

## Our Shadows and Ourselves:

### The “Yom Kippur Generation” in Israeli Fiction<sup>1</sup>

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*This article is dedicated to the memory of the members of my company: Yehuda Aizik, Richard Dofman, and Yehoshua Ben-Nun, who fell in the 1982 Lebanon War in the Battle of Sultan Yaakub, and my friend Dov Lazarovich (Balbala), who was killed in the same war by “friendly fire.”*

#### Abstract

*In the literary corpus created by writers of the "Yom Kippur Generation" (those who were born in Israel in the 1950s and began to publish their works in the early 1980s), the syndrome of the "light twin" and the "dark twin" repeatedly and stubbornly appears. In my article, I refer to the recurring appearance in the fiction of the members of this generation of a child or tender youth who lives like the actual and/or imaginary sibling of the protagonist. This is an absent-present, dead-alive character, who is sometimes wrought as a “light twin”—a chosen, favorite son, somewhat mysterious, and sometimes as a “dark twin”—a son who is rejected, abandoned. This syndrome reflects the cognitive dissonance that characterized this generation. They could not have reconciled in their minds the stories of the "lambs to the slaughter" with the glorious victory of the IDF over the Arab armies in the 1967 Six-Day War. From the examination of the corpus in question, an amazing conclusion emerges. For members of the generation of that war, the 1973 Yom Kippur War served as an emergency exit. That terrible war, for which this generation in particular paid a heavy price, diminished or at least moderated the intensity of the conflict fixed in their minds between proud and trusting Israeliness and the diasporic victimhood, including its inherent sense of humiliation from “Over There”.*

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<sup>1</sup> A version of this article appeared in Hebrew in my book *Vantage Point: Issues in the Historiography of Modern Hebrew Literature*, published by Dvir in 2005.

## Introduction

The concept of the “Jewish bookshelf,” which, when it was coined by Haim Beer, awakened a lively debate in the pages of the literary supplement of *Haaretz*,<sup>2</sup> relates to a group of books that is supposed to serve as, according to some, an obligatory or, according to others, a recommended textual corpus. There are those who are of the opinion that it is a corpus of texts that has always been and will always continue to be relevant to the entire Jewish people. Others believe that this corpus is relevant only for certain groups. Some of those involved in the discussion are convinced that for these groups, the “Jewish bookshelf” is valid in all generations, while others believe that it is valid only in relation to certain, defined periods, or perhaps even only for one specific period.

Either way, the discussion of the Jewish bookshelf as a unique focus of authority, influence, and inspiration seems to me to be essentially flawed. While I have no doubt regarding the status and importance of this bookshelf in shaping Jewish and Israeli culture, we must remember that all cultures, including Jewish and Israeli culture, grow and are shaped by a number of bookshelves, among them “the bookshelves of our childhoods.”

I refer, focusing on the Israeli context, to the hundreds of books that were displayed on public bookshelves and/or bought by our parents in accordance with specific psychological and socio-ideological codes. These were the books that we, as young readers who grew up in a certain environment, placed in a particular way on our actual and imaginary bookshelves. We went back to them or did not, put them at the front of the shelf or the back, in the “hidden row,” placed them on our bedside tables or hid them under the mattress, and so on.

I claim, and this is not, I believe, an exaggerated claim, that each generation of readers has a specific children’s bookshelf of its own. In all likelihood, some of the

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<sup>2</sup> See Ariel Hirschfeld. “Hiper Text, Shlom Bayit V'Aron Hasfarim Hayehudi” (Hypertext, Domestic Peace, and the Jewish Bookshelf). *Haaretz* Hamusaf Lesifrut Vetarbut. February 13, 1998.

books on this shelf were also on the bookshelf of the previous generation, in the same location or in a different one, but in each and every generation, girls and boys respectfully remove certain books from the bookshelf and replace them with new or updated books.

The generational bookshelf that I want to examine here is the bookshelf of the “Yom Kippur generation.” By this term, I refer to the group of authors born in the 1950s, whose works share thematic and stylistic similarities that are anchored in common foundational cultural experiences.<sup>3</sup>

The events that can be defined as foundational experiences of the members of the generation are childhood in the first and/or second decade of a young, pioneering, and optimistic country, on the one hand, and life against the background of Holocaust trauma, on the other (it must be noted in this context that a considerable number of members of the “imagined community” under discussion here are [direct or indirect] members of the “second generation” of the Holocaust). Other foundational experiences are the Six-Day War, which broke out in the transitional period between their childhood and adolescence (for a large part of this group, this war overlapped with their bar or bat mitzvah ceremonies),<sup>4</sup> and the Yom Kippur War, which comprised a transitional link between their adolescence and maturity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The term “literary generation” has been defined in many ways. See, among others, Nurith Gertz. *Khirbet Khizeh Vehaboker Shelemaharat (Khirbet Khizeh and The Morning After)*. (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad and the Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, Tel Aviv University, 1983), 8–11; Dan Miron. *Bodedim Bemo'adam – Lidyokana shel Harepublika Hasifrutit Ha'ivrit Bithilat Hame'a Ha'esrim* (When Loners Come Together – A Portrait of Hebrew Literature at the Turn of the Twentieth Century). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1987), 115–150; Zohar Shavit. *Hahayim Hasifrutiyim Be'eretz Yisra'el 1910-1933* (Literary Life in Eretz Israel 1910–1933). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad and The Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, 1982), 15–27; Jurij Tynanov. “On Literary Evolution.” In Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Eds.). *Reading in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*. (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1978), 66–87.

<sup>4</sup> It is worth adding here that this is the last generation of sabras who grew up in the Israel of the 1948 borders.

<sup>5</sup> Most of those born in the first half of the 1950s—actually those who were recruited to the Israel Defense Forces up to 1973—took part in the Yom Kippur War. Many of them were doing compulsory military service and “in any case” their part in bearing the burden and damage of the war was great. Moreover, while no actual study like Emmanuel Sivan’s *Dor Tashah: Mitos, Dyokan Vezikaron*

I chose to discuss this generation for three main reasons. First, this is a generation that has not received the attention of cultural and literary scholars, and not because its authors and poets have produced a small number of cultural assets. Among these authors and poets are: Alon Altaras (1960),<sup>6</sup> Lily Perry-Amitai (1953),<sup>7</sup> Mishka Ben-David (1952),<sup>8</sup> Shoshi Breiner (1952),<sup>9</sup> Israel Berama (1956),<sup>10</sup> Dror Green (1954),<sup>11</sup> David Grossman (1954),<sup>12</sup> Eleonora Lev (1952),<sup>13</sup> Itamar Levy (1956),<sup>14</sup>

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(The 1948 Generation: Myth, Profile and Memory) (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Press, 1991) has been conducted on this matter, it is reasonable to assume that the victims of this war, which is considered the most difficult and traumatic of all, with the possible exception of the War of Independence, those who were on the front lines and were killed or injured and suffered or still suffer from PTSD, belong to certain socio-cultural groups from which most of the authors of the generation also came. Many testimonies and studies of the Yom Kippur War as a traumatic war have been published. See Edna Lomsky-Feder, *Ke'ilu Lo Hayta Milhama: Tfisat Hamilhama Besippurey Hayim shel Gvarim Yisra'elim* (As if there was no War: Life Stories of Israeli Men). (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1998); Amia Lieblich, *Hutz Mitziporim* (Only the Birds: The Story of Israeli POWs in Egypt). (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1989); Yuval Neria, *Hahayim Betzel Hamilhama: Hebetim Psichologiyim* (Life in the Shadow of War: Psychological Aspects). (Jerusalem: The Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Alon Altaras. *Hanekama shel Marichika* (Maricika's Revenge). (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 1999); *Hasimla Hashhora shel Odelia* (Odelia's Black Dress). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2002); *Ze Hayered Shelanu* (It's Our Child). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2008); *Kshenish'arnu Levad* (And Then We Were Alone). (Or Yehudah: Zmora-Bitan, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Lily Perry-Amitai. *Golem Bama'agal* (Golem in a Circle). (Jerusalem: Keter, 1986); *Rikud al Hamayim* (Dancing on the Water). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1994); *Bikur Hatalyan* (The Executioner's Visit). (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Achronoth, 1999); *Sonata* (Sonata). (Tel Aviv: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Mishka Ben-David. *Hayalim Smehim* (I Have Not Seen Happy Soldiers). (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 1982); *Sefer Ha'efsharuyot Hamugbalot* (The Book of Limited Possibilities). (Or Yehudah: Sifriat Maariv, 2000); *Du'et Bebeirut* (Duet in Beirut) [in Hebrew]. (Jerusalem: Keter, 2002). *Eyfo Mina?* (Where is Mina?). (Tel Aviv: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, 2015), and others.

<sup>9</sup> Shoshi Breiner. *Ariadne* (Ariadne). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1990); *Ahava Ivrit* (Hebrew Love). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2006); *Sefer Hapredot Hagadol* (The Book of Farewell). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Israel Berama. *Yamim Kru'im* (Torn Days). (Jerusalem: Keter, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Dror Green. *Tzevet Arba* (Crew Number Four). (Jerusalem, Keter, 1992); *Freud Neged Dora Vehamodel Hashakuf shel Ti'ur Hamikre* (Freud versus Dora and the Transparent Model of the Case Study). (Ben Shemen: Modan Publishers, 1998); *Tipul Nafshi: Madrich Lamishtamesh* (Psychotherapy: A Consumer's Guide). (Ramat Yohanan: Sfarim 2003).

<sup>12</sup> David Grossman. *Ratz: Sippurim* (Jogger). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1983); *Hiyuch Hagdi* (The Smile of the Lamb). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1983); *Ah Hadash Legamre* (A Brand New Brother). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1986); *Ayen Erech: Ahava* (See Under: Love). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1986); *Hazman Hatzahov* (The Yellow Wind). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1987); *Gan Riki: Mahaze Bishtey Ma'arachot* (Riki's Playgroup: A Play in Two Acts). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1988); *Sefer Hadikduk Hapnimi* (The Book of Intimate Grammar). (Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1991); *Nochahim Nifkadim* (Absentees). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1992); *Yesh Yeladim Zigzag* (The Zigzag Kid). (Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1994); *Isha Borahat Mibsora* (To the End of the Land). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2008); *Nofel Mihutz Lazman* (Falling out of Time). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, 2011); *Sus Ehad Nichnas Lebar* (A Horse Walks into a Bar). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2014); *Itamar Michtav* (The Itamar Letter). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1988); *Shetihiyi Li Hasakin* (Be My Knife). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz

Amnon Navot (1952),<sup>15</sup> Albert Suissa (1959),<sup>16</sup> Ronny Someck (1951),<sup>17</sup> Nava Semel (1954),<sup>18</sup> and Youval Shimoni (1955).<sup>19</sup> Second, this is a unique generation in terms of its connection to Hebrew children's books, for two complementary reasons: it is the first generation of sabras and immigrants that enjoyed in its early, formative years (from pre-school until the end of elementary school) a relatively large selection of children's books, and the last generation of sabra and immigrant children that did not grow up with television and computers. The third reason that I decided to examine

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Hameuchad, 1998); *Mishehu Larutz Ito* (Someone to Run With). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2000); *Baguf Ani Mevina* (Her Body Knows [In Another Life]) (two novellas). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2002); *Hamavet Kederech Hayim: Ma'amarim 1993-2003* (Death as a Way of Life: Essays 1993–2003). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Eleonora Lev. *Sug Mesuyam shel Yatmut* (A Certain Kind of Orphanhood). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1989) (A new edition of the book was published by N.B. Books, Tel Aviv, in 1999.); *Boker Rishon Began-Eden* (First Morning in Paradise). (Tel Aviv: Keshet, 1996); *Mavet ze Davar Negativi* (Death is a Negative Thing). (Jerusalem: Keter, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Itamar Levy. *Kapot Ragle'a Ha'adinot shel Hamadam* (The Madame's Dainty Feet). (Jerusalem: Keter, 1988); *Agadat Ha'agamim Ha'atzuvim* (The Legend of the Sad Lakes). (Jerusalem: Keter, 1991); *Otiyot Hashemesh, Otiyot Hayare'ah* (Letters of the Sun, Letters of the Moon). (Jerusalem: Keter, 1991); *Zelig Mainz Vega'agu'av el Hamavet* (Zelig Mainz and his Longings for Death). (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim, 1985); *Etyudim Lemorgana* (Morgana, Morgana). (Jerusalem: Keter, 1996); *Miyomano shel Me'ater Sfarim* (Diary of a Book Searcher: A Memoir). (Itamar Levy's Bookstore [http://www.itamar-books.co.il], 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Amnon Navot. *Onat Hamlachim o Kav Hakeshel shel Hasusim* (Season of the Kings). (Jerusalem: Keter, 1983); *Tisat Machshirim* (Instrument Flight). (Jerusalem: Keter, 1988); *Lochde Arikim o Roman al Mishtara Tzva'it* (Gladiator [Studebaker], or a Note on the Military Police). (Jerusalem: Keter, 1992); *Mikra'ot Yisra'el* (Readings on Israel). (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2008); *Mizkar Pnimi: Sipporet Ivrit 2000-2010* (Internal Memo: Hebrew Literature 2000–2010). (Tel Aviv: Dehak, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Albert Suissa. *Akud* (Bound). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Ronny Someck. *Gole: Shirim* (Exile: Poems). (Tel Aviv, Massada, 1976); *Solo: Shirim* (Solo: Poems). (Tel Aviv: Massada, 1980); *Asphalt: Shirim* (Asphalt: Poems). (Ramat Gan: Massada, 1984); *7 Shurot al Pele Hayarkon* (Seven Lines on the Wonder of the Yarkon). (Tel Aviv: Opatowsky/Tel Aviv Foundation for Literature and Art, 1987); *Bardelas shel Harsina* (Panther). (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 1989); *Blood Mary* (Blood Mary). (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 1989); *Gan-Eden Le'orez* (Rice Paradise). (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 1996); *Hametofef shel Hamahapecha* (The Revolution Drummer). (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 2001); *Mahteret Hahalav* (The Milk Underground). (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 2005); *Algeir* (Algeria). (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 2009); *Ko'ah Sus* (Horse Power). (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Nava Semel. *Shirey Herayon Veleйда* (Poems of Pregnancy and Birth). (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim, 1982); *Hayeled Me'ahorey Ha'enayim – Ahat Zkena* (The Child Behind the Eyes; An Old Woman). (Tel Aviv: Adam, 1988); *Moris Haviv'el Melamed La'uf* (Flying Lessons [Flying Away]). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1988); *Gershona-shona* (Becoming Gershona). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1988); *Rali Masa Matara* (Night Games). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1993); *Isha al Niyar* (Bride on Paper). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1996); *Kova Zchuchit* (Glass Hat). (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Hapoalim, 1998); *Tzhok shel Achbarosh* (And the Rat Laughed). (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Achronoth, 2001); *Isra'el* (Isra Island). (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Achronoth, 2001); *Hatuna Australit* (Australian Wedding). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2009); *Rosh Akum* (Head on Backwards). (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 2012), and others.

<sup>19</sup> Youval Shimoni. *Ma'of Hayona* (The Flight of the Dove). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1990); *Heder* (A Room). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1999); *El He'afar* (Dust). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2007); *Kav Hamelah* (The Salt Line). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2014).

precisely the childhood bookshelf of this generation is simply that I myself am one of its members.

The subject at hand invites a discussion of three fascinating and intertwined issues. The first is socio-cultural, and concerns the unique characteristics of the children's bookshelf of this generation. The second issue is psycho-literary, and concerns the reflections of the composition and characteristics of that childhood bookshelf in the literary creations written by the authors of the Yom Kippur generation twenty and thirty years after the period of their childhoods. The third issue connects the two previous issues, and sheds light on them. This is a historical-literary and psycho-cultural issue, and it is concerned with the emotional and conscious function of the Yom Kippur War, which was experienced by the members of this generation as soldiers during their compulsory military service or as youths at the end of high school, regarding their attitude toward their personal and national self-image. This self-image developed while they were still in the shadow of two other wars that were difficult for members of the generation to connect: World War II and the Six-Day War.

## I.

The children's bookshelf of this generation consists of hundreds of books that can be divided into many categories. I would like to address one seemingly technical category according to which books were situated on this bookshelf, in the front row, that is the "display" row, or in the back row. This "placement," I again assume, reflects the status of the books in the eyes of those who placed them in these positions, that is, the children, the readers of the early, middle, and late nineteen-sixties. Thus, at the front we placed encyclopedias and applied science books that

sprung up like mushrooms after the rain<sup>20</sup> and local and translated literature for elementary school children: adventure books, detective books, and so on, which fit wonderfully both the whims of the age group and the “spirit of the nation,” which was, as mentioned, at least seemingly, young, mischievous, and optimistic.<sup>21</sup> A central

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<sup>20</sup> These included the encyclopedias of the members of this generation, *Michlal*, *Maayan*, and the large and colorful *Tarbut*, which changed the way we related to the acquisition of knowledge, the wonderful *Encyclopedia Rimon*, and others. There were books on applied science: Azaria Alon. *Al Ha'etzim ve'al Ha'avanim* (On Trees and Rocks). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1958); *77 Sihot al Teva* (Seventy-seven Talks on Nature). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1964). Many books on various subjects: Yitzhak Levanon. *Nichsey Hatarbut* (Cultural Assets). (Tel Aviv: Zelikovitz, 1959); *Hayafot Be'agadot Ha'olam* (The Most Beautiful of World Legends). (Tel Aviv: Aryeh [date of publication not available]); M. Margolin. *Da et Ha'olam* (Get to Know the World). (Tel Aviv: Twersky, 1966); Dr. Moshe Granot. *Mivnim Mefursamim Bahistoria* (Famous Buildings in History). (Idit, 1959); Ramon P. Kofman and Natan G. Goodman. *Matzbi'im Mefursamim* (Famous Military Leaders). (S. Friedman, 1956), and more. We were absolutely enchanted by *The Silent World*, by the French sea researchers Jacques Cousteau and Frédéric Dumas (published in Hebrew in 1958 by Hadar).

<sup>21</sup> This list of books below is not complete. It is an inventory, general and inclusive. That is, it does not include sociological distinctions, for example the distinction between “boys’ literature” and “girls’ literature,” which are necessary in other discursive contexts. On the other hand, for our purposes here, the distinction between “high” and “low” literature is important. This is only somewhat similar to the distinction between “literature at the front of the shelf” and “literature at the back of the shelf,” or, in the words of Yehuda Paradis, who was, for many of us in those days, one of the representatives of the world of knowledge, the distinction between “literature read above the table” and “literature read under the table.” See Yehuda Paradis. “Sifrut Shekor'im Mitahat Lashulhan” (Literature Read under the Table) *Maariv Lanoar*. 9 September, 1958. 15–16.

The list below includes sample titles of works from the “front of the shelf,” as follows:

1. **Translated General Adventure Literature:** Edmondo De Amicis. *Heart*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of M. Mavshan. (Shtibel, 1951); Alexandre Dumas. *The Three Musketeers*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Y. Levanon and Hana Ben Dov. (Neuman, 1950); and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Y. Crost. (Idit, 1954); Mark Twain. *Tom Sawyer*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of B. Modan. (Chechik, 1956); Jules Verne. *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of L. Eliav. (Yezreel, 1950); *Captain Grant's Children*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Y. Avnon. (Shimoni, 1950); *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of U. Halperin. (Omanut, 1925, 1955); *Michael Strogoff*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Y. L. Baruch. (Omanot, 1930); Ferenc Molnár. *The Paul Street Boys*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of R. Katz and S. Kantzler. (Yezreel, 1965); Henryk Sienkiewicz. *With Fire and Sword*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of A. N. Frank. (Masada, 1921); *In Desert and Wilderness*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Y. Lichtenbaum. (Omanut, 1953); Janusz Korczak. *Kaytek the Wizard*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Y. Lichtenbaum. (Am Oved, 1962); Selma Lagerlöf. *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* (three volumes). Published in Hebrew in the translation of S. Ben-Avram. (Am Oved, 1961); Erich Kästner. *Dot and Anton*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of E. Kaplan. (Achiasaf, 1962); *The Flying Classroom*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of E. Kaplan. (Achiasaf, 1964); *The 35th of May, or Conrad's Ride to the South Seas*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of E. Kaplan. (Achiasaf, 1967); *Emil and the Detectives*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of A. Ayali (Indman). (Yezreel, 1968); *Lottie and Lisa*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of E. Kaplan. (Achiasaf, 1951); Lucy Maud Montgomery. *Anne of Green Gables*; *Anne of Avonlea*; *Anne of the Island*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Y. Fishman. (Neuman, 1957); Louisa May Alcott. *Little Women*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Shlomo Arav. (Chechik, 1954), and many more.

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2. **Translated Adventure Literature, Westerns:** Karl May. *Winnetou*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Y. Yariv. (Tel Aviv: Tevel, 1955); *Winnetou II*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Y. Lendek. (Niv, 1955); James Fenimore Cooper. *Leatherstocking Tales*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of L. Nachmani. (Omanut, 1926); *The Last of the Mohicans*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of D. Amikam. (Tel Aviv: Yezreel, 1944).
  3. **Local Adventure Literature:** Yemima Avidar. *Shmona Be'ikvot Ehad* (Eight in Pursuit of One). (Twersky, 1954). Nahum Gutman. *Hahofesh Hagadol o Ta'alumat Ha'argazim* (The Summer Vacation or The Crate Mystery). (Am Oved, 1946). *Be'ereetz Lobengulu Melech Zulu* (In the Land of Lobengulu King of Zulu). (Davar, 1953); *Ir Ktana Ve'anashim ba Me'at* (A Small City with Few People). (Am Oved and Dvir, 1959). Yaakov Horgin. *Hakana'im Hatze'irim* (The Young Zealots). (Yezreel, 1935); *Habalashim Mikita Vav* (The Detectives from the Sixth Grade). (Yezreel, 1966); Avner Carmeli (Shraga Gafni). *Habalashum Hatze'irim Bemivtza Sinay* (The Young Detectives in the Sinai Operation). (Tel Aviv: Zelikovitz, 1957); *Habalashim Hatze'irim Vetarazan Portzim Lemifratz Shlomo* (The Young Detectives and Tarzan Attack Solomon Gulf). (Tel Aviv: Zelikovitz, 1957); *B'at Alon B'at* (Kick, Alon, Kick). (M. Mizrachi, 1960); all of the *Chasamba o Havurat Sod Muhlat Behehlet* (Chasamba or The Absolutely Absolute Secret Group) books by Yigal Mossinson, which began to be published in 1950; Ido Seter (Hezi Lofban). *Oz Yaoz Neved Taniney Paroah* (Oz Yaoz and Pharoah's Crocodiles), (1963). Starting in 1953, Tarzan booklets appeared, published by Karnaf and edited by Aharon Amir. The author of these Tarzan stories was called Yovav, but actually a whole group of Israeli writers, among them Amos Kenan, Yeshayahu Levit, Shimon Tzabar, Dani Herman, Elisha Gat, and others, was responsible for writing them.
  4. **Books for Children with Refined Taste:** Michael Ende. *Jim Button and Luke the Engine Driver*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Linda Matalon. (Tel Aviv: Avigail, 1965); Kenneth Grahame. *The Wind in the Willows*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of Yonatan Ratosh. (Machbarot Lesifrut, 1956); Alan Alexander Milne. *Winnie the Pooh*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of E. D. Shafir and V. Israelit. (Machbarot Lesifrut, 1951); Juan Ramón Jiménez. *Platero and I*. Published in Hebrew in the translation of E. Olsbenger. (Am Oved, 1968).
  5. **Short Stories (including folktales) from Various Cultures:** This is a genre with which we became familiar first and foremost through anthologies such as: Dan Oren (Ed.). *Mivhar Hasippur Ha'erope'i* (A Selection of European Stories). (Hadar, 1959); David Shachar (Ed.). *Mivhar Hasippur Hayapani* (A Selection of Japanese Stories). (Hadar, 1957); *Mivhar Hasippur Haskandinavi* (A Selection of Scandinavian Stories). (Hadar, 1954); Amos Kenan (Trans.). *Mivhar Hasippur Hasini* (A Selection of Chinese Stories). (Hadar, 1954)

For more on the children's bookshelf of the members of this generation, see Uriel Ofek. *Mitarazan ad Chasamba* (From Tarzan to Chasamba). (Givatayim and Ramat Gan: Masada, 1969); *Lexicon Ofek Lesifrut Yeladim* (The Ofek Lexicon of Children's Literature). (Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 1985); Amnon Dankner and David Tartakover. *Eyfo Hayinu Ume Asinu* (Where We Were and What We Did). (Jerusalem: Keter, 1996); Eli Eshed. *Mitarazan ve'ad Zbeng: Hasippur shel Hasifrut Hapopularit Ha'ivrit* (From Tarzan to Zbeng: The Story of Israeli Pop Fiction). (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2002).

We can expand the bookshelf of the members of this generation according to the many references, some explicit, others less so, in some of their works. Prominent in this context are Itamar Levy's *Etyudim Lemorgana*; "Momik," the first section of David Grossman's *Ayen Erech: Ahava*, Amnon Navot's books, and my book *Makhela Hungarit* (A Hungarian Chorus) (Or Yehuda: Kinneret Zmora Bitan, 2014).

We can learn about the old and new character of the children's bookshelf of this generation by comparing samples from the list of childhood books in the works mentioned with a parallel list that can be constructed according to references from some books of the previous generation, for example, Avraham Hefner's *Kolel Hakol* (All Inclusive) (Jerusalem: Keter, 1987) and Amos Oz's *Oto Hayam* (The Same Sea) (Jerusalem: Keter, 1999) and *Sippur al Ahava Vehoshech* (A Tale of Love and Darkness) (Jerusalem: Keter, 2002). Yet the long "catalogues" of children's books and the repeated references to them comprise a unique poetic performance of the literature of the members of the Yom Kippur generation. Hefner is, from this perspective, a writer who was ahead of his time. As for Oz, these are his late semi-autobiographical works.

The old and new on the children's bookshelf of the Yom Kippur generation can be discussed, again by looking at samples, by comparing the lists of children's books in the books mentioned with a



position in the front row was taken up by the victory albums that were published immediately following the Six-Day War. Many of us had the misfortune to celebrate our bar or bat mitzvahs on the heels of that war, which yielded a huge harvest of war books and victory albums.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, at the back of the shelf, in the second row, hidden from view, we placed books that belonged to “Over There” and to “That,” two euphemistic terms loaded with connotations of taboo and guilt, and also, due to strange and complex mechanisms, a sense of pride and even chosenness. The corpus of “Over There” dealt with the places from which our parents came, since most of the parents of the literary people of this generation came from “Over There”—or “Before” or “Just Before” or “Just After.” I refer also to texts that dealt with Jewish life in Europe before World War II (for example, the stories of Shalom Aleichem and H. N. Bialik at whose center are children and youths) and also texts that dealt with the history of Jewish children in the Holocaust (*Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, published in Hebrew in 1953; *The Adventures of Tova: The Life Story of a Young Girl* [in Hebrew], published in 1954). The corpus of “That” was concerned with the territory

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parallel list that can be constructed in accordance with the internal references in some of the books of the next literary generation. In this regard, Etgar Keret’s books, which are all in conversation with the popular Hebrew literature of the nineteen sixties, are an especially rich resource. On this matter, see also Eli Eshed, *Mitarazan ve'ad Zbeng* and Etgar Keret, “Lama Kvar Lo Ro'im et Danidin” (Why Don’t We See Danidin Anymore?). *Chadashot*. April 2, 1993.

On the matter of the importance of the children’s bookshelf in the emotional and/or artistic development of the authors of this generation, see also Itamar Levy, *Miyomano shel Me'ater Sfarim*, 5–9; David Grossman “Sfarim Shekar'u Oti” (Books that Read Me). In *Me'ayin Nahalti et Shiri: Sofrim Umeshorerim Medabrim al Mekorot Hashra'a* (Writers and Poets on Sources of Inspiration). Ruth Kartun-Blum (Ed.). (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Achronoth, Sifrei Chemed, 2002), 33–48. (Published in English translation as an article titled “Books That Have Read Me: The Works that Shaped My Imagination” in *Tablet* on October 23, 2008. Trans. Jessica Cohen. <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/books/847/books-that-have-read-me>).

<sup>22</sup> See, among others, Naftali Arbel (Ed.). *Milhemet Sheshet Hayamim* (The Six-Day War). (Tel Aviv: M. Mizrachi, 1967); *Milhemet Sheshet Hayamim: Parshiyot Gvura* (The Six-Day War: Stories of Heroism). (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishers, 1968); Shmuel Segev. *Sadin Adom: Milhemet Sheshet Hayamim* (Red Sheet: The Six-Day War). (Tel Aviv: Twersky, 1967); Shabtai Tevet. *Hasufim Batzari'ah* (Exposed in the Turret). (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1967); Uri Milstein. *Milhemet Hatzanhanim* (The Paratroopers’ War). (Tel Aviv: Ramdor, 1968).

of lust in its various performances, which were relatively naïve in comparison with later literature of “Over There.”<sup>23</sup>

A third corpus comprised a sort of deviant mixture of the previous two. We can refer to it as the “Over There-That” corpus, lewd World War II literature, called “stalag fiction,” which was enormously popular. This large group of books, published in Israel at the beginning of the nineteen sixties, dealt with the sexual adventures of female German guards in World War II prisoner camps (stalags), in which Allied soldiers were held, and their punishment—sexual torture by the prisoners, at the end of the stories.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, the four books that formed the *Salamandra* series<sup>25</sup> by Yehiel Dinur (Ka-Tzetnik) were also seen by many young readers of this generation as belonging to this category.

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<sup>23</sup> I refer, for example, to the magazine *Gamad*, and to several other “exemplary” books, first and foremost *Fanny Hill*, written by John Cleland in the eighteenth century. Eli Eshed (ibid., 227) notes that “1964 was no more or less than the year of *Fanny Hill* in Israel, [...] with] no less than five different editions of the book published by five different publishers!” Cassanova was also revived that year, with Mozes publishing five booklets of his adventures, after which books in which he starred were published by Ramdor.

Another division of this corpus, which Eli Eshed (ibid., 231–237) has called “ladies in distress,” dealt with the stories of young women with no status or means who were caught up in stormy and exciting adventures. Most of these women—and this is a subject that requires a separate study—are new immigrants. These include, for example: L. Hod. *Harpatke'ote'a shel Ha'ola Hayafa Yehudit* (The Adventures of the Beautiful Immigrant Yehudit): *Sippurim Ve'uvdot Meha'olam Hatahton* (Stories and Facts from the Underworld) and *Anita: Toldote'a shel Na'ara "Tmima"* (Anita: The Story of a “Naïve” Girl”) by Milton Hart (pen name), published by Ramdor.

<sup>24</sup> For example: Mike Baden (Eli Keidar). *Stalag 13* (Stalag 13). (Yanshuf, 1961); Victor Boulder (Meiron Uriel). *Stalag 217* (Stalag 217). (Pil, 1961); Kim Rockman (Meiron Uriel). *Stalag Hashedim* (Stalag of the Devils). (Pil, date of publication unknown); *Stalag Hanekama* (Stalag of Revenge). (Pil, date of publication unknown); Colonel Marin Rosenberg (Meiron Uriel). *Hayiti Mefaked Stalag* (I Was the Stalag Commander). (Pil, date of publication unknown).

On stalag fiction see the following: Eli Eshed. “Sex, Shkarim Umahanot Rikuz” (Sex, Lies, and Concentration Camps). *Yedioth Achronoth* Musaf Shiv'a Yamim. January 5, 2001; *From Mitarazan ve'ad Zbeng*; Oz Almog. *Preda Misrulik: Shinuy Arachim Bahevra Hayisra'elit* (Farewell to Srulik: Changing Values among the Israeli Elite), Vol. 2. (Or Yehuda and Haifa: Zmora Bitan and Haifa University Press, 2004), 1092-1135; and Saul Friedlander. *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death*. Trans. Thomas Weyr. (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

<sup>25</sup> Ka-Tzetnik (Yehiel Dinur). *Salamandra* (Salamandra). Trans. Y. L. Baruch. (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1947); *Piepel* (Piepel). Trans. Moshe M. Kohn. (Tel Aviv: Am Hasefer, 1961); *Bet Habubot* (House of Dolls). (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1955); *Ha'imut* (The Confrontation). (Tel Aviv: A. Levin-Epstein Modan, 1975).

See on this matter Dan Miron. “Ben Sefer Le'efer” (Between Ashes and Books). *Alpayim* 10 (1994), 196–224; Omer Bartov. “Kitsch Vesadism Baplaneta shel K. Tzetnik” (Kitsch and Sadism on Ka-Tzetnik’s Planet: Israeli Youth Imagine the Holocaust). *Alpayim* 17 (1999), 148–175.

In his essay “Sfarim Shekar'u Oti” (Books That Read Me) David Grossman offers a fascinating discussion of the relationship between the corpus of books placed at the front of the bookshelf and the corpus concealed in the back—and in this specific context I refer only to books about “Over There”—and the motivations that led the children of the generation to create these foreground-background relations:

When I was eight years old, my father suggested that I read Sholem Aleichem’s *Adventures of Mottel, the Cantor’s Son...* Father, who immigrated to Palestine in 1936, did not talk much about his childhood. Only rarely was the curtain drawn to reveal a strange, enchanting, intangible world, almost like a shadow theater

[...]

I did not understand a word of what I read, and yet there was something there. I took the book from my father’s hands and climbed up onto the windowsill, my favorite reading place. Outside was Beit Mazmil, where the residents were trying to accustom themselves to the neighborhood’s newly ordained Hebrew name, Kiryat Yovel. It was a cluster of apartment buildings whose occupants had made their way from seventy exiles and who argued in seventy languages. The dwellers of the tin-shack neighborhood [which we called “*asbestonim*”] looked on enviously at those who were lucky enough to get a tiny apartment in one of the buildings. There were young couples who confronted life with determined optimism, and Holocaust survivors who walked the streets like shadows and whom we children feared.

[...]

I did not know, I did not understand, but something inside me would not allow me to let go of the inscrutable stories, written in a Hebrew I had never encountered before. I read like someone entering a completely foreign world that was, at the same time, a promised land. In some sense, I felt that I was coming home. And it all worked its magic on me in a muddled way: the words with the biblical ring, the characters, the customs, the ways of life, and the fact that the page numbers were marked with letters ... Even the smell of the pages was dense and so different from the scent of the other books I read.<sup>26</sup>

And here there appears a sample list of “front-row books,” the books that were at the front of the shelf at the time:

translations of *The Famous Five* and *The Secret Seven*, *The Paul Street Boys* and *[Kaytek] the Wizard*, the works of Erich Kästner and Jules Verne, and Israeli books like Shraga Gafni’s adventure stories, Eliezer Smoli’s *Frontiersmen of Israel*, [and] the adventures of the secret agent named Oz Yaoz...<sup>27</sup>

So much for the identity of the two groups of books on the shelves of the young David Grossman. And after he defines the two corpuses and marks the boundary between them, which was, for him—and I think for all, or at least most of the children of the generation—sharp and very clear, Grossman points out the motivations behind this dichotomy:

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<sup>26</sup> David Grossman, “Sfarim Shekar'u Oti,” 34-35. The translations of all the quotes from this essay are taken from “Books That Have Read Me: The Works that Shaped My Imagination.” *Tablet*. October 23, 2008. Trans. Jessica Cohen. <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/books/847/books-that-have-read-me>). Accessed March 17, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*

When I excitedly told my best friend in the neighborhood about my new experience [the precarious, dreamlike world of the stories of Shalom Aleichem], he gave me a sideways look and his lips began to curl into a smirk. I quickly changed the subject, but the incident forced me to make increased efforts in such pursuits as suicidal leaps from trees and climbing up tall cranes, all to clear my briefly sullied name. Very quickly, with a child's instinct...I realized that the shtetl must remain my secret world, to be shared with no one.

Between the ages of eight and ten I was a double agent from “here” to Over There and back again...I worked tirelessly to expose Arab spies...(half the country was busy with that) and spent days in physical training so that I could either make it onto the Israeli team ...or get into the paratroopers. But whenever possible I dived back into my Jewish shtetl, which was becoming more and more tangible, comprehensible, and relevant to me, animating within me some Jewish note—that was at the same time very diasporic—giving it a voice and sensations, and a clear existence in my world.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, as a child, David Grossman experienced two literary-existential worlds between which there was a clear division; one belonged to Here and one to Over There. One was solid, the other precarious. One was clear, the other dim. One was above ground, the other like a burrow. The clear dichotomy, the absolutely differentiated existence of the two worlds—which were the shadows of one another—made it possible for them to exist simultaneously in his childhood and in the childhoods of other “sensitive” children of the same period.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 37.

But at a certain stage, the thick barrier between these two worlds broke down. One day during the early years of secular and religious government schools, an unexpected meeting took place between the clear, known Israeli world, the seemingly brave, new, optimistic world of the children of Chasamba and Danidin and Oz Yaoz, and the dim, dreamlike world of Mottel.

The odd thing was that all that time I was convinced that the world of Sholem Aleichem—the world of the Eastern European shtetl—continued to exist alongside my own ... [that it] did indeed live on somewhere out there, with its various laws and institutions, its special language, and its mystery ... And then when I was about nine and a half, in the midst of a Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony, one of those clumsy, hackneyed, repetitive rituals that are so helpless in the face of the thing itself, in the face of that unfathomable number, six million...

It struck me all at once. Suddenly. The six million, the murdered, the victims, the “Holocaust martyrs,” all those terms were in fact *my* people. They were Mottel and Tevye and Shimele Soroker and Chavaleh ... And ... this comprehension shook my entire world. I remember my distress during the following days, a distress characteristic of the children of real survivors, because I imagined that I now bore some responsibility to remember all those people; it was a responsibility I did not want.<sup>29</sup>

I would like to add that the first, literary dead were joined by others, who had, in the eyes of many of the children of the generation, a similar ontological status: these were the dead left or abandoned “Over There” by members of our families, who

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 37-38.

peered at us from one or two photographs, who seemed to us like messages from another planet. The phenomenon that represented for us, the children, the relationship between Here-Over There and light-shadow at the peak of their deceptive power were the families of the children we knew and/or heard/whispered about who had a sister or brother who stayed “Over There” and/or whose father or mother had been married in the past and had a spouse who remained “Over There.”

Both the literary dead and the dead who were very real to their dear ones were perceived in the consciousness of the children of the nineteen-sixties as dead-alive or alive-dead. Entities that did not take up space in the visible, physical dimension, but that at the same time were a mysterious, troublesome, and attractive presence, accompanied us like shadows everywhere.

## II.

The clash between the worlds that existed in the consciousness of the children of the nineteen-sixties for a relatively long period—the young and optimistic State of Israel which reached its pinnacle in the euphoria of the Six-Day War, on the one hand, and the “shadow theatre” of the Holocaust, on the other—as well as the cognitive dissonance that was created as a result, and the sense of responsibility and guilt that repeatedly took over the consciousness for various periods of time were all the inheritance of many of the children of the Yom Kippur generation. This was the inheritance of all the children of actual survivors or potential survivors from Europe, Africa, Asia, and America, the children of *Sh'erit ha-Plita*, (the Surviving Remnant;

the Jewish refugees who survived the Holocaust). In actuality, it was the inheritance of everyone who spent their childhood in Israel in the nineteen fifties and sixties.<sup>30</sup>

The feelings of responsibility and guilt of the members of this generation, which have been discussed by sociologists and psychologists,<sup>31</sup> are expressed in many structural and thematic ways in their stories, poetry, plays, and essays. These expressions themselves and the ways in which they are constructed, and in which meaning is attributed to them, require a long discussion. In the framework of this paper, I would like to isolate only one psycho-literary expression of this emotional and conscious thicket in which the members of this generation are caught. We can call it the “dark twin” and “light twin” syndrome. I refer to the recurring appearance in the fiction of the members of this generation of a child or tender youth who lives like the actual and/or imaginary sibling of the protagonist. This is an absent-present, dead-alive character, who is sometimes wrought as a “light twin”—a chosen, favorite son, somewhat mysterious, and sometimes as a “dark twin”—a son who is rejected, abandoned. Either way, the guilt for the death of the dead-alive son—whose burial place is at once known and unknown (like the burial places of founders of dynasties and nations, such as Moses)—weighs, “of course,” on the brother who has been sentenced to live.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> It is also, apparently, the inheritance of those who grew up in the nineteen seventies. An amazing phenomenon in this context is the “act of transmission” of Holocaust trauma experienced by various characters in the works of second-generation Israeli authors whose parents came from Arab countries. See Kobi Oz. *Avaryan Tza'atzu'a* (Petty Thief). (Tel Aviv: Keshet, 2002); Dudu Busi. *Pere Atzil* (A Nobel Savage). (Jerusalem: Keter, 2003); and Yossi Sucary. *Emilia Vemelah Ha'aretz* (Emilia and the Salt of the Earth). (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2002).

<sup>31</sup> Dina Wardi. *Memorial Candles: Children of the Holocaust*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Dan Bar-On. *Fear and Hope: Three Generations of the Holocaust*. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998); Iris Milner. *Kir'ey Avar: Biografia, Zehut Vezikaron Besipporet Hador Hasheni* (Past Present: Biography, Identity, and Memory in Second-Generation Literature). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> The use of the motif of twins and its connection to the oppositions light-dark, present-absent, alive-dead, spiritual-physical, sacred-profane, and so on, was not invented by the members of the Yom Kippur generation. This is a specific, unique processing of a motif that has many-branched roots in mythology and folklore and many literary performances. See J.E. Cirlot. *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Trans. Jack Sage. (Mineola: Dover, 2002).



This is very heavy guilt, both because it is impossible to ever shake it off due to a “lack of evidence” one way or another, and because it is anchored in primal experience, in the twilight zone between personal biography and collective biography and between the mythological and the historical. The “light twin”/“dark twin” “knows” that the fact that he exists, the fact that he is alive and breathing, is inextricably bound to the death of the “dark twin”/“light twin” who used to exist/was “murdered” or never existed.

This story of the alive-dead, burned, tortured, drowned, betrayed, abandoned sibling appears in the dreams of many of the members of this generation as well as in their literary works, those that focus mainly on the Holocaust and those in which the Holocaust hardly features. In this context, we should remember the laboratory experiments that David Grossman, Itamar Levy, and Ami Dvir conduct on their protagonists and/or their doubles, children who live whole lives in several days or who stop developing, or children who are the product of atrocious “genetic experiments.” Thus, in *Ayen Erech: Ahava* (See Under: Love), Kazik (Momik’s nightmare double) lives an entire life in twenty-four hours; in *Sefer Hadikduk Hapnimi* (The Book of Intimate Grammar), Aron’s development/puberty is arrested; and in *Agadat Ha'agamim Ha'atzuvim* (The Legend of the Sad Lakes), Arnon Greenberg is the product of two opposing DNA lines—one that is the result of the

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Regarding modern World Literature, the phantom, alive-dead characters in the literary corpus of the offspring of slaves in the United States and the Caribbean islands are particularly important in the context of this discussion. See, for example, the alive-dead sister in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*. (New York: Knopf, 1987) and Jamaica Kincaid’s *Mr. Potter*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002).

Regarding Modern Hebrew literature, I will mention three central types of performances of this motif: 1. the alive-dead pairs in the literature of the War of Independence, the most famous of which is the youth and the lass in Natan Alterman’s “Silver Platter;” 2. the alive-dead pairs in Holocaust literature, typical examples of which are the artist twins in Aharon Appelfeld’s *Badenheim Ir Hanofesh* (Badenheim 1939) (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuhad, 1979); the young twin Holocaust refugees, one of whom drowns in an artificial lake, in David Schütz’s *Shoshan Lavan Shoshan Adom* (White Rose, Red Rose) (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuhad, 1988); and 3. the alive-dead pairs in the Israeli literature written against the background of the struggle with the Palestinian Arabs, the most famous example of which is in *Michael Sheli* (My Michael) by Amos Oz (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1968).

unproven fact that he is the son of a Jewish Holocaust-survivor father, on the one hand, and one that is the result of the equally unproven fact that he is the son of a Gentile, German Nazi who impersonated a Jewish Holocaust survivor, on the other.

However, and this seems to me more significant, the “dark twin”/“light twin” syndrome also reappears with frightening obstinacy in the works of members of the generation who have no direct connection to the Holocaust. This is also true for authors who are children of actual survivors and authors of the generation whose parents were not “really survivors.” I will dedicate the following discussion to this syndrome and its appearance in one work that is representative of this whole group of works.

David Grossman’s novel *Shetihayi Li Hasakin* (Be My Knife) declares itself, both by means of the central genre upon which it is based, the secret confessional letter, as well as by means of its twisting central plot axis, a story of unfulfilled and perhaps impossible love. This is either literally a love story between a man and a woman, and most critics have related to it as such,<sup>33</sup> or, as other critics have suggested,<sup>34</sup> a love story between the artist and the muse, his poetic spirit.

But behind these two love stories, and in my opinion, here, as in Grossman’s other books,<sup>35</sup> both possibilities are correct; another story, hidden, darker, and more evasive than the other two is woven. This is, I believe, *the* story of the generation: the

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<sup>33</sup> See Batya Gur. “Dyokano shel Adam Sheyitem et Atzmo” (A Portrait of a Man Who Orphaned Himself) *Haaretz*, April 24, 1998; Amnon Navot. “Sakin Liftihat Michtavim” (A Knife for Opening Letters) . *Maariv* Sifrut Vesfarim. April 24, 1998, 30.

<sup>34</sup> See Ariel Hirschfeld. “Ha'unikorn Vehare'i Harek” (The Unicorn and the Empty Mirror). *Haaretz*. June 19, 1998, 13 B; Sagiv Marcel. “Mashber Emtza Hayey Hayetzira David Grossman, “Sfarim Shekar'u Oti,” 34-35. The translations of all the quotes from this essay are taken from “Books That Have Read Me: The Works that Shaped My Imagination.” *Tablet*. October 23, 2008. Trans. Jessica Cohen. <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/books/847/books-that-have-read-me>. Accessed March 17, 2017. (The Midlife Creative Crisis). *Moznayim* 73: 2 (1998), 57–58; Yigal Schwartz. “Ad Hagal'in Halavan shel Hanefesh” (To the White Kernel of the Soul). *Yedioth Achronoth* Tarbut Sifrut Omanut. June 26, 1998, 26; Eli Shai. “Erom Teva Domem (Nude Still Life). *Iton* 77 229 (1999), 32–35.

<sup>35</sup> See Maayan Harel, “Geled Shehitkasha Venikrash al Petza Hayed: Miniyut Bitzirato shel David Grossman” (Sexuality in the Works of David Grossman). MA Thesis. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2003.

story of the “light twin”/“dark twin” who is alive and the “dark twin”/“light twin” who is alive-dead.

This light-shadow story, which escaped many experienced readers, is the dominant thematic and structural component of the novel before us, that is, the component that determines the character and boundaries of the life force/libido of the fictional world that Grossman created here, with its two facets, the ability to love and be loved, and the ability to create.

The story of the twins, the “dark” and the “light,” appears in *Shetihyi Li Hasakin* in two versions: the masculine version, the twinning of the protagonist, Yair, and his childhood friend, Shai, and the feminine version, the twinning of Miriam and Anna, a dead woman who lives on in her defective baby, Yochai, who is adopted by Miriam. Here I will discuss only the masculine version.

In one of his letters to Miriam, Yair tells her, for no apparent reason, about a disturbing thought that has entered his mind, and not for the first time:

The day before yesterday, in the coffeehouse in Tel Aviv, just in that moment of glamour and sunshine, a kind of dark, elemental thought that has been wandering through me for a while now suddenly rephrased itself—that I am some kind of “black twin.” I mean ... one who killed his twin in the womb. I know you’re not laughing at this thought—it has always been with me, ever since my very early childhood ... Who was he? I don’t know. Why must I have killed him? I don’t know ... He was only a very tiny, shiny little body; I see him surrounded with a yellow or golden glow, some kind of enwombed body, yet divine and glowing. I

mean, a quiet, continuous, uninterrupted, beaming light emanated from him. And I killed him.<sup>36</sup>

The “light twin” who has died is replaced later in the book by the alive-dead “black twin” Shai, Yair’s friend who was wounded in “one of the glorious campaigns of our forces in Lebanon.”<sup>37</sup> Despite the fact that he is a very close friend from his early childhood, Yair avoids meeting him. He prefers not to go on leave from the army so that he would not have to cope with the decision of whether or not to visit his wounded friend, who has burns over his entire body. Finally, he gathers his courage and visits him, and thus his soulmate, his twin—the one together with whom he has felt for years like “a double-headed creature with a multi-hemisphered”<sup>38</sup> brain—is revealed to him.

Someone was getting up for me at the end of the corridor. A thin body, with a shaved head, only one good eye wide open in his face, with no eyebrow above it. And there was also a horrible mouth, slightly pulled to the side in some kind of permanent skeleton’s giggle. He was leaning on crutches; one of his legs had been amputated above the knee.<sup>39</sup>

Yair observes this “something” only once. Afterwards, he erases Shai, his twin, from his life completely. As he unequivocally puts it, “I cut him out of my life.”<sup>40</sup>

What is the meaning of the “twin” thoughts that repeatedly disturb Yair, and why are they connected to the “twin” friendship with Shai, who was wounded in “one of the glorious campaigns of our forces?” Why is Shai burned, and why does Yair “cut” him out of his life? And how do the incarnations of this “twinning” and the

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<sup>36</sup> David Grossman. *Shetihyi Li Hasakin*, 84. Translations of all quotes from this book are from *Be My Knife*. Trans. Vered Almog and Maya Gurantz. (New York: Picador, 1998), 83. Page numbers for the following quotes will given from the original Hebrew version followed by the English translation

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 132; *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 131; *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 133; *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 134; *Ibid.*, 136.

parallel incarnations of the female twinning in the book fit together with urges, with love, and to falling in love, to narcissism, dialogism, creativity, the muse, and the other issues that readers perceived as standing at the center of this book? The answers to these questions are hinted at in the novel by means of dozens of links between the themes of “urges,” “creation,” and “Holocaust.” Some of them are created by Yair, the narrator, while others are created by the author “Grossman,” together with his readers, “behind Yair’s back.”

Thus, for example, the family is described here as a concentration camp (“don’t forget that I am a person who was born to parents and that until age eighteen lived in a family, in a family as a principle and as a death camp”<sup>41</sup>). And the love of a woman, defined in one place as a way to “escape the gravity of his particular family,” is defined in another place as being “*there*”<sup>42</sup> the same “there” that is a euphemism for the areas where Jews were annihilated in *Ayen Erech: Ahava*, as it is in the socio-linguistic reality to which this novel relates.

This terrible linkage between the Holocaust and love can perhaps explain the emotional disability, the harsh narcissism, and/or the infantile nature and blatantly childish behavior of Yair and other protagonists of Grossman and his generation.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 75; Ibid., 74.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 142; Ibid., 145.

<sup>43</sup> The lack of a desire to grow up or the fear of growing up is common in the fiction of the members of this generation. This phenomenon is expressed in two prominent ways. First, most of the main characters in the stories of members of this generation are children in early adolescence (twelve to fourteen years of age) or in late adolescence (sixteen to eighteen years of age). See, among others, Yochai, Beber, and Ayush in Albert Suissa’s *Akud*; Momik in Grossman’s *Ayen Erech: Ahava*; Aron in *Sefer Hadikduk Hapnimi*; Nono in his *Yesh Yeladim Zigzag*; Ismail in Itamar Levy’s *Otiyot Hashemesh Otiyot Hayare’ah*; Itamar in his *Etyudim Lemorgana*; Achav in Amnon Navot’s *Onat Hamlachim*; Vladimir in his *Tisat Machshirim*, and others.

Secondly, the protagonists, children and youths, and even the older ones—in their twenties or thirties—refuse to grow up. This refusal is frequently expressed in ways that entail extreme violence of the sort that comes from or is invited by external factors or involves the protagonists injuring themselves in various and bizarre ways. I have already mentioned in this connection the characters whose physical development is arrested. We should add to these the characters whose minds are very limited (all the minor characters in Navot’s stories, and, to a certain extent, even his protagonists) and the characters whose minds collapse during the story: Momik at the end of the first section of *Ayen Erech: Ahava*; Hilmi in *Otiyot Hashemesh Otiyot Hayare’ah*, Arnon Greenberg at the end of *Agadat*

But it must be noted, and this is the other side of the same coin, that in this connection between, on the one hand, death, memory, and the extinction of this memory and, on the other, Eros and the vitality that springs from it, Grossman's book expresses immense power. This is a connection with great creative potential, which is perceived as closed and protected in a place that Iris Milner<sup>44</sup> calls "the family crypt" of the members of the second generation, that is, in the sealed containers of family memory, traces of which exist in the "back-of-the-shelf" books of our childhoods and in family photographs and stories left from "Over There." In these textual representations, great erotic and thanatic powers upon which Grossman repeatedly attempts to draw and simultaneously protect himself from are hinted at.<sup>45</sup>

The psycho-generational pattern on which *Shetihyi Li Hasakin* is based stands at the foundations of other non-Holocaust stories of the generation, such as Itamar Levy's *Zelig Mainz Vega'agu'av el Hamavet* (Zelig Mainz and his Longings for Death), *Kapot Ragle'a Ha'adinot shel Hamadam* (The Madame's Dainty Feet), *Otiyot Hashemesh Otiyot Hayare'ah* (Letters of the Sun, Letters of the Moon), and *Etyudim Lemorgana* (Morgana, Morgana); Amnon Navot's *Onat Hamlachim* (Season of the Kings); *Tisat Machshirim* (Instrument Flight); *Lochde Arikim o Roman al Mishtara Tzva'it* (Gladiator [Studebaker], or a Note on the Military Police); and *Mikra'ot Yisrael* (Readings on Israel); and even in *Ze im Hapanim Elenu* (The One Facing Us)

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*Ha'agamim Ha'atzuvim*. A parallel deformation is the "direct passage" from childhood to old age as a kind of attempt to escape growing up. See, for example, the link between the Israeli youth and the old Arab in David Grossman's *Hiyuch Hagdi*, and the link between Miki and her adopted grandfather in *Golem Bama'agal*. This phenomenon reaches its most extreme expression in Lily Perry-Amitai's *Rikud al Hamayim*, in which the protagonist, a woman in her thirties, retires of her own will to an old age home. A similar unwillingness to grow up, but with a more optimistic and enlightened angle, is typical of all of Daniella Carmi's characters.

For more on this matter, see Yigal Schwartz. "Hasipporet Ha'ivrit: Ha'idan She'ahrey, He'arot Hemshech Ladiyun Bematzava shel Hasipporet Ha'yisra'elit" (Hebrew Fiction: The Era After). *Efes Shtayim* 3 (Winter 1995), 7–15.

<sup>44</sup> Iris Milner, *Kir'ey Avar*.

<sup>45</sup> See Yigal Schwartz, "Ad Hagal'in Halavan shel Hanefesh." *Yedioth Achronoth* Tarbut Sifrut Omanut. June 26, 1998, 26.

by Ronit Matalon, a “Levantine” novel that moves between Israel, France, and Western Africa.<sup>46</sup>

In all of these novels, the disturbing twinning or doubling phenomenon is present. In every one of them lives someone “at the expense” of his double who has been killed, murdered, tortured, and humiliated in one bizarre way or another, and in all of them a thicket from which there is no escape is created between the Holocaust, the ability to love, and the ability to create. Moreover, in all of these works, the “repressed story” or the story of the silenced sibling is linked in a reciprocal relationship with the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War, and/or the Lebanon War, which serves here as a distant-distancing thematic parallel to the Yom Kippur War.

What is implied by this fundamental linkage is that the Yom Kippur War, which the members of this generation experienced almost as a trauma of annihilation, made possible the return of the repressed, that is, the literalization of the Holocaust anxiety that the Six-Day War brought to an end. In other words—and Gershon Shaked,<sup>47</sup> Hanna Yablonka<sup>48</sup> and Oz Almog<sup>49</sup> made similar claims regarding the effect of the Eichmann Trial on previous generations—the trauma of the Yom Kippur War made it possible for the members of this generation to connect to an earlier and more difficult trauma. It took them back, after years of repression, to the “shadow theatre” of their childhoods.

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<sup>46</sup> This is how, with a great deal of justification, Nissim Calderon sees it. See his *Pluralistim Be'al Korham* (Multiculturalism versus Pluralism in Israel). (Haifa and Tel Aviv: Haifa University, Zmora-Bitan, 2000), 67–84.

<sup>47</sup> Gershon Shaked. *Hasipporet Ha'ivrit 1880-1980* (Hebrew Narrative Fiction 1880–1980). Vol. 5. (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad and Keter, 1998), 19–105.

<sup>48</sup> Hanna Yablonka. *The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann*. (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 2004). See also Tom Segev. *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*. Trans. Haim Watzman. (New York: Holt, 1991); Hannah Arendt. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. (New York: The Viking Press, 1963); Efraim Sicher (ed.). *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory after Auschwitz*. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

<sup>49</sup> Oz Almog. *Hatzabar – Dyokan* (The Sabra: A Profile). (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1997), 137–147.

Anita Shapira addressed the therapeutic role of the trauma of Yom Kippur regarding the collective identity conflict of Jewish Israelis, a conflict that was still, in the mid-nineteen-seventies, marked by the rift between the “light sabra” and the diasporic, Jewish, Holocaust survivor “shadow people.”<sup>50</sup>

Another dimension was added by the Yom Kippur War: for the first time, footage was shown on television of Israelis taken prisoner, of weakness and of degradation. These phenomena, which had so far been considered characteristic of the Diaspora Jew in the negative sense, received ... overnight legitimacy, becoming part of the Israeli experience. The heroic self-image of the Israeli sabra, as personified by Moshe Dayan, lost much of its glamour: the independent, forceful aura that had made the Sabra so attractive turned out to be no more than an aura, unable to protect its owner against human weakness, defeat, surrender, and humiliation. The downfall of the Sabra as society's ideal self-image in the wake of the war, together with the shock waves it caused, opened the door to legitimizing other types of Israeliness and legitimizing [an] Israeli identity that appropriated experiences of the Holocaust as its own.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ben-Zion Tomer. *Yaldey Hatzel: Mahaze Bishtey Ma'arachot* (Children of the Shadows: A Play in Two Acts). (Tel Aviv: Amikam, 1963). On the same matter, see Gershon Shaked, "Yaldut Avuda (Al Nose Ha'sho'a Basipporet Hayisra'elit Hatze'ira)" (Lost Childhood [On the Theme of the Holocaust in Young Israeli Fiction]). in *Gal Hadash Basipporet Ha'ivrit: Masot al Sipporet Yisra'elit Tze'ira* (A New Wave in Israeli Fiction: Essays on Young Israeli Fiction). (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim, 1974), 71–86; Ben-Ami Feingold. *Hasho'a Badrama Ha'ivrit* (The Holocaust in Hebrew Drama). (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1989).

<sup>51</sup> Anita Shapira. “The Holocaust: Private Memories, Public Memory.” (Yad Vashem: The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, 2008) <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/courses/commemoration/pdfs/reading1.pdf>. Accessed March 18, 2017.



The door that opened to Holocaust trauma following the Yom Kippur War for all Jewish Israelis served as an emergency exit for members of the generation of that war. That terrible war, for which this generation in particular paid a heavy price, diminished or at least moderated the intensity of the conflict fixed in their minds between proud and trusting Israeliness—represented by the books that took up the front of their bookshelf—and the diasporic expressions, the victims, and the humiliation from “Over There,” represented by the relatively very few books that were stashed away next to the books on “that” and “that over there” in the back row of the same shelf.

This phenomenon appears in the works of the members of the generation in dramatizations of two conscious processes-situations and in the meeting between them. One process is the dramatization of the cognitive dissonance between healthy-proud-fighting Israeliness and the diasporic experience of being a Holocaust survivor. The second process is the dramatization of the conscious situation of the members of the generation who served, against their will, as Grossman describes, as double agents from “here” to “there” and back. The meeting of these two processes creates a rhetorical-generational-plot pattern whose essence is the repeated attempts of children and youths, who serve as the narrator-protagonists of the stories, to align “here” and “there” by “translating” linguistic components—single words, expressions, and ideas—and non-linguistic components from “the language of there” to “the language of here” and vice versa.

And yet, all these attempts end as colossal failures whose results are terrible: aggressive outbursts, mental breakdowns, the loss of linguistic ability, implied suicides, and so on. This is so in books in which the events of the Six-Day War and the Holocaust are prominently represented as the central contradictory disposition in

the story, that is, as an analogy that serves as its structural and theoretical message, as well as in the stories in which this disposition has a more marginal status.

We may recall, for example, the passage in which Momik, at the end of the first section of *Ayen Erech: Ahava*, is trying to trap the “Nazi Beast,” when, finally “a terrible scream escape[s] him, the cry of a Beast.”<sup>52</sup>

...he shook himself and stood over Grandfather Wasserman, sneering. Shut up already, we're sick of your story, you can't kill the Nazikaput with a story, you have to beat him to death, and for that you will need a naval commando unit to break into the room and take him hostage till Hitler comes to save him, and then they catch Hitler and kill him too with terrible tortures, they yank his nails out one by one, shrieks Momik, leaving Grandfather and approaching the cages, and you gouge his eyes out without an anaesthetic, and then you bomb Germany and wipe out every trace of Over There, every good trace and every evil trace, and you liberate the six million with a spy mission the likes of which you have never seen, you turn back the clock like a time machine, sure, there must be someone at the Weizmann Institute who could invent something like that, and they'll bring the whole world down on their knees, pshakrev, and spit in their faces, and we'll fly overhead in our jet places, war is what we need, screamed Momik, and his eyes were like the eyes of his cat ...<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> David Grossman. *Ayen Erech: Ahava*, 74. Translation from *See Under: Love*. Trans. Betsy Rosenberg. (NY: Picador, 1989), 84.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*; *Ibid.*, 85.

There is a similar setting in *Otiyot Hashemesh Otiyot Hayare'ah*. Here the young narrator-protagonist is Ismail, who during the story, which takes place during the first Intifada, teaches himself the Arabic alphabet (since the schools were closed), and through them, he believes he will be able to keep the magnificent tribal national stories that he absorbed from his grandmother in line with the humiliating, depressing reality of his life. But Ismail's expectations, like Momik's, are not fulfilled. The story ends with the following section, in which it is implied that Ismail, whose consciousness collapses before he

The “practice” by means of which Momik attempts to destroy the “Nazi Beast” (including the literalization of the “Nazi Beast”) is entirely based on his ability to translate from the language of “here” to the language of “there” and the opposite. He is, after all, the “translator of the royal realm ... oh, yes, Momik can translate just about anything ... he can even translate nothing into something.”<sup>54</sup>

We can learn about the identity of the languages from which and to which Momik and his friends translate and the ways in which they are connected to one another from the “war pledge” uttered by the child narrator-protagonist of Itamar Levy’s *Etyudim Lemorgana*, a war pledge that will serve him and his street-mates in the war with the youth of the neighboring street that takes place during the Six-Day War:

By the time I had finished the map of the world and was ready for war, Morgana returned to the shelter. She sat at Yisrael Wasserman’s battle desk and pulled tiny, imaginary needles out of her skin. “The war has begun!” we said to Malka Morgana. The war has begun. You are the one who will command us. We will fight the Arabs, the Apaches, the predators, the criminals who flee to the orchard and the British, and the Turks, and the palefaces, and the Nazis who tortured Avichay’s parents [the “light twin” of the narrator, who dies in the story], and the Gentiles,

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succeeds in learning all the letters, will soon die, and not coincidentally, of course: “In the morning they came to take me, too. They shaved me and prepared me, and took their leave from me, my brother Sharif, and the doctors, and the nurses who once touched me when I was naked, everyone called me Sid Zakkut. If they had only asked, I would have shown them with pride how I can write my whole name, with all its letters. I am Jaaffar Omar Ismail Zakkut, even if I don’t know some of the letters. They pushed my bed into the corridor again. I saw the ceilings running, running. I saw doorposts and doors. The neon lights scratched glowing lines inside my eyes. Scratched and disappeared. My brother navigated me into the elevator and stroked my head. Who knows if we’re going up or down? Suddenly, I laughed. Suddenly I’m crying. I heard a lone piano. Tomorrow I’ll get up and finish reviewing the last letters. I have three letters left to finish learning literary Arabic. I have the letter Haa’, and I have the letter Ayn, and I have the letter Ayyin, the last and final one and the closing one, and the finishing one and the only and special one, after which there is nothing.” *Otiyot Hashemesh Otiyot Hayare’ah*, 165.

<sup>54</sup> *Ayen Erech: Ahava*, 35; *See Under: Love*, 35.

and the PLO, and the fedayeen, and Nasser, Gamal Abdul Nasser, and Zachy Haltura Ibn Maflus, and Abu Jilda, and Professor Herr Schultze, and the kids from Borochoy Street who came to destroy us, to our last drop of blood.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, the revelation of these processes was made possible, first and foremost, but not only, by the trauma of the Yom Kippur War. The alternative channels created on the Israeli pop scene of the nineteen seventies and eighties comprises an additional factor that had considerable weight in this context. These channels made it possible to give expression, first in a weak and modest voice, and later at “full volume,” to the emotions and unease that the institutional channels—the school curricula, canonical Hebrew songs, and so on—did not make it possible to express.

This is a multi-disciplinary phenomenon that requires a deep examination from several methodological perspectives. Here I only wish to point out, for just a brief moment, one of its most fascinating revelations.

As a historical witness, I would like to report on the immense importance of the connection that Yehuda Poliker and Yaakov Gilad made between rock music and the story of the Holocaust. It is difficult, in my opinion, to make light of the revolutionary basis of this move and the power of its effect on a large audience—first of all, on the members of the Yom Kippur generation and/or the members of the “second generation,” to which these two great artists belong, as does Orna Ben-Dor, who produced, following Poliker and Gilad’s performance and record, the film *Biglal Hamilhama Hahi* (Because of that War) (1988).

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<sup>55</sup> Itamar Levy. *Etyudim Lemorgana*, 36.

The surprising connection between rock music—which is based on the expression of emotional distress by means of a performance whose essence is the stage presence of male/female blatant sexuality, strengthened by electronic amplification and various lighting effects—and the horrors of the Holocaust, allowed Gilad-Poliker, and through them us, to create a meeting place between “the dark twin” and the “light twin” in each of us. Poliker and Gilad presented a performance amazing in its sensitivity and power, in which they served as double agents between “here” and “there,” between themselves/ourselves and their/our shadows.