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Bein polanit le'ivrit. On the Polish-Hebrew Literary Bilingualism in Israel (Reconnaissance)*

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The phenomenon of the Polish literary milieu in Israel was created by immigrants who came to Eretz Israel between the interwar period and the March *Aliyah*, as well as later [see: Famulska-Ciesielska, Żurek]. Both writers leaving Poland with some achievements, as well as those who only started their literary work after many years in Israel, repeatedly faced the dilemma of what language to write in: Polish, which was the first language of assimilated Jews or those who strongly identified themselves as Jews, but who did not know any of the Jewish languages, or in Hebrew, which was often only learnt in the New Country?[1]

At the time the Israeli statehood was being formed, Hebrew was the third official language of Palestine alongside Arabic and English, and since 1948 the official language of the State of Israel [*Medinat Israel*, see: Krauze, Zieliński,

* Polish original: (2016) „Bejn polanit le'iwrit". O polsko-hebrajskim bilingwizmie literackim w Izraelu. (Rekonesans). *Wielogłos* 2(28), pp. 99–123.

[1] Bilingualism, which has always occupied a special place in the history of the Jewish nation, contributed to the creation of multilingual literature, created not only in Yiddish, Hebrew or Ladino, but also in the languages of the countries of settlement. As the Jewish writer and critic Shmuel Niger noted, for Jews one language has never been a sufficient medium [see: Niger, pp. 51–57].

passim][2]. At the same time, the Polish language, although recognised as an attribute of the elite as early as in the period preceding the establishment of Israel[3], could not officially compete with Hebrew in terms of prestige and importance as one of the languages of the diaspora. While all diasporic languages, especially Yiddish [see: Rayfield, pp. 19–21], was initially perceived as a symbol of submission and an obstacle to the consolidation of Israeli society in the spirit of Zionist values, the resurrected Hebrew[4] language was treated not only as a symbol of state independence, freedom and community building, but also as a sign of "the return to the country of the forefathers" and the basis for a consciously created "positive identity"[5] for Israel. When the state had existed for fifty years, as the authors of the *Encyclopedia of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education* noted in 1998, the language war was won and the goal of the hegemony of the Hebrew language achieved [see also: Geller, pp. 86–87; Chaver, pp. 76–83]. At the same time, although Hebrew for future generations of Israelis has become not only the everyday language of school and public life, but also the language spoken at home,

> […] the dream of the early Zionists of a monolingual Hebrew-speaking Israel has not become a reality.
> […] the widespread use of other languages notably Yiddish and Russian (as community languages) and English (as a second language for public and official use) means that bilingualism is a reality of life in Israel [Baker, Prys Jones, pp. 202–203].

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The widely discussed phenomenon of Polish literature created in Israel [see among others: Löw 2001, pp. 81–92; Zacharska, pp. 224–238; S.J. Żurek, pp. 219–233; T. Cieślak, pp. 164–185; Dąbrowski, Molisak; Famulska-Ciesielska] is inextricably linked with the issue of Polish-Hebrew bilingualism, and to

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[2] Multilingualism as an immanent feature of literature created by Jews was pointed out by the critic of Yiddish and Hebrew literature, Bal-Makhshoves [Bal-Machszowes] (born Israel Isidor Elyashev [Izrael Izydor Eliaszew], 1873–1924). According to Bal-Makhshoves, the Jewish writer not only "breathes and lives […] between two languages", but also "the spirit of Hebrew remains a mixture of the spirits of dozens of other [non-Jewish—B.T.] languages" [Bal-Machshowes, p. 147]. See also: Szymaniak, pp. 144–145; Adamczyk-Garbowska, *passim*.

[3] Israel Bartal notes that even before the State of Israel was established "not English (official), but Polish was the language of the intelligentsia". While adding that "Poland was a blemished land", Bartal probably suggests the pejorative associations that this language might have evoked in part of Israeli society [Friedrich, Bartal].

[4] The creator of Modern Hebrew was the Lithuanian-born Jewish linguist Eliezer Ben-Yehuda [Ben Jehuda] (1858–1922) [see: Kowalczyk, pp. 45–58; Koestler, chapter *The Rebirth of the Hebrew Language*; Bartal, pp. 141–150; H. Blanc, pp. 397–409].

[5] A term coined by Małgorzata Melchior. See: Melchior 1990, p. 189; Melchior 2004, p. 20, *passim*.

a lesser extent also with bilingualism based on the use of Polish and Yiddish (or all three languages) for literary purposes, or even Polish-English bilingualism[6]. Of the approximately 130 writers who, from the 1950s, formed the Polish literary community in Israel, many kept Polish as the language of their own literary work. In particular those writers whose output was formed in Poland were not able to give up their already formed creative tool, even if they noticed the need to appear in the mainstream of Israeli literature written in Hebrew. The Polish language, "incompatible" with Israeli realities and often treated as foreign in local society, from the very beginning condemned the authors who wrote in it to marginalism: non-Hebrew literary production was "badly perceived and not supported" [Jabłońska 2004, p. 121]. An interest in the Israeli market and the need to seek the attention of Israeli critics was expressed by such Polish writers as Leo Lipski[7], Stanisław Wygodzki [see: Löw 1995, pp. 72–77] or Ida Fink, who was the first non-Hebrew writer in Israel to receive the Israel Prize in Literature in 2008. Ida Fink's book debut, a collection of stories *Pisat zman* from 1975, written in Polish and translated into Hebrew by Nahman Ben-Ami [Nachman Ben Ami], was not published in the original language until 1987. Fink, who came to Israel without any knowledge of the Hebrew language, with a few unpublished stories in Polish, stayed with the Polish language for "natural necessity" because her Hebrew was not fluent enough to be used in her literary work[8]. Translation remained for Fink, as for Lipski and Wygodzki, the only way to reach the Hebrew-speaking audience.

The majority of immigrants who came from Poland and were interested in literary activity wrote or later began to write in Polish, at the same time using Hebrew and sometimes Yiddish[9] for the purpose of non-fictional prose (Józef, i.e. Joseph Bau, Roman Frister, Natan Gross, Felicja alias Felicia Karay, Aleksander Klugman, Józef or Josef Kornblum, Jan Kot), such poetic genres as *fraszka*, or trifle (Józef Bau, Zeew Fleischer), as well as for translation pur-

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[6] Eugenia Prokop-Janiec, analysing the phenomenon of the Polish-Jewish literature of the interwar years, mentions cases of writers using three languages [see: Prokop-Janiec, pp. 303–306, 316–317].

[7] In a letter to Jerzy Giedroyc dated 19 Sep. 1970, Lipski wrote: "Publishing my stories here [in Hebrew] will be beneficial for me in that it will establish some kind of asocial 'status' for me here". As cited in: Kossewska 2015, p. 63.

[8] The writer only knew a colloquial form of Hebrew, as she repeatedly mentioned in her interviews. See: Bielas, Fink; Szewc, Fink; Sobolewska, Fink; Lewińska, p. 56.

[9] Among the Polish-Israeli writers who used Polish and Yiddish were, among others, the following: Lipa Fischer (1905–?), who published, in Tel Aviv, a collection of Polish poems and two volumes of fictionalised memoirs in Yiddish, and Rachel [Rachela] Auerbach (1901?–1976), the author of books written in Yiddish about the Holocaust, as well as Polish poems published in the pre-war press [see: Famulska-Ciesielska, Żurek, pp. 54–55; 23–24]. The writer with the richest literary output in both languages was Kalman Segal (1917–1980) [see: Ruta].

poses[10]. According to the classification proposed by Edward Balcerzan, such a division of creative capabilities between the two languages indicates two varieties of literary bilingualism situated lower in the scale of bilingualism: incomplete creative bilingualism and functional bilingualism. In Balcerzan's opinion, the first of these varieties refers to a situation where the writer creates in two languages, "but there are clear differences between the degree of difficulties he has overcome in L1 and that in the case of L2". In other words, the second language produces texts that are not artistic literature intended by the author or genres that are considered to be easier in terms of language. Functional bilingualism, which occurred when "the author wrote in L1, but in addition to his original work he also produced literary translations that evoke the context of L2" [Balcerzan, p. 12], consisted in reserving the second language, in this case Hebrew, for translation activity.

Few Israeli writers of Polish descent have for a long time created literary works in genres that are considered to be the most difficult in terms of language, i.e. poetry and fictional prose, and at the same time equal in terms of value in both languages—according to Balcerzan's classification, this is the highest type of creative bilingualism, including self-translations. Multilingual creative capabilities may manifest themselves in various manners through an asymmetrical and time-shifting distribution of creative efforts between the two languages. Sometimes, after the first attempts to write in Polish, the "Hebrew stage" appeared in the works of Polish-Israeli authors, after which the return to Polish was final, and the use of Hebrew was limited to translation or self-translation (Renata Jabłońska, Irit Amiel). Self-translation became a way to write directly in Polish (example of Miriam Akavia [Akawia] and Irit Amiel) [see: Kraskowska, p. 45, *passim*], although, as in the case of Halina Birenbaum, it could only be an episodic attempt to create in the second language. Other Polish-Israeli writers change the language of their writing to Hebrew; in such cases, after the first attempts made in Polish, they rooted themselves permanently in the Hebrew language (Anda Amir-Pinkerfeld, Uri Orlev [Orlew], Jaakov [Jaakow] Besser, Dan Tsalka [Calka])[11].

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[10] Well-known translators of Polish literature into Hebrew are, among others, the following: Zvi [Cwi] Arad (1909–1994), Joseph [Józef] Lichtenbaum (1895–1968), Beniamin Tenenbaum-Tene (1914–1999), Shalom Lindenbaum (born 1926), Yoram [Joram] Bronowski (1948–2001), Szoszana Raczyńska [Shoshana Raczynska, Raczynski] (1921–2007), Dawid Weinfeld [Waynpeld, Waynfeld] (b. 1937) or Rafi Weichert (b. 1964). See: Famulska-Ciesielska, Żurek, appropriate personal entries.

[11] New Hebrew literature includes the works of the poet Avot Yeshurun [Awot Jeszurun] (1904–1992), who spent his childhood in Krasnystaw and left for Palestine at the age of 21. Although Yeshurun only wrote in Hebrew, he often wove into poems words and phrases in Yiddish, Polish, Russian or Arabic. As he said in an interview, "I listen with two ears, and each ear hears a different language. One ear hears Hebrew, the other Yiddish. […] Yiddish is my mother tongue. And I've written that Hebrew is my mother tongue"

The choice of the language of writing by Israeli writers of Polish origin seems to be only to a small extent determined by their knowledge of Hebrew in the period preceding their migration to Israel. While some Jews from Poland (Natan Gross[12], Roman Frister, Irena Bronner, Arie Brauner, Shoshana Raczynski or Lea Shinar[13]) knew some Hebrew from Jewish schools, others, including mainly representatives of the younger generation, attended only state Polish schools and usually did not speak any of the Jewish languages (Miriam Akavia, Ida Fink, Jerzy Herman, Ida Henefeld-Ron, Maria Lewińska, Renata Jabłońska, Uri Orlev, Anita Wolfstein). As the Warsaw-born Israeli-Polish Yiddishist Chone Shmeruk [Szmeruk] notes, in the interwar years "the educational system in Poland brought about an ever-increasing number of Jews whose main language was Polish" [Shmeruk 1989, p. 296][14].

Those immigrants, who acquired their Hebrew speaking and writing skills only in their new homeland, most often stayed with Polish as their literary material (the exception is Uri Orlev), retaining Hebrew for non-belles-lettres genres, literary translation or self-translation. According to Jadwiga Maurer, "every Polish Jew […] has different excuses why he did not break with Polishness. Why they continue to live […] in Polish mythology" [Maurer, p. 28]. The rootedness in the Polish language, despite the sense of loyalty to the new homeland, was an important element indicating biculturalism and double identification—as Ryszard Löw observes, becoming an Israeli did not have to mean automatic rooting out of Jewish Polishness:

> Leaving Poland was not the beginning of the migratory journey, but the end of the diasporic journey, reaching the homeland of choice and adopting its language, that

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[Cole, p. 107]. Another writer associated with Poland (Lviv and Warsaw) was Uri Zvi [Cwi] Grinberg [Grynberg, Greenberg] (1896–1981), who wrote in Yiddish and in Hebrew. See: Piątek, pp. 171–195.

[12] In hindsight, Natan Gross (1919-2005), a director, writer and translator, described the Hebrew that he "brought from Poland" as "school-like", "poor" and "not suitable for printing". Some time after studying at an ulpan in Jerusalem, however, he began to edit the film monthly "Oman ve'Technai be'Kolnoa", where he published articles and columns in Hebrew. See: Gross 2006, pp. 239, 154.

[13] Lea Shinar [Szinar] (Rela Weinfeld; 1924–2014), the elder sister of Miriam Akavia (1927–2015), recalls: "When I was still in Poland, I already knew the Hebrew alphabet, especially prayers. My father wanted me to be able to pray. And it was the old Hebrew alphabet that had been distorted for centuries. I heard modern Hebrew in the theatre when an Israeli group came to Kraków. It pleased me and I started to learn before the war, but […] it was only when I sailed to Haifa in 1948 that I learned the language well" [Lisowski, Shinar, p. 149].

[14] According to Shmeruk, although in 1931 nearly 80 percent of religious Jews considered Yiddish as their mother tongue, while only about 12 percent declared Polish and about 8 percent Hebrew, the majority of Jewish students attended free public institutions, where Polish was the language of teaching and the compulsory language of speech [see: Shmeruk 1989, pp. 285–296].

> is Hebrew. For many Hebrew as an acquired language […] also became […] the language of literary expression. However, not for all [Löw 2001, p. 85].

Writing about the need for contact with the Polish press and books, characteristic especially for immigrants of the Gomułka *aliyah*, Elżbieta Kossewska draws attention to the fact that the need to write was triggered by immigration, which caused a remoteness and was inseparable from the sense of loss and longing for the place of childhood, as well as anxiety and insecurity in the face of the challenges of the new reality. For many immigrants, the Polish language became "a mental anchor; they expressed in it the shock they experienced when they found themselves in a new country, its terrifying climate, and previously unknown human, social and cultural structures" [Sawin, p. 107]. They read and wrote in Polish even at the cost of staying on the periphery of Israeli society, in which "one could only be listened to in Hebrew" [Kossewska 2009, pp. 123–124].

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The motives for which writers abandon their mother tongue to create in a second language vary. The choice of the language of creative writing may be determined equally by factors related to the emotional and extra-artistic sphere: from fascination with a specific culture and the internal need to have a new poetic instrument, not yet burdened with unimportant associations, to factors conditioned by external circumstances (such as dislocation) and resulting from specific political and worldview-related choices. Apart from the ideological and cultural context, an important motive is usually the presence or lack of readers in a given language and a possible desire to broaden the audience [see: Tarnowska 2004, pp. 97–109; cf. Beajour, p. 39]. However,

> the motivations for the decision most often fall within the sphere of […] the most subjective experiences, about which only the subject him/herself can say something really meaningful, even if not always objectively true. Such information will often refer to the personality of the author rather than explain the essence of the phenomenon we are interested in. The real mechanism remains hidden. Trying to penetrate the principle of its mechanics, we are always dependent on speculations and hypotheses [Kraskowska, p. 40].

In the case of Polish-Israeli writers who were surrounded by the Hebrew language on a daily basis, the process of displacing the language of childhood by the second language became natural, so there was also a temptation to appear in front of a Hebrew-speaking audience. The choice of Hebrew, which was "the language of the nation and the language of one's own children" [Lenar, Akavia] connotating a sense of belonging, was also an expression of an emotional connection with the new homeland. As Miriam Akavia recalls:

> There were lofty moments. There was a rebirth. There was a sense of belonging that I could not give up anymore. The sight of free, cheerful children speaking Hebrew, singing Hebrew songs moved me to tears [Obirek, Akavia, p. 3].

Similarly, Akavia's sister, the author of Hebrew novels Lea Shinar, although she spoke of her strong ties with the Polish language, described her own Hebrew as "ideology" and "another, equally great love" [Lisowski, Shinar, p. 149].

As for most writers Polish was their first language (L1), writing in an acquired language, which was not only the second (L2), but sometimes even the third (L3) or fourth (L4), could mean a desire to break away from one's family environment. The reborn Hebrew language was therefore becoming a tool for changing one's own cultural identity [see: Prokop-Janiec, pp. 363–372] and the instrument of separation from everything that evoked associations with the painful past. In the post-war years, the desire for this transformation was magnified by the pressure of Hebraisation:

> Before their arrival in Eretz Israel, the Holocaust survivors studied Hebrew in displaced persons' camps in Germany, undergoing Zionist indoctrination, which included the rejection of the language of their country of origin and forging closer ties to Hebrew. In this case, political integration accelerated linguistic adaptation […] the Holocaust survivors wanted to get rid of the stigma of the diaspora and the Holocaust as soon as possible, deny the past and merge into a new strong-looking Jewish society in Eretz Israel. The theme of the Holocaust was used to cross out the life of assimilated Jews in the diaspora—it was unacceptable to extend its effects in the form of using the language of the country of origin to the Jewish communities in Eretz Israel. In Yishuv, all manifestations of the links between Jews and their former language and culture were very badly perceived [Kossewska 2015, p. 69].

The process of acquiring a new cultural identity, as described by Kossewska, has become a part of the fate of the majority of Polish immigrants. Miriam Akavia recalls: "Immediately after the war we were required to forget about our roots, real names and Yiddish. [We were required to] return to the former Israel and Hebrew" [Grzelczak, Akavia, p. 26][15]. Irit Amiel also expressed the conviction that Hebrew should have been "given strength" [Kozioł, Akavia, pp. 94–95]:

> No one spoke Polish in Israel. We came here and wanted our children to be born in Hebrew. We made such a decision. […] I wanted to be a *Sabra*. I wanted to speak Hebrew like everyone else. With no accent. [Grzela, Amiel]

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[15] According to Akavia, the Hebraisation of names was not so much a result of the internal needs of immigrants as of state pressure. Despite the fact that she took her Hebrew name and surname shortly after arriving in Israel, Akavia still used her old surname for a long time. See: Olszewska, p. 212.

The pressure of Hebraisation causing that "it was a shame to speak Polish or Yiddish"[16], and partly also the stigmatization of the Polish language as associated with anti-Semitism, alongside social and political conditions, became the reason why "children did not want to talk to their parents in Polish" [Kossewska 2009, p. 124]. The desire to "give testimony" and be understood by one's loved became, together with the feeling of loosening ties with the old country and the lack of people who could read Polish, an important motive for undertaking creative work in Hebrew:

> How was I supposed to write in Polish? – recollects Irit Amiel. – For whom? Why? I could not speak Hebrew. Then I gave up thinking about writing. After all, Poland was two and a half years away from Israel. And then there was the iron curtain. [Grzela, Amiel]

Some writers also complained about their growing diffidence in the use of Polish. The poet and translator Jael Shalitt, who kept her Polish writings in a sock drawer for a long time after she arrived in Israel in 1950, says: "Writing in Polish is a tormenting uncertainty, a chase for the escaping shape of the word, and eventually the fear that one day you will loose the sense of this language" [Leociak, p. 71]. Miriam Akavia was also unsure of her Polish. For her, just like for Irit Amiel, Hebrew was the language of her new family, her husband, children and grandchildren, while Renata Jabłońska[17], the author of the 1999 volume of poetry *Eier zehr* [*Foreign City*], explained the Hebrew stage of her creative work in the following way: "I was afraid to start writing poems in Polish; it was a fear that I would 'not match' the richness of Polish poetry". Apart from the fear of "facing" the highest achievements of Polish poetry, her literary fascinations contributed significantly to the creation of Jabłońska's Hebrew poems:

> I have read Hebrew poets, Rachel, Lea Goldberg, Alterman, Amichai… This certainly influenced me (e.g. Rachel's simplicity and sensitivity, Lea Goldberg's beautiful language and Amichai's wisdom), but I did not consciously refer to anyone.

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[16] Amiel recalls: "there were posters hanging in buses: 'Hebrew, speak Hebrew'. When you spoke another language with someone, people intervened. It was terror" [Grzela, Amiel]. Agata Tuszyńska noted: "'When I came here', recalls Jadzia, a survivor on the Aryan side, 'one was not allowed to speak Polish, everyone ran after you and shouted out rak ivrit… (only in Hebrew)'" [Tuszyńska, p. 17].

[17] Renata Jabłońska, born in 1935 in Łódź and brought up in Polish culture, came to Israel in 1957. She made her prose debut in the American magazine "Literatura" issued in Polish in Hollywood. She published her first book, a volume of short stories *Kikar ha'melekh Albert* [*King Albert's Square*], translated by several translators, in 1993. After this Hebrew episode, she published several volumes of poetry and prose in Polish, both in Poland and in Israel.

> […] I was under the influence of Hebrew poetry at the time and these poems really "came by themselves"[18].

While the confessional poems from Jabłońska's first volume mainly concerned the problem of it being difficult to acclimatise oneself in Israel[19], both Akavia and Amiel wrote in Hebrew about their Polish childhood and about their wartime experiences. With time, the memory of traumatic experiences, suppressed both because of the imperative not to talk about the Holocaust[20], which was common until the beginning of the 1960s, and because of the fear of "touching this subject with words" [Szewc, Fink, p. 4], started to demand externalisation. The first works by Miriam Akavia, for whom writing was a form of self-therapy, were written in Hebrew [see: Grzela, p. 17]: a way to "get rid of the burden of explaining […] all that" to children "who were not told about war experiences" [Poskuta-Włodek, Akavia; cf. Akavia 2010, Rutkowska]. Akavia's debut autobiographical novel [see: Akavia, Lenar] *Ne'urim ba-shalekhet* was published in 1975 in Tel Aviv, and in 1989 it was published in Mosze Plessner's Polish translation as *Jesień młodości* [literally: *The Autumn of Youth*]. Subsequent Polish editions of this book in 1996 and 2010 were self-translated[21]. Similarly, Akavia's novel published for the first time in 1984 under the title *Karmi sheli* [*My vineyard*], which tells the story of the writer's family and her "beautiful childhood in Kraków", was published six years later in Polish in the author's translation. This is what Akavia said about this novel:

> I wrote [it—B.T.] continuously, dozens of times, but only in myself; I do not know in what language, maybe even in Polish, although the first language in which this book was published was Hebrew. [Obirek, Akavia]

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[18] Both quotations come from Renata Jabłońska's letter to the author of this paper, dated 26 Dec. 2015.

[19] Cf. for example the poem *ba'kluv* [*in a cage*]: "sometimes I am closed / in a transparent cage / I see the world outside / I cannot touch it / people see me / my figure my clothes / but they cannot see the transparent / cage". [The original, see: Jabłońska 1999, p. 3]

[20] Until the trial of Adolf Eichmann, the subject of the Holocaust was excluded from public discourse in Israel. See: Tarnowska 2006, pp. 173–193.

[21] The short stories included in the volume *Cena* [*Price*] (1992) were also a self-translation, based on the book *ha-Mehir* published in 1978. Some of these short stories were published in the volume *Urojenia* [*Delusions*] (2000). The following prose works remained in Hebrew: *ha-Derekh ha-aḥeret* [*The other way*] (1992) [see: Gross 1993]; *Yureḳ ṿe-Anyah* [*Jurek and Ania*] (1975, 2000); *Be-artso shel Yanush Ḳorts'ak* [*In Janusz Korczak's country*] (2006); *Bayit Bonim Be-Ahava* [*Dom buduje się z miłością*] (2001). On the other hand, *Harpatḳah ba-oṭobus: ve-'od harpatḳa'ot* [*An adventure in a bus and other adventures*] (1986) and *Galiyah u-Miḳlosh: Nituḳ yeḥasim* [*Galia and Miklosz. Breaking relations*] (1982), have Polish versions: *Przygoda w autobusie* (1995) and *Galia i Miklosz. Zerwanie stosunków* (1992).

The stories collected in *My Returns* (2005), on the other hand, were written in Polish. Although Akavia's creative work was described in Poland as Hebrew [Wojdowski], according to Henryk Grynberg, her writings are "a return from a refuge to a beautiful family home, saved in memory. […] Akavia belongs to the Polish literature of the Shoah. Neither Israel nor the Hebrew language saved her from this" [Grynberg, pp. 47–48].

The Polish literature of the Shoah also includes the work of Irit Amiel (born Irena Librowicz in 1931) [see: Famulska-Ciesielska, Żurek, pp. 18–19], taken up first in Hebrew to express experiences about which the author was unable to speak [see: Wasita, Amiel, p. 278][22]. One impulse to create Amiel's first volume of poetry, *Mivḥan be-Sho'ah* (1994), was the poet's granddaughter's request for help in preparing for a school exam:

> One day Noa, my granddaughter, came to me […] and said all smiles: "Safta, or grandmother, I am supposed to write an essay about the Holocaust, and you were there. Will you help me?" So I helped her. Then I wrote these works with all of them. I thought about myself: "I am the one about whom Noa said: you were there. It was then that I wrote *Egzamin z Zagłady* (literally: *Holocaust Examination*) in Hebrew [Grzela, Amiel][23].

A collection of poems, which in the 1990s had three Tel Aviv editions (1994, 1995, 1998), almost simultaneously appeared in her own translation as the *Egzamin z Zagłady* (1994, 1998). As Amiel explained,

> I decided not to write in Polish until I had learnt Hebrew very well. I wrote my first poems in Hebrew. Interestingly, writing in Hebrew opened me up to Polish. It came back because it was in the brain [Grzela, Amiel].

Subsequent volumes of poetry: *Nie zdążyłam…* [literally: *I did not make it on time…*] (1998), *Wdychać głęboko* [*To breathe in deeply*] (2002) and col-

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[22] Similarly, the history of "Israeli Polish literature" includes the bilingual work of Josef [Józef] Bau (1920–2002), the author of four Hebrew books, which are: collections of humoresques, essays and memoirs. As Ryszard Löw put it, "[Bau—B.T.] did not depart from the Polish language, but everything he wrote in Hebrew remains very Polish, very Polish-Jewish. The kind of humour, allusiveness, metaphors and the sense of verbal expression grew out of the culture of the Polish language. These features of Bau's writing certainly played a significant role in his inability to join the Hebrew writing cycle" [Löw 2002/2003, pp. 319–320].

[23] Irit Amiel talked to Maria Lewińska about acquiring a new language in the following terms: "When I came to Israel at the turn of 1947–1948, the Israeli War of Independence broke out. I wanted to write a diary, but in what language? And suddenly I understood that I was left without a language. A man without a language is a cripple. This is the fate of an immigrant. It was necessary to quickly learn a new language: Hebrew. A language with a completely different shape, rhythm and melody. A language, which at that time sounded aggressive, dry and as harsh as orders, and tasted like gravel in the mouth" [Lewińska, pp. 58–59].

lections of short stories: *Osmaleni* [*Singed*] (1999) and *Podwójny krajobraz* [*Double Landscape*] (2008) were originally written in Polish. Both prose books were nominated for the most important Polish literary award Nike. The book *Osmaleni* was translated by the author into Hebrew (*Tseruvim*, Jerusalem 2002), as if to satisfy her conviction that "nothing is completely finished until it exists in both languages, Polish and Hebrew" [Amiel 2014, p. 216].

The return to Polish after many years of not using this language on a daily basis can be explained not only by psychological reasons ("I like Polish, because I was born in this language. It connects me with my childhood, with my parents" [Grzela, Amiel][24]), but also with artistic ones ("I like the way in which words can be created. You add a negation and you are already 'insatiable'" [Grzela, Amiel]). Writing about the problem of presenting the Holocaust in a literary work, Irit Amiel argued:

> There is something in the Holocaust that cannot be rendered well in other languages. It was happening in Poland. When you say "akcja", people know what you mean. And when you start writing in English, there is no "akcja" anymore, there is only "action" and nobody understands anything. My books are translated into other languages, but they do not reverberate elsewhere as they do in Poland. Language is a huge force [Grzela, Amiel].

The network of connotations that grew over Hebrew, the language of the Bible and Eretz Israel, implied associations unrelated to Europe and did not correspond to the experiences of the diaspora that were connoted by the culture of the country of residence. Miriam Akavia noticed that

> it was not easy to change from Polish to Hebrew, and to write in Hebrew about the Polish climate, Polish nature, Polish seasons, Polish cities and villages, mountain rivers and dense forests, the smells of mushrooms after rain and the smells of elderberry… [Nagroda SEC dla Miriam Akavii, p. 387].

The Polish language was the medium in which the memories of the Arcadia of one's childhood and experiences connected with the war and the Holocaust could be expressed in the most appropriate way. Akavia is not sure, however, what the most important stimulus was that made her return to her native language as a tool for her creative work:

> One day I found myself in the Union of Cracovians in Tel Aviv. I met many specialists in Polish and writers from Kraków: Natan Gross, Dr Reuven Wolf. Maybe their influence triggered my return to the Polish language. Or maybe, when after

[24] Amiel, in whose house the Polish language was used before the war, says: "I have been in love with the Polish language since childhood. I know many Polish poems by heart, as well as Polish church and patriotic songs. I think the Polish language saved me from the Holocaust. […] Now, in Israel, I still buy Polish newspapers and read Polish books, and Polish culture is still close to my heart" [Wasita, Amiel, p. 278].

> many years I visited Kraków as an employee of the Israeli embassy in Stockholm, or maybe because Polish literature was the literature of my youth, it is a narrow but strong base on which, if not my outlook on the world, then my way of thinking was shaped [Lewińska, p. 63].

What is more, Hebrew was not a fully-formed language adapted to the changing reality. The Israeli writer Aharon Megged, born in 1920 in Włocławek, wrote about the generation of the builders of Israel, including the *Yishuv*-born *Sabras* or "New Jews"/Israeli who, unlike the Jews of the diaspora, were national heroes [see: Almog]:

> We, also those born here, for whom Hebrew is the mother tongue and the only language they know, we feel that for us this tongue is "unnatural", that it does not yet "speak out of itself", that we need roots deeper than one generation, a relationship stronger than that between mother and son, to grow into it.

According to Megged, Hebrew, less "emotional" than, for example, Yiddish, also connoted other social attitudes:

> If it is true that a nation shapes its language, to some extent it is also true that a language shapes its nation. […] in Hebrew one can be open less, people confess less, repine less and complain less. There is simply a lack of appropriate words [Megged, pp. 19–20; cf. Shmeruk 2011, pp. 22–33].

At the same time, this lack of words brought about the "awareness of literary possibilities, which are nowhere else in the world" and created the temptation for the writer to freely shape this not yet firmly established language, which "is still being created, every day": "You can come up with words, combine them, add them. It is possible to draw on the treasury of words of the emigrants from Eastern Europe. […] It is possible to create words which will immediately enter general circulation" [Tuszyńska, p. 18].

For writers from Poland writing in Hebrew, the lack of "childhood language", apart from their insufficient knowledge of the biblical language, was an ailment that caused a feeling of language insufficiency[25]. As Jerzy Lisowski writes,

> Every language entails the long train of the whole area of its culture consisting of beliefs, legends, proverbs, lullabies and rhymes, student, peasant and thievish dialects, etc., etc.—everything that one absorbs unconsciously and that later ferments in the imagination. Well, you can be bilingual, but you cannot have a double childhood or double youth, those batteries of emotions that sometimes charge you for your whole life [Lisowski, p. 175].

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[25] Uri Orlev said: "The Polish language soaked into me when I was very young. These are things you never forget: certain feelings, words, the visuality of these words in Polish. And in Hebrew it changes, sometimes there are no such words" [Ziemann, pp. 12–13].

As one of the reasons for staying with the Polish language as the language of literary creation, Renata Jabłońska considered this sense of linguistic "incompleteness", which makes Hebrew words, especially those related to the sphere of feelings, sound foreign to her[26]. And she describes the division of functions that both languages perform in her everyday life in the following way:

> When I think about the past, my parents, school or friends, or about my favourite landscapes, it always happens in Polish, completely unconsciously. But when it comes to everyday matters, especially those concerning the local reality, I think in Hebrew [Jabłońska 2001, p. 26].

Despite the initial conviction that Hebrew was more suitable for the role of a poetic medium than Polish, Renata Jabłońska later suddenly felt that she "did not want to write in Hebrew, but in Polish" [Tarnowska, Jabłońska, p. 51].

The impulse to publish in Polish was certainly also induced by the interest of critics that appeared in Poland in the 1990s. The restoration of Polish-Israeli diplomatic relations in 1990, after twenty-three years, enabled Israeli writers to participate fully in Polish literary life [see: Szaynok, pp. 15–30][27]. Even those writers of Polish origin who write exclusively in Hebrew[28] or translate their works and publish them in two language versions for two circles of recipients[29] reach the Polish market.

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Although for assimilated Jews born in Poland, Polish was the language of home and their immediate family that shaped their sensitivity and perception

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[26] From Renata Jabłońska's letter to the author of this paper, dated 13 Dec. 2015.

[27] A large part of Polish-Israeli literary production, especially in the years 1967–1990, reached Polish émigré publishers in London and Paris. Since 2000, the majority of Polish-Israeli authors' books have been published in Poland. See: Tarnowska 2014, pp. 27–41.

[28] Authors writing exclusively in Hebrew include the poet Anat Zagórska-Springmann (b. 1947), who nevertheless translates her own works into Polish (see: Zagórska-Springmann 2005/2006, pp. 25–27; Zagórska-Springmann 2008, pp. 122–123), as well as Jonathan (Jonatan) Barkai (b. 1937), a theatre actor and director, translator of contemporary Polish poetry into Hebrew. In recent years, the Lublin-based Werset publishing house has published the following volumes of Barkai's poems translated by Viola Wein: *Pastoralna atmosfera cmentarzy* (literally: *The pastoral atmosphere of cemeteries*) (2011); *Morderczy wizerunek* (*A murderous image*) (2013) and the volume *Zatracona metropolia* (*The lost metropolis*) (2014) evoking an image of contemporary Tel Aviv.

[29] The self-translated books include Natan Gross's *Kim pan jest, panie Grymek* (*Who are you, Mr. Grymek?*) from 1991 (original title *Mi atah, Adon Grimek?*, 1986), Uri (Jerzy) Huppert's *Podróż do źródeł pamięci* (*The journey to the sources of memory*), 2004 (original title *Mah zokher ha-yeled* [literally: *What* a *Child Remembers*], 1999), Yosef (Józef) Bau's *Czas zbezczeszczenia* (*Time of Desecration*), 1990 (original title *Shenot tirtsah* [literally: *The 1940s*]), or Lea Shinar's *Michal, córka Szaula* (*Michal, daughter of Shaul*), 1995 (original title *Michal, bat Shaul*, 1989).

of the world, in the Hebrew-speaking environment the process of displacing and replacing the language of childhood with the acquired language[30] inevitably had to take place. Another writer writing in Polish (e.g. patriotic texts addressed to a Polish audience) was the poet Anda Amir-Pinkerfeld born in Rzeszów (Anna Pinkerfeldówna, 1902–1981), the author of a volume of poems entitled *Pieśni życia* (literally: *Songs of Life*), published in 1921 in Lviv. Born into an assimilated Jewish family, in her youth she joined the Zionist organisation "Ha'shomer ha'tsair" ("The young guard") and in 1924 she permanently left for Palestine. Influenced by the poet Uri Zvi Grinberg, she began to write poems in Hebrew. She made her debut in her new homeland in 1928 in the magazine "Dawar" and published her first volume of Hebrew poetry *Yamim dovevim* (*Whispering Days*) a year later [see: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, pp. 848–849]. In addition to poetry, she also created literature for children, for which she was awarded the Israel Prize in 1978.

The Kalisz-born poet and translator Yaakov Besser (1934–2006), who made his debut with Polish poems in a local newspaper in Legnica after the war, did not return to Polish as a tool for writing original literature either [see: Besser; Famulska-Ciesielska, Żurek, pp. 35–36]. Neither did the prose writer, author of books for children and translator Uri Orlev (Jerzy Henryk Orłowski), an author of over thirty books in Hebrew. Orłowski, born in 1931 in Warsaw and brought up in Polish culture, admitted that "there was no other language in [his—B.T.] home" [Ziemann, p. 19]:

> We lived in Żoliborz. I recited at school: "Who are you? A little Pole". Before going to sleep, I prayed: "Angel, my watchman". Every Sunday, I went with the housekeeper to church. I had no idea that I was a Jew. This is how my family was assimilated [Smoleński, Orlev; cf. Orlev 2012; Abramow-Newerly].

Hiding during the war on the "Aryan" side, as well as during his later stay in the Bergen-Belsen camp, Orłowski wrote poems in Polish[31]:

> I wrote my first poems when we were hiding on the "Aryan" side in Warsaw. These poems stayed there for good. When the area of the [Bergen-Belsen concentration] camp was reduced, I returned to creating poetry, as did other children. I wrote the first version on a board that I detached from my mattress. It was only when I was fully satisfied with a poem that I rewrote it in a notebook [Polin.pl].

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[30] Bilinguals generally prefer one language and also experience periods when one language starts to dominate the other. If this process continues in one direction, the initially foreign language may become the functionally first language [see: Miodunka, p. 274; cf. Cieszynska; Błasiak-Tytuła, pp. 57–70].

[31] In 2005, the author translated these poems into Hebrew. The bilingual Polish-Hebrew edition including photocopies of some pages of his notebook was published in Jerusalem [see: Orłowski=Orlev]. These poems were also translated from Hebrew into Italian [see: Orlev 2012b].

After emigrating to Palestine after the war, he settled in one of the kibbutzes in Lower Galilee, he learnt to speak Hebrew and took his Hebrew name and surname[32]. Despite the feeling that "Poland betrayed him during the war" and abandoning Polish as a tool of creative work, Orlev said in interviews with Polish Radio that he remained a "Polish patriot": "To this day, when I see the Polish flag, the four-cornered cap or the eagle with a crown, I still feel moved. I could not change it even if I wanted to" [2014]. The choice of Hebrew as the language of his creative writing did not invalidate the cultural identity connoted by the language of his childhood, nor the linguistic associations rooted in the writer's subconscious. Both languages, influencing each other, created in his mind a kind of "inter-language"[33]. The writer recalls his work with Ludwik Jerzy Kern, the translator of his novel for children and young people entitled *Ha-I bi-Reḥov ha-tsiporim* (*An island in the Ptasia Street*), from 1981, as follows:

> He read his translation to me and I verified it against the Hebrew original. On the third day, I told him: "Jurek, you read this Polish original to me, and I'll check it against the Hebrew translation". The meanings of many words that I wrote in Hebrew had in my memory the roots and associations of Polish words [mc/jp 2014].

Similar was the creative path of Dan Tsalka, born in Warsaw as Mieczysław Całka (1936–2005), one of the most eminent Israeli writers. Tsalka survived the war in Siberia and Kazakhstan and after the war he grew up in Wrocław, where he studied philosophy and literature at the local university. He arrived in Israel in 1957, aged twenty-two. After his literary debut, which was the publication of four short prose works in the Polish left-wing magazine "Od Nowa" [Całka 1959], he cut himself off from the Polish language and after 1967 he published only in Hebrew [see: Ithl.org.il]. He is the author of about twenty books, both prose and poetic, of which only the short story *Ba'dereh le'Halab* (*On the Way to Aleppo*) has been translated into Polish [see: Calka 2009]. One of Dan Tsalka's later books, the autobiography of *Sefer ha'alefbet* (*The alphabet*), constructed from slogans arranged in alphabetical order, was modelled on Czesław Miłosz's *Abecadło* (*Miłosz's Alphabet*). Recalling such bilingual and bicultural writers from Poland as Tsalka, the politician and columnist Shevah (Szewach) Weiss noticed that even if they wrote in Hebrew about Israel and Israeli society, they always brought "our Europeanness, our Polishness" [Weiss] into Israeli literature.

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[32] Uri Orlev made his debut in 1956 with a novel *Ḥayale-Ḥayale* [*Lead toy soldiers*]. In 1976, he began writing books for children and young people, scripts for radio and television broadcasts, and translating Polish literature into Hebrew. He has authored more than thirty books that have been translated into 38 languages and has won many literary awards. See: Orlev 2000, pp. 76–78.

[33] A term coined by Ida Kurcz. See: Kurcz, p. 186.

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Bilingualism, which is a relative phenomenon—not only individual and gradual, but also dynamic, i.e. changing in time—is difficult to classify. In the case of literary bilingualism, there are various possible reasons to change the language of creative writing, from ideological to artistic, and there are different variants of the creative path. Even in the case of full bilingualism[34], when both languages become equal mediums of a writer's identity, in the domain of literary creation they are usually unequal—one of the languages (usually the first) dominates.

The majority of immigrant writers from Poland or immigrants who became writers in their new homeland remained permanently connected with the tradition of Polish literature. This applies both to authors writing exclusively in Polish and bilingual writers who, after years of growing into a new language and attempts to create literature in it, returned to their first language, which was Polish. This return did not, of course, mean a complete abandonment of Hebrew, but only a new partition of the tasks and functions of the two languages. The boundaries of interterritorial bilingualism, which, according to the Nigerian researcher Ekundayo Simpson, means the domination of the native language as a tool of creative work [Simpson 1978, p. 5], were also not exceeded by those writers who practised literary genres considered easier in terms of language in both tongues.

An example of extraterritorial bilingualism, meaning a permanent change in the language of creative writing, is the literary output of those immigrants for whom the Polish language, for various reasons, turned out to be an insufficient creative tool. Works by writers such as Anda Amir-Pinkerfeld, Uri Orlev and Dan Tsalka form an integral part of mainstream Hebrew-language Israeli literature.

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[34] A term coined by Ida Kurcz, which means a fully developed language and communication competence in both languages, both spoken and written. See: Kurcz, p. 176.

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