from 1663 until his death, and wrote the poetic drama *Yesod ʿolam*. He published fifteen of his emblem-riddles, and Pagis has found one more. The last known emblem-riddle was written by Rachel Morpurgo, in 1852. Pagis is content not to try to draw broader conclusions about the development of Hebrew literature in these two exceptional cultural centers, on the basis of this one genre. Nevertheless, this deeply studied, narrow genre can now be compared to the contemporaneous development of other genres, to map the Hebrew literary system of Italian and Dutch Jews between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries.

To guide those who will continue these investigations, Pagis appends to the book a model for abstract description of three riddles by Moses Zakhut. In addition, he provides a complete inventory of the riddles, arranged by author, by manuscript, and by library, and a full bibliography of discussion of riddles. There are ten chapters to the book, an appendix, and six indices, as well as a thirteen-page English summary.

Conceptually, *A Secret Sealed* is only an appendix to Pagis' overall project of research. He announces here the imminent appearance of another book, about Hebrew literature in Italy from 1350 to 1550; an article, "The Literary Riddle, a Generic Model"; and another article about an anonymous manuscript, evidently from the Renaissance, that develops Maimonides' discussion of parables at the opening of the *Guide for the Perplexed*. A posthumous book of poetry has already appeared, and publication of other research that Pagis left behind is equally desirable. Even when others eventually complete the projects for which he was not spared, this book by Pagis will remain as a model for literary historiography, as well as a permanent acquisition of this scholarship.

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Agnon for All Seasons: Recent Trends in the Criticism

Agnon's importance to Jewish modernity can be understood in terms of his complex relationship to its main currents. Modern Jewish history inscribes itself in his texts, whether overtly in their subject matter, or indirectly, in the thematic reach and resonance of his narratives. The text constitutes a space in which one can read the traces of cultural trends and conflicts, as they have been filtered through and shaped by the writer's mind. Criticism complements the Agnon text by demonstrating its cultural reach, and making the reader more aware of the variety of ways in which the text uses the material of culture in its communicative processes. As with James Joyce, the critical literature heightens the reader's awareness of the range of Agnon's inventiveness in his exploitation of several literary and cultural traditions. Here the greatness of the modernist master can be seen in the ongoing disclosure of the semiotic richness of the artistic text.

A survey of the scholarship on Agnon yields not only information about the writer and his art, but gives insight into the intertextual universe of modern Jewish culture. In this respect, the criticism broadens our understanding of Agnon's unique integration of European talmudic culture, with a post-

Enlightenment secular modernity that includes European literary traditions. The broad-scale concept of intertextuality developed by Julia Kristeva helps to define the horizons of a culture, by examining the manner of our existence in a universe of signs.[1] Entry into culture entails both submission to and appropriation of cultural materials, an encounter to which the literary text provides graphic testimony.

One can gain a sense of the depth and breadth of Agnon's appropriation of the forms of European and Israeli Jewish culture by reading some of the critical writing on Agnon produced in the last decade. Recent work gives evidence of a range of readers' responses determined by the demands of the texts and the study of their sources, as well as by the situation in time and place of the reader. From Gershon Shaked's ongoing studies of the facets of Agnon's art, to Avraham Holtz's painstaking reconstruction of sources, to Esther Fuchs' insistence on the pervasiveness of irony in the Agnon text, to the linguistic and philological studies of Hillel Weiss and M. Z. Kaddari, a survey of the criticism yields the impression of diverse responses among readers whose approaches and methods vary greatly. Whether approached diachronically or synchronically, in terms of the artist's production or readers' reception, an examination of current scholarship gives evidence of the evolving importance of Agnon's art to twentieth-century literature and to Jewish culture. The bulk of the scholarship continues to be written in Hebrew, an observation that scarcely needs explaining, particularly when it comes to the study of linguistic sources. Nevertheless, we can also point to the need for further work to bring Agnon's unique brand of literary modernism to the attention of a larger audience. (A survey of English-language Jewish studies journals yields an array of studies, each on a different aspect of Agnon, that merit the attention of readers in European and comparative literature.[2])

Gershon Shaked's books and articles have produced over the years perhaps the most encompassing criticism of Agnon, in their studies of artistic development, intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of texts, the workings of irony, and the process of reception. In the tradition of Dov Sadan, Shaked places the literary work in the context of larger cultural issues, while remaining attentive to the text as such. English readers now have access to a sophisticated introduction to Agnon that takes in a great deal of Shaked's work from 1973 to the present in *Shmuel Yosef Agnon: A Revolutionary Traditionalist.* Shaked's most recent Hebrew book on Agnon, *Panim aḥerot beyitsirato shel Shai ʿAgnon* (*Agnon: A Writer With a Thousand Faces*), takes us up to the present moment in its account of the reception of Agnon and its openness to the ongoing process of interpretation.[3]

As the first major development in English-language Agnon criticism since Arnold Band's 1968 *Nostalgia and Nightmare,* Shaked's book conveys to the reader an understanding of the construction of the Agnon text and its relationship to historical events. Band gave us a biographical introduction, a developmental study of Agnon's art, as well as a compendium of bibliographic material, all of which are still standard references for scholars.[4] Shaked now provides English readers with a study that demonstrates the unity and diversity of Agnon's generic, stylistic and thematic choices; his study is all the more valuable for its condensation of a great deal of scholarship into a book that does not presuppose the reader's familiarity with its subject.

Shaked's understanding of Agnon as a "revolutionary traditionalist" shapes this English-language study. Thus, the first chapter not only supplies biographical and historical background, but makes use of *ʿAgunot,* the 1908 story from which Agnon took his name, to demonstrate the ambivalent relationship of the Agnon text to classical Jewish literature, in particular rabbinic commentary. Close reading demonstrates the text's complex mediations "between the tradition and a new context" (p. 28) and exemplifies what Shaked calls Agnon's use of the "pseudo-quotation." Assembling citations from Midrash, Talmud, and Zohar, Shaked shows how Agnon "pieced the sources together, joining them in mythopoeic fashion to create his own midrash" (p. 36). This opening introduces the reader to Agnon just as much through the writer's particular use of intertextuality, as through a survey of the formative influences on his development.[5] Shaked considers Agnon's development from early romantic tendencies to a "classical" notion of form that derives from both Jewish and Greek sources. From the reader's point of view, this development results in a move from the less ambiguous "readerly" texts of the early writing to the more complex "writerly" texts of Agnon's maturity.

A chapter on the novel supports the assertion that Agnon's novels are "social novels," not through a simple notion of referentiality, but by demonstrating the ways in which social issues and contexts form part of novelistic structure. Describing *Hakhnasat kalah* (*The Bridal Canopy*) as a "comic myth of Jewish faith" (p. 129) in the tradition of the European picaresque, Shaked outlines its construction out of sets of paired antitheses. He views *Oreaḥ natah lalun* (*A Guest for the Night*) as an artistic peak for Agnon and finds in it Agnon's contribution to the modern novel of the technique of digression, as well as of a kind of fragmented parallelism, techniques appropriate to the novel's historical setting in eastern Europe between the wars. Shaked takes note of the novel's ironic treatment of the artist's guilt and responsibility, as expressed in the complex relationship of implied author to first-person narrator. However, one may take issue with his classification of the posthumously published *Shira* as a return to the family novel and, as such, a "regression" in Agnon's art (pp. 153, 158), a description that does not account for some of Agnon's thematic and formal explorations in this unfinished text.

Against the literary-historical background of both European and Hebrew fictional forms, Shaked demonstrates the range of Agnon's use of the novella, in modes ranging from the psychological to the grotesque, as well as the diverse uses to which he put the short story, from the folkloristic to the surrealistic. (In this section, some of the infelicities of the translation are most apparent, as in the category of the "abstract" story; elsewhere, the reader's critical ear may be jarred by such translations as "decoherence.") Shaked demonstrates the "unity and diversity" that characterize Agnon's range in historical time and geographical sweep, in his choices of genre, intertextual relations to earlier literatures, and diversity of characterizations. At one point, the demonstration of diversity produces a list of character types, but for the most part, the breadth of Shaked's book is sustained by the richness of its discussion. English-language readers stand to gain a sense of Shaked's unique contributions to Agnon scholarship over the years, in work that includes the thematic and structural studies of *Omanut hasippur shel ʿAgnon* (*Agnon's Narrative Art*), as well as the historical depth of his three-volume history, *Hasiporet haʿivrit 1880–1980* (*Hebrew Fiction 1880–1980*).[6]

In *Agnon: A Writer With a Thousand Faces*, Shaked begins with intrinsic and intertextual analyses of texts, disclosing their complex construction and the multiplicity of readings they allow. Here, the discussion of *The Bridal Canopy* displays a critical virtuosity that does justice to this rich novel, by showing the novel's playful manipulations of its quixotic protagonist and his doubles, as well as its juggling of narrative levels. In Shaked's reading, the carnivalesque conclusion sets up a comic utopia which appears to dissolve social distinctions, but fails to offset a counternote of skepticism.

Shaked makes a general claim for the unique status of intertextuality in Hebrew literature, "because of its literary-historical tradition, based on midrash upon midrash" (p. 25). In support of the assertion that intertextuality is not simply a literary strategy for Agnon, "but the core of the artistic work and perhaps its chief subject" (p. 11), Shaked offers analyses of *ʿAgunot* and of *Mazal dagim* ("The Luck of Fishes" or "Pisces"), a story included in the posthumous volume *ʿIr umeloʾah* (*A City and Its Fullness*). His analysis of each shows the relationship of the text to prior texts, an analysis that leads, in the case of *Mazal dagim,* to broader cultural conclusions.

Identifying *Mazal dagim* as a pseudo-chronicle that parodies a nineteenth-century pamphlet by the rabbi of Buczacz (p. 139), Shaked assembles a set of talmudic and midrashic passages, in order to demonstrate the story's grotesque transformations of its sources. That intertextual upheaval extends into the carnivalesque narrative that Shaked likens to a *Purim-shpil:* Fishel Karp, the protagonist, becomes interchangeable with the fish that his name suggests; the swallower becomes the swallowed, in a confusion of boundaries and an unleashing of instincts that suggests regression to a prelinguistic realm (p. 149). In Shaked's reading, this grotesque story carries larger implications: despite admiration for the Rabelasian appetites of its protagonist, it suggests a pessimistic view of a modern Jewish revolution that has lost its own identity, by exchanging the ideal of the *talmid ḥakham* (scholar) for the *ʿam haʾarets* (ignoramus) (pp. 153–54).

Studying the relations of texts to historical contexts, Shaked looks at six major novels—*The Bridal Canopy, Sippur pashut* (*A Simple Story*), *A Guest for the Night, Tmol shilshom* (*Only Yesterday*), *Shira,* and *Beḥanuto shel mar Lublin* (*In Mr. Lublin's Store*)—in terms of the historical span that they cover. By approaching the novels collectively, virtually as a master-text, Shaked demonstrates their historical sweep over four generations of Jewish history. His grouping allows also for a study of the tension between plot and anti-plot that can be found in each, from the tension between the naive faith of Reb Yudel Hasid and the unresolved general social dilemma in *The Bridal Canopy,* including also the tension between bourgeois family values and romantic rebellion in *A Simple Story,* to the contrast between the main plot of *Only Yesterday* in which Yitzhak Kummer, would-be pioneer, serves as ironic sacrifice, and the opposing plot, consisting of hints in the novel that point to the extra-literary reality of cooperative settlements that fulfill the pioneer ethos. As Shaked puts it, Agnon obliges his readers to reflect on Jewish history in the twentieth century from new points of view that reveal the weaknesses of ideological models (p. 88). This analysis of the interaction between text and social context gives insight into Agnon's use of the novel form as a means of engaging modern Jewish history. A different and yet complementary approach to this rich area of

study can be found in Dan Miron's excellent study of problems of closure in Agnon's major novels.[7]

In a further investigation of the relationship between the literary text and historical trends, Shaked finds in the novella *Shevuʿat emunim* (*Betrothed*) the evidence of the neurotic conflict of a generation.[8] Attentive to configurations of characters, such as the depiction of female characters as interchangeable embodiments of a type, Shaked is able to sketch psychological implications of the narrative on the level of the collective, without abandoning close attention to textual data.

The last chapter of this book uses reception theory to study Y. Yizraeli's theatrical productions of *The Bridal Canopy* and *A Simple Story* as models of an interpretive process at work. Using dramatic productions of literary texts as exemplars of the process of reception, Shaked shows us how each generation must reread and repossess its Agnon, or use Agnon as a way of dealing with its collective past. Theatrical productions serve as concrete expressions of interpretations that grapple with the difficult questions in the texts themselves, by placing them in relation to the director/interpreter's own social context. Shaked's discussion shows us that the dialectical tension between the interpreter's own questions and the demands of the work lies at the heart of any critical process. In Shaked's analysis, Yizraeli's production of *The Bridal Canopy* gives theatrical expression to this struggle by contrasting a traditionally garbed Reb Yudel in *kapote* to the rest of the cast, who wear the jeans and casual dress of present-day youth. Through semiotic cues supplied by stagecraft, such as the use of rock music, stylized speech, and the visual discrepancy between Reb Yudel and the rest of the actors, the director adds his own intergenerational drama to Agnon's text.

Shaked shows how Yizraeli transfers the psychological novel, *A Simple Story*, from one semiotic system to another, while shaping the production to express his interpretation. Staging the unconscious of the protagonist Hirshl through the figures of the mad uncle and the rooster as his alter egos, and foregrounding the grotesque in staging the family dinner, Yizraeli creates an expressionist drama that highlights the demonic side of Agnon. The theatergoer can differentiate *peshat* from *drash* in these stagings of Agnon, if he or she is familiar with the Agnon text. In Shaked's meta-critical discussion, theater offers an embodied or concretized reading. As historically specific realizations of literary texts, Yizraeli's productions give insight into the process of literary history.

Shaked's critical tact enables him to consider social and historical connections without violating the integrity of the text. Agnon's art is tantalizing in its use of apparently autobiographical material, including the public data of the writer's life, such as his birthdate, the timing of his aliyah, his journey through eastern Europe in 1929–30. Early Agnon criticism often failed to differentiate between author, narrator and protagonist, fusing the three into an "Agnon" produced by the reader's naive construction of the literary text. Nevertheless, the problem of biography in writing about Agnon remains to be solved; the scholar who tackles it will have to come to terms with the writer's construction of a public persona, as much as with the compilation of historical data.[9]

The 1978 volume, *Shai Agnon: Meḥqarim uteʿudot* (*S. Y. Agnon: Studies and Documents*), edited by Gershon Shaked and Rafael Veiser, gives an indication of the diverse range of materials to be considered in any effort to analyze the

"Agnon" that readers, critics, and historians have constructed.[10] From manuscript studies, such as Sara Hagar's important contribution to our understanding of the development of *Only Yesterday* out of the separate plots of Yitzhak and the dog Balak, to selections from correspondences between Agnon and Y. H. Brenner and Zalman Schocken, respectively, to interpretive and historical studies such as those by Gershom Schocken (on the leprosy motif in *Shira*) and Aharon Bar-Adon (on Agnon's departure from the National Committee on Language), this volume communicates to the reader some of the facets of Agnon's complex position within twentieth-century cultural history.

In the decade since *Meḥqarim uteʿudot,* the sources of information about the writer and his milieu have widened somewhat. Several collections of letters offer portraits of the writer through his personal relationships. One such collection is *Esterlayn yeqirati* (*Estherlein My Dear*), edited by Emuna Agnon Yaron, a selection of letters between Agnon and his wife, during the period that included the end of his stay in Germany and his return to Palestine in 1924.[11] We have also Lilian Dabby-Goury's 1987 edition of letters between the young Baruch Kurzweil and the older Agnon.[12] While the focus is on Kurzweil's development as a critic (the book includes Kurzweil's correspondence with Uri Tsvi Greenberg as well), the epistolary exchange between Agnon and Kurzweil portrays each in his evolving understanding of himself and the other.

For a diachronic view of the reception of Agnon's writing, students of Agnon can turn to *Reishitah shel biqoret ʿAgnon* (*Early Agnon Criticism*), Judith Halevi-Zwick's study of the reception of Agnon's writing, from "*ʿAgunot*" in 1908 to the publication of the first edition of the *Collected Works* in 1931.[13] (Halevi-Zwick reminds us that early readers were responding to an Agnon who had not yet produced the stories of *Sefer hamaʿsim* [*The Book of Deeds*], that were to prove so influential in determining the modernist face of the writer.) The history provided by Halevi-Zwick's diachronic overview is usefully supplemented by the collection of articles Hillel Barzel has edited, *Shmuʾel Yosef ʿAgnon: Mivḥar maʾamarim ʿal yetsirato* (*S. Y. Agnon: A Selection of Articles on his Work*).[14] Organized by genre, this volume offers a representative sampling of the works of major critics, from Y. H. Brenner's early acclaim for "Agunot," to recent work.

Avinoam Barshai has compiled a useful collection of historical documents and studies, together with a biographical essay covering the major periods in the author's life, that provides a starting point for anyone interested in exploring the public and private history of Agnon. Titled *Deyoqno shel Shai ʿAgnon: Haromanim shel Shai ʿAgnon* (*The Image of S. Y. Agnon: The Novels of S. Y. Agnon*), this volume was developed as part of study program by the Open University of Israel.[15] By including Arnold Band's study of "Agnon Before He was Agnon," Gershom Scholem's reminiscences on the young Agnon in Germany, as well as Yitzhak Bakon's brief inquiry into the actual date of Agnon's aliyah and Rafael Veiser's article on "Fact and Fiction in Agnon's Biography," Barshai enables the student of Agnon to become acquainted with the circumstances of the writer's early years and with some of the controversies surrounding milestones in his life. The potential biographer of S. Y. Agnon will face a daunting task in attempting to describe and interpret the complex self-fashioning of the subject, but he or she will be able to make use of a growing body of material.

In the context of a large-scale effort to demonstrate the bilingual origins of

modern Hebrew literature, Yitzhak Bakon provides a literary history of the writer's beginnings, in *ʿAgnon hatsaʿir* (*The Young Agnon*); Bakon shows us the evolution of the writer's own self-concept through phases of involvement with poetry and prose, composed alternately, in Yiddish and in Hebrew.[16] With the observation that the real history of the writer is to be found in the development of his art, Bakon traces early influences such as teachers who read Tolstoy, Zola and Ibsen with the boy Czaczkes, through the literary and personal influences of Bialik, Brenner, and E. M. Lifschutz. Bakon points out the predilection of the youthful Czaczkes for friendships with older men who played a paternal role. Agnon's letters to Brenner are an interesting source in this respect; the impact on Agnon's creativity of these friendships remains to be explored.[17]

Amplifying our understanding of Agnon before he was Agnon (to borrow Band's apt phrasing), Bakon charts the pre-history of the writer, giving us a portrait of the artist's literary formation in the period prior to *ʿAgunot,* the story whose 1908 publication consolidated Agnon's identity as a writer of Hebrew prose. With close attention to the years 1905–8, Bakon studies Czaczkes' early production of mediocre poems and episodic short stories in Yiddish and Hebrew, showing the writer's development toward increasing narrative complexity, scope and structure, the formation of a narrative persona, and the emergence of motifs that were to remain with him throughout his artistic career. (His study adds further historical depth to our knowledge of the early "Toytntants" narrative, which was later embedded in "*Beʾerah shel Miryam*" ["Miriamʾs Well"] of 1909, and ended up on its own in "*Agadat hasofer*" ["Tale of a Scribe] of 1919.) Bakon's style is fairly tedious, his exposition tends to be long-winded, and his interpretations of stories are not compelling; nevertheless his scholarly labors add to the study of Agnon's artistic formation.

Avraham Holtz gives insight into Agnon's artistic workshop in his 1986 study of a Yiddish source for the frame story of *The Bridal Canopy.* (Holtz's forthcoming volume of annotations to *The Bridal Canopy* promises a wealth of historical, geographical and textual material for the study of Agnon's literary transformations.) Holtz's 1986 title, *Maʿaseh reb Yudel Ḥasid: Mereshito benisim venifla'ot ʿad Hakhnasat kala shel Shai ʿAgnon* (*The Tale of Reb Yudel Hasid: From a Yiddish Narrative in Nissim v'niflaot to Agnon's Hakhnasat kalla*), is consistent with the notion of an intertextual universe of a specifically Jewish nature, in its suggestion of the survival and gradual transformation of Reb Yudel over generations of tales and texts.[18]

Holtz provides a transcription of a Yiddish story that formed part of a *quntras* or collection of hasidic stories, titled *Nissim venifla'ot* (*Wonders and Miracles*). For purposes of comparison, he lifts the frame story of Reb Yudel out of Agnon's 1919–1920 publication of the earliest version of *Hakhnasat kala* (which consisted of three installments in the American journal *Miqlat*). In effect, this study supports Bakon's claim for the role of Yiddish in the development of modern Hebrew literature. By presenting the Yiddish story side by side with Agnon's earliest Hebrew rendition of the story of Reb Yudel, Holtz demonstrates the extraordinary dependence of Agnon's frame story on the Yiddish source, as well as his "liberation" from this dependence in the 1931 version of *Hakhnasat kala* in the first edition of *Kol sipurav* (*The Collected Works*), and later revisions. By isolating the frame story, Holtz points to what appears to be the direct translation of passages from

the Yiddish, while noting significant differences in Agnon's presentation of Reb Yudel, as well as additions and amplifications.

Looking back at the criticism on *Hakhnasat kala,* Holtz offers his findings as support for Dov Sadan's comments on the irony and sophistication of Agnon's method in the novel; similarly, he finds evidence of Agnon's transformation of a Yiddish source in Gershon Shaked's study of organizing oppositions in the novel (e.g., fasting versus gluttony, poverty versus wealth). However, when Holtz uses his publication of the Yiddish story as the occasion to raise the need for re-evaluating claims for Agnon's "originality," as when he questions Band's claim that *The Bridal Canopy* gives us Agnon at the "peak of his mythopoeic powers," we must keep in mind that "originality" as such is of little literary value: the test of "mythopoeic power" lies more in the uses to which the artist puts received materials, than in the question of whether or not he invented them.

Holtz's study belongs to the larger area of work on Agnon's textual and linguistic sources. Two recent studies add to this aspect of the scholarship: Menahem Zevi Kaddari's *Shai ʿAgnon rav sagnon* (*S.Y Agnon: Master Stylist*) and Hillel Weiss' *Qol haneshamah: ḥeqer "Hadom vehakiseh" sefer divrei hayamim leShai ʿAgnon* (*The Voice of the Soul: Studies in "Footstool and Throne," S. Y. Agnon's Book of Chronicles*).[19] Kaddari makes use of descriptive stylistics in order to give substance to the designation of Agnon as *rav sagnon* or "master stylist" (Bialik's phrase for Agnon). Using methods that are largely statistical and quantitative, Kaddari tries to observe a distinction between "analysis" and "evaluation," informing the reader when he feels his discussion is about to move from the former into the latter. While his dissections of linguistic practices are informative, however, it should be acknowledged that evaluation always forms part of the critic's approach to a text, if only in the act of selection of material for study. When, for example, Kaddari concludes that stylistic shifts in *Kisui hadam* ("The Covering of Blood") show the "hidden subject" of the story to be the gradual deterioration in Torah study in eastern Europe before the Shoah, the reader may feel that the stylistic analysis has actually been employed in service of Kaddari's prior assumption, as a reader, that this is a story about *yeridat hatorah* or the "decline of Torah."

The sort of stylistic inquiry that Kaddari employs is still in its early stages; as a result, close attention to stylistic features of the text tends to produce either diminished attention to the problem of meaning or excessively modest conclusions that do not seem to require the support of statistical data. Nevertheless, Kaddari's book yields a number of interesting observations on the historical strata of Hebrew from which several Agnon texts draw some of their phrasing.

The book's opening chapters are devoted to study of *Lifnim min haḥomah* ("Within the Wall"). Here, an examination of the use of adjectives in the opening story of the collection yields the conclusion that Agnon begins with an abundance of double adjectives, suggesting the abstract, transcendental subject of the story, but that on the whole, his use of adjectives is restrained, tending at most to some predicate adjectives. More interesting, perhaps, is Kaddari's study of the use of the "function word" (*mot util* in French stylistics) "*vadaʾi*" ("certainly" or "surely") in its various forms. Kaddari identifies the term as a feature of rabbinic style and quotes Agnon on his relationship to "*leshon ḥakhamim*" ("the language of our sages") (pp. 50–51). We may want to question this use of the author's remark as support for a reading of his work. Nevertheless, Kaddari's examination of the

usage of "*vada'i*" and its variations in the stories of *Lifnim min haḥomah* yields the interesting conclusion that all of its occurrences conform to "*leshon ḥakhamim*," specifically, to the linguistic practices of the Amoraim, more so than of the Tannaim, in the Aramaic of the Babylonian Talmud. He goes on to show that even when Agnon's use of "linguistic markers" appears to show the influence of European languages, full examination demonstrates continuity with talmudic language (p. 54).

By contrast, Kaddari's study of the lexicon operative in *Shira* produces the interesting conclusion that Agnon's linguistic innovations here consist largely in making use of the vocabulary that Eliezer Ben Yehudah and his generation had introduced, rather than of new words that came into Hebrew later (p. 118). These findings add a layer of complexity to *Shira,* a secular novel that takes up the relationship of Jews to European culture, and was composed during the last decades of the author's life. Kaddari's linguistic findings have interesting ramifications for cultural history when considered in light of the subject matter of the particular text and the period in which it was written.

In an extended examination of the linguistic features of dialogue in *Kisui hadam* ("The Covering of Blood"), Kaddari examines Agnon's presentation of each of the story's speakers, transitions from one to the other, use of verbs indicating speech, and so on. Here the stylistic description of the text takes up disproportionate space in relation to the relative modesty of the conclusions it supports. When, for example, Kaddari looks at descriptions of eyes and eye-movements accompanying speech, one may wish that he would move on to study the contribution of stylistic features to the construction of character in the text. Kaddari's study of modes of address used by the story's speakers, of transitions and changes of direction in the course of the story, as well as of literary strategies to indicate changes in speaker, all lead him to conclude that the dialogue in "The Covering of Blood" is not so much dialogue as it is a conversation in one overriding voice that presents the author's ideas in dramatized form (p. 70). This interesting conclusion can be taken further, if we consider its implications in more literary terms.

The literary critic can integrate Kaddari's linguistic findings into the study of the manipulation of voice(s) in the narrative text, taking into account the *dialogic* quality of narrative texts, as it is analyzed by Bakhtin.[20] Agnon scholarship is taking us closer and closer to the verbal composition of the text, as critics use advances in the theory of literature in order to achieve a more precise understanding of what Lachower called "*nusaḥ Agnon*" ("the Agnon style").[21]

Hillel Weiss studies Agnon's use of Jewish sources in order to understand the construction of *Hadom vehakiseh* ("The Throne and the Footstool") in a 1985 volume, *Qol haneshamah* (*The Voice of the Soul*). The bulk of Weiss' study is devoted to the text of the second *parshah* or chapter of "The Throne and the Footstool," from section 6 to the end, which he describes as Agnon's "Book of Chronicles." He classifies this chapter as a traditional *yalqut* (collection) of a historiographic nature, in the manner of *Yalqut Shimoni* or *Pirkei deRabi Eleazar,* and describes it as a weave of hundreds of *psuqim* and *midrashim* (biblical and midrashic passages). It is the annotation of this abundant use of sources that takes up the major portion of the book.

Weiss' work offers to readers of *Hadom vehakiseh* a survey of the genres it employs, as well as its use of sources from biblical to kabbalistic literature. In

approaching the title, "The Throne and the Footstool," for example, he supplies its intertexts, from the biblical Isaiah, through the talmudic (Hagigah 12a), to a passage in the Zohar on the relation of the world below to the world above (pp. 15–17). In this light, the narrative present of "The Throne and the Footstool" is simply the latest historical stratification in that intertextual process; it is a construction that both extends and appropriates past usages. Rather than stop there, however, Weiss examines Agnon's use of "throne and footstool" as a metaphor with a special meaning in the world of the narrator, where it is intertwined with the myth of personal redemption implicit in Agnon's selection of Tisha b'Av as his birthdate (pp. 18–21). Although Weiss, like other critics, tends at times to confuse author and narrator, his sensitivity to Agnon's personal mythology adds to our reading of the text, as for example, when he concludes that *Hadom vehakiseh* functions as a "signature story" for Agnon (p. 20). We can link this late Agnon story (published in part during his lifetime, and, in complete form, after his death), with the inaugural story *ʿAgunot,* whose title and midrashic opening, as Gershon Shaked has shown, construct the writer out of an intertextual relationship to Jewish sources.

Weiss' study of the allegorical dimension to the first chapter of "The Throne and the Footstool" provides a strong response to previous allegorical readings of Agnon and to critics of those allegorical tendencies. He shows us how the signifier "house," indicating a closed, square receptacle, comes to be used in contexts which make it interchangeable with "body," "room," "cabinet," "suitcase," "box," and "word" (p. 26). A word can take on significations that are often contradictory to one another, insofar as shifts in context give different meanings to it. Weiss' incorporation of a variety of sources into a reading of "The Throne and the Footstool" gives insight into the operations of a polysemy that is, to a large extent, controlled by intertextual relations (although we must always remind ourselves that identifying a source text does not complete the task of interpretation).

Esther Fuchs has written two books on Agnon's ironic art, *Omanut hahitamemut: ʿal haʾironiah shel Shai ʿAgnon* (*Cunning Innocence: On S. Y. Agnon's Irony*), published in 1985, and *Seḥoq samui: Heibetim qomiyim bayitsirah haʿagnonit* (*Hidden Laughter: Comic Aspects in S. Y. Agnon's Fiction*), which came out two years later.[22] The 1985 book examines point of view, plot, characterization and literary self-consciousness, in a series of chapters that group what she refers to as the "pious" texts of Agnon, together with those considered to be "modern and secular." Fuchs' overriding goal is to show that any such division in the canon disregards the fundamental irony of the Agnon text. She contends that irony is not just a foundation or a means, but rather, that it is the "organizing principle of the Agnon creation in all its facets" (p. 19). Thus, she discusses the contributions of paralepsis (an overabundance of non-essential detail), as well as paralipsis (the omission of crucial details), to the ironic effects Agnon achieves. Using ample examples from a range of texts that includes *The Bridal Canopy* (her primary focus), *A Simple Story,* and *Shira,* Fuchs shows how point of view is rendered ironic by the tension between the paraleptic expansiveness of an unreliable narrator on relatively trivial matters and that narrator's paraliptic omission of reference to larger existential problems.

While Fuchs' analyses of the manipulation of textual elements such as point of view do demonstrate common features to Agnon's art, she makes excessive

claims for the existence of a split in the critical reception of Agnon's "religious-pious" and "secular-modern" texts. There is undoubted truth to her critique of the tendency of critics to move too quickly to allegorical interpretations that smooth over and evade ironic tensions in the Agnon text; as a result, her resolute attention to internal tensions is welcome. At the same time, her argument relies on an exagerrated polarization of the criticism.

Shmuel Werses' historiographic essay on Agnon criticism, "Agnon Master of Aggadah," describes the efforts of early critics to link Agnon to predecessors and literary traditions; while they pointed out his use of traditional aggadic material, they realized all the while that they were trying to describe something unique to the particular work.[23] We have only to turn to Sadan's early writings on *The Bridal Canopy* to realize that the confusion of author and narrator and the attribution of piety to each is nowhere as pervasive as Fuchs claims it is. In an essay originally published in 1932, on the four volumes of the *Collected Works* just published by Schocken, Sadan admires Agnon's capacity to immerse himself in the reconstruction of the past, but also points out that, as with Cervantes' portrayal of Don Quixote, the novel's double vision keeps the reader from knowing for sure whether the author is admiring or criticizing the innocence of his protagonist. (In this respect, Sadan contrasts *The Bridal Canopy* to a satire such as *Bin'arenu uvizkenenu* (*With Our Youth and Our Aged*), where there is no doubt as to authorial point of view.)[24]

Fuchs' 1985 book, *Cunning Innocence,* attacks nostalgic and sentimentalizing readings of *The Bridal Canopy.* In the 1987 *Hidden Laughter,* she argues for reading *The Bridal Canopy* as a parody of a hasidic story. Both of these studies criticize the disproportion between the miraculous ending of *The Bridal Canopy* and the misery of the larger Jewish community that the ending fails to address.[25] And yet here too, we find that this critique, as well her comments on the *deus ex machina* ending of the novel, valid as they may be, can scarcely claim to be revisionary, since they are anticipated in Sadan's 1932 essay and have been remarked on by others since then.[26]

In the 1985 book, Fuchs demonstrates a capacity for methodological clarity in approaching Agnon's art, but that approach is largely constrained by the limitations that her thesis imposes on her readings. The 1987 book widens the approach somewhat, by considering irony, parody, satire, and the grotesque, as categories of the comic. Nevertheless, chapter titles in the 1987 volume such as "*The Bridal Canopy:* Pious Story or Parody?" and "'Forevermore': Pathos or Irony?" not only leave little doubt as to where the critic stands, but demonstrate the limitation of a reading that demands choice between so severely polarized a set of options.

The limits of this polarization can be seen as well in the classification of *Belevav hayamim* (*In the Heart of the Seas*) as a "realistic" story, an assertion that Fuchs makes in support of the claim that the *miraculous* transportation of the story's protagonist to the Land of Israel on a handkerchief is "grotesque" in its disruption of the *realistic* story (p. 27). But "realistic" is scarcely a sufficient description of this narrative, suffused as it is with the atmosphere of pious legend. Similarly, when she turns to *'Ad 'olam* ("Forevermore"), Fuchs' claim to "demystification" of that story relies not only on the merits of its own argument, but on a somewhat polarized reading (a "mystification" of its own) of the criticism. Fuchs is undoubtedly right to take on the adulation that previous critics

have awarded to Adiel Amzeh, the protagonist of "Forevermore" who retreats to the leprosarium to enjoy uninterrupted study of a manuscript, but she compels the reader to imagine the richness of a reading that would encompass *both* the ironic and the sympathetic views that the text actually offers. (By contrast, a 1988 essay by Naomi Sokoloff offers a more encompassing analysis that opens the story up to interpretation by acknowledging its thematic focus on textuality.[27])

Fuchs' discussion of *'Ad henah* (*Until Now*) is less driven by a single constraining thesis; here, she responds to previous criticism by opening up the text to inquiry, rather than closing it down with a single argument. In discussing the "episodic model" of plot (pp. 35–37), Fuchs emphasizes the relationship between fragmented form (the series of stories without apparent connection) and the confusion and upheaval of German society in World War I; she also discusses the use of repetition, digression and circularity, devices that are neutral in themselves, but can be used in service of irony.

Fuchs' studies set up the demonstration of ironic tensions as an apparent end point of critical activity. At some point, however, a study of satire and irony must turn to fuller exploration of the existential issues to which ironic disjunctions in texts draw our attention. The 1987 volume refers, at a number of points, to a "global" or "cosmic" irony that would seem to suggest a move towards some of the existential questions that her analysis of ironic structure raises (e.g., pp. 84 and 93 in discussing *'Ido ve'inam* [*Ido and Enam*]). Nevertheless, the discussion tends to stop at the notation of "global" or "radical" irony. Fuchs is certainly right to argue that form is content, and that literary self-consciousness is a strong feature of the Agnon text. Those observations make a place for Agnon in the pantheon of twentieth-century modernism, but they do not constitute an endpoint for a criticism that must then go on to investigate the uses to which that self-reflexive sophistication is put.

In contrast to the analytical precision with which Esther Fuchs differentiates author from narrator, David Aberbach conflates writer, narrator, and protagonist in his 1984 book, *At the Handles of the Lock: Themes in the Writing of Sh. Y. Agnon.*[28] Sufficiently astute in his recognition of recurring themes, Aberbach uses psychological speculation in a manner that collapses distinctions among author, narrator and character, disregarding other aspects of texts in the interests of compiling data for the psychohistory of the "Agnon hero"; this rubric is so loose that it allows an assemblage of data from a variety of novels and stories, together with observations as to the writer's personality, construed from the comments of his acquaintances. In his psychoanalytic approach, Aberbach makes extensive use of British object relations theory, an area in which he is clearly well versed; nevertheless, he evades what should be an essential exposition of method in any effort to apply psychological theory and clinical examples to literary characters and to biography. Consider, for example, this double-barreled assertion at the outset:

> The heroes of Agnon's fiction, while superficially different, are extraordinarily alike in their deeper psychological motivation. Agnon's close friends maintain that he is in fact the principal subject of his fiction. (p. 13)

From this precarious scaffolding, Aberbach goes on to draw conclusions as to the writer's passivity, childlike nature and withdrawn tendencies, on the basis of data from literary texts that is loosely linked to references to letters from Agnon's

acquaintances. (One may wonder if Aberbach's correspondents knew the interpretive uses to which their observations were to be put.)

Aberbach is a good reader in that he tends to point out important structures, such as the recurrence of love triangles, or the link between madness and emasculation in *A Simple Story* (pp. 126–27). Nevertheless his emphasis on the pathology of the hero limits his readings and does violence to the literary text through which character is constituted. If, as Aberbach suggests, one character's fall into a ditch and another's attraction to a burial vault "reflect a desire to return to the womb" (p. 140), then the challenge to the critic is to consider the function of that desire in particular texts, and only then to go on to speculate as to links among texts. Instead, with no apparent data from the texts in question, this study hypothesizes as to the origins of that desire "in a faulty relationship with the mother, a consequent failure to grow up, and an obsession with death" (p. 140). The effect of this sort of interpretive activity is to negate the value of any one text, first by disregarding its structure and then by merging its protagonist with the protagonists of other texts in the construction of a developmental profile that no one text supports. Thus, while chapter 7 on "Distortion of Body-Image in Agnon" compiles a fascinating array of instances of the disruption of bodily integrity, the discussion limits itself by considering that material in terms of disturbances in development of a hypothetical Agnon hero and classifying them in terms of a schizoid state or schizophrenia (p. 131).

In a chapter titled "The False Face," Aberbach tells us that while "Agnon's face is that of a calm, unambitious, somewhat old-fashioned Jew[. . . .] Agnon is no more the naive and pious teller of tales than Robert Frost is the sensible, good-natured Farmer Brown" (p. 101). By ignoring the distinction between writer and narrative persona, Aberbach narrows his Agnon to the dimensions of an exact identification with the narrator of his tales. This critical enterprise conjures up a nightmarishly judgmental scene, in which the artist is arraigned on charges of deceiving his readers by putting on a false face, rather than applauded for entertaining them. Agnon's narrative personae pose a challenge to the reader, inviting us into the verbal maze of the text, forcing upon us a temporary surrender, at least, of the posture of superior knowledge.

More interesting is Aberbach's conclusion that the "false self is a kind of uneasy truce, expressing anarchy in the voice of authority, libido in the voice of conscience, creativity in the voice of submission, modernism in the voice of tradition, chaos in the voice of calm" (p. 117). Nevertheless, because he has limited himself to the analysis of a psyche that is in large part his own construction, Aberbach misses the opportunity to explore the dialogic qualities of Agnon's fiction to which this multiplicity of voices might lead.

The question of balance in the relation of evidence to interpretation has always been an issue in criticism. It is particularly apparent in the history of Agnon criticism, which had its beginnings in impressionistic appreciations and ideological appropriations of the literary text for a range of positions on the relationship of modern Jewish culture to the past. In surveying the early criticism diachronically, as Shmuel Werses and Judith Halevi-Zwick have done, we see that it is less a matter of changes in the themes and issues that critics choose to discuss in reading Agnon, than in the methods they employ and in the degree of their

closeness to or departure from the verbal texture of the literary work. At its best, Esther Fuchs' insistence on the ironic *strategies* of the Agnon text can be understood as an approach built upon her objection to the idealizing or sentimentalizing tendencies of early criticism, which ignored the constructedness of texts; while she may exaggerate the notion of a split in Agnon criticism, her point acquires more validity when taken in the broader sense of the development of the criticism as a whole.

By excavating Agnon's sources, the scholarship on Agnon lays the groundwork for understanding his artistic importance in terms of his appropriation and transformation of the materials of culture. At the same time, however, it enables us to see why Agnon's writings have not found the wider audience, beyond Hebrew, that they deserve. Although we have seen two new translations of Agnon in recent years, language difference still poses problems to the critic.[29] Nevertheless, while a full appreciation of Agnon's art may require an understanding of his sources, it is the text's manipulation of sources that is of potential interest to readers. Those "manipulations" are literary. As such, they are to be studied as constitutive features of the work of art, along with other elements of its construction.

We can understand the task of criticism to be the description of the work in terms of the elements and aspects of its composition, a labor that precedes (but does not replace) the activity of interpretation. Interpretations of Agnon's art now rest more reliably on analysis of textual structures, whatever their occasional lapses may be. Developments in the methods employed by critics of Agnon reflect the recent history of literary criticism in the use of structuralist and semiotic methods of dissecting the artistic text. Thus, we may look for studies that will evaluate Agnon's use of cultural materials and his manipulations of voice in the polyphonic discourse of his novels. Work on Agnon's use of the novel form will further the insights of Shaked and Miron, advancing our understanding of what Alter calls Agnon's "magic formula for writing rabbinic and novelistic in splendid convergence."[30]

In light of Agnon's innovativeness in the realm of modern European and Jewish culture, it is disappointing to find relatively little comparative work. Hillel Barzel's 1972 study of Agnon and Kafka charted the aspects of similarity in the work of the two writers. More recently, Gershon Shaked's *The Shadows Within* takes into account the European Jewish backgrounds of Agnon and Kafka.[31] Shaked's English-language studies offer the reader an understanding of both secular-European and Judaic contexts for reading Agnon.

Studies of the writer's life and self-presentation will benefit from advances in genre studies that sharpen our capacity to differentiate among ways of representing the self, acknowledging the text's construction of its subject, whether biographical or autobiographical. Biographical studies can situate Agnon's life in its historical and geographical contexts, amid the upheavals of Jewish life that have occurred in the last hundred years. Here too, Agnon's shaping of his artistic persona needs to be understood as the construction of a life that reflects the contours of modern Jewish history. As Shaked has shown, that historical process is ongoing and exceeds the lifespan of the writer, as new generations bring to Agnon their own issues and presuppositions. And it is here that we must remind

ourselves that determinations of form are made by readers whose varying positions may produce dramatically different descriptions of texts. As readers bring to Agnon their own questions and contexts, their readings produce new studies of artistic structure that testify to the ongoing life of the literary text.

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NOTES

1. Kristeva argues that every text is a transformation of another text. "Text," in her usage, refers to sign systems that may be verbal or non-verbal, conscious or unconscious. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language,* trans. Margaret Waller (New York, 1984).

2. For a sampling of offerings, consider the following: Nitza Ben-Dov, "Discriminated Occasions and Discrete Conflicts in Agnon's *A Simple Story," Prooftexts* 9 (1989): 213–28; Sidra D. Ezrahi, "Agnon Before and After," *Prooftexts* 2 (1982): 78–94; Yael Feldman, "How Does a Convention Mean? A Semiotic Reading of Agnon's Bilingual Key-Irony in *A Guest for the Night," Hebrew Union College Annual* 56 (1985): 251–69; Esther Fuchs, "Ironic Characterization in the Works of S. Y. Agnon," *AJS Review* 7–8 (1982–83): 101–28; Naomi Sokoloff, "Metaphor and Metonymy in Agnon's *A Guest for the Night," AJS Review* 9 (1984): 97–111. See also the issue of *Prooftexts* (1987) devoted to Agnon on the occasion of the centenary of his birth.

3. Gershon Shaked, *Shmuel Yosef Agnon: A Revolutionary Traditionalist,* trans. Jeffrey Green (New York, 1989); *Panim aḥerot beyitsirato shel Shai ʿAgnon* [*Agnon: A Writer With a Thousand Faces*], (Tel Aviv, 1989).

4. Arnold Band, *Nostalgia and Nightmare: A Study in the Fiction of S. Y. Agnon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968). Baruch Hochman's study, *The Fiction of S. Y. Agnon* (Ithaca, 1970), should also be cited as a readable introduction to Agnon. Robert Alter's recent study, *The Invention of Modern Hebrew Prose* (Seattle, 1989), provides a literary-historical context for reading Agnon; his afterword to the translation of *Shira* (New York, 1989), as well as his articles over the years, offer the English-language reader a variety of perspectives on Agnon.

5. Parts of Shaked's discussion of "ʿAgunot" appeared originally in *Midrash and Literature,* eds. Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven, 1986), a collection of essays that charted new directions for the study of rabbinic exegesis and contemporary literary theory. Shaked's study is aptly housed in this volume and makes an important contribution in its demonstration of Agnon's intertextuality.

6. *Omanut hasippur shel ʿAgnon* [Agnon's Narrative Art] (Jerusalem, 1973); *Hasiporet haʿivrit 1880–1980* [Hebrew Fiction 1880–1980], 3 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1977, 1983, 1988).

7. Dan Miron, "Domesticating a Foreign Genre: Agnon's Transaction with the Novel," trans. N. Sokoloff, *Prooftexts* 7 (1987): 1–27. See also the recent full-length study by Stephen Katz of narrative structure in *A Guest for the Night: Hagibor biʿeinei ruḥo: Omanut hasiper shel ʿAgnon beʿOreaḥ natah lalun'* (Tel Aviv, 1985).

8. This chapter originally appeared as an article, "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Neurotic," *Prooftexts* 7 (1987): 41–52.

9. Alan Mintz gives insight into the production of the myth of the artist in an essay that analyzes Agnon's revisions, during the 1920s and 1930s, of some of his earlier stories; Mintz concludes that Agnon carried out a process of "suppression, conservation, and revision," in order to highlight the figure of the artist, as well as to shift from the romantic sentimentality of the earlier work to a more ironic stance. Alan Mintz, "Agnon in Jaffa: The Myth of the Artist as a Young Man," *Prooftexts* 1 (1980): 36–64.

10. Gershon Shaked and Rafael Veiser, eds., *Shai Agnon: Meḥqarim uteʿudot* [S. Y. Agnon: Studies and Documents] (Jerusalem, 1978).

11. Emuna Agnon Yaron, ed., *Esterlayn yeqirati: Mikhtavim 1924–31* [Estherlein My Dear: Letters 1924–31] (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1983). We can expect also the publication of the Agnon-Schocken correspondence.

12. Lilian Dabby-Goury, ed., *Kurzweil ʿAgnon U. Ts. G.: Ḥilufe igarot* [Kurzweil Agnon U.Z.G. (Uri Zvi Greenberg): Correspondence] (Tel Aviv, 1987).

13. Judith Halevi-Zwick, *Reishitah shel biqoret ʿAgnon* [Early Agnon Criticism] (Haifa, 1984). Halevi-Zwick is the author as well of *ʿAgnon bemaʿagalotav: ʿIyunim beʾomanut hasippur shel ʿAgnon* [Agnon in Context: An Intrinsic Approach to His Works] (Tel Aviv, 1989), a collection of her articles written over the past twenty years.

14. Hillel Barzel, ed., *Shmuʾel Yosef ʿAgnon: Mivḥar maʾamarim ʿal yetsirato* [S. Y. Agnon: A Selection of Articles on his Work] (Tel Aviv, 1982).

15. Avinoam Barshai, *Deyoqno shel Shai ʿAgnon: Haromanim shel Shai ʿAgnon* [The Image of S. Y. Agnon: The Novels of S. Y. Agnon] (Ramat-Aviv, 1988).

16. Yitzhak Bakon, *ʿAgnon hatsaʿir* [The Young Agnon] (Tel Aviv, 1989).

17. A selection of Agnon's letters to Brenner appears in Shaked and Veiser, 1978, pp. 39–56. Shaked describes the formative impact of the friendship in his English-language study (1989), pp. 10–12.

18. Avraham Holtz, *Maʿaseh reb Yudel Ḥasid: Mereshito benisim venifla'ot ʿad Hakhnasat kala shel Shai ʿAgnon* [The Tale of Reb Yudel Hasid: From a Yiddish Narrative in *Nissim v'niflaot* to Agnon's *Hakhnasat kalla*] (New York, 1986). Holtz's volume on *The Bridal Canopy* will be published in Israel by Schocken.

19. Menahem Zevi Kaddari, *Shai ʿAgnon rav sagnon* [S.Y Agnon: Master Stylist] (Jerusalem, 1980); Hillel Weiss *Qol haneshamah: ḥeqer "Hadom vehakiseh" sefer divrei hayamim leShai ʿAgnon* [The Voice of the Soul: Studies in "Footstool and Throne," S. Y. Agnon's Book of Chronicles] (Jerusalem, 1985). Edna Aphek's study of word systems in Agnon offers a useful examination of recurring word roots in Agnon's fiction. Edna Aphek, *Maʿarakhot milim: ʿiyunim be signono shel Sh. Y. ʿAgnon* [Word Systems: Studies in the Style of S. Y. Agnon] (Tel Aviv, 1979).

20. M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, 1984).

21. As cited in Shmuel Werses, *Biqoret habiqoret: Heʿarot vegilgulehen* [The Criticism of Criticism: Evaluations in Development] (Tel Aviv, 1982), p. 224.

22. Esther Fuchs, *Omanut hahitamemut: ʿal haʾironiah shel Shai ʿAgnon* [Cunning Innocence: On S. Y. Agnon's Irony] (Tel Aviv, 1985); *Seḥoq samui: Heibetim qomiyim bayitsirah haʿagnonit* [Hidden Laughter: Comic Aspects in S. Y. Agnon's Fiction] (Tel Aviv, 1987).

23. Werses, pp. 219–23.

24. Dov Sadan, "With [the Publication of] His First Four Volumes" [1932], *ʿAl Shai ʿAgnon: Masah, ʿiyun veḥeqer* [On S. Y. Agnon: Essay, Inquiry, and Research] (Tel Aviv, 1967), p. 24.

25. Fuchs, 1985, pp. 38, 70–74; 1987, pp. 25–27.

26. Sadan, 1967, pp. 25–26.

27. Naomi B. Sokoloff, "Elements of Plot in Agnon's 'Ad Olam,'" in *S. Y. Agnon: Texts and Contexts in English Translation,* ed. Leon Yudkin (New York, 1988). Sokoloff's study is part of a collection of essays that presents some of the facets of recent research on Agnon, as well as guidelines for teaching Agnon at the undergraduate level.

28. David Aberbach, *At the Handles of the Lock: Themes in the Writing of Sh. Y. Agnon* (Oxford, 1984).

29. S. Y. Agnon, *A Simple Story,* trans. Hillel Halkin (New York, 1985); *Shira,* trans. Zeva Shapiro (New York, 1989). In an essay on Halkin's English rendition of *A Simple Story,* William Cutter demonstrates the fruitfulness of reading the English and the Hebrew together, approaching the translation as a reading that foregrounds certain aspects of the

text, while disregarding others. William Cutter, "Rendering Galicia for America: On Hillel Halkin's Translation of *Sippur pashut*," *Prooftexts* 7 (1987): 73–87.

30. *The Invention of Modern Hebrew Prose*, p. 50. I have tried to deal with some of the issues surrounding Agnon's modernist writing, including the comparison to Kafka, as well as the production of a myth of the artist, in my forthcoming book, *Between Exile and Return: S. Y. Agnon and the Drama of Writing* (Albany, 1991).

31. Hillel Barzel, *Bein ʿAgnon leKafka: Meḥqar umashveh* [Agnon and Kafka: A Comparative Study] (Ramat-Gan, 1972). Gershon Shaked, *The Shadows Within: Essays on Modern Jewish Writers* (Philadelphia, 1987). Yair Mazor's study of Agnon's Scandinavian connections takes on an important subject, but does not develop it sufficiently. Yair Mazor, *The Triple Cord: Agnon, Hamsun, Strindberg Where Scandinavian and Hebrew Literature Meet* (Tel Aviv, 1987).

Writing the Holocaust: Canons and Contexts

S. Lillian Kremer. *Witness Through the Imagination: Jewish American Holocaust Literature.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989, 392 pp.

Berel Lang, ed. *Writing and the Holocaust.* New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988, x + 301 pp.

James E. Young. *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988, viii + 243 pp.

On June 18th this past year Paris witnessed a tremendous act of commemoration: a hundred years since the birth of Charles de Gaulle, fifty years since his speech from London calling on the French to resist both the government of Vichy and the Nazi occupiers, and twenty years since his death. The glorification of De Gaulle went hand in hand with the self-canonization of Paris and its war-time role. Huge billboard photographs, representing the key moments of De Gaulle's life, dominated the walls of the metro stations: De Gaulle at the British Broadcasting Corporation making his call to resistance ("L'honneur de la France, 18 juin 1940"); De Gaulle striding down the Champs-Elysees ("Paris libéré, 23 août, 1944"); the great man addresses an election rally ("Le Président sera élu par tous les français, 28 octobre, 1962"); De Gaulle meets Konrad Adenauer, then Chancellor of the German Federal Republic ("L'amitié franco-allemand, 22 janvier, 1963"); De Gaulle is greeted by a wildly enthusiastic crowd ("Vive la République").

The series of posters offers a striking example of the process of canonization. Through them, De Gaulle becomes a political symbol who has no life outside of his role in French history. His life and his career are indistinguishable. It seems almost churlish to point to such gaps in the story as the bloody war in Algeria or the May '68 uprisings. The audience becomes the willing accomplice in De Gaulle's elevation to well-deserved mythic status.

Like all attempts at canonization, the images reflect a particular (and partisan) vision of the past as well as a desire to use that past to shape the future in a particular manner. The example offered by this particular commemoration is, I believe, relevant to the problems of canonization posed by the three recent works on Holocaust writing listed at the beginning of this essay. Each of these works is, in a certain sense, an act of advocacy. Each begins from a particular version of current collective memory of the Holocaust and, through the work which results, attempts to shape the area thus delineated. Indeed, it may well be argued that