Book Reviews

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Shai Ginsburg, *Rhetoric and Nation: The Formation of Hebrew National Culture, 1880–1990* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 484 pp., $49.95 (cloth).

Rhetoric and Nation is one of those events in literary scholarship that, once it is out there, feels like an absolutely necessary part of our ongoing dialogue on books and culture. Shai Ginsburg's unique contribution is in the tripartite conversation he constructs among literary, critical, and political discourses, which are seldom considered together. This approach is fundamental not only to his scholarship and but also to his ethics of reading. Every section of *Rhetoric and Nation* is built on that tripod, and the insights that such a structure yields become as natural in hindsight as they may appear surprising at first.

The other significant achievement of this book and of Ginsburg's ongoing scholarly project is that he helps bring Hebrew/Israeli culture out of the "hothouse" of Jewish Studies and exposes it to the bright—and often harsh—sunlight of other regions, other disciplines, and comparative ideological discourses. Within the contentious atmosphere of today's academy in America and in Europe, especially where Israel and Palestine are concerned, the steady, open-minded, critical, and courageous but responsible voices of Shai Ginsburg and a few others have become vital to maintaining academic standards and open-minded encounters.

Ginsburg belongs to the generation of scholars who have studied and taught at the best universities in both Israel and the United States and have, quite simply, created a revolution in their respective fields. Israel Studies, Hebrew, and Jewish Studies departments and programs have too often been beset not only by ideological positions, but also by divisions between theorists who rarely engage in close textual readings and more conservative scholars who bring to their opposition to theory a latter-day version of New Criticism and/or a kind of Hebrew or Jewish "essentialism." The

cohort of which Ginsburg is one of the leaders reflects the best of contemporary Israeli and American scholarship in what I would call the post-polemic approach to culture and to scholarship; while acknowledging the polemics that drove the older generations of writers, poets, and critics, and while remaining actively engaged on the political front, they tend in their scholarship and teaching to be more interested in dialogue than dialectics, and are far enough removed in time and space from earlier debates to bring a fresh cross-cultural perspective to what has often been a contentious site of competing schools of thought, superseding 'waves', or ideological camps. Secondly, though not unrelated, they are unique in their mutually supportive rather than mutually exclusive approach to one another, their work, and their students.

Another characteristic of this small but growing group of bi- or tri-cultural scholars is the fact that since they are equally fluent in Hebrew and English (and, increasingly, Yiddish or Ladino, French and German), they address more than one audience in their work as in their public appearances in the United States, Europe, and Israel. Although there are of course points of intersection and overlap, there are also subtle assumptions that students of each culture make to which a scholar like Ginsburg is delicately attuned. *Rhetoric and Nation* implicitly addresses different readers in their own idiom and helps each to understand the cultural assumptions of the other.

As I have indicated, each of the three sections of this volume is divided into three parts—a fictional/poetic text or texts, a critical position or oeuvre, and a canonic political essay, manifesto, or declaration. In every chapter, Ginsburg not only analyzes the respective texts at hand, but also exposes the sometimes explicit, but more often implicit, connections between them and other texts in the ambient culture.

Evidence of this procedure is abundant throughout the volume, which explores, among others, the fictions of Moshe Smilansky and Moshe Shamir, the theories and critical discourses of Joseph Hayyim Brenner and Dan Miron, the political positions of David Ben-Gurion, and political resonances in the fiction and public declarations of Amos Oz and A. B. Yehoshua.

Two of the most powerful examples are the chapters on Ahad Ha'Am and Yaakov Shabtai. The chapter that features three essays by Ahad Ha'Am (Asher Ginzburg), one of the leading voices in the debate between cultural and political Zionism at the turn of the twentieth century, begins with a constitutive poem by H. N. Bialik, proceeds by exploring the writing of Leo Pinsker to which Ahad Ha'Am is responding, and then concludes with Micha Josef Berdyczewsky's critique of Ahad Ha'Am. By patiently and painstakingly but very accessibly interrogating the work

of Ahad Ha'Am, Ginsburg thus rolls out the debates that would shape a century of Hebrew culture. What might appear at first to the uninitiated reader as hair-splitting or the Hebrew equivalent of angels dancing on the head of a pin, becomes urgent and consequential. I am certain that every reader, by the end of the chapter, is not only persuaded of the logic of the argument about the cultural and political prospects for the Jewish people in transition, but is also drawn into a reading procedure that could apply to any text.

The chapter devoted to Yaakov Shabtai's magnificent novel, *Zikhron devarim* (translated into English as *Past Continuous*), exemplifies the virtues of Ginsburg's approach. Once again, the implicit and simultaneous presence of two different reading communities or addressees, one conversant in Hebrew and familiar with the literary text at hand, and the more general reader, informs this writing. The chapter is geared to both readers in subtle ways, but the Hebrew reader will pick up the resonances of the original narrative and the English reader will, perhaps, be more attentive to the more generic cultural statements—regarding, for example, the overlooked presence of women who, once exposed or acknowledged, disrupt many of the assumptions of both characters and readers. Here as elsewhere, when he provides historical information, Ginsburg achieves a much-needed balance between the "encyclopedic" approach that often characterizes Jewish studies aimed at an English readership and the intricacies of 'insider trading' that characterize many of the internal debates in Hebrew. His work thus reaches both the intelligent but uninitiated, and the fully informed and engaged, reader.

Exposing the "effect of transparency" in Shabtai's text, which actually draws attention to "its own textuality" (309), and to its limited ability to incorporate discarded others, also gestures toward the larger question of the relation between 'realism' in Hebrew prose and 'reality'—the 'Hebrew street'—which has been a subject of fascination in the critical literature for many years. The presumption that the Hebrew literary project both anticipated and constituted the polity—that, in a way, 'realism' preceded and then constituted 'reality'—has been articulated by careful scholars from Robert Alter to Dan Miron. Additionally, the political resonances of such procedures have been explored and critiqued by readers as consequential and diverse as Amos Oz and Hannan Hever. Ginsburg's contribution marks a major turning point in this ongoing discussion.

Ginsburg also engages critical theory by inviting Homi Bhabha's refinement of Foucault, inflected by his own insights, to illuminate the prose of Shabtai. But what is most striking throughout Ginsburg's work is that behind the familiarity with current critical theory lies a deep knowledge of the *history of philosophy* that is missing in so many of these discussions.

One example among many is his very thoughtful critique of the theories of Bhabha, even as they have explicitly informed Ginsburg's reading of many of the Hebrew texts. The same is true of Deleuze and Guattari, of Foucault, and many others.

Although what I am calling an 'ethics of reading' is hard to define, you recognize it when you encounter it. Shai Ginsburg is one of those rare scholars who is deeply versed in current and classical literary and cultural theory and at the same time respectfully critical of its blind spots. It is more common to find ideological commitment to one position or another in a field that reflects the unresolved political struggles in Israel/Palestine. But Ginsburg brings something even more precious to these contentious places: a quiet, patient, but very courageous insistence on close readings and on a respons-ible posture towards the text at hand, towards the criti-cal apparatus itself, as well as towards the political issues they raise. And he is one of those generous scholars for whom scholarship and the cultural enterprise are a smorgasbord of endless delights rather than a zero-sum game of 'gotcha'.

Ginsburg's insistence on challenging the 'oneness of the nation' or of the narration of that nation, is at the heart of this project. He shows that what is at stake is not just the subversive reading, but the uncovering of "disparate moments" in the "Hebrew discourse of the nation" itself, from its inception,

> answer[ing] to diverse identifications, addresses, and logics, [so that] their semblance of congruity and coherence lies not in any inherent likeness but, instead, in their co-presence or, rather, co-movement in [what he calls] the nation's Time Square … [The critical project that he offers is meant] to open up possibilities for alternative narratives by reexamining the narratives one uses in an effort to expose their blind spots, rather than succumb to the power of existing narratives. (382)

This is a project through which Ginsburg has enriched the lives of all his interlocutors immeasurably. My own approach to the 'canon' of Hebrew letters has been significantly changed after reading *Rhetoric and Nation*.

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Anat Helman, *Becoming Israeli: National Ideals & Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 296 pp., $35.00 (paperback).

An almost daily aspect of life in the early years of Israeli statehood was one that involved *not* doing: waiting, standing in line—for the bus, for buying food, for buying tickets to the cinema. Yet standing in line seems to have been a rather active business, to the extent that one journalist praised new immigrants from Iraq who waited patiently, without complaining or swearing, saying that they seemed like Englishmen rather than Jews. Anat Helman's book, *Becoming Israeli,* focuses on everyday culture in 1950s Israel, an era considered to have been marked by strong and successful hegemony and uniformity, at least among Ashkenazi 'veterans'. In this period, Helman writes, 'statism' (*mamlakhtiyut*), i.e., centralized state institutions and policy, went hand in hand with ideological and ethical centralism, expressed in ardent official attempts to influence all spheres of life, 'unify' the nation, induce an ethos of 'pioneering' or working for the sake of collective good, and to stimulate a feeling of respect for the state. If asked, most veteran Ashkenazim would probably have said that they adhered to these values wholeheartedly. Yet Helman is less interested in the stories Israelis told themselves about themselves, and more in investigating the extent and the ways in which hegemonic values were manifested in everyday practices and forms of interaction.

In the face of images of uniformity, Helman's portrait emphasizes heterogeneity and chaos. Based on an impressive quantity of written and visual sources, she examines seven spheres of daily social interaction: language, food rationing (and especially rationing humor), cultural militarism, riding the bus, going to the movies, the kibbutz dining hall, and manners. In each of these spheres she confronts official ideology and the dominant ideals with people's actual practice. In conceptualizing the relationship between these levels, she turns to Michel de Certeau's distinction between 'strategies' and 'tactics'. While strategies are in the realm of disciplinary institutions and dominant ideologies, tactics are in the much more elusive realm of the mundane, of people's creative ways of living in the world, of 'getting by'. This framework seeks to develop a more nuanced approach to analyzing practice, characterized by flexibility and ingenuity, than the Foucauldian binary of 'discipline' versus 'resistance'.

Most of the discussion focuses on the experience of longtime Israelis, mainly Ashkenazim. They were the ones who produced most of the available sources (at least of the kind on which Helman's study is based), but more importantly, they were part of and participated in shaping the

hegemonic culture, in contrast to Arabs and Mizrahi Jews, who were subject to outright coercion, as well as to non-Zionist ultra-orthodox Jews. Yet even this group did not simply obey or embody these ideals, but rather negotiated, modified, contested and even ignored them, not always intentionally or consciously.

Becoming Israeli paints a vivid and fascinating picture of life in the 1950s. Although its focus is everyday practices and interactions, these are placed within the context of wider social, political, and economic processes. I found the most compelling chapters to be those that portray a rich picture of the sensual fabric of everyday life, such as the chapters on riding the bus and going to the movies. The chapter on the buses, for instance, reveals both the physical experience of riding, and the constitutive social and cultural tensions which permeated Israel's public sphere. On the face of it, the bus was a space in which people from all walks of life met on relatively equal footing. At the same time, social hierarchies did not dissolve upon mounting the bus. Unpleasant and sometimes outright violent or racist utterances were often made in busses, and these contrast starkly with the formal rhetoric of the 'ingathering of the exiles'. And in contrast to the strategic representations of busses as an example for service, safety, and comfort, the physical experience of riding the bus was one of crowdedness and sweatiness, rudeness, noise, and often smoke and other nasty smells. The cinema hall was not exempt from similar sensual experiences.

In the chapter on manners, Helman writes that rudeness and directness could equally be considered part of the 'old Jew' or the 'new Jew', given the multiplicity of models of what constituted the old and what the new. In fact, as Helman's discussion demonstrates, the distinction between strategies and tactics was not always clear-cut. For instance, institutional policy towards Yiddish was more tolerant and flexible than the informal domain of daily life, where Yiddish was treated with hostility. Alternately, if speaking Hebrew often involved making mistakes, using slang, etc.—was this a manifestation of tactics (deviance from 'correct language') or rather of a successful strategy (i.e., making Hebrew into a spoken and colloquial language)? Another example comes from the kibbutz, where its daily culture, writes Helman, was strongly informed by ideology. Behaviors which could be defined as 'tactics' were usually brought to the surface and either rejected or institutionalized, i.e., raised to the level of strategy.

These cases raise questions concerning the relationship between tactics and hegemony. Helman rightly argues that "in order to view the effects of hegemonic ideals on people's actual lives, not only on their conscious ideology, we should avoid limiting our study to narrated principles and formal policies; and as we envelop more daily practices and informal interactions, the picture that surfaces becomes increasingly multifaceted and

versatile" (188). But what does this level of multiplicity and versatility teach us about the working of hegemony? Here I am reminded of Paul Willis's argument that hegemony works not in spite of people's creativity but *thanks* to it; thanks to their experience of themselves as exercising some autonomy from the state and its ideological and disciplinary apparatus. Obviously, veteran Ashkenazim had no reason to truly resist a system which granted them privilege. What I was missing in this context is a more explicit formulation of the main hegemonic projects in 1950s Israel, and the specific interests they were intended to serve.

Finally, Helman's choice of sources—mostly printed sources such as newspapers and journals—seems to favor third-person rather than first-person accounts of everyday practices and interactions. While the latter are certainly not excluded, I would wish they were heard more often. Such accounts could have given us a better sense, not only of what people did, but how they experienced and understood what they did, and thus shed more light on the intricate relationship between ideals and everyday life, which Helman so proficiently brings to light in *Becoming Israeli*.

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Madelaine Adelman and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., *Jerusalem: Conflict and Cooperation in a Contested City* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 368 pp., $39.95 (cloth).

This book is a collection of essays that aim to provide multiple readings of Jerusalem. As the editors explain in their comprehensive introduction, an attempt is made to examine conflict and cooperation in the city through the prism of different disciplines, theories, and methods. The result is an intriguing collage built around a major theme: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the contested city of Jerusalem. The different chapters, written by scholars coming from political science, religious studies, sociology, anthropology, geography, and cultural studies, portray three major 'cities' that make up the real and contested city of Jerusalem: the national, the holy, and the everyday-life cities.

Each of these cities is shaped by power relations, narratives, and symbols that revolve around specific issues. At the center of the national city is the conflict over sovereignty and legitimacy, manifested in demographic changes and territorial struggles. In demographic terms, the Palestinians seem to win this battle. Between 1967 and 2012 the Palestinian share of

the city's population increased from 26 to 37 percent. In territorial terms, however, Israel has the upper hand. It has encircled the city with three zones of urban neighborhoods and new settlements that stretch from the inner city of East Jerusalem to the outlying urban neighborhoods and the surrounding new settlements.

The holy city is dominated by symbolic and spatial conflicts. The symbolic conflicts have to do with narratives and scriptures that shape orientations, behaviors, and power relations. Israeli control of the city is countered by a Palestinian narrative that denies any Jewish connection to the Temple Mount. On the other hand, national-religious Jews seek to change the nature of the city by buying up land within the confines of the Old City. The spatial conflicts are expressed in friction over control of spaces, granting access to holy places, and counter-resistance.

Beyond the national and holy cities there lies the everyday-life city, where residents need services, work, building permits, and recognition of their ordinary rights. The asymmetric power relations that shape every-day life manifest themselves, among other ways, in unequal allocation of resources and uneven development, in the construction of barriers, and in a wall; all of which restrict and limit everyday life. However, conflicts and tensions within the confines of the everyday-life city are often ignored because the researchers who contributed to this book tend to focus on the national and holy cities. This is most unfortunate, since this city has mul-tiple interesting aspects, as Glenn Bowman writes, that challenge our pre-conceptions. These challenges are associated with the changing character of the city, and especially with the unraveling of the existing social fabric.

Palestinian Jerusalem is a city in the making. The elite groups from the old Jerusalemite families have moved out, and the central functions of the city as a cultural and service town have disappeared. At the same time the nexus of the *hamula* (extended family) ties, religious inclination, and party support either for Fatah or Hamas have deepened. The presentation of the everyday-life city could be enriched by a Palestinian essay on this topic.

The editors and authors contributing to this book have succeeded in accurately illuminating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within Jerusalem. This is achieved, however at the expense of some other conflicts that shape the city's image and structure. Although several authors refer to other tensions (Sapoznik, Adelman), some structural conflicts that shape the city are missing. Among these, one may count the ongoing conflict between the secular and ultra-Orthodox Jewish populations. This conflict, which has already been explored by Friedman and Shilhav (1985), encompasses the spheres of beliefs, symbols, codes of behavior, space, and power relations. As the ultra-Orthodox population witnesses a dramatic growth, the ultra-Orthodox city sprawls from the northern

reaches of Jerusalem southwards, and now almost borders on the central part of the city. The conflict between rich and poor, which surfaced in Jerusalem during the 1970s and 1980s through the urban protests of the Israeli Black Panthers and the *ohalim* (Tents) Movement, and nationally in 2011, is entirely ignored. Finally, the environmental conflicts that have involved thousands of the city's populace and shaped its development seem to escape the attention of the authors.

Although the book's goal is to explore both conflict and cooperation in Jerusalem, most of its content is tilted towards conflict, although between conflict and cooperation there is certainly a wide spectrum of possible developments, ranging from integration through interaction, accommodation, resistance, and violent conflict. Jerusalem is no doubt a contested city, but there are interesting cooperative developments that take place below the radar and deserve more attention. Menachem Klein, Roger Friedland, and Richard D. Hecht are well aware of these possibilities, but stop short of elucidating them. Klein reviews some of the literature on cross-border cooperation and indicates the existence of interactions between Palestinians and Israelis in various public spaces, but does not explore any case of cross-border cooperation.

Friedland and Hecht direct the reader's attention to the existence of accommodation procedures that are embodied in the Law for the Protection of the Holy Places. This law has preserved (with the important exception of the Western Wall) the religious status quo in the holy places of Jerusalem, thus respecting the established privileges of the various religions and denominations within the city. Accommodation, one may argue, characterizes some other fields; among them education, health services, and labor mobility.

The seeds of cooperation in Jerusalem are manifested in informal associations between Palestinian and Israeli NGOs, in the growing number of Palestinian students at the Hebrew University and Hadassah College, and in joint Palestinian and Israeli activities that seek to promote Palestinian urban and neighborhood plans. These accommodation processes and the somewhat hidden cooperation enterprises clearly indicate that, beside the ethno-national conflict, there is genuine potential in Jerusalem for functional cooperation. Elman is right when she observes that Jerusalem has been the major stumbling block on the road to peace, but the functional relations emerging in Jerusalem clearly point toward the positive role the city could play in the future.

As Sohn, Reitel, and Walther (2009) have shown, functional integration between border cities may precede institutional integration. Thus, current forms of accommodation and cooperation in Jerusalem may pave the road to future solutions, providing incentives for future agreements and

dividends that sustain such agreements after they have been signed. The process, in other words, is no less important than the act of settlement.

In sum, readers of this book are exposed to an excellent study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Jerusalem through its various manifestations. Those who are searching for the counter-movement of cooperation will have to wait for another book.

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Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands Before Israel* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 352 pp., $35.00 (cloth).

On 19 December 1903, the Russian Zionist student Chaim Selig Luban fired a few shots at Max Nordau during a Chanukah ball in Paris and shouted: "Death to Nordau, the African." Nordau survived the attempt on his life unhurt. He had become a target because of his outspoken support for the so-called Uganda Plan, which the British government had offered to Herzl and the Zionist movement. There were many 'Africans' at the time who at least played with the thought of moving Jews from Eastern Europe to Eastern Africa as a possible temporary solution, an 'asylum for the night' (*Nachtasyl*). Among them was the man most behind the renewal of the Hebrew language, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who had moved to Jerusalem as early as 1881 and now proudly called himself an 'African' in his attempt to save Jewish lives: "You call yourself Zionist of Zion, Palestinian Zionists, and we—Africans, Ugandans. Gentlemen, we are not at all ashamed of that name. But we are not Africans nor Ugandans, we are rather of the people. This is what we are! You are of the land, and we are of the people" (Conforti 2014: 41).

When after Herzl's death in 1905 the Zionist Congress dropped the idea of a *Nachtasyl*, the remaining so-called territorialists founded their own movement under the leadership of the well-known British writer Israel Zangwill, who for two decades worked tirelessly to establish a Jewish

home in Galveston, Angola, or North Africa. They claimed to be the true heirs of Herzl, who famously had written in *Der Judenstaat* that he could imagine a future Jewish state either in Palestine or in Argentina and who had embraced the British Uganda offer.

In his new book, Adam Rovner for the first time systematically writes about the collective attempts of territorialists to find a Jewish home, somewhere. He starts with the 1825 plan for Grand Island near Buffalo and ends with the signing of a document by the Dutch governor of Surinam to grant Jews autonomy in Dutch Guyana, just a few months before the establishment of the State of Israel. Rovner's heroes are an eclectic bunch, stretching from the US consul to Tunis and High Sheriff of New York, Manuel Noah, who came up with the Grand Island scheme; to Isaac Nachman Steinberg, Lenin's first Commissar of Justice, who later founded the Freeland League and frenetically searched for Jewish homes in Australia, Angola, and Surinam. In Rovner's words, Steinberg was "one of the most important Jewish figures of the twentieth century you've probably never heard of" (154). The account of Steinberg, for which Rovner found considerable private documentation, is among the most fascinating in this thoroughly-researched and well-written account of Jewish territorialism.

Today, territorialism is mostly forgotten. But, as Rovner reminds us, it has not totally disappeared from the Jewish imagination. There seems, indeed, to be a revival of territorialism in the realm of fiction. The American Jewish novelist Michael Chabon wrote about a Jewish territory in Alaska in *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, while young Israeli writers ponder about what might have happened if alternative Jewish colonial schemes in Argentina (Eshkol Nevo's *Neuland*), Grand Island (Nava Semel's *Isra Isle*), or Uganda (Yoav Avni's *Herzl Amar*) had materialized. Video artist Yael Bartana represented Israel at the Venice Biennale with an astonishing project about Jews returning to Poland.

This is an unusual book, and not only because of its rather odd protagonists. Writing this book entailed traveling around the whole globe. Rovner went himself to all the places he describes, from Buffalo to Madagascar, from Angola to Tasmania, and from Surinam to Kenya. The reader, while bound to his desk, can become a fellow-traveller when consulting the author's website, which includes a whole array of images from all the lands that failed to become Jewish homelands.

Rovner's account of territorialism is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of Zionism, as it shows not only the alternative paths which the Zionist movement could have taken, but also convincingly argues that Zionism was an essentially territorialist movement until the 1905 decision to reject the East African proposal. Not only Pinsker and

Herzl, but many other Zionists would have compromised on Eretz Yisrael, for a safe and viable Jewish homeland in Argentina or elsewhere. This book reminds us once more of the many suggested ways to solve what contemporaries called the 'Jewish question', from Socialist Bundism to Orthodox Agudism, from Dubnow's Diaspora nationalism to Stalin's Birobidzhan solution.

In the end, of course, Zionism prevailed, while the other movements ended in failure or tragedy. It was Chaim Weizmann who perhaps expressed best, in a 1906 conversation with then-British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour, why it was not Uganda but the Land of Israel that appealed to the Jewish masses: "'Mr. Balfour, supposing I was to offer you Paris instead of London, would you take it?' He sat up, looked at me, and answered: 'But Dr. Weizmann, we have London.' 'That is true,' I said, 'but we had Jerusalem when London was a marsh'" (Weizmann 1966: 111).

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Fran Markowitz, Stephen Sharot, and Moshe Shokeid, eds., *Towards an Anthropology of Nation Building and Unbuilding in Israel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 352 pp., $65.00 (hardback).

This book is a collection of 19 articles commissioned by the editors in honor of Alex Weingrod's eightieth birthday. Prof. Weingrod is a recognized doyen of anthropological research and teaching in Israel and professor emeritus of Anthropology at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheva. The volume is a tribute to him by scholars who have been inspired by his ideas and scholarly guidance, ranging from colleagues who are his contemporaries to younger scholars who have built upon his work or his guidance as a teacher.

The book is organized around three major themes:

1. Coexistence and conflict—the challenge of Jewish-Arab relations in Israel and the continuing impact of conflict with the Palestinians

2. Immigration and ethnic relations among Jewish immigrant groups and relations with Arab citizens of Israel
3. Religious practices and social interactions within Israeli society

A fourth section addresses Israeli anthropology in a comparative international context. This organization reflects the editors' grouping of contributions from each author into a framework that reflects the major 'problematics' of Israel's evolving social structure. As the book title suggests, both integration ('building') and conflicts ('unbuilding') are identified and discussed.

Commenting on all 19 chapters in a brief review is not possible, but what is most noticeable is that, taken together, the various chapters address the most fundamental social issues facing Israel. Presumably by design, almost all of them cite a study by Weingrod or indicate how their work relates to his scholarship. In other words, it becomes clear from the collection that over the course of his career Alex Weingrod has addressed virtually all the key issues in Israeli society, and inspired others to do so as well. The book is perhaps best summarized in Weingrod's own words, drawn from his afterword to the volume: "The collection presents a wonderfully varied series of essays focusing mainly on Israel's recent past and present. Each chapter tells a particular story, and taken together they weave an informed analysis of how the society emerged, changed, and in many respects became transformed" (317).

Weingrod goes on to identify (318–320) four deep divisions that have emerged within Israeli society, each of which is illustrated in one or more of the chapters:

1. Erosion of egalitarian structures, growing economic inequality (wealth alongside poverty), and class differences eroding social solidarity.
2. Divisions between Jewish and non-Jewish Israelis, continuing discrimination against the 20 percent of Israelis who are Palestinian Arabs, and more recently, exploitation and marginalization of migrant workers from various parts of the world and refugees from conflicts in Africa.
3. Religious-secular divisions, the growing social chasm between the secular majority and increasing numbers in Orthodox religious groups living in self-segregated enclaves, largely on state support. He cites the huge gaps between the technological sophistication and entrepreneurial spirit of the secular 'start-up nation' and the involvement of the rabbinate in national politics in order to divert resources to their own institutions, such as separate religious

schools that refuse to teach basic arithmetic or citizenship. He critiques the struggle by ultra-Orthodox groups to avoid national military service and control marriage, divorce, and burial in a manner that distances secular from religious.

4. Political divisions between 'right' and 'left' that, in the Israeli context, do not refer to economic policy, free markets, or activist government, but, rather, to supporters of Israeli expansion into the West Bank versus advocates of permitting the emergence of an independent Palestinian state in order to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Weingrod points out that of course Israel can be proud of major social successes: absorption of more than one million former Soviet immigrants since the 1990s, remarkable creativity in all branches of the creative arts, and a formidable high-tech sector. Despite these accomplishments, the divisions and social problems remain.

Almost all the authors contributed original pieces written especially for this volume. Only two authors indicate that their chapters have been previously published, although most of the other contributions reflect already-known views and research of the various authors. What the book does present is a well-written and tightly edited overview of work being accomplished by Israeli anthropologists, a review and panoptic of issues facing current-day Israel, and a series of brief yet detailed insights into many aspects of life in Israel.

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Guy Ziv, *Why Hawks Become Doves: Shimon Peres and Foreign Policy Change in Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 194 pp., $75.00 (hardback).

In the discipline of international relations, and specifically in the area of foreign policy, most of the focus of the extant literature has been on uncovering the structures that shape and constrain policy options. Recent scholarship has called for greater attention to the agency of political leaders, arguing that individual leaders are highly consequential. Works by scholars like Elizabeth Saunders (2011) and Yael Aronoff (2014) have suggested that the beliefs and personality of individual leaders will influence whether military force will be used as a foreign policy instrument or whether peaceful

paths will be pursued. Guy Ziv's thoughtful book constitutes an important addition to this growing trend. Ziv seeks to move beyond asserting simply that leaders matter or identifying how they matter to exploring why leaders change their beliefs. More specifically, his primary interest is understanding how some leaders change their worldview about security, war, and peace, or to use his terms, how 'hawks' undergo 'dovish' transformations.

Relying on cognitive psychology and using Shimon Peres' transformation from hawk to dove as his primary case study, Ziv's main argument is that leaders who are cognitively open and complex are more likely to change their beliefs than those who are cognitively closed and simple. By cognitive openness and closeness, he means a scale of receptiveness to new information that is inconsistent with preexisting beliefs. Cognitive complexity refers to capacity to recognize multiple dimensions of given issues. Ultimately, the more cognitively open and complex a leader, the more capable they are to process fundamental environmental and situational changes and adapt their foreign policy accordingly. This theoretical proposition is significant because it can help differentiate between leaders who shift their positions due to political convenience (and therefore might reverse them if doing so would entail political gain) from those whose positions have changed as a result of more profound 'learning' and are therefore more likely to be committed to the new path.

Although the main focus of the empirical analysis is the transformation of Shimon Peres, whose views changed distinctively across the hawk-dove spectrum, I found the second chapter of the book, which compares Peres with three other Israeli prime ministers, namely Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, and Yitzhak Rabin, to be the most intriguing. This four-pronged comparison is particularly useful because it includes leaders whose positions transformed to different degrees or at a different pace, even though they largely experienced the same environmental changes in the 1980s and early 1990s (Begin, who left politics in 1983 and died in 1992, is the exception).

To avoid running into the problem of tautology whereby each leader's cognitive openness and complexity is evaluated on the basis of their position on the conflict with the Palestinians, Ziv uses an array of methods to evaluate these two variables on other policy issues, significant as well as mundane. Thus, he notes that a large number of people who worked closely with Shamir testify that once his opinion was formed on almost any issue, it became practically immutable; and that Shamir tended to be highly dismissive of opinions or information that were inconsistent with his preexisting opinions.

While Shamir's worldview is characterized as narrow and undifferentiated, Ziv argues that "Begin appears to have had relatively low levels of

cognitive openness and complexity, though not quite as low as Shamir's" (29). Thus, although Ziv acknowledges that Begin provides a more complex case, he nonetheless implies the former prime minister had a "one-dimensional" character (31) and ultimately his "cognitive makeup was quite similar to that of his successor" (35). The evidence that Begin was strong-minded is persuasive, and yet I found the multifaceted cognitive structure of Begin to be understated by the author. Begin after all did alter his positions in fundamental ways on key issues, including the terms of an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. Whereas his starting stance was premised on a determined rejection of the land-for-peace principle, he eventually concluded that it was in Israel's best interest not only to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula but also dismantle its settlements there.

A second important example of Begin's complex cognitive structure is his resignation from the premiership as a result of the war in Lebanon, having recognized that it had not evolved as he had anticipated or yielded the desired outcome. His resignation, an issue overlooked in Ziv's discussion, signals a practical admission of policy failure, an attribute that is inconsistent with the 'simple' cognitive structure, as operationalized in the book.

Rabin's cognitive constitution is characterized as "moderately open and moderately complex" (36). Ziv describes him as less dogmatic than his Likud counterparts and somewhat open to new input from his environment, but nonetheless reliant only on a small circle of trusted advisors. The example of the Entebbe rescue operation is particularly helpful for demonstrating Rabin's cognitive characterization: as long as there was no viable military plan to rescue the Israeli hostages, Rabin was willing to negotiate with the hijackers and accede to their demands. However, once he was persuaded of the viability of the military option, his policy choice changed.

In contrast to the other three leaders, Shimon Peres is deemed by Ziv as having a highly complex and open cognitive structure. Peres is described as a leader who seeks out others' points of view, a listener who values ambiguity, realizes there are no silver-bullet policy choices, and adapts his points of view on the basis of new information and widespread consultation. Thus, for example, as prime minister in the mid-1980s, he was able to change from his traditional socialist-leaning Labor tradition and introduce liberal economic reforms in order to combat the soaring inflation.

This cognitive psychology framework is used throughout the rest of the book to analyze Peres' transition along the hawk-dove spectrum. Ziv identifies three periods in Peres' evolution: the hawkish years (1953–1977), the first phase of the dovish turn, (1977–1987), and the second phase of the dovish turn (1987–1997). It would have been beneficial to make the differentiating factors between the two dovish phases, which are well-analyzed in the chapters, more immediately clear by providing them with distinctive

titles. Ultimately, the first stage is transitional and the second deals with the consolidation of the dovish worldview. That noted, the chapters do identify clear differences in key policy decisions. Thus, in the 1977–1987 period, Peres began to support territorial compromise and his support for settlements diminished, yet he continued to oppose a Palestinian state and negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). By the time of his consolidated 'dovishness', Peres recognized that the Jordanian option was off the table, and altered his views to support talks with the PLO and the creation of a Palestinian state.

It is also worth highlighting that in an academic world where conventional academic writing style keeps important research findings unnecessarily contained in the domain of a confined group of specialists, Ziv's lucid writing style makes his book accessible to students and a general readership, a feat that should not be taken for granted. This book keeps the reader engaged and ultimately makes an important contribution to the discipline of international relations, as well as providing a fresh outlook on the transformation undergone by one of Israel's most prominent statesmen, Shimon Peres.

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R. Amy Elman, *The European Union, Antisemitism, and the Politics of Denial* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 176 pp., $50.00 (hardback).

This book's publication coincided with the recent series of violent anti-Semitic acts in Europe; most notably in Paris (January 2015) and Copenhagen (February 2015). Yet, unfortunately, the issue of anti-Semitism in Europe is perennially relevant. Since 2000, anti-Semitism has been visible all over the continent, gaining moral support apparently from elements of the 'anti-racist' camp on behalf of the principles and values of the left.

EU institutions confront a dilemma regarding their will and capacity to intervene in the politics of its member states in dealing with this issue. They must take into account three key elements: historic European

relations with Jews, culminating in the Holocaust; European Muslim communities and both their integration and their self-perception as facing discrimination and exclusion; and the EU's founding goals to diminish war, ethnic violence, and discrimination through economic integration, and to guarantee peace by weakening the nation-state.

This book emphasizes the third element, much neglected by the literature on anti-Semitism. Elman examines the role of the EU in mitigating anti-Semitism among its member states, with Austria and Sweden as case studies; in other words, "Is Europe's integration good for the Jews?" (1). The book's answer, as one might expect, is negative. It demonstrates how, again and again, EU institutions, as well as Sweden and Austria, have shown reluctance to raise their voices against anti-Semitism and act effectively to eradicate it. In spite of the rhetoric, some symbolic and ambiguous acts, and endless reports and conferences, Europe lacks political courage and cannot offer an effective antidote to anti-Semitism.

By analyzing both these member states and the EU's key policy-making institutions, the book goes beyond evaluating the dimension of current anti-Semitism in Europe or measuring the role of the EU in providing remedies. It intends to suggest how best to mitigate anti-Semitism and to determine which level of government is apt to provide redress. Jews and other minorities should decide whether to invest their energies in transnational institutions or to pursue their aspirations within the national borders. The author proposes yet another possibility. Blurred boundaries can enhance the permeability of states and the openness of transnational actors to varied claims for social justice.

This is the direction of the book. It provides an overview of the circumstances that obliged EU institutions to take action against anti-Semitism while recognizing the reciprocal relationships and the need of member states to cooperate by informing on anti-Semitic acts, implementing EU efforts, and complying with its directives. Particularly interesting, in my view, is the author's suggestion that, in spite of the rhetoric, "political actors throughout the EU rarely regard Jews as sufficiently oppressed to warrant either state or Union interventions. Thus, Jews receive 'virtual redress', sporadic rhetoric that condemns the continent's past crimes while proving insufficient in countering current antisemitism" (7).

This point should be more profoundly elaborated in the book since it sheds light on a paradox. The more Europe does to remember its past horrors, the less it is obliged to take concrete action to fight current anti-Semitism, as if there is a trade-off between the psychological and moral dimension and the political dimension of the Holocaust remembrance.

The book is well organized. The first chapter suggests that the EU's anti-discrimination policies in general do not present a coherent and

deliberated strategy. Rather, they are improvisational policies resulting from struggles and bargaining among member states and EU institutions. As always in politics, the consequences are not determined entirely by the intentions of those who create them, especially in cases of multi-level governance. The author rightly identifies the Amsterdam Treaty as a (missed) opportunity to delineate the powers and responsibilities of its multi-level governance regarding issues of discrimination, human rights, and anti-Semitism.

Chapter two details the consequences of these early policies on Sweden and Austria, and Elman well defends her choice of them as case studies. Their similarities and differences contribute to better understanding of the reciprocal relations and influences between the EU and its member states, although one should bear in mind their relatively small size and marginal influence among other EU members.

Chapter three moves back into the successes and shortcomings of these EU efforts and the reform efforts in 2000. Elman argues that the Race Directive, regarded by many as an important tool to combat anti-Semitism, lacked clarity, and thus provided very limited redress for the Jews. It provides a legal framework for the fight against racial or ethnic discrimination while intentionally ignoring religious or political dimensions. Thus, any expression against Jews based on religious identity or as supporters of Israel, has no legal remedy. Some reactions to the 9/11 terrorist acts are seen as an expression of this political dimension of anti-Semitism and thus a new challenge for the EU.

One question this chapter does not answer well is the argument that 9/11 should be considered a turning point in the study of current anti-Semitism and efforts to combat it. It is well-known that conspiracy theories of Israeli involvement spread through social media and were echoed in some public statements. This was clearly based on classical anti-Semitic images and propaganda. And 2000–2001 saw an abrupt increase in anti-Semitic incidents throughout Europe.

At the same time, other international events occurred that, in my opinion, had greater consequences for anti-Semitism in Europe, but are hardly mentioned in the book. First was the eruption of violence in the Middle East, covered closely by the European media, such as the death of twelve-year-old Mohammad Al-Dura in Gaza on 30 September 2000. Second was the 2001 World Conference against Racism in Durban, days before 9/11. It is notorious for equating Zionism with racism and became a symbol of the delegitimization of Israel. The absurd reactions to 9/11 are no more than another syndrome of virulent anti-Semitism.

Chapter four also considers the consequences of the EU efforts to fight anti-Semitism in Sweden and Austria after 2000. Both countries demonstrate

the EU's reluctance to recognize that anti-Semitism is not exclusively identified with the extreme right, and its hesitation to take concrete measures when it comes from other sectors, let alone the left or Muslims. Jews in both countries are victims of expressions of anti-Semitism from vast sectors of society and of the passivity or unwillingness of national leaders to fight it. Since EU directives do not define religion or nationality as a basis of discrimination, Jews are in practice left with no legal redress. Both countries replicate the EU shortcomings and even overlook the few limited measures the EU could have provided.

Elman is completely right in criticizing EU institutions for the lack of a clear working definition of anti-Semitism. It is impossible to monitor or compare between countries a phenomenon that has no definition, and leads to politicization and manipulation of data, as Elman demonstrates. Yet Elman also fails to provide clear criteria. By not offering a clear working definition of her own, one suspects she adopts too expansive a definition that fails to distinguish between verbal and physically violent acts or statements against Israel, Zionism, and Jews. It is indeed true that some critics of Israel include anti-Semitic elements and employ religious prejudices. She quotes Daniel Goldhagen that "antisemitism adopts the idiom of its day" (61). Still, one should be wary of equating criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism or even anti-Zionism or relating political stands to racial motivations.

Chapter five suggests that the ambivalent efforts to fight anti-Semitism result from the multi-level political structure of the EU, where each level shifts responsibility elsewhere. Europe's architects truly believed economic integration could be an effective instrument to fight all 'evils', including the nation-state, wars, ethnic clashes, and anti-Semitism. All levels of governance should combine their efforts to fight them. But "social justice became everyone's task but no one's responsibility" (65).

Elman suggests that the shortcomings of the fight against anti-Semitism are reflected in similar efforts by the EU, and offers practical insights applicable to any fight for social justice and accountability. This is positive, but the author's efforts are very limited since she does not believe anti-Semitism is integral to ethnic discrimination or xenophobia but rather a unique phenomenon requiring specialized tools to tackle it. This is highly regrettable, given the author's own experience with the issue of sexual equality in Europe and the appropriate role of its institutions in that struggle. A short comparison between different kinds of discrimination, differing capacities of European institutions to intervene, and the different motivations to do so could enrich the discussion and shed more light on the limitations and opportunities in the fight against anti-Semitism.

So, does Europe have a phone number for use in the fight against anti-Semitism? Certainly not! Jews suffer from various expressions of

anti-Semitism in Europe, as this book and reality show us. Elman asks whether key EU institutions could provide effective guidelines and legal and political tools for member states to fight it. Her answer is clear. The EU lacks commitment, will, courage, and capacity to respond to the challenge. It overlooks the potential of its own institutions to create novel and effective initiatives against anti-Semitism. There is no coherent definition or coherent policies for mitigating anti-Semitism. Still, it is not too late for Europe to wake up if it wants to maintain its role as a 'moral power' that sets global standards, rather than spreading the dangerous idea of cultural relativism.

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Rachel S. Harris, *An Ideological Death: Suicide in Israeli Literature* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 280 pp., $79.95 (cloth).

This book takes us on a fascinating journey that traces the image of suicide in the Israeli literature of the last few decades. In her introduction, Harris argues that "suicide in Hebrew literature creates tension by being in disharmony with the national narrative … The image of suicide can disrupt the narrative, making the reader uneasy. The appearance of suicide in literature raises questions about existing social patterns, as part of a text's engagement with the society in which it appears, and which it may describe" (14, 16).

Harris analyzes the dialectical relationship between Hebrew literature on the one hand, and the Zionist enterprise and the concepts of the new Jew on the other hand. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, with the rise of Zionism, which sought self-determination for the Jewish people bereft of territory for thousands of years, there was a need for a change in the image of the Jewish prototype. The Zionist thinkers believed that the creation of a new image for the modern male Jew would cure Jewish psychological and physiological inferiority. In order for the Jews to escape their terrible destiny in the Diaspora, they needed to exercise and develop their bodies and, in particular, display their good health through their upright bodies. Hence, only a 'new Jew' could lead to the creation of a new nation; only he would be prepared for the national mission of settling the land of Israel, working its land, fighting its enemies, and achieving sovereignty.

The 'new Jews' were born mainly in Europe and immigrated to the land of Israel; their children were natives and were nicknamed *sabras* (the prickly pear bush brought to Israel from South America). The *sabra* is

depicted as close to nature, rebellious, headstrong, proud, a man of action as well as words, plainspoken and blunt, instilled with a powerful sense of ideological commitment and national responsibility. While the *sabra* appears to be individualistic, his image represents the collective practices underpinning the communal utopia of socialist Zionism. That image suggests that the individual is the bearer of the collective ideal of serving the community, often sacrificing personal interests. In the 1940s and 1950s, in times of national struggle, the *sabra* was the first to go to battle and to sacrifice himself for the collective cause. Thus self-sacrifice, on the altar of the Jewish state, became an essential attribute of the *sabra* myth.

The Hebrew literature of that time was engaged in the Zionist enterprise, and the appearance of the *sabra* myth and the concept of sacrifice were evident in many texts. Nevertheless, although many literary texts were loyal to the myth, others chose to contest it. Though the first appearance of subversive texts dates back to the 1940s and 1950s (in works of S. Yizhar and Moshe Shamir, among the most prominent authors of that time), over the years, and as a result of political upheavals—including the Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the 1977 election, and the 1982 Lebanon war—the representation of this myth has become a tool for criticism. This explains why the image of suicide negotiates and subverts important attributes of the collective Zionist ideology and its symbols. It expresses a critical stance toward the myth of sacrifice for the national collective and the expectation of heroism and death. It undermines the concept of new Jewish masculinity and raises doubts regarding Israeli militarism.

Harris focuses on Hebrew literature from 1948 onward and investigates the ways in which the image of suicide relates to political, social, and cultural issues, and how it reflects the failure of the national Zionist ideal. The texts she discusses were written by major Israeli authors such as A. B. Yehoshua, Benjamin Tammuz, Yaakov Shabtai, Yehoshua Kenaz, Alon Hilo, Etgar Keret, Yehudit Katzir, and Amos Oz. Harris's argument describes a process undergone in mainstream Israeli fiction that reveals its ability to take critical stances. Although most of the authors discussed in the book generally support Zionism and the State of Israel, use of the image of suicide represents the struggle for identity and the continuous need to question the values and the practices that stem from the Zionist project.

The six chapters focus on different issues. In the first, Harris traces the image of Samson, and the construction of the *sabra* hero and the myth of national sacrifice. She shows the evolution of this biblical image from the poetry of Haim Guri and Amir Gilboa to Yehuda Amichai and Nathan Zach. The discussion of the well-known short story "The Way of the Wind" by Amos Oz illustrates the intergenerational conflict through a protagonist who is the total antithesis of the *sabra*.

The second chapter questions the concept of militarism and the male body and centers on Yehoshua Knaz's 1986 novel *Infiltration (Hitganvut Yehidim)*. It portrays a unit of noncombat soldiers who cannot and will not represent the national myth of the new Jewish masculinity.

Three novels, Benjamin Tammuz's *Requiem for Na'aman* (1978), A. B. Yehoshua's *Mr. Mani* (1990), and Alon Hilu's *The House of Rajani* (2008), are discussed in the third chapter, in which Harris investigates the Zionist narrative and its Others—Mizrachim, Sephardim, Palestinians, and women.

Chapter four discusses Tel Aviv through the works of Yaakov Shabtai, Yehudit Katzir, and Etgar Keret, while chapter five focuses on women's suicide. In the concluding chapter, Harris discusses the representation of suicide in literature in general, and shows that her investigative model can be applied to other literatures as well.

The image of suicide in literature can appear in different guises and take on different shapes. Yet in almost all cases, it cannot be disregarded because it elicits such strong emotional reactions. Primarily because it is so powerful, literary suicides can function as moral lessons, as a tool for challenging ideologies and social norms.

This book constitutes a comprehensive study of the image of suicide in Israeli literature. It demonstrates, through a close reading of major texts, how critical stances are produced by literary images, and reveals the debate on Israeli masculinity as it intertwines with issues such as militarism and nationalism, the body, gender issues, intergenerational relations, and the Israeli landscape.

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David Ohana, *The Origins of Israeli Mythology: Neither Canaanites Nor Crusaders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 276 pp., $94.99 (hardback) and $28.09 (paperback).

David Ohana's book, *The Origins of Israeli Mythology: Neither Canaanites Nor Crusaders*, is a tour de force. It brilliantly situates Zionism and its intellectual and historical predicaments in multiple contexts, including the history of ideas, the impact of modernization in all its forms on Jewish life, and the contradictory dangers to Israel's future prospects associated with Zionism's partial success.

His overall argument is that two terrible threats lurk within the movement's master narrative. That master narrative is familiar. After centuries

of backwardness and suffering in the warped worlds of the Diaspora, modern Jews could rehabilitate themselves as human beings and return to history as a people by reconnecting with the Land of Israel and by projecting Western technology and organizational progress into the East.

The first threat is Canaanism, a categorical rejection of Jewish life in the Diaspora. In this vision, Zionist rejection of the *galut* meant that Zionists would cease being Jews because of the sheer power of the Land of Israel. Ohana delves deeply into the emotional and ideational sources of this vision, an extravagant but logical extrapolation of the principle of negation of the *galut* that supercharged both the individual psyches of key Zionist leaders and thinkers, and the collective discourse of many of the early pioneers. With Canaanism comes the horror of too much success. Jewish life in exile is rejected so vehemently and completely, and the self-love and will to power of Hebrews living in the Land of Israel are so consuming, they produce an anti-Jewish embrace of myths of a warlike, conquering, culturally domineering Semitic race.

Ohana's treatment of Nietzsche as a thinker whose bold, icon-destroying posture toward all conventions fired the imaginations of the first generations of Zionist activists, is fresh, erudite, and enlightening. This reader was led to take Nietzsche much more seriously than ever before and was stunned to learn that Israel Eldad, the ultranationalist firebrand, was also Israel's foremost scholar of Nietzsche. Ohana's analysis of Hanan Porat and the myth of the return to Gush Etzion that connected Gush Emunim to the Caananite movement, is both stimulating and persuasive; shedding new light on, among other things, the phenomenon of the 'hilltop youth'.

If the first threat is the horror of a too successful Promethean Zionism, drawn to the logical extremities of its Nietzschean ambitions, the second is the anxiety of failure, an abiding existential insecurity that Jews will remain aliens in the East; doomed, as were the Crusaders, to isolation, exhaustion, and eventual collapse. Ohana provides a masterful treatment of the inability of Zionist theorists, scholars, and politicians to escape the nagging worries that their project would ultimately suffer the same fate as the Crusader kingdom.

Although Zionist consideration of the Crusades almost always contends that Zionism is so fundamentally unlike the Crusader adventure that it cannot be treated as a useful or valid analogy, Ohana clearly demonstrates Zionism's inability to convince itself of that claim. The result is endless discussion of the imperatives for Zionism and the State of Israel that must be obeyed if failure and collapse are to be avoided. Ohana's ironic conclusion is that while Zionists have used Crusader failure as an object lesson for what not to do (remain alienated from the region, refuse compromise and political reconciliation with Muslim neighbors, stay tied

to and dependent on the West, etc.), time and circumstances have pushed Israel to mimic the Crusaders, as Israel is evolving into an alien, isolated fortress, militarily imposing but surrounded by existential threats and filled with angst about its future.

The third part of the book presents Ohana's own preferred mythic formula for preserving the Zionist ethos and the Jewish state while avoiding both the horrors of anti-Jewish Caananism and the paralyzing anxieties of the Crusader posture. That formula is 'Mediterraneanism'. He relies heavily on the writings of an Egyptian Jew, Jacqueline Kahanoff, whose upper-class cosmopolitan upbringing in Egypt, and whose Iraqi and Tunisian ancestry, gave her the basis for imagining Israel in the 1950s and 1960s as a Mediterranean society participating in "a geopolitical and cultural dialogue that will involve the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, not only as a negation of the Zionist-crusader analogy, but first and foremost as a positive self-definition" (223).

In this context it is not irrelevant to note Ohana's own background. He was born in Morocco. And we can see his attraction to a formula that naturalizes the permanence and cultural rootedness of Israelis in the region without the assimilationism and virulent rejection of Judaism espoused by the Canaanites. But although, in theory, this formula is suggested as a framework for anchoring Jewish national life in the Land of Israel on cultural and social realities rather than on force, there is nothing in either Kahanoff's writings as cited by Ohana, or in Ohana's own analysis, to suggest how the crucial force-saturated questions of control over land, the fate of Palestinian refugees, the future of the occupation, the future of settlements, and struggles over how to honor both Jewish and Palestinian claims to national self-determination, could be addressed.

To be sure, Ohana only suggests the Mediterranean vision as an option, to be examined and evaluated. Still, the reader cannot help but feel that he has been overly protective of his preferred fantasy by sparing it the scouring examinations to which the Canaanite and Crusader mythologies were subjected. His treatment of Mediterraneanism is best understood as a catalog of traces within the intellectual history of Zionism and Israel, assembled to valorize and make plausible a vision that is imaginable in theory, but not yet in practice. For Ohana gives no attention to how this ideational frame could arise from, or convincingly express, the interests, experiences, and passions of the masses of real people who live along the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Only by providing such an analysis could readers be persuaded that the 'Mediterranean option' has any more promise for Israel than a somewhat similar formula had for saving the settlers in Algeria from their fate. Indeed, it is instructive to note the resonance of Ohana's investment in the idea of Israelis adopting

a 'Mediterranean' culture with the late nineteenth century fantasy of Louis Bertrand and the 'Algerianists'. This movement hailed the mixture of Italians, French, Spaniards, Maltese, and Greeks that comprised the *pied noir* settlers of Algeria as a robust new race, rejuvenated by the North African sun, and capable of transforming France into the leader of a Latin Mediterranean space.

The Origins of Israeli Mythology is an astonishingly good book. Its strengths lie in the analysis of tropes and the relationship of intellectual orientations and postures to the contours of the European cultural space. While Ohana's analysis does lead to the conclusion that something new is needed to replace the exhausted Zionist visions, that something will have to be born from material struggles and their satisfaction, not from the beauty of an idea.

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