First International Symposium on Jewish Children's Literature

Forty Years of Children's Literature in Israel: Genres, Trends and Heroes*

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Chairperson's introduction:

No sooner had I decided that, as a tribute to our Israeli hosts, the program would begin with a survey of Israeli children's literature, than a copy of Bookbird arrived with an article entitled "A House Named 'Yemima'" by Yardena Haddas of the Yemima Center for the Study and Teaching of Children's Literature, about the Center and its founder, Dr. Shlomo Harel. Yardena was invited to be the moderator of the session and Dr. Harel, the first presenter. His dynamic talk was presented in Hebrew, but owing to his painstaking translation, we are able to publish it in English. In order to save space, Dr. Harel's spirited "booktalks" have been omitted, but we hope that the annotated bibliographies for each genre and stage, which are provided at the end of this article, will be equally helpful.

—Marcia W. Posner

Adventure stories dominate Israeli children's literature. At various times over the past forty years, three types of adventure stories have been prominent: historical/biographical, Holocaust, and neighborhood life. Each deals with reality, challenging situations, and leadership in a different way. This paper examines: (1) the ways in which the cultural climate and sociological ethos participate in molding the hero's character; (2) whether the fictional world presented to Israeli children mirrors the Israeli reality of the time; (3) whether Israeli children's fiction satisfies the expectations and needs of readers, educators, parents, and critics; and (4) how the adventure genre gained its prominence in Israel.

I. Historical/Biographical Fiction

Historical/biographical stories recall exciting and stimulating eras and introduce heroic personalities who can serve as role-models. These stories provide encounters with facts and events that took place before the reader's time, and communicate behavioral values that have withstood the hardships of the past and are still valid today, on both personal (imitable behavior) and national (political and military leadership, etc.) levels. Closer to the present, themes deal with the National Renaissance (Ha-Te'hiyah) Era, the initial years of the Zionist movement and the New Settlement in Eretz Israel (Yishuv Hadash); the pioneer 'Aliyat; and the heavy burdens of realizing Zionist ideas.

II. Holocaust Fiction

Here we can identify the impact of the trauma on the writers who have experienced the Holocaust. Traces of that horrible experience also exist in stories written by writers of the second generation, who have felt driven to memorize and express what took place in the "other planet," and to communicate the lesson learned to future generations.

III. Realistic "Neighborhood" Fiction

These stories are influenced by sociological changes in Israel during the last forty years. The whole structure of society—including habits, family, street, home, and neighborhood—has changed immensely. The villa, the penthouse, the air-conditioned car, the personal computer, the chase of personal convenience, and especially the closed door—all these have replaced the modest lifestyle, the wide-open door, the daily Kumzitz in the center of the neighborhood, the street-games (for example, "One, two, three, a herring . . ." and "Shalom, my lord, the king. Where have you been and what have you done?").

and the romantic encounters in the shade of the sycamore trees. That which happened in the past is gone forever. Memories and longings are all that are left. Returning is possible only in dreams and stories.

All of these stories share the drive to escape the presence of the last three decades by addressing other realities, those of the past—heroic, horrendous, and nostalgic. In this sense, "the past" could be understood as an antithesis to the present, a preference for another reality. The question remains as to which reality is presented to Israel's children, through the literature they read. Perhaps exploring the changing role of the hero in this literature will shed some light on this question.

IV. The First Stage: The Constructive-Heroic Hero, 1950s and 1960s, or Shemonah Be-ikvot Yemimah (Eight in the Footsteps of Yemima)

Certain authors, born close to the beginning of this century, are prominent in this stage. Included are: Nahum Gutman, Yemima Tchernovitz-Avidar, Binyamin Galai, Moshe Ben-Shaul, Yig'al Mosinzen, and

Sheraga Gafni (whose pseudonyms are: Avner Carmeli, On Sarig, and Eitan Dror). The basic materials, the themes, the characters' motives, the conditions, the dynamics, and the epic endings in their prose interrelate and create a distinctive literary “world.” They were influenced by several factors, both literary and extraliterary.

**Literary Factors**—Traces of the fairy tale can be found in many of the stories. A pathetic or dangerous situation is revealed, and then, at the critical moment, in the right time, in the right place, the “Good Fairy” (a gang of children) descends from heaven, and is able to save the victim from his plight and solve the problem in the best way, resulting in a happy ending.

One early literary model is the Israeli historical adventure story, for example, Ha-kana'im ha-te'irim (The Young Zealots, by Ya'akov Hurjgin, 1935), about a rebellious gang of Jewish boys who dare to confront the Roman conquerers of their land. (This story was probably influenced by the extraliterary climate of its time, since 1935 was a year of extreme political tension in Eretz-Israel, on the verge of the great Arab Rebellion, which lasted for three years.)

Another literary model was imported from Germany: Erich Kastner's Emil and the Detectives (1928), translated by A. Shlonsky in 1935. This book and its sequel, Emil and the Twins (1934, translated by M. Z. Valpovsky in 1937), express universal humanistic values of friendship, loyalty, conscience, nostalgia, and happiness, liberally spiced with humor. Of course, the pattern could serve the Hebrew writer and child-reader only after making the gang strictly Jewish. The time, the place, the attire, the style—and mainly the nature of the challenges which had to fit the personal and social ethos of writers like those noted above—were changed. Into this melange were added elements of Arthur Conan Doyle's and Ian Fleming's style, but the Hebrew writers transformed the single detective following the felon(s) into a whole gang of children who are volunteer amateur detectives, endlessly ambitious, setting out on their own initiative for the sake of one Jewish refugee (Ehad mishelamu = One of Us, Yemima, 1947); one lost sister (Shene re'im yats'u la-derekh = Two Friends Went Together, Yemima and Mira Lobé, 1950); or one lonely child in trouble (Be-ma'agal ha-setarim = In the Secret Circle, 1955). This disproportionate measure of rescuers to the rescued embodies the Jewish-Zionist ethos common to that whole generation: “The sons of Israel are responsible for each other.”

**Extraliterary Factors**—It may be assumed that the story-plots, the characters in the stories, and the worlds they created were greatly influenced by the reality of such paramilitary pioneer groups as the Nili, Palmach, Gadna, Shurat Ha-mint-gridvim; by youth movements; and also by Tsha'ah (The Israel Defense Force—all of which had acquired a positive image and shared qualities of self-realization, valuable perception, and revolutionary victory, and whose members were believed to possess “positive indigenous character,” with forelocks, healthy tans, rootedness and an outspoken Sabra style.

A primary formulation concerning all the stories in this category is that they share a “constructive-heroic” hero who is motivated by the burden of values and, at the same time, is engaged in an adventurous plot. This type of story aims to inspire the reader with a courageous, selfless, and sacrificial spirit for the sake of social-Zionist ideals—echoing the values of the implicit narrator who represents the author’s voice. Actually it is possible to identify the “birth” of this formula in a very early and famous story by Yemima (Eight in the Track of One, 1945). It is the first Israeli gang-story in which detective ingredients, courage in combat, and realization of national-educational values are integrated. It was followed by many others by the same and other authors. A later example may be found in the Hasambah series by Yig'gal Mosinzon. The publication of this work, first as a weekly series in Mishmar li-yeladim from 1949–1950, and then as a book in 1950, practically parallelized Israel's independence. Its plots mirrored the struggle for statehood—the child-gang (with Sabra names) fights the British and the Arab Legion, rescues Jews emigrating illegally to Eretz-Israel, and so forth.

V. The Second Stage: Mythological Heroes Inspired by the Six-Day War

The literary model of child-gangs continued into the seventies, but the lightning victory of the Six-Day War resulted in increased national self-confidence and in a new type of one-dimensional Israeli literary super-hero, with mythological overtones—in contrast to the former literary heroic model, who correlated with social ideals.

Although the new stories imitated (and were often unintended parodies of earlier works, such as the Hasambah series, by Yig’gal Mosinzon) and utilized patterns established by the Yemima stories, there is a marked difference in the character and personality of the hero. In the stories of the fifties and sixties, the hero embodied general human qualities, such as friendship, sensitivity, mutual understanding, and help for children in trouble wherever they are; while in the post-Six-Day War stories, the cluster of heroes’ characteristics was reduced to focus upon the “fighters’ fraternity”: the coming of battle, combative appearance, bravery, and operational capability. In other words, the stories went from a multi-colored and open molding of Zionist-national-humanistic-constructive values, such as those in Yemima’s stories, to communicating militant motives only. Popular music reflected this trend as well, and songs such as “Nasser is waiting for Rabin, Ay, Ay, Ay” prevailed.

This attitude exacted a heavy literary toll. The image of the hero went from one who enjoyed idealistic and romantic motivations for rebelling against Jewish passivity, the repressive enemy, and the alien conqueror, to the rudely limned model of an elated military hero, a sort of mythological hero who is destined in the end to win, to defeat an inferior enemy. The line between “good guys” and “bad guys,” “winners” and “losers,” becomes sharper, and the language of the prose becomes journalistic, using military jargon, rather than literary expressions. There is also a disturbing use of the term “black” (Black Hassan, Eliav, 1975) to describe the enemy forces, in contrast to the “white” Israeli, (and read Panim Mekho'arot Bamar'ah (An Ugly Face in the Mirror (Cohen, 1985)), about introducing a racial stereotype into Israeli children’s literature as a result of the Jewish-Arab conflict.

**Summing Up the First Two Stages**

Reasons for the Prevalence of Hero Tales in Israel—The heroes of both the First- and Second-Stage stories were, to some extent, a reaction to Bialik’s earlier work—against his use of a central character who is best described as a fervently spiritual Jewish boy, the diligent yeshiva student in Bialik's Ha-matmid at the beginning of the century—and toward his assertive Aryeh ba'al gut (Arieh the Corpulent), who is the exceptional Eastern European Jew. Aryeh has a strong physical presence...
that broadcasts his potential for violence if threatened. This type of character was
atypical of Jewish society in the Diaspora.
It was against the norm, but with the pas-
sage of time it became the norm and per-
haps a "sweet revenge" against the usual
Jewish fate, because the Jew in real life, as
in literature, was always persecuted and
beaten, humiliated and defeated, arrested
and subdued. Now, at last—a little in real
life (through Israel's wars and army opera-
tions) and much more in literary creative
"fantasy"—it became possible to reverse
the situation from followed to pursuer, from
persecuted to persecutor, from subdued to
subduer, and so on.

Character Development—Characters in
Israeli literature tend to be portrayed in
extremes. This may be explained as an
expression of paranoia. This basic para-
noia was brought to Israel by immigrants
who had suffered under the Bolshevik-
Ukrainian experience. This fear of the
foreign conqueror is mirrored in children's
and adult literature, and has resulted in the
stereotype of foreign conqueror. Not only
were the Arabs stereotyped here, but, so
too, were strangers as a whole—the Ger-
man spy, the British policeman, the Roman
soldier, the Jordanian Legionnaire, the
P.L.O. terrorist, etc.

In response, the Hebrew narrative for chil-
dren searched and found a defender.
David, the mythological king who suc-
cedes—with his wisdom, cleverness, and
resourcefulness—in conquering Goliath.
This David is the symbolic representation
of the new Israeli Sabra, the beautiful,
the brave, the self-assured, and the suc-
cessful. In order to exalt his praise, writers
described his antipode, the enemy, as
someone foreign, clumsy, failing, and ugly.
One cannot ignore the fact that the authors
under discussion had experienced the
great national victories and had subse-
quently undergone a psychological flip-
lop: from fearful children of a doomed,
beaten nation (literally) into proud sons of
a nation which can and does strike back.
Such release of tension was joined by the
appearance of the "primitive" element that is
imprinted in person and nation, and a natural
desire for revenge (expressed mainly by
Jewish heroism).

Comparison of Themes in the Works of
Yemima and the Post-Six-Day-War Au-
thors—Writers such as Avraham Ben-
Shachar, Chaim Eliav, Chaim Gibory, On
Sarig, and others reveal a quasi-romantic
facet, as if they are saying, spiritually, to
Yemima, that while they admire the literary
model she created and they, too, are for
raising brave Jewish sons, fighters, and
volunteers; freeing, saving, absorbing
("Allyot"); winning, catching, helping, etc.,
they no longer have any use for the whole
issue of value-burdens and humanistic
motivations, the friendliness and social
values of the community. These are an-
achronisms that they have discarded. To
Yemima, the perception of values was at
the heart of the story. To the post-Six-Day-
War authors, winning and surviving is all.

Yemima's typical story is built on a row
crystallized opposites: many against one,
ability as opposed to weakness, values
versus survival, personal realization vis-à-
vis passivity, spontaneous action as op-
posed to planning, lust versus ideals,
patriotism against treachery; and also
variations of good as the reverse of bad,
austerity contrary to luxury, perplexity
opposed to self-assurance, leadership
against herd-instincts, parents opposed to
children, and self-identity versus amor-
phousness. All of these pairs do not repre-
sent misty, indefinite aspects, but relevant,
simple, immediate ones—so "local" (Isra­
eli) and, at the same time, so universal.

Opposed to the variations played on the
instrument of Yemima's literature, the nar-
ration of the post-Six-Day-War authors lim-
its very much the arc of opposites, mainly
to "good" and "bad." According to the sto-
rries of Chaim Eliav, the heroes of On Sarig
(a later pseudonym of Shraga Gafni,
whose earlier work was much more open
and multifaceted), and the other authors
of this period, they value revelations of physi-
cal heroism, even when it is inevitably
combined with cruel violence. The inclina-
tion to represent the Israeli hero as a lofty-
souled and courageous person in the
midst of brutal conduct creates a sub-
conscious linking of the justified with the
twisted, the moral with animal-violence.
Furthermore, the Israeli hero is always de-
picted as superior to his Arab enemy, who
always hates him and conspires to kill him.

The Comparison of "Reality" in the
Works of Yemima and Those of the Sec-
ond-Stage Authors—In Yemima's sto-
rifies, the episodes join to project a total
portrait of Israeli reality: conquest of labor,
the desert, striking roots in this land, the
integration of newcomers from the Di-
aspora, saving refugees, mutual help, self-
defense, settling on the land, and creating
a valuable society. If each of Yemima's sto-
rifies can be viewed as a "sign," and the
sum of her stories as the social-cultural-
political "billboard" of a renewed Israel,
then opposed to this constructive sign
would be the "signpost" of the post-Six-
Day-War authors, who point the way to a
barren, narrow corner of reality that is de-
defined by national security, nothing more.

VI. The Third Stage: From The Late
Eighites—The New Wave

Right from the beginning of the Seventies,
a trend away from the constraints and
tabs of previous literary convention be-
came apparent. As a result, several new
themes appeared in children's literature,
sometimes singly, sometimes in combina-
tion. Among them are: bereavement and
orphanhood from a personal point of view,
and later, parent-child relations; alienation
and unpopularity; and the "different" child
such as Sumkhi (Soumchi, Oz, 1978), a
child at odds with his environment. Stories
of this period derive from the darker side
of life. The rationale for them is that chil-
ren should be prepared and strengthened,
through stories, to meet difficult situations
—death, incurable disease, divorce, ab-
sence of a parent, disappointment, hard-
ship, personal frustration, self-struggle,
bad dreams, mad fantasies, and suicide.
The result of all of these elements—the
thematic layers, the recurring motives, the
hero's image—is that current narratives for
children have forsaken the child gang of
single purpose and instead focus on ab-
normal phenomena and situations which
have a bearing on the life and happiness of
the single child in his private circle. These
form the background for stories where
happiness can be equated with sheer sur-
vival, both physical and emotional.

Israeli children's literature is gradually
being freed from didacticism and from
being a conduit for national-Zionist values.
Writers are now looking into the soul to
bring forth what is happening in the individu-
al's inner consciousness, played upon a
background of external circumstances.
The inner, personal drama of the child, as
an outcome of external factors that create
it, is the major focus now. The writers of the
last decade have twisted and turned the
Hasamba't model so much that, instead of
the courageous, humanistic heroes of yest-
yesterday, we have the image of Hoveshet
keter ha-neyar (She Who Wears the Paper
Crown, Nurit Zarchi).
The themes and the first use of the “hero” in the works of Nurit Zarchi and the other authors of this period are the antithesis of those in the works of Yemima Tchernovitz-Avidar, Yig'al Mosinzon, and others of their generation. In the preceding generations, and mainly in the fifties and sixties (Shene re'im yats'u la-derekh; Be-ma'agah ha-setarim; Hasambah, etc.), the literary “hero” is generally elevated above others in his power and bravery. He represents the main norms of society in the non-literary reality, and the core of his activity is in the external reality—the realm of deeds. Zarchi’s pattern of heroine has been shaped as the opposite.

Her stories border on fantasy, on the wonderful lawfulness of the realm of legend and fairy tale—as those that deal with metamorphoses and transformations. Zarchi’s “wonderful worlds” are antididactic and non-national, becoming personal voyages (naive as they may be)—they too embody certain romantic aspects. This means that, then and now, romanticism, with all its many multicolored and contradictory elements, continues to serve as a central pool that influences the literary profile, inclusive of images and heroes in Israeli children’s literature through its generations.

Classified Bibliography

The Roman numerals preceding the category headings correspond to those in the text of the paper. Hebrew bibliographic data follows in the same sequence.

I. Historical/Biographical Sequence


———. Sarah gborat Nili (Sarah, the Heroine of Nili). Josef Sreberk, 1967.


Orlev, Uri. Ha-l bi-Rehov ha-Tsiporim (The Island on Bird’s Street). Jerusalem: Keter, 1981.


II. Holocaust Fiction

Ben-Shaul, Mosheh. Yeled ha-bayit ha-muzar (The Children of the Odd House), 0 (or), Min ha-refa’el Albanez? (Who is Rafael Albanez?). Ramat-Gan: Massada, 1966.


The first two stories focus on the adventures of a gang of boys in Jerusalem during the British Mandate Period. The third, an adventurous sleuth-like story written later, still centers on constructive happenings: a gang of boys from Jerusalem frees an imprisoned girl underground-fighter.

Gafni, Shraga

Shraga Gafni is a prolific author who also uses the pseudonyms Avner Carmeli and Eitan Dror. His stories demonstrate the “constructive hero,” the volunteer who confronts and overcomes the challenges of the times: settling, absorbing Aliyah, protecting the homeland, and fighting crime. Everything in these works is based on the personal positive example and Israeli reality.

As Avner Carmeli


Gingi ha-sayar (Red Head, the Patrol). Tel-Aviv: Mizrachi, 1954.

Sketches about life, folklore, and atmosphere in Little Tel-Aviv, before the establishment of the Israeli state.


About the famous Shekhunat Borochov (the Borochov neighborhood of Tel-Aviv, which has already turned into a myth in the history of neighborhood folklore of Israel).


Reconstructs memories of childhood in the Shabazi neighborhood of Tel-Aviv.

IV. “The First Stage: The Constructive Hero”—1940s—1960s: A Partially Annotated Bibliography

Ben-Shaul, Mosheh. Yalde ha-bayit ha-muzar (The Children of the Odd House), 0 (or), Min ha-refa’el Albanez? (Who is Rafael Albanez?). Ramat-Gan: Massada, 1966.


FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON JEWISH CHILDREN’S LITERATURE


Ha-Balashim ha-tse’irim (The Young Sleuths). Zelcovitz, 1953–1958. An eleven-book series which includes:

Be-mivtsa’ Sinai (In the Sinai Operation).
Be-mifrats Shelomoh (In the Solomon Gulf).


As Eltan Dror

Galai, Binyamin. Atatele ‘Ako (The Bats of Acre). Tel-Aviv: Ma’hbarot Le-sifrut, 1961. A gang of children, out of adventurous curiosity, roam and search throughout Acre’s streets and underground alleys in order to find a treasure that is presumably hidden there. The gang’s search results in their fighting and overpowering enemies of Israel.

Yig’al Mosinzon’s “Hasambah” Series

Mosinzon, Yig’al. Hasambah, o Havurat sod mohlat be-ḥellet (Hasambah, or the Group of the Top Secret). Tel-Aviv: Tverski, 1950. About Yaron Zehavi and his deputies—Tamar, Danny, Ehud the Fat, etc.—who fight British Intelligence, save a treasure of hidden weapons, and rescue a ship of Jewish refugees who had arrived “illegally” in Eretz-Israel. Missions of this kind are usually conducted by adults. While captured by the Arab Legion, the group shows solidarity and brotherhood, bravery, readiness for suffering and sacrificing, patriotism, leadership, etc. The sequels follow:

Hasambah be-ma’arav ha-gevul (Chasambah in Ambush at the Border). Gadish, 1958.

Hasambah bi-kravot rehov be-‘Azah (Chasambah Fighting in the Streets of Gaza). Gadish, 1957.

Hasambah be-sherut ha-ngilu ha-negdi (Chasambah in the Counter-Espionage Service). Gadish, 1967.


In 1970, the “commanders” in the book Hasambah ba-peshitah bi-te’alat Suez were replaced by Yoav Zur and his deputy Rachel. In other words, such obviously Israeli names as Yoav Zur and Yaron Zehavi have replaced traditional Diaspora names, such as the Son of Pessi the Cantor, or Y’ankel and Shmerale.


Tchernovitz-Avidar, Yemima. Eḥad mi-shelenu (One of Us). Lichtenfeld, 1947. Hagai and his friends join together in order to help a boy, a Holocaust survivor, who tries to be absorbed in his new homeland.

———. Shemonah be-’ikvot eḥad (Eight in the Track of One). Lichtenfeld & Bronfman, 1945. The story of Hagai, a city boy, who recalls his adventurous stay in a kibbutz to which he was sent by his parents, who wanted to remove him from the bombed city. This story concludes with the pursuit of, and search for, an eccentric man, really a German spy, who dwelt in a forsaken building in the kibbutz. (The story is based on a real experience that Yemima herself underwent, while visiting in Kibbutz Ginosar.)


———. Ba-ševil ha-miptapat (In the Winding Path). Tversky, 1956. About the children of a mountain village and their adult guide, who persuade the parents not to leave the place, despite the hardships—lack of crops, etc. In the end, the idealistic guide and the children take part in cultivating the soil, removing physical obstacles, and cleaning up the parents’ misconceptions.

———. Mivtsa’ 52 (Operation 52). Ramat-Gan: Massada, 1971. A Zionist detective story told in the first person. Its heroes include the children of Safed, the writer who composes detective stories, and an old, clandestine lady. The children try to decipher the meaning of the notes sent to them, which are written in a secret language. They learn that interesting events are occurring nearby, events that demand their attention.

——— and Lobē, Mira. Shene re’im yats’u laderekh (Two Friends Went Together). B. Lichtenfeld, 1950. About Ilan, the Sabra, and Ya’akov, the Holocaust survivor, who set out to Italy in search of Ya’akov’s sister, who disappeared during World War II. After many adventures and obstacles, and with the help of other friends, the lost sister is found in a monastery and brought to Israel.


Children’s Books

Ben-Shaṭar, Avraham. Shu’alim be-ḥoravot (Foxes Among the Ruins). Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1968. This story describes the super-heroic actions of young boys during the war in the Old City of Jerusalem, 1948.

Eliaq, Haim. Yalde ha-ir ha-atikah (Children of the Old City). Tel-Aviv: Yesod, 1971. A series that is a poor imitation of Yig’al Mosinzon’s Chasambah series. It includes:

‘Alirot yalde ha-ir ha-’atikah (Adventures of the Children of the Old City).

Yalde ha-’ir ha-’atikah ba-matsor (The Children of the Old City Under Siege).

Yalde ha-’ir ha-’atikah be-’ikvot ha-meraglim (The Children of the Old City in the Track of Spies).

Yalde ha-’ir ha-’atikah bi-shvi ha-lgyon (The Children of the Old City in the Captivity of the Arab Legion).

Yalde ha-’ir ha-’atikah u-miḥarumtam ba-mistanemim (The Children of the Old City and Their Fight Against the Arab Infiltrators).

Gafni, Shraga, as On Sarig:


Danidin ba-ševi (Danidin in Captivity). Tel-Aviv: Mizrachi, 1974.


VI. "The Third Stage": From the End of the 1970s to the 1980s: A Partially Annotated Bibliography

Realistic-Psychological Literature

Adar, Tamar. Hatul, sapan, letsan (A Cat, A Seaman, A Clown). Tel-Aviv: Ma'ariv, 1984. This book marks a change from previous social conventions, in that it is inner-directed (the "me"-generation)?: A multi-aged book that begins with the proverb "If you do not go after your heart, your heart will go from you," it deals with such basic problems as personal fidelity, love, the meaning of life, loneliness, and double allegiance.

Almagor, Gil. Ha-Kayits shel Aviyah (Avia's Summer). Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1985. About a girl named Avia, whose father has died and whose mother is mentally ill. The story tells about a decisive summer in her life. She has to cope with tragic events and situations: loneliness, poverty, pain, and shock. The book deals with therapeutic aspects of these problems.

Bergman, Ze'ev. Lamrot kol ha-akhzavot (In Spite of All Disappointments). Adam, 1989. About a boy's suicide and the way his family and friends cope with the shock and the suffering following his death.

Hupert, Shmuel. Oti lo sha'alu (They Have Not Asked Me). Tel-Aviv: Sifriat Poo'ah, 1985. An adolescent boy insists upon his right to hold his own opinions, resulting in tension between him and his parents and peers.


Noy, Yitzhak. Arba'ah yamim 'al ha-nahar (Four Days on the River). Jerusalem: Keter, 1989. Zalman is dissatisfied with his name and his father—both old and outdated. He can never figure out either, until he gets an opportunity to sail with his father for four days, during which his father confides that he had fought with the Jewish Brigade during World War II, and he reveals the source of Zalman's name. This knowledge matures Zalman, bringing him peace and harmony within his environment.

Oz, Amos. Sumkhi (Soumchi). Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1978. About a sentimental, romantic type of boy nicknamed Soumchi after the Hulah lake, when it was still untamed. Soumchi, whose frame of reference is characters from romantic literature (of Oz himself), such as Hanah Gonen, in Mikhael sheli (My Michael), and the boy in Har ha'etzah ha-ra'ah (The Mountain of Bad Advice), is at odds with the practical, realistic society in which he lives. He sees his deeds as lunatic. He becomes the object of derision among friends, family and acquaintances—repulsed even by the dying girl, Esti, whom he loves—because none of them understands him, the depth of his knowledge, or the influence of literature over his thought processes.

Raz, Orit. Ani lo mah she-atem hoshvim (I Am Not What You Think). Jerusalem: Keter, 1989. About Yoni, a dyslexic child who suffers from problems of communication with his parents, neighbors, and especially with other pupils in his class, and who has to build a life for himself within a very short time.

Rosenperl, Shaul. Aba shel Gidi kibul 'onesh (Giddi's Father Got Punished). Shocken, 1983. Deals with Giddi's psychological suffering as a result of his father's incarceration in jail as a thief.


Shtreit-Wurzel, Esther. Mikhtavim le-Tsofiyah (Letters to Tsophia). Amichai, 1964. A story told in the form of letters written by a twelve-year-old girl to her adult cousin, in which are examined the problems of appeal and rejection, the looks of boys and girls, misunderstanding, sense of self, inner struggle, and growing up. The author shows great sensitivity toward the characteristics of age and sex.

Teper, Yonah. Bakkuk ha-bosem shel ima (Mother's Perfume-Bottle). Tel-Aviv: Ha-kibbutz Ha-meuchad, 1986. After her mother's death, Shiri, an only child, strives to produce a play which mirrors her own life.
Fantasy-World and Psychological Literature

Zarchi, Nurit. Avigayil me-har ha-melakhim (Avigayil from the Kings’ Mountain). Ramat-Gan: Massada, 1989. Avigayil, who has lost her parents and is now living in Kefar Giv'on, has trouble adjusting to life there and decides to run away from reality. She passes through a time tunnel and meets a witch who knows everything, including the kings who fight there. Avigayil becomes a “little priest” who encourages the good kings to fight the bad ones, and experiences wars that blur between Biblical and contemporary ones.


———. Ha-Yaldah Robin Hud (The Girl Robin Hood). Tel-Aviv: Sifriat Poalim, 1982. Robin Hood is dissatisfied with her school’s curriculum and its unspoken agenda, demonstrated by its lack of integration between suburban children and rich, city children. She is filled with utopian dreams of a “fraternity of freedom”—a series of youth-villages modeled after a kibbutz that will not, however, erase the member’s individuality for the sake of society (as in real kibbutzim). The point of the story is to emphasize the importance of idealistic dreams and to stress that it is better to raise a “legend-killing” generation.


———. Meshoshim (Feelers). Ramat-Gan: Massada, 1980. A girl receives a pair of invisible feelers and is able to feel things that others do not know about.


———. Zikhronot min ha-sharvul (Memories Out of the Sleeve). Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1979. A story about the Templars’ voyage to Eretz Israel in the 19th century, told by a she-mouse who joined the travelers.
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(Continued on next p.)
Dr. Shlomo Harel received his Ph.D. from the Department of Hebrew Literature of Tel-Aviv University. His dissertation dealt with research on Hebrew poetry during the 19th century. He is the head of the regional school for teachers-in-service at Beit-Berl, where he also heads the Department of Literature at Beit-Berl College and the Yemima Center for the Study and Teaching of Children's Literature, which he founded in 1985. He is the editor of Be’emét?!, a miscellany of children's and adolescents' literature, and Be’eri, the interdisciplinary yearbook of Beit-Berl. Dr. Harel has recently published a novel: The Puffins of Itzi Geva: A Life-Story of a Boy in Love, intended for adolescent readers, and a new book of his theoretical research about children's literature: Children's Literature as Literature. Dr. Harel has also received many awards, including the Shlomo Shpan Prize for Literature (1972), a stipend from the International Library for Children's Literature in Germany, the Partisan’s Prize (1988), and the Dov Sadan Prize (1990).

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