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THEORY — POETICS — HEBREW AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

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gests an alternative. For purposes of literary evaluation, one should replace the broad horizontal characterization of trivial literature with a differentiated, vertical exploration of aesthetic "families" which can embrace the entire spectrum of qualitative levels. The terms "trivial literature" and "kitsch" should be eliminated from the vocabulary of systematic poetics but redefined in terms of the history of taste: "trivial literature" would thus mean literature which is downgraded by the dominant representatives of taste in a given epoch. The mutual relationships of the varying

"trivial literatures" and "high literatures" merit examination, and the variations deserve historical and sociological explanation and critical comment. The aesthetic dichotomy in its modern form must be traced back to its origins in the conditions of the eighteenth century. All the various "trivial literatures" must be integrated into the scholarly consciousness, as elements of the systems of literary "communication" within a given nexus of historical conditions and as part of the entire history of "literary life".

ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEBREW CRIME STORY DURING THE 1930'S IN PALESTINE

by ZOHAR and YAAKOV SHAVIT

[Hebrew article: 30-73; bibliography: 45]

During the 1930's a vigorous activity of writing and publishing Hebrew crime stories in Palestine can be observed. It was a period of development of the literary center in Erez Israel, based on demographic growth, an increase in cultural and social differentiation and in the number of Hebrew speaking natives. It is natural that in the beginning this non-canonical literature (mainly melodramas, adventure, detective, crime, spy, and romantic stories) was accompanied by attempts at aesthetic and value legitimization. Such works were regarded partly as a means for bringing classics of action literature "down" to children and adolescent readers of Hebrew (Jabotinsky), partly as a vehicle for introducing new literary conventions and linguistic norms, thus changing the canonical litera-

ture "from the bottom" (Avigdor Hameiri). Non-canonical literature was also described as a means of acquainting an immigrant society with the Hebrew language and literature, and spy stories as capable of establishing security consciousness (David Tidhar).

The authors survey the non-institutionalized publishers of crime and spy stories between 1931 and 1948. Also described is the reaction of the literary establishment and its normative value system to such non-canonical literature in Hebrew, and the apologetics of the latter's writers. Lack of financial motivation and evaluative hostility have gradually prevented the full development of an original non-canonical system in Hebrew. Today, most of these genres are supplied, in large numbers at that, through translations.

THE STORY OF THE DIBBUK AND THE DEMON-WIFE *

by JOSEPH DAN

(Hebrew article: 74-84)

In 1889 a collection of stories was printed in Jerusalem entitled *Ma'aseh zediqim* ("The Deeds of the Pious"). The collector and author of this book was Abraham Ha-Levi Ibn Susan. This collection of stories is one of many which were written and printed in Palestine and the Near East in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of this century, and which have so far been neglected by those studying the history of modern Hebrew literature. It should be

emphasized that Sephardi authors in the East were free from the serious ideological problems which burdened Hebrew writers in Europe and could, therefore, concentrate their efforts on the literary side of their stories. Any discussion of the relationship between Eastern and Western Hebrew literature of this period has to take this fact into account.

From the wealth of narrative material, old and new, which is included in this book and others, we present here one episode which its recounter, Ibn Susan, claims to have been a witness to, in Tiberias, probably about 1860. The main plot is the story of a dibbuk entering the body of a young man. Efforts by many wise men to remove this dibbuk are described in de-

* This study was prepared within the framework of a study of traditional Hebrew narrative literature, and was sponsored by the Jewish Memorial Fund, New York.