



Review

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least useful, if not even loaded with cultural heritage, in the teaching of Hebrew literature to the non-fluent Hebrew student.

The lack of a unifying statement or a conclusion seems to prompt the author's apology in his introduction. Neither the "reading below the surface," nor the structuralist approach, nor the inclusion of children's literature "justifies" the group. Yet, I find these justifications superfluous, as Aristotelian unity is not a prerequisite for a volume of literary interpretations. There is no need to force a theoretical unity when the underlying principle is Mazor's style, his personal insights, his amiable verbosity. In that respect, this tenth book is not a deviation but rather a fortification of an interpretive approach which continues, in its own version, the traditional, albeit anachronistic, subjective detours of Klausner, Lachover, and even Sadan.

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FROM AGNON TO OZ: STUDIES IN MODERN HEBREW LITERATURE [HEBREW]. By Warren Bargad. South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 126. Pp. xii + 195; pp. 25. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996. Cloth, \$79.95.

I have a great deal of respect for American scholars such as Robert Alter, Abraham Holz, Alan Mintz, William Cutter, Stanley Nash, Arie Wineman, and Warren Bargad, to name just a few, who dedicated their professional lives to Hebrew language and literature and made distinctive contributions to the field on various levels. It is with this kind of respect that I read Bargad's book.

This book is an anthology in which Bargad collects ten of his English articles and essays published in the 1970s and 1980s, seven reviews which were published during the same period, two Hebrew essays published in the early 1970s, and one in 1990. In general, articles which preserve a lasting literary insight remain of great interest many years after their publications, while other articles have short lives.

The writing of "Exclamations, Manifestoes, and Other Literary Peripheries" was triggered by the 1972 appearance of the Hebrew journal *Siman Kri'a: A Diversified Quarterly for Literature*. Bargad translated, presented, and compared previous manifestoes of Hebrew journals such as *Hedim*, *Moznayim*, *Likrat*, *Akhsanya*, *Akshav*, *Masa (Davar)*, *Hasifrut*,

and *Siman Kri'a*. He also made various comments about *Siman Kri'a's* manifesto and challenged some of its statements. For example, he found "ludicrous, even utterly specious" the editors' suggestion that Israeli literature prior to *Siman Kri'a* did not reflect an Israeli reality and did not arise out of its literary possibilities. Bargad published his article "Children and Lovers: On Yehuda Amichai's Poetic Works" in 1975. Bargad states that "the piece on Amichai's earlier volumes, the least 'scholarly' item in this collection, has had the most citations and other feedback..." (p. ix). Not everyone has to agree with the author's rating of his own articles. Bargad relates some characteristics of Amichai's first four poetry volumes in terms of content and form as well as the disarming simplicity, charm and wit, relevance and insight, and aesthetic challenge and pleasure one finds in Amichai's work. Another article in the anthology is "The Image of the Arab in Israeli Literature." Bargad provides comments about the relevant works of authors such as Moshe Smilanski, Yitshak Shami, Yehuda Burla, S. Yizhar, Binyamin Tammuz, Moshe Shamir, Amos Oz, Amalya Kahana-Carmon, and A. B. Yehoshua. The difficulties of providing an in-depth analysis of a certain theme in many literary works is obvious.

Was it perhaps necessary or beneficial to update these articles? Would it not be beneficial to examine *Siman Keri'a*—not only its 24-year-old first issue—in light of its manifesto? How would Bargad rewrite his article about Amichai now, more than twenty years after its publication, in terms of Amichai's subsequent publications, the research of Amichai's work, and Bargad's academic growth since? How would Bargad rewrite now his 20-year-old article about the image of the Arab in Israeli literature in light of the voluminous applicable literature and research?

In another one of his approximately 20-year-old articles, titled "The Poetic of Allusion and the Hebrew Literary Tradition," Bargad challenged again (!) some aspects of the above-mentioned manifesto of *Siman Kri'a*, particularly its support of the liberation of literary works "from the pillory of Agonesque.... They are devoid of the patterns of allusion which weigh so heavily..." (pp. 41–42). Bargad briefly relates two allusions in Agnon's two literary works and "A Simple Story." Is this significant insight regarding Agnon's use of allusions or to "the poetic of allusion and the Hebrew literary tradition" (p. 41)?

In his 1978 "Elements of Style in the Fiction of Amalya Kahana-Carmon," Bargad reminds the reader that style is the most important semantic vehicle in the lyrical prose of Kahana-Carmon. He discusses three stylistic devices—the archaism, the cliché, and the euphemistic expres-

sion—as conveyors of meaning in the short story “To Build Her a House in the Land of Shinar.” Bargad does not thoroughly support his contention that the above are central stylistic elements in the structure and semantic of this author’s work. Furthermore, the Hebrew language is dynamic, and it is not an easy task at this point to decide the stylistic level of many language uses.

In his preface, Bargad mentions his gratifying twenty-year friendship with Kahana-Carmon. A remark such as this may provide some clues to the literary world of a scholar, though they have no bearing on the evaluation of his work. In this context, I was touched by Bargad’s “debt of gratitude to Arnold Band,” who provided “a model for the pursuit of Hebrew literary research.” I would welcome, however, more detailed insight about this, pondering the scholar’s honorable academic ways to pay off such debts. Another example of Bargad’s academic contacts is his use of an unpublished 1986 paper of Chana Kronfeld (pp. 119–120). However, I would expect a 1996 update to inform the reader where he could read Kronfeld’s paper in case it was published between 1986 and 1996.

Regarding the 1988 article “Binary Oppositions in the Poetry of Amir Gilboa,” the use of pre-existing literature about Gilboa’s work could enhance this piece.

The anthology includes three Hebrew articles. The first one is “Three Monologues on Zionism: Agnon, Hazaz, Oz—A Deconstructionist Approach.” Bargad relates to monologues in Agnon’s “A Guest for the Night,” Hazaz’s “The Sermon,” and Oz’s “A Late Love.” Each one of these works has a monologue about Zionism which in turn contains irresolvable alternations and internal conflicts. Bargad’s presentation is lucid and sophisticated. I keep in mind the intellectual and emotional complexities of Zionism and hardly expect that they can be resolved in an unequivocal, unambiguous manner. Also, my understanding of some of the quoted paragraphs is different from Bargad’s. For example, contrary to Bargad (p. 3), I cannot find any humiliation in Agnon’s paragraph as long as I remember to what it does allude (*Horayot* 10).

Two other Hebrew articles were previously published in *Hadoar* in 1972: “A Moon in the Vale of Aijalon: A Lyrical Novel by Amalya Kahana-Carmon” and “Aharon Appelfeld: The Lost Past Seeks Remembrance.” I find many articulate descriptions of the characteristics of Appelfeld’s four books (1962–1967), and it is typical of Bargad to attempt to portray the common and the typical in a literary work. Bargad’s discussion of various motifs in Kahana-Carmon’s novel is illuminating.

The book includes seven reviews which Bargad published in the 1970s and 1980s. Reprinting reviews is valuable if they preserved some "permanent" qualities. Bargad reviewed poetry volumes, novels, anthologies, and scholarly publications. I find his interest in them praiseworthy. He reviewed Robert Alter's beautiful anthology *Modern Hebrew Literature*, Amos Oz's *Unto Death*, A. B. Yehoshua's *Early in the Summer of 1970* and *The Lover*, S. Y. Agnon's *A Simple Story*, Esther Fuchs' *Israeli Mythogynies*, and more. Many central aspects of these works remained untouched within Bargad's reviews, as one may expect after reading a review. For example, reading Bargad's review of Yehoshua's *Early in the Summer of 1970*, I found that many integral literary elements could be addressed briefly, such as: What are the fantastic elements in this story? What are the relations between the generations? How is the motif of sacrifice treated in the story? Does the absence of the mother's character in the story have any meaning? What are the meanings, the effects, and the structural impacts of the repetitions in the story? How does the father respond to his son's "death" and to the sight of his live son? Similarly, for example, reading Bargad's review of Yehoshua's *The Lover* left me with the feeling that basic questions could and should be asked by a reviewer: Is it a story of individuals or of Israeli society? What are the literary devices depicting the Israeli family as the most severe failure of Israeli society? How do the various generations compare with each other? What are the main symbols in the novels? What are the meanings and implications of the names of the characters? What are the functions of sex, money, and academic degrees in the novel?

In general, Bargad's interest in Hebrew literature is genuine and expansive, his attitude to it passionate, and some of his views and generalizations useful.

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TRADITION AND TRAUMA, STUDIES IN THE FICTION OF S. J. AGNON. D. Patterson and Glenda Abramson, eds. Pp. x + 226. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994. Cloth.

The papers collected in this attractive volume afford valuable insights into some vexed issues of Agnon criticism by some of our most able Anglo-Saxon Agnonists. Naomi Sokoloff valiantly takes on the perplexing