Hebrew University. Well-known poets and critics were his formal and informal students, among them Tuvia Rübner, Dan Pagis, and Natan Zach. Strauss's literary analysis of four psalms and poems by Judah Halevi, Bialik, Rahel, and Leah Goldberg created a tradition—a transformation of the traditions he had brought with him from modern German New Criticism (for example, Wolfgang Kaiser and Emil Staiger). He was most influential through his impact on Natan Zach. The poet, critic, and leader of a literary movement, Zach was a member of the "Liqrat" group, which began in 1952 and included Hrushovski, Amichai, Avidan, Sivan, and, at the beginning, myself. Zach used the new theories to open his major struggle against the ruling tradition of Shlonsky and Alterman in modern Hebrew poetry.

Some of Hrushovski's scholarly articles on Hebrew prosody and rhyme, subjects he taught in Jerusalem from 1953, were part of this rebellion, emphasizing the semantic relativity of literary norms. So were Adi Zemah's New Critical interpretations of medieval poetry and my own articles since 1953. By stressing the literary formal aspects of the novel and the short story, I sought to rescue literature from the pathetic claws of thematics and Marxist-thematic interpretation. Scholarship and criticism formed a literary group, and the transformation of critical methods and devices fed the rebellion against the rule of collectivism, ideology, and other *ism's*.

The young critics and scholars had yet another godfather: Dov Sadan. The reinterpretation of Sadan's legacy was another act of their rebellion. Sadan's immense output has given to each and every one of his students a point of departure. His explicitly psychoanalytical studies of Brenner and implicitly psychoanalytical studies of Bialik and Agnon were starting points for Adi Zemah's study of Bialik's "the Hidden Lion," and some other metapsychological studies of Agnon and others. His powerful insights into the deep structure of major Hebrew, Yiddish, and even German-Jewish writers was a source of inspiration for Dan Miron and, I believe, for some

aspects of my own work. Even Even-Zohar's concept of a polysystem has its "inner" source of influence in Sadan's major introduction to modern Jewish literature, "The Values of Our Literature." His stylistics influenced anyone who was writing on aspects of style, and his positivistic collections of data became standard. Most of the rebellion constituted a "creative betrayal" of some of Sadan's concepts and his philosophy of the history of Hebrew and Yiddish literature. Young Israeli scholars and critics used the psychoanalytical aspects of his work for the reinterpretation and modernizations of the classics and to fight an intellectual war of independence. There is no question that Halkin and Kurzweil, too, have contributed, each in his own way, to the development of "horizontal" and "vertical," or "positivistic" and "poetic," scholarship in Israel.

To sum up: the interrelationship between the generations was much closer than we could learn from Roskies's presentation, and the development of literary scholarship was more an evolutionary process than a revolutionary one. In Israel, as everywhere else, scholarship has been an integral part of the history of belles lettres.

III

Now we come to the major issue of Jewish scholarship in our time: what is the *function* of Jewish literary criticism and scholarship in its different languages and locations? Scholarship and literature have to be understood in a general and a specific social and ideological framework, and the functions of the scholarship in Yiddish, Hebrew, and English differ according to the different functions of these languages in the two major locations of Jewish scholarship.

Methodologies exist to serve a purpose; they do not exist for their own sake. Scholars use methods and are not used by them. History creates historians; historians create a new reading of history according to the issues and conflicts of their present historical situation. In literary scholarship the issues are more complicated because of the interdependence of literary scholarship, literary criticism, and the local trends and values of literature. What is the function of literary scholarship in Israel as it relates to three areas as different as modern Hebrew, modern Yiddish, and modern Jewish literature?

Hebrew in Israel is a living, vibrant, productive language, and there is a natural reading public for criticism and scholarship. The individualistic rebellion of the New Wave in poetry and fiction—from Amichai and Zach to Yehoshua and Oz—was fed by an individualizing deideologization of scholarship and criticism. New Criticism, structuralism, and psychoanalysis liberated literature from Zionist and socialist ideologies and opened the way for a new anticollectivist outlook. Moreover, it facilitated the appearance of

a new and modern reinterpretation of the major figures of Hebrew literature from the end of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century. The breakdown of the national consensus, the clash among the major political parties, and the revival of political poetry (Laor, Sharon) and the socially engaged novel (Oz, Orpaz, Kaniuk, Ben Ner, Grossman, and others) and drama (Sobol) have opened the way for a more socially oriented kind of criticism and scholarship (Miron, Shaked, Gertz, Kalderon, Hever). The methodologies used serve the major concerns of the present day.

Yiddish in Israel is a dead language, used mostly in homes for the elderly and as a literary language by a few Holocaust survivors. It exists for the readership in Israel, as in America, in translation only: Sholem Aleichem in the classical translation by I. D. Berkowitz, Peretz in a simple translation by Shimshon Meltzer. The preoccupation of scholarship is to establish the canon and to integrate Yiddish literature into the mainstream of Hebrew letters. If Yiddish is to survive, this is the only way. Most comparative studies and the work of bilingual writers have this function. The concept of one culture and two languages has no practical meaning. It is but a slogan for scholars to reintegrate in their comparative studies these two sisters with different cultural pasts, presents, and futures. This aim has not yet been achieved, and if literary scholars want to effect a new cultural integration of these twin literary traditions, this should be the major orientation of their research.

IV

In America the scholar has to face two facts: Yiddish literature has lost its creative force, and it exists mostly in translations. Some scholars and critics (Howe, Schultz) have made these translations the object of their inquiry, and in their own way they are justified. They know perfectly well that the only way to reintegrate Yiddish literature into American-Jewish society is to translate it—literally and metaphorically. By “metaphor” I mean the critical explication of the text using any methodology that opens up the text for readers who are not interested in its immediate message and meaning but in its more general and universal applications.

Hebrew literature has only a slightly better chance to survive in America. In Yiddish there is almost no new creativity, and even its academic study is dedicated more to research than to teaching. Hebrew has become the language of ethnic identity, Yiddish more an old curiosity. The function of Yiddish scholarship has become to relate a translated canon to a specific ethnic group, to show the group how it could be enriched by this heritage, and to claim that the major figures of the canon—who should be retrans-

lated with comments, introductions, and glossaries—should be integrated into Jewish education. The function of Hebrew scholars is a bit more complicated. The existence of a living and creative center in Israel is a problem for American scholars and critics of modern Hebrew literature. They have responded variously to the challenge, and their actions bespeak different attitudes and approaches. Some have accepted the centrality of Israel and do whatever they do as though they were participating actively in the endeavors of Israeli scholarship; they publish for an Israeli audience. They are, whether by birth or by vocation, Israeli scholars who happen to live in America. They are not messengers of Hebrew to the Jews or non-Jews in the United States, and they are not attempting to reintegrate modern Hebrew in the American-Jewish heritage. Two examples from two different schools are A. Holtz and S. Nash. It would seem that it is easier to partake of the center as a positivist than as a commentator seeking to interpret or interact with an immediate public, but whatever they do is functional and contributes to the ongoing research in the Israel center. There is no question that theoretically they can do here (America) whatever is done there (Israel) so long as they do not lose their immediate contact with the readers' expectations there.

Others have made an attempt to introduce major Hebrew writers to an American reading public. This was, as far as I can tell, Arnold Band's purpose in his book on Agnon, *Nostalgia and Nightmare*; Miron's in *A Traveler Disguised*, his study of Mendele; and Yael Feldman's in her book on Gabriel Preil. Whether they succeeded or not is another question. Still others try to address Hebrew literature from the vantage point of whatever is of interest to the general American reading public. Thus feminist concerns have spawned some books about women in Hebrew literature by Fuchs and Aschkenasy, and following the deep interest of American Jews in the Holocaust, there have been some major contributions to the interpretation of catastrophes in history and literature by Mintz and Roskies.

There is yet one more response. I refer to the outstanding contribution of Robert Alter, as well as some others such as Spicehandler in *The Modern Hebrew Poem Itself*. Alter has become the advocate of Hebrew literature in America and has done for the circulation of Hebrew literature in this country more than any cultural attaché. He and others, having the benefit of knowing the original, are the critical spokesmen for Hebrew translation. Their critical essays have a very important cultural function. They understand Hebrew literature from the point of view of the American-Jewish reading public and explain to American Jews how the literature of their brethren on the other side of the ocean is relevant to their lives.

V

There is an analogous function for literary criticism in Israel when it deals with American-Jewish literature. Therefore the archetypical approach of Harold Fisch is quite useful. One who finds a deep structure that proves the Jewish relevance of this literature creates a cultural bridge. In America, reading American-Jewish writers has a similar task but a different function. The task is to find out what is Jewish in American-Jewish literature, the function is to rescue some of it from the general melting pot as one of the spiritual means for ethnic survival.

In the end we conclude that literary scholarship is not an objective discipline independent of time and location. Just the reverse: it is a historic means to achieve the major aim of a tradition's spiritual survival. As long as we choose to be Jews, it is the survival of Jewish traditions in all languages and all locations that we want to sustain.

Jewish Art



14

JEWISH ART AND JEWISH STUDIES

Joseph Gutmann

Jewish art, a late and minor offshoot of the nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, has in the last forty years blossomed and become a legitimate branch of art history. Once cultivated largely as an avocation by a handful of European scholars, Jewish art history is now taught in courses offered at leading universities. An annual scholarly magazine, *Jewish Art*, explores the subject; international congresses are devoted to it; and a Center for Jewish Art has been established in Jerusalem. In addition, Judaica museums proliferate, and major auction houses regularly feature Judaica objects.

The interest in Jewish art history probably owes its current impetus to three factors.

1. First was the amazing discovery in 1928 of the sixth-century C.E. Beth-Alpha synagogue mosaic and in 1932 of a mid-third-century C.E. synagogue with a complex cycle of paintings from a provincial Roman military outpost at Dura-Europos, Syria. Not only were these unusual finds totally unanticipated by scholarly reconstructions of rabbinic Judaism of the period but they actually challenged old theories that Judaism had never tolerated any visual art and that its laws strictly forbade such endeavors.

2. The creation of the State of Israel in 1948 also helped stimulate an interest in Jewish art history. Like any other nation, Israel desired to claim a national art in order to boast of a noble and ancient artistic heritage. Archaeological digs were encouraged and spectacular finds of figural syna-