SIDRA DEKOVEN EZRAHI
BOOKING PASSAGE

That is, its own parodic subtexts are embraced in the grand sweep of incorporation. Within the competing itineraries that constitute the Jewish Journey, the circular route of the "losers" is supplanted by a triumphal linear movement crowned by arrival. The voyage is no longer impeded by the delays and digressions of endless deferral; even the associative discourse of storytelling, a discourse of infinite detours, takes place on but does not impede the journey itself. This is a voyage of consequence more radical than the arrival (and inevitable departure) of the pilgrim at the holy center. As Hananiah's journey proceeds, it is transformed from the random pattern of the peregrine (*na' va-nad*), through the circumambulation of the pilgrim (*'oleh regel*), to the unerring homing pattern of the "repatriate" (*'oleh*). The footloose Jew, the shlemiel, is transformed into a subject whose efforts are measured not only by his faith but also by the concrete results of his actions.

KINUS: INGATHERING OF THE STORIES

It became evident to many writers as the nineteenth century drew to a close that a whole treasury of stories and folktales was being jeopardized in the intoxicating moment of collective redefinition. As the map comes closer than ever before to approximating the territory it represents, acts recuperating mythic geographies reflect both an urgency and a profound ambiguity. On the road for so many centuries, the Jews had created a wealth of literary signposts and simulacra. Now the road and the languages were shifting to accommodate a new enterprise that, like a Borgesian narrative, would conflate the highways and the story lines, the visible and invisible structures, of a reinvented Jewish civilization. If the Jews had perfected over the centuries what Georges Van Den Abbeele calls the "topological theories of language in which the utterance becomes a question of choosing the right 'route,'" they were now discovering, belatedly, the form of "travel [that] requires the ability to 'read' a map."[16] The challenge would be to avoid the temptation to stretch the *territory* so that it coincided exactly with the map.

Shmuel Werses has traced the language of Agnon's *nilbavim* to sources both in the Mishnah and in the travel narratives of the Middle Ages and the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. The mishnaic literature of pilgrimage, with its emphasis on the round-trip dynamic of cultic acts such as the three-day trip from Jaffa to Jerusalem and back, and the aggadic incorporation of underground caves, the Ten Tribes, and the Sambatyon River provide the quasi-historical and quasi-mythological cartographic

elements in this approach to the Holy Land. The medieval and early modern texts supply prototypes for the infinitely expandable episodic structure, for the delays and impediments arising from inimical natural or human sources, for the uneven calibration—contraction and expansion—of time and topography, and for the ethnographically inspired encounters with scattered Jewish communities (encounters whose anachronism in this text lend them some levity).[17] The projection of utopian spaces into the recounting of the (often uncomfortable) daily routine of travel furnishes the narrative with a point of ultimate reference much like that which a specific destination furnishes the process of navigation.[18]

But the most radical change in the diasporic orientation to the physical world finds its expression in a *metamorphic* landscape that replaces both metaphor and metonymy. The language of miracles in *Bilvav yamim* fulfills in its hypostases the incomplete process we traced in the poetry of Yehuda Halevi, which became more intense and more substantial as he drew closer to the shores of the beloved country. It may also signify a dimension of the revolutionary shift in the relation of fictional and actual worlds. The Hebrew literature emerging both in Europe at the turn of the century and in the Yishuv of the early twentieth century was conceived by its writers and readers as an autonomous enterprise, but what came to be called the Hebrew "republic of letters" also had a constitutive role in creating a material culture;[19] this is what makes Hebrew literature such an interesting example of the links between modernism and nationalism. Herzl's "if you will it, it is not a dream," the emblem of the Zionist emergence from the "dream-state" of the aggadically minded, reflects a cultural challenge of the highest order. Those forms of the Jewish imagination that were inherently nonrevolutionary because they were, in some fundamental sense, nonreferential are being mobilized to perform a revolutionary task; "*will*," the fuel that empowers the imagination, is meant eventually to supersede it.

Benjamin Harshav observes of the European diasporic culture at the end of the nineteenth century: "In their everyday awareness—as Jews—they were connected to a *universe of discourse*, a 'fictional world' outside of history and geography, based on a library of texts and their interpretations. . . . Hence the centrality of discourse (rather than love of the land) for their self-understanding. When this universe of discourse lost its moorings . . . the anchoring of a universe of discourse vis-à-vis the 'real,' historical world became the most important existential question for any alternative, any mode of Jewish culture, and for every individual."[20] In the analysis of the crucial relation of text to territory that

is our explicit theme, this argument may have been overstated, even if it has been the guiding wisdom for at least two generations of scholars. But it provides a useful transition to a very different epistemology. Like the journey itself, this development appeared to be one-way: Robert Alter writes that only "after writers had succeeded in creating an 'as if' reality in Hebrew" had certain prerequisites of consciousness been met that would facilitate the construction of an "actual Hebrew reality," with all its concomitant physical and social structures in the "real geography of this world."[21] But the logic that guided the movement of modern Hebrew literature toward referentiality a century ago eventually will prove to have been only one phase in an *ongoing* dialectic; as our own century wanes, new reconstructions of diasporic culture privilege speech acts and texts once again. That was hardly foreseeable, however, at the moment of revolutionary fervor we are now examining.

The role played by the *kinus*, or collection of traditional literary material, as a proleptic act of the ingathering of the people is an important component in the construction of the republic of letters.[22] The neoromantic incorporation of mythic and folk elements into Hebrew poetry and prose beginning at the end of the nineteenth century will eventually signal a more complex encounter with the past. Within the space of a few years, H. N. Bialik begins working with Y. H. Ravnitzki to compile aggadic folklore in what will become *Sefer ha-aggada*; Martin Buber launches a lifelong engagement in the translation, interpretation, and adaptation of tales of the Hassidic masters; and Mikha Yosef Berdichevski collects and publishes Hassidic and aggadic legends in German, Hebrew, and Yiddish. I. L. Peretz, whose cultural appeal is to the secularizing, modernizing Jew in Poland, begins incorporating folk motifs, particularly Hassidic and Kabbalistic elements, into his fiction.[23] Sh. Ansky, the former Narodnik revolutionary, spends his last decades gathering "ethnographic" fragments of the Jewish spirit to be placed in a museum dedicated to the renewal of Jewish creativity.[24] The process as a whole, like acts of literary recuperation in the creation of modern national cultures generally (especially in older civilizations such as those of Greece and Ireland), involves both collecting and reinventing folk traditions.[25]

This phenomenon is articulated in all its complexity in the fiction of S. Y. Agnon. Jewish writers of the turn of the century, depending on how radically they separated from the past, felt varying degrees of guilt and nostalgia as well as revulsion and denial, expressed as much in acts of suppression as in acts of rescue; for some the encounter with the past generated and for others it impeded their own creative enterprise.[26] In

the case of Agnon, who began the project of compiling the "corpus hasidicum" with Buber in the early twenties but abandoned it in 1924, when the fire that destroyed his Homburg home destroyed the nearly completed volume, some of the conservationist impulse was rechanneled into his fictions, most saliently into those that acquired the status of pious or pseudo-pious folktales.[27]

In *Bilvav yamim*, Agnon adds a new dynamic to the intertextuality that had become, in its many forms, a means of rescuing the endangered past. The delusionary authority of the pseudo-scientific, semimythical sources that clouded the cognitive faculties of Benjamin the Third, not unlike the romances that had clouded Don Quixote's vision, are reinvested with authority as a revalorized wellspring of Jewish spirituality. The wealth of legendary material from biblical, Talmudic, and medieval literature that appears in this novella as strands woven into a tale of both miraculous and mundane travel to the Holy Land recapitulates the Journey that is Exile and the stories gathered along the way—including Agnon's own earlier narratives. The stories, sometimes recounted by Shmuel Yosef the storyteller, sometimes incorporated into the visual experience of the pilgrims as minidramas enacted along the way, are conjured from the deepest layers of the collective consciousness.[28]

At what was to prove the midpoint in Agnon's career, the act of recasting, through a kind of grace, elements and characters from his own stories may be as significant as the grounding of the metaphoric and aggadic imagination. The intricate ways in which he incorporates earlier figures, or their descendants, from his fictions into a given narrative contribute to the sense that he is writing the ongoing epic of an entire civilization; we see this even in his last writings, when the horrible prophecy about the future of the Jewish people from the novel *Ore'ah nata lalun* [A Guest for the Night], made on the eve of World War II, is recorded as *fact* in the postwar, posthumously published story "Kisui ha-dam" [Covering the Blood].[29] The strategy, which often highlights continuities, also underscores ironies in the intergenerational unfolding of the drama of Jewish life. A *mitnaged* in one story ("Ha-nidah" [The Outcast]) gives birth to one who appears in *Bilvav yamim* as a Hassid. The "kerchief" that will be recycled in *Bilvav yamim* appears not only in the story by that name ("Ha-mitpahat") but also in the early story "'Agunot" [Abandoned Wives] (1908) that gave the writer his own name. From that short narrative, the first of many in which a heedless human act creates a cosmic rift that leads lost souls to wander throughout life seeking to make amends, the image of a penitent rabbi floating aimlessly on the great seas

on a kerchief, seeking to redeem *'agunot*, is reincorporated in *Bilvav yamim* in the figure of Hananiah—whose direction is clear and who *succeeds* in fulfilling those tasks the rabbi only set out to perform.

The ontological fluidity of characters who appear here and there in previous fictions as they vacillate between aggadic landscapes and real geographies establishes the kind of "discursive unity" defined by Thomas Pavel as inherent in the open (or openly negotiated) boundaries between fiction and nonfiction "*from an internal point of view*": "In *War and Peace* is Natasha less actual than Napoleon? . . . Fictional texts enjoy a certain discursive unity; for their readers, the worlds they describe are not necessarily fractured along a fictive/actual line."[30] Here, too, Hananiah is no less "actual" than Napoleon or, for that matter, than "Shmuel Yosef."

The poignancy of ingathering the scriptural and aggadic sources along with the community who preserved them, and of incorporating the writer's own earlier work, climaxes in the final chapters when the biblical verses are not only invoked but *repatriated*. Having finally reached the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, the group of pilgrims recites the Song of Songs and "Rabbi Moshe lean[s] his head against the wall and remember[s] that he [is] standing at a spot from which the Divine presence itself had never moved." In this reconsecrated sacred center he recites the very verses—"The King hath brought me into his chambers" (Song of Songs 1:4)—that his brother Gershom had begun to recite (in another place and another story) at the moment of his death.[31] But unlike his brother, Rabbi Moshe is able to complete the verse as "the joy of the Land of Israel" fills him. Agnon here presents another resolution to his own narrative dilemma (which is, after all, the dilemma of exile), rewriting his own story in the moment of grace, with the end in sight (E 116; H 545). There may be no more powerful confluence of text and territory, or absorption of text *in* territory, in all of modern Hebrew literature.

Throughout his long writing career, Agnon's peculiar and often elusive synthesis of (or vacillation between) poetic alternatives endeared him both to traditionalists, who regarded him as a scribe of orthodox civilization and Hassidic folklore, and to modernists, who hailed him as Kafka's Hebrew voice representing lonely individuals lost in an absurd universe. Agnon's fictions provide unique and daring examples of the recombination of modes of prophetic writing that enter as fragments into the universe of authority within which the modern poet operates. By assuming a prophetic modality, the author makes possible a selective, self-

conscious anachronism in retrieving poetic options from the ruins of past (or passing) traditions.

Comparative studies of Abramovitsh and Agnon usually attribute the difference in tone to the satiric agenda of the one and the recuperative or even romantic enterprise of the other. Abramovitsh, in any event, is living through the revolutionary moment of Hebrew (and Yiddish) creation while Agnon, whose youth corresponds with Abramovitsh's last decades, is witness to and participant in the accomplished revolution, followed by the denial and then the destruction of the Eastern European culture of origin. Regardless of a writer's particular agenda, nostalgia succeeded by a deep pessimism are natural stages in the long period of mourning over the violent death of a community. In the narrative that we have been considering, the romantic/nostalgic attitude toward a past that has been largely disinherited but not yet destroyed is manifest in characters like Hananiah and in the tales of piety and its reward. Just a few years later—on the very eve of World War II, as the struggle for material survival becomes paramount—little trace of the mythical remains in a text like *A Guest for the Night* (1939). Tropes that recur in Agnon's narratives, such as the kerchief in *Bilvav yamim*, are neither personal nor entirely public but rather *rescued* figures; as the reality of Jewish life becomes more harsh, the rescue efforts become more desperate and unconventional. The metonymic key that would have opened the doors to innumerable, replicable houses of prayer and endless stories in the European Diaspora is saved at the last minute and brought "back" to the Land of Israel in the baggage of the narrator of *A Guest for the Night*, returning from his decimated and soon-to-be-eradicated hometown in Galicia.[32] It is as strong an acknowledgment of the death throes of a form of Jewish imagination as any we will encounter.

MUCH LATER: JUST YESTERDAY

Under the shadow of genocide, the tales of pious pilgrimage and arrival undergo a kind of self-mutilation that comes increasingly to characterize the writing of Agnon's last decades: *Tmol shilshom* [Just Yesterday], written during the war years and published in 1945 but set in the Second Aliyah period (1905–14), begins, as does *Bilvav yamim*, in a promissory language that could become either epic or mock-epic.

The novel opens with a highly conventionalized representation of modern rites of ascent in which the biblical allusions can be read as either

sible subtexts of Agnon's narrative, especially the reference to the tomb that "achieves its perfect form" in the land of Israel; as the site of the "resurrection of the dead," it alone is "the place of perfect burial" (p. 208).

13. Sanhedrin, 98a. Critics including Dov Sadan, Hillel Barzel, and Arnold Band have noted the coincidence of the composition of *Bilvav yamim* and the short story "Ha-mitpahat" [The Kerchief] in the early 1930s, as well as other Agnon narratives in which the kerchief appears as a central metonymy. Dov Sadan, "Ma'aseh mitpahat" [On Kerchiefs], in *'Al Shai Agnon* (Tel Aviv: Ha kibbutz ha-me'uhad, 1959), pp. 65–73; Barzel, introduction to *Shmuel Yosef Agnon*, pp. 77–78; Arnold J. Band, *Nostalgia and Nightmare: A Study in the Fiction of S. Y. Agnon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 224, 227.

To reinforce our own intertextual journey, I could cite a report in the *Itinerary* of Benjamin of Tudela of a contender for the messianic title, David Alro'i, who lived in Kurdistan and actually endangered the entire Jewish community there with his defiance of the reigning authorities some dozen years before Benjamin's visit; he is said to have miraculously escaped several tight spots, once removing his mantle and spreading it "on the face of the water to cross thereon" (Benjamin of Tudela, *The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela*, ed. and tr. A. Asher [New York: Hakeshet Publishing, 1841], vol. 1, pp. 79 [Hebrew] and 55 [English]).

14. From the rabbi in "'Agunot" through Menashe Haim in "Ve-haya he'akov le-mishor" [And the Crooked Shall Be Made Straight] and Yudel Hasid in *Hakhnasat kallah* [The Bridal Canopy], the *na' va-nad*, or wanderer who is not a pilgrim, describes a kind of penitential arc in space. This movement can be also traced in the Yiddish fiction of both Isaac Bashevis Singer and his elder brother, Israel Joshua Singer. See I. J. Singer's *Yoshe Kalb* (1932) and Anita Norich's commentary on it in *The Homeless Imagination in the Fiction of Israel Joshua Singer* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 19–39. For a discussion of I. B. Singer, see chapter 8.

15. The opening passage of *Bilvav yamim*, for instance, can be seen as a revisionary performance of the opening of *Benjamin the Third*.

16. Abbeele, *Travel as Metaphor*, p. xx.

17. For a full discussion of Agnon's sources, see Werses, *Sipur ve-shorsho*, pp. 221–33. The geography of the voyage from Galicia to Jaffa through Moldavia and Turkey is as accurate as the geography in *The Travels of Benjamin the Third* is imaginary.

18. In a hostel in Istanbul, for example, the pilgrims meet a Sephardic emissary who unrolls before them the mystical geography of Jerusalem, Safed, Tiberias, and Meron (E 84–88; H 527–28).

19. For a discussion of the Hebrew "republic of letters," see Dan Miron, *Bodedim be-mo'adam: le-diyukana shel ha-republika ha-sifrutit ha-'ivrit be-tehilat ha-mea ha-'esrim* [When Loners Come Together: A Portrait of Hebrew Literature at the Turn of the Twentieth Century] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1987), pp. 13–19.

20. Benjamin Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 20–21.

21. Paraphrasing Dov Sadan here, Alter goes on to argue that to the extent that such an extreme statement holds, it is true primarily through hindsight, as it was mostly "on Central and Eastern European soil" that writers of the Hebrew Enlightenment such as Abramovitsh, Gnessin, and Berdichevski thought they were creating an "authentically *European* Hebrew fiction" (*Invention of Hebrew Prose*, p. 71; emphasis mine).

22. The term *kinus* is applied to the ingathering of people and of books. Bialik refers to the "heziyon ha-kinus ha-sifruti," and the centripetal dynamic is envisioned as literary as well as human. If, Bialik declared in a speech delivered before the Second World Congress for Hebrew Language and Culture (Vienna, 1913), we desire to revive the energy, vitality, and influence of literature, then we must generate a new national "*kinus*—not religious, of course—of the best Hebrew writing of all the ages." *Ha-sefer ha-'ivri* [On the Hebrew Book] (Jerusalem: Goldberg, 1913), n.p.

23. Ruth Wisse argues in *I. L. Peretz and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991) that Peretz in the 1890s is the counterpart to Herzl in advocating the renewal of a modern, secular Jewish culture that would acquire an autonomous minority status in Poland. On acts of literary rescue as forms of "creative betrayal" that account for the proliferation of Yiddish storytellers at the turn of the century, see David Roskies, *A Bridge of Longing: The Lost Art of Yiddish Storytelling* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

24. Sh. Ansky is the pen-name of Solomon Zanwil Rapaport. His particular act of *kinus* in the early years of the Soviet Union has an even more interesting afterlife as a traveling exhibit, which provides a more contemporary dimension to the entire story of exile and homecoming. Ansky's "dybbuk," the restless spirit of the unburied dead, is reconfigured in the post-USSR world as an emblem of the indigenous homelessness of Ansky himself and of the Jews at large. One Israeli reviewer of the 1994 exhibit of Ansky's collection at the Israeli Museum, *Be-hazara la-'ayara* [Back to the Shtetl], writes that "the *golah* is here and the shtetl is here. . . . [T]he exhibit presents the shtetl to present-day Israel in a concave mirror—without either of the participants in the specular dialogue being capable of knowing who is the representative of the banished dybbuk (*ha-dybbuk ha-meshulah*) and who is the true expression of the root culture." Eli Shai, "Kemihah mistit le-negi'a ba-kame'a" [Mystical Yearnings to Touch the Sublime], *Ha-aretz*, Book Section, July 13, 1994, p. 8. This statement and the exhibit itself, like a previous installation at the Israel Museum titled *Wandering*, are symptoms of the restlessness, the nostalgia, and the postmodern or "post-Zionist" yearnings for a free and creative reconnection with the past complicated by a fear of the resurgence of constrictive religious forms in late-twentieth-century Israeli culture.

25. For a critical discussion of the parallel invention of national and modernist cultures in Greece and Ireland, and of the roles that literature plays in forming the modern nation-state and that the language wars play in "consolidating" national identity, see Gregory Jusdanis, *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture: Inventing National Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), and David Lloyd, *Nationalism and Minor Literature: James Clarence*

Mangan and the Emergence of Irish Cultural Nationalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

26. On Bialik's work on *Sefer ha-'ivri* and *Sefer ha-aggadah*, see Dan Miron, *Bo'ah, laylah: ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit bein higayon le-i-higayon be-mifna ha-mea ha-'esrim* [Come, Night: Hebrew Literature between the Rational and the Irrational at the Turn of the Twentieth Century] (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1987), pp. 183–89. Whereas the evaluations of Bialik and Ravnitzki's enterprise have been many and varied, Michael Fishbane finds such anthologies as *Sefer ha-aggadah* inherently valuable as acts of canon formation. He argues that even when considered in terms of the national cultural movement that it was meant to serve, and even with its flawed or controversial presentation of the aggadic texts, *Sefer ha-aggadah* can be "compared to the periodic collections of Hebrew literature that have occurred earlier in Jewish history such as the redactions of the Bible, the Mishnah, and the Talmuds over the course of a millennium. . . . Each act of ingathering produced an anthology (the quintessential Jewish genre) of certain favored traditions and it marginalized others." Fishbane, "The Aggadah: Fragments of Delight," *Prooftexts* 13, no. 2 (May 1993): 187.

27. In a more formal recuperation, Agnon collected source material on the High Holy Days, *Yamim nora'im*, and he viewed the project as equivalent or complementary to Bialik's *Sefer ha-aggadah*. On Agnon's responses to the challenge of *kinus*, on his rather complicated relationship to Bialik and *Sefer ha-aggadah*, and on the ill-fated enterprise that he began with Buber and that Buber was left to complete on his own, see Haim Be'er, *Gam ahavatam, gam sinatam: Bialik, Brenner, Agnon, ma'arekhet yahasim* [Their Love and Their Hate: H. N. Bialik, Y. H. Brenner, S. Y. Agnon] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1992), pp. 207–9, 220–25, 286–87. Buber, Bialik, and even the paralyzed Franz Rosenzweig strongly petitioned Agnon not to abandon the Hassidic book after the catastrophic fire, but to no avail.

28. "The ship went on, the waters moved as usual, and a still small voice rose from the ship. It was the sound of song and praise rising from one firmament to another": the voices of boys and girls exiled by Titus after destroying the Temple, who jumped into the sea and were taken by God ("in his right hand," as it were) and brought to an island where they spend the ages speaking of the "glory of Jerusalem" (E 61–64; H 515–17). These children are Israel's memory, as encapsulated in its myths and its mythic geography. Here they facilitate the journey that finally reaches its destination.

29. See Ezrahi, "Agnon Before and After," pp. 90–93.

30. Thomas G. Pavel, *Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 16.

31. S. Y. Agnon, "Ha-nidah" [The Outcast], in *Elu ve-elu*, p. 56.

32. Once the signifier of the mobility of generations of Jews, the key is a metonymy of the Temple itself and the key that was relinquished when Israel went into exile. See Ezrahi, "Agnon Before and After," pp. 78–94.

33. S. Y. Agnon, *Tmol shilshom* [Just Yesterday] (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1971), p. 7. Hereafter references will be made parenthetically to this edition.

34. Yitzhak obviously is also the namesake of Isaac, the prototypical survivor; and he is great-grandson of Yudel Hasid, the picaresque hero of Agnon's earliest novel, *Hakhnasat kallah* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1974) (*Bridal Canopy*, tr. I. M. Lask [N.Y.: Literary Guild of America, 1937]), whose progress is facilitated by a miraculous monetary endowment and semimiraculous climatic events. On that novel and its relevance to Agnon's portraits of wandering Jews, see Dan Miron, *Histaklut be-ravnekher: 'al Hakhnasat Kalah me-et Shai Agnon ve-sviva* [The Motley Canopy: A Study of S. Y. Agnon's Narrative Art in *The Bridal Canopy*] (Tel Aviv: Ha-kibbutz ha-me'uhad, 1996).

35. On *Tmol shilshom*, see Amos Oz, *Shtikat ha-shamayim: Agnon mishtomem 'al elohim* [The Silence of Heaven: Agnon's Fear of God] (Jerusalem: Keter, 1993); Hoffman, *Between Exile and Return*, chap. 7; and Nitza Ben Dov, *Agnon's Art of Indirection: Uncovering Latent Content in the Fiction of S. Y. Agnon* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993).

36. One of the earliest of the modern pilgrims to the Holy Land, Herman Melville's Clarel (*Clarel*, 1876), also traces a labyrinthine pattern through the city of Jerusalem—and through eighteen thousand lines of iambic tetrameter.

37. Like many of Agnon's narratives, parts of this long novel were published separately; the chapter on "Rav Geronam yakum purkan" appeared in *Moznayim* (May 14, 1931, pp. 5–7) some fifteen years before the novel was published, at the time Agnon was working on *Bilvav yamim*.

38. What Gustav Krojanker describes as an "old world epic," in which there is still an unmediated relation to the Divine, a confluence between outside and inside, is not the province of the modern novel. Krojanker identifies the fusion of the "real" and the legendary planes, the "historical-fictional journey," as a peculiar form of "aggadic epic" (*Yetzirato shel Shai Agnon*, pp. 78–79, 126–27).

Along complementary lines, Dan Miron argues that the modern novel was an alien form that Agnon explored nearly to its fullest degree, stopping just short of drawing the conclusions to which the novelistic inquiry inevitably leads, conclusions that are the equivalent of a form of exile from the "spiritual, personal source" located in Scriptures. In the later novels, especially in *Shira*, which he never finished, the demands of the hour and the demands of the genre as it was practiced by his contemporaries made closure, with its resolution of the tensions between the world of faith and the historical reality of the twentieth-century Jew, harder to achieve. See "Agnon's Transactions with the Novel," *Prooftexts* 7, no. 1 (January 1987): 26. See also Hoffman, *Between Exile and Return*.

39. Originally published in a limited edition of 300 copies, *Die Gabe* was reprinted by the Leo Baeck Institute with comments and short translations by Martin Goldner: *Die Gabe: For Franz Rosenzweig on His 40th Birthday, 12/25/26* (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1987).

40. Hoffman, *Between Exile and Return*, p. 177.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., p. 178 (quoting *Die Gabe*, p. 9).

43. Ibid., pp. 178, 57. "I use the term 'textuality' to suggest that issues of boundary and transgression, exile, and return are acted out within the domain of the writing itself," says Hoffman; "in a geography of language and text, [Agnon's] writing moves between exile and return" (pp. 2, 5).