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 **The Satirical Revue of *Ha-Matateh* in 1939**

**and the Demonstration of Wellbeing**

This article explores the mechanisms by which Ha-Matateh, the Eretz-Israeli satirical theatre company, created a sense of wellbeing among its audiences during a time of crisis in pre-state Israel. The article focuses on a revue by Ha-Matateh, *Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City*, which premiered in May, 1939. This production made reference to the troublesome and stressful reality of the time: extreme antisemitism was sweeping across Europe, diplomats were feverishly trying to prevent another war, and a new White Paper issued by the British government jeopardized the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. This article shows how this stage presentation transformed the fears and anxieties that dominated the real world into humorous expressions of pleasure, social engagement, success, and a sense of security.

**Introduction**

On May 16, 1939, the popular Eretz-Israeli satirical theatre Ha-Matateh(Hebrew for “The Broom”) premiered a satirical revue entitled *Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City*. The performance referred to the events of the day, events which left little room for optimism.

In the May 16, 1939 edition of *Davar,* the highest-circulation Hebrew daily newspaper in the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community of Mandatory Palestine), the front page story assessed the soon-to-be published White Paper on the new British policy in Mandatory Palestine. Current sources indicated that the British government was planning to limit both Jewish immigration to Palestine and the ability of Jews to purchase land – jeopardizing the future of a Jewish national home.[[1]](#endnote-1) The second page reported distressing news from Europe: the suffering of Czechoslovakian refugees flocking to Poland, anti-Jewish violence in Nazified Slovakia, and antisemitic discrimination against Jewish students in Poland.[[2]](#endnote-2)

These headlines clearly articulated the stressful situation in the Yishuv. Since 1929, the three-way relationship between the Jews, the Arabs, and the British forces in Mandatory Palestine had deteriorated, reaching a crisis point in May, 1939. The Jews’ goal was to build a national home in Mandatory Palestine, and they wanted the borders opened to mass immigration of Jews from Europe. This had become urgent, given the Fascism and antisemitism sweeping Europe, and speculations about the outbreak of another world war. However, the Arab population had become increasingly hostile toward the political ambitions of the Yishuv. Since 1936, they struggled openly and violently against the local Jewish population and the British forces. The British Mandatory authorities aimed to navigate the storm, while pursuing Great Britain’s interests in the Middle East and preparing the diplomatic ground for the looming war. On May 17, 1939, they published the MacDonald White Paper, in which they retreated from the promises made in the Balfour Declaration.[[3]](#endnote-3)

The revue *Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City* referred to the feverish consumption of news in that time of political instability. In the first scene of the show, a group of five actors performed a cheerful song (lyrics written by Nathan Alterman and set to music by Moshe Wilensky) :[[4]](#endnote-4)

Newspapers! Newspapers! Newspapers! Newspapers! / To your right and to your left, in front and behind / in houses, in gardens and by the kiosks / their readers are like students of Halakha and Talmud // [….] Each reader explains, and feverishly proves / that war is approaching / or peace is on the move.[[5]](#endnote-5)

Thus, the stage performance transformed an uncertain and anxious reality into a delightful and pleasurable performance.

In this article, I analyze how *Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City* created a sense of wellbeing among the theatregoers of the Yishuv. This satirical revue did not create a fictional world existing solely within the autonomous domain of the arts. Quite the contrary – it reflected and commented on daily life experiences. As such, the play negotiated and regulated the often painful emotions the theatregoers felt toward the scenes represented on stage as well as those they experienced in everyday life – at least while they were watching the performance.

The current article is comprised of three parts. In the first, I contextualize this revue within the history of Ha-Matateh and present the methodological framework. The second part considers *Haim and Sa’adia* and its use of the mechanisms of empathy and warmth. The third part analyzes three representative scenes from the play and examines how they transformed the disquieting emotions linked to the reality they represented, and negotiated a sense of wellbeing.

**Ha-Matateh: History and Methodology**

*Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City* was a typical revue of Ha-Matateh. Yitzkhak Nuzhik, the artistic director of the company, authored and staged the play, Nahtan Alterman wrote the lyrics, Moshe Wilensky the music, and Emmanuel Luftglas designed the scenery. The company was founded in 1928, but its ensemble and artistic style crystallized only after Nuzhik, a Yiddish light theatre artist from Warsaw, joined the troupe in 1933.[[6]](#endnote-6) Before arriving in Palestine, Nuzhik was a leading figure in Warsaw’s Yiddish light theatre scene and a member of the satirical theatre company Sambatyon.[[7]](#endnote-8) Both in Warsaw and Lodz, the flourishing Yiddish light theatre and cabaret scene was one of vibrant artistic activity.[[8]](#endnote-9) Based on Nuzhik’s artistic achievements in Warsaw, the Ha-Matateh actors, then looking for artistic leadership, invited him to join them in Palestine. He accepted. After joining Ha-Matateh, he continued his artistic activity in Jewish light theatre, only now in Hebrew.[[9]](#endnote-10)

Under Nuzhik’s artistic directorship, the company put on about four original satirical revues a year, in addition to one translated, full-length comedy. Nuzhik shaped the poetic format and authored many of Ha-Matateh’s satirical revues. Each program was conceived as a collection of short scenes enacting daily scenes from life in the Yishuv, which were linked by a character or two and a shared thematic framework.[[10]](#endnote-11) In the play analyzed in this article, Haim and Sa’adia were the linking characters, and their journey from a rural settlement to the city was the thematic framework.

Like many other Ha-Matateh plays, *Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City* was extremely popular. Ha- Matateh was based in Beit Ha-am, the largest performance hall in Tel Aviv during the 1930s. In addition, the company performed the play in rural and urban locations across country: Rehovot, Hadera, Jerusalem, Netanya, Haifa, Petah Tikva, Kfar Saba, Herzliya, and Ra’anana.[[11]](#endnote-12) The audience members were typically bourgeois residents of those cities and settlements. The Jewish population of the Yishuv had grown from 56,000 in 1917 to 425,000 in 1939. About 80% were immigrants from the Ashkenazi communities of Central and Eastern Europe: Soviet Union, Poland, Germany, and Austria. About 20% of the Jewish population were from Sephardic, Yemenite, and Middle Eastern Jewish communities.[[12]](#endnote-13) Most of the theatregoers living in British Palestine had immigrated from Jewish bourgeoisie or petit-bourgeoise families in Europe during the preceding decades, and were accustomed to attending the theatre. We may assume that they had mastered Hebrew sufficiently to follow a theatre performance, were prosperous enough to afford the tickets, and took an interest in contemporary Hebrew-Zionist popular culture.[[13]](#endnote-14)

In contrast to the play’s popularity and success as satirical theatre among a broad audience, reactions of theatre critics were more restrained. The critics perceived Ha-Matateh merely as light entertainment. The Hebrew theatre critics and the literati of the Yishuv disapproved of the heritage of Yiddish popular theatre and looked down on its Hebrew incarnation, as performed by Ha-Matateh.[[14]](#endnote-15) They favored the elitist Hebrew dramatic theatre, which strove to differentiate itself from popular Yiddish theatre from Eastern Europe. The intellectual elite of the Yishuv preferred Habima, the esteemed national theatre company founded in 1917 as a dramatic Hebrew studio near the Moscow Art Theatre of Konstantin Stanislavski, moving to Palestine in 1931. The critics also gave minor attention to Ha-Ohel, a theatre company founded by Moshe Ha-Levi in 1925 as a workers’ theatre affiliated with the Histadrut, the General Federation of Jewish Labour in Eretz Israel.[[15]](#endnote-16) The works of Ha-Matateh were rarely discussed in the press.[[16]](#endnote-17)

How, then, can we understand the emotional influence that *Haim and Sa‘adia are Going to the City* had on the audience, when there is only one review of the play? Gad Kaynar and Allison P. Hobgood explain that the creators of a show, aware of their target spectators, – their ethnic identity, aesthetic taste, and ideological preferences – implicitly refer to this community of theatregoers within the work of art itself. Namely the implied community is present in the play text, stage images, and the reality conventions of the fable.[[17]](#endnote-18) Hence, a study of the documents preserved from this performance (the play’s script, program, and pictures of the performance) enable us to deduce who the implied audience was and to uncover the emotional perceptions of theatregoers of the time. Susan Bennett and Hobgood stress that theatrical performances shape the audience’s emotional reactions, which may range from identification-based cathartic reactions to alienation.[[18]](#endnote-19)

 Barbara H. Rosenwein explores the role of emotions within communities from a sociohistorical point of view, positing that each sociological community stresses a specific set of emotions that dominate its culture, repressing some while emphasizing others. Communities use emotions to enforce ethical and political norms. Thus, analysis of the distinctive ways in which communities handle and articulate emotions is an effective tool for learning about their identities and characteristics. She explains that emotions are articulated and expressed in a society’s cultural products in the public sphere. Theatre performances are one of the vehicles used to articulate a community’s emotions and negotiate them as a sociocultural construct.[[19]](#endnote-20)

Before delving deeper into the analysis of the play, it should be noted that “wellbeing” is not an emotion per se. It combines subjective feelings with environmental factors.[[20]](#endnote-21) Martin Seligman defines wellbeing as a conceptual construct constituted from a cluster of positive emotions, positive relationships, personal and communal engagement, a commitment to something greater than oneself, and a sense of accomplishment.[[21]](#endnote-22) Edgar Cabanas and Eva Illouz criticize Seligman’s notion of wellbeing, arguing that it encapsulates a contemporary neoliberal worldview.[[22]](#endnote-23) Other scholars historicize wellbeing, elaborating that despite the prevalence of this concept in Western philosophy since antiquity, it has changed throughout history and reflects evolutions in religious and political thought.[[23]](#endnote-24)

What mechanisms are used to construct emotions in theatre performances? Monique Scheer discusses the performative nature of emotions, whereby individual members of a society enact emotional scripts that encapsulate social habitus.[[24]](#endnote-25) Theatre functions as one of many performative modes that create scenarios of embodied knowledge, a corporeal repertoire that is learned, rehearsed and practiced.[[25]](#endnote-26) Thus, theatre exhibits embodied emotional knowledge and scenarios that correspond and correlate to other social performances of emotional scripts.

The satirical revues of Ha-Matateh portrayed everyday scenarios and thus conducted a dialogue with the reality outside the theatre. This is characteristic of the satirical genre, which draws its strength from the audience’s ability to understand the references hidden in the work of art and to enjoy its artistic commentary.[[26]](#endnote-27) The reality portrayed in Ha-Matateh’s performances included emotionally disturbing scenarios of fear, anxiety, frustration, anger and other extreme emotions. The actors demonstrated how these disturbing everyday emotional scenarios could be transformed into positive emotions of humor, pleasure, confidence and joy; emotions that generate a sense of wellbeing.

I relate to wellbeing as a set of positive emotions linked to self-fulfillment, communal engagement, security, and a sense of achievement. This analysis of *Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City* focuses on how the performance articulated positive emotional scripts on the stage, embodying, inter alia, emotions such as joy, pleasure, confidence, satisfaction, and empathy. It reflected disturbing emotional scripts and transformed them into a source of pleasure and social empowerment.

**Mechanisms of Empathy and Warmth**

Following the opening song, entitled “Very Lofty Politics,” the first scene introduces Haim (played by Moshe Khurgel) and Sa’adia (played by Yosef Oxenberg). The audience meets the characters in a construction site. They have been hired to build a cowshed for the landlord, who is a well-established German Jew (referred to by the slang term *yekke*), who recently arrived in the Land of Israel – and wishes to establish himself as a farmer. However, Haim is so engaged in reading newspaper articles, explaining to Sa’aida what he read about a government minister, and discussing it with him at length, that he does not pay attention to his work and the cement dries, making it impossible to form the bricks. The landlord scolds them for not doing their job, but soon enthusiastically joins their discussion, sharing what he read in the German Zionist newspaper, *Der Judische Rundschau*. Since the workday has been wasted, they must find something else to do, which leads them to embark on a journey to the city.[[27]](#endnote-28)

Haim and Sa’adia are not traditional protagonists. They do not undergo a process of development and the character they met, rather than themselves, are the focus of the picaresque scenes in which they were involved. They function as cabaret conferenciers, guiding the audience from one performative scene to the next. Nevertheless, they are lovable characters –clownish, ridiculous, and warm – and as such, they serve as the focus of empathy in the play.

The mechanism of empathy, as P. N. Johnson-Laird and Keith Oatley explain, lies at the heart of narrative-based artforms. Empathy enables spectators or readers to experience complex emotions such as vulnerability and compassion, expanding their own emotional spectrum as they identify with a fictional character. A sympathetic and morally amiable fictional character intensifies the audiences’ empathic reaction and confirms their emotional and social norms.[[28]](#endnote-29) Live theatre further enhances empathy, as the focus of empathy is divided between the fictive characters and the actors. In her study of avant-garde performances, Erika Fischer-Lichte concluded that there is a feedback loop between the performer and the audience. The performer becomes involved in the audience’s reality and the audience reacts emotionally to the artwork and to the performer due to the vulnerability of her/his corporal presence. In extreme cases, audience members at performance art events have gone so far as to stop the show when they fear for the wellbeing of the performer.[[29]](#endnote-30)

Exploring the literary intertextuality embedded in the characters of Haim and Sa’adia leads to a better comprehension of how the emotional reaction they evoked contributed to a sense of wellbeing. Besides being unpractical chatterboxes *luftmenschen*, rigid Jewish community members engaged in unneeded occupations, incapable of producing anything beneficial or supporting themselves, Haim and Sa’adia are shown to be effeminate, subordinate to their wives in the domestic hierarchy.

In the second half of the first scene, their wives enter the stage. Haim’s wife Hanna chastises him and tells him to travel to the city that very instant: “All our neighbors in the *moshava* (Hebrew for this type of rural settlement) have hastened to the city; hurry up to buy food products, to stock up!”[[30]](#endnote-31) Rachel, Sa’adia’s wife, echoes her sentiments. The women quickly decide that the men are not to be trusted with this mission and they should go instead. Hanna demands from Haim: “Give me the money! Whatever you have – give! Everything! Everything!”[[31]](#endnote-32) Rachel does the same. Haim begs her, in vain, to “Leave me something! At least a penny for cigarettes […]!”[[32]](#endnote-33) After the women take off, Sa’adia moans: “May God protect us! Like a gang! They took all the money and ran away!”[[33]](#endnote-34) Only then, with no work and no money, do the two men embark on a journey to the city to find out what is going on in the world.

The journey of the two effeminate *luftmenschen* to the nearby city and back home echoes the journey of another pair of men in another play: Benyamin and his assistant Senderl in *The Travels of Benyamin the Third* by Mendele Mocher Sforim (S. Abramovich).[[34]](#endnote-35) Abramovich wrote three versions of the novel in Hebrew and Yiddish; the last and most canonic version was published in 1911.[[35]](#endnote-36) This work was adapted twice for the Hebrew theatre in 1936–1937. In 1936, Moshe Ha-Levi staged an adaptation of the novel at Ha-Ohel, and in 1937 Barukh Tchemerinski and Avraham Baratz put on their adaptation of the novel. Whereas the Habima production was not very popular, Ha-Levi’s production was a box office success, and was still running in 1939.[[36]](#endnote-37)

There are several similarities between *The Travels of Benyamin the Third* and *Haim and Sa’adia*. First, the dramaturgy of the picaresque journey of *Haim and Sa’adia* resembles Aharon Ashman’s adaptation of *The Travels of Benyamin* performed by Ha-Ohel. In both journeys, the two men run into robbers, visit the marketplace, and are eventually brought to an army barracks.[[37]](#endnote-38) Second, both Moshe Khurgel and Rosa Lichtenstein, as Haim and his wife, looked like Jews from the iconic Eastern European Jewish *shtetl*. Khurgel, a stout, Polish-born actor, was dressed in a ragged, over-large suit and a fedora, recalling the image of Sholem Aleichem’s character Menahem Mendel, an aspiring yet helpless shtetl Jew. Lichtenstein, a German-Jewish actress, a large woman in her fifties, wore a heavy dress with an old-fashioned hairdo, and was portrayed as the stereotypical emasculating Jewish woman.[[38]](#endnote-39) Toward the end of the play, the audience learns that Haim and Hanna have six children.[[39]](#endnote-40) Such a large family was atypical of Zionist communities in the Yishuv and was more closely associated with Jewish life in the Old World.[[40]](#endnote-41)

The various adaptations of the novel and stage adaptations of *The Travels of Benyamin the Third* depict the shtetl.[[41]](#endnote-42) Jeffrey Shandler argues that following its decline and demise, the shtetl became a central locale for Jewish imagination, a powerful, post-vernacular cultural paradigm richly described in Jewish literature and intellectual life from the Enlightenment through the post-Holocaust era.[[42]](#endnote-43) According to Dan Miron, the shtetl was a powerful metaphor because it encapsulated longing and nostalgia, a sense of belonging, warmth and humor, alongside criticism and a desire to distance oneself from its rigid way of life.[[43]](#endnote-44)

The shtetl reflects a cultural syntax of identity and belonging, of feeling at home, and security. These warm emotions, explains Naomi Eisenberger, are closely linked with pleasure and wellbeing.[[44]](#endnote-45) The analogy between *The Travels of Benyamin the Third* and *Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City* transferred the warm emotions associated with the Eastern European shtetl to the Yishuv in Mandatory Palestine. Haim and Sa’adia’s home, their “shtetl,” is the *moshava*, the first type of settlement created by Zionists in Eretz Israel. Most of these settlements, such as Rishon LeZion, Zikhron Ya’akov, and Rehovot, were founded during the 1880s and were the cradle of Zionist-Hebrew culture in Eretz Israel. Unlike the third Aliya socialist settlement forms, a *kibbutz* or a *moshav*, the moshava was not linked with any Socialist Zionist movement.[[45]](#endnote-46) By the 1930s, there were many well-established *moshavot*, with an upper class comprised of the core of founding families, who were farmers and landowners, and a lower class of farm workers and service providers.[[46]](#endnote-47) Haim and Sa’adia belonged to the lower class: amiable representatives of the simple people. By setting the fable of this play along the route between the settlement – the local embodiment of the shtetl – and the *shtot* – the embodiment of the city – this spectrum of bourgeois urbanity was designated as the main location of the Zionist enterprise.[[47]](#endnote-48) Evoking warm and homelike emotions toward the settlement and the local city among an audience comprised of new immigrants was an ideological act producing a sense of wellbeing.

Whereas Khurgel and Lichtenshtein created the image of Ashkenazi shtetl Jews on the stage, Sa’adia and his wife Rachel were Yemenite Jews. There were indeed Yemenite Jews among the moshava inhabitants; they settled in Rishon LeZion and Rehovot during the first and second decades of the 20th century.[[48]](#endnote-49) Yemenite Jews constituted a distinct sociological and emotional community.[[49]](#endnote-50) Bat-Tzion Eraqi Klorman shows that they were discriminated against in the allotment of land parcels, and that they struggled in vain to achieve influence in the inner political arena of the settlement. This turbulent relationship with the European community in the moshava created a myriad of emotions such as anger, disappointment, and frustration.[[50]](#endnote-51) Rachel Sharabi draws a similar picture in her study of the interaction between Jewish-Yemenite settlers in the moshav Ravid, and the hegemonic Ashkenazi establishment of the Yishuv. She elaborated how the Yemenite immigrants felt threatened by the implied demand of the Zionist institutions to change their lifestyle and norms.[[51]](#endnote-52) The situation of this community was no easier in the larger cities, where they also found themselves on the margins of urban society. In the Tel Aviv area, for example, they lived in poor neighborhoods on the outskirts of Jaffa, earning a living as laborers and simple service providers.[[52]](#endnote-53)

Although there was a profound feeling of alienation between the Ashkenazi and Yemenite communities in the social sphere, in the fields of the performing arts, audiences were enchanted by the exotic appearance of Yemenite performers. The young Tzipora Tzabari won the 1928 *Adloyada* beauty pageant,[[53]](#endnote-54) and Yemenite-Jewish actresses, singers and performers, such as Sara Levi (Tanai), Ester Gamli’elit, Rina Nikova’s Yemenite dance company, and more, found their place in the 1930s’ performing arts scene.[[54]](#endnote-55) Performances of Yemenite-Jewish characters also gained popularity in light Hebrew theatre.[[55]](#endnote-56) The portrayal of Yemenite-Jewish characters in original Hebrew plays of the time was more complex, with Yemenite Jews portrayed, on the one hand, as the reincarnation of the authentic Biblical Jew and, on the other hand, as estranged from the modern pioneer-socialist ethos.[[56]](#endnote-57) The cultural meaning and emotional impact of Yosef Oxenberg portraying Sa’adia and of Gamli’elit as his wife Rachel can be understood in the context of the tension between the tradition of Yemenite-Jewish performers and the everyday reality.

On a simple level, the performances of Haim and Sa’adia displayed inclusiveness and reaffirmation of the Jewish peoplehood in Eretz Israel. Haim and Sa’adia echoed Benyamin and Senderl, who were a sympathetic and lovable pair in the Jewish and Hebrew literary and performative culture of the Yishuv during the 1930s.[[57]](#endnote-58) Haim and Sa’adia, like their intertextual reference pair, Benyamin and Senderl, functioned as an empathy-evoking metaphor for Jewish peoplehood. The Eretz-Israeli version of the story included Ashkenazi and Yemenite Jews alike. Haim and Sa’adia cared for one another and exhibited a gentle brotherhood. Sa’adia mentions that Haim is his partner “born and bred.”[[58]](#endnote-59) The inclusiveness and warmth were also apparent in the performance. Gamli’elit, who was herself a Yemenite Jew, portrayed an authentic and sympathetic Jewish-Yemenite woman in the play, with the desired exotic beauty.[[59]](#endnote-60) Poet and theatre critic Leah Goldberg defined her stage appearance as “sweet” and praised her singing abilities, though criticized her acting skills as poor.[[60]](#endnote-61)

Oxenberg also portrayed a gentle and sympathetic character. Wearing regular work clothes,[[61]](#endnote-62) his Yemenite identity was made apparent by his head covering, sidelocks, and language, which orientalized him and stressed his piousness. He mentions the name of God in almost every phrase, often using the archaic Aramaic phrase *rakhmana litzlan*, meaning “May God protect us.” In scene six, for example, he complains that he could not find his wife, and he confesses that:

The flowers appear on the earth and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. I do not want a turtledove and do not want to return. […] we are looking for our wives. I sought her, but I found her not.[[62]](#endnote-63)

His paraphrasing of *The Song of Songs* (2: 12 and 3: 2) humorously shows the deep religiosity of the Yemenite Jews. While there is no recording of the performance, we may assume that Oxenberg imitated a Yemenite accent. In Ha-Ohel performances with Biblical language, a stage version of Hebrew, inspired by Yemenite liturgy, was used;[[63]](#endnote-64) we may assume, therefore, that Ha-Matateh did the same.

Oxenberg, a Lodz-born actor, playing a Yemenite Jew can also be seen as an Eretz-Israeli variation of a “blackface performance.” Blackface is a performative practice that flourished in 19th and 20th-century popular American and European theatres, in which a white actor embodies a character of color by blackening their face. This practice encapsulated deep interracial power relations. The white actor robs characters of color of their unique individuality, culture, and ethnic authenticity. The mimicry of the skin color ridicules it and shows it as being dirty. Moreover, this praxis prevented actors of color from prospering in the performing arts and limited their ability to exhibit their racial heritage onstage. Yet, in 19th century historical context, some white actors managed to express genuine empathy toward characters of color and to create onstage an image of humanity beyond skin color. Via blackface acting, characters such as Tom in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Jim in Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* became accessible to a wide audience, and eventually changed perceptions of people of color.[[64]](#endnote-65)

In the Eretz-Israeli context, the performance of a Yemenite character by an Ashkenazi actor delineated the boundaries between the two sociological and emotional communities and constructed the performance as a site of negotiations between them. For the majority-European community, Oxenberg’s portrayal of Sa’adia would have been delightful, evoking empathy, warmth and a sense of wellbeing, along with curiosity, good humor and inclusiveness toward Yemenite Jews. Moreover, the metaphor of the shtetl situated the engagement between the different Jewish communities in Eretz Israel. While there is no documentation of the effect this performance had on a Yemenite-Jewish audience, we may speculate that their emotional reaction would have been more ambivalent. While it is possible that feelings of acceptance and inclusiveness were shared by Yemenite audience members that attended the performance, we may presume that they would have found this imitation of a Yemenite Jew mocking and insulting, given their complex feelings regarding the Ashkenazi majority,

**Negotiation of Wellbeing**

As noted, *Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City* opens with a scenario of anxiety. There is an ominous feeling that war is about to break out. Worried people are obsessively reading newspapers and frantically rushing to the city to buy food in preparation for the unknown. However, on stage, these scenarios of fear and anxiety were portrayed in a humorous manner. Willibald Ruch argued that humor is one of the significant characteristics of positive psychology. It is an enjoyable mechanism that is based on a surprising incongruity of different social scripts, which enable the negotiation of complex emotions. Although there are many types of humor, ranging from cheery to macabre dark humor, as a whole, humor is associated with good spirits and the ability to react creatively and playfully to a given situation.[[65]](#endnote-66) As such, humor is an important tool in evoking positive emotions and producing wellbeing.

In the following section, I analyze three scenes and explain their reference to the outside reality and the emotional reactions they would have evoked. Furthermore, I look at how the use of humor in the theatrical performance transformed the emotional scenarios they expressed and created a sense of wellbeing.

Tax Payment and Shame

This scene takes places at a bus stop. A bus arrives and Bronka Salzman, in the role of an unnamed woman, runs hysterically to block the bus entrance. She shouts: “I will not allow! No way will I allow it! For an entire day! An entire week! An entire eternity! I will remain on guard and will not let you enter! You will not go away!”[[66]](#endnote-67) She yells at her father and husband and prevents them from getting on a bus that is going to the big city. This intense scene expressed an emotional habitus of fear and urgency. For the theatregoers of the Yishuv in general and Tel Aviv specifically, the reference was clear. During the waves of the Arab revolt between 1936 and 1939, there were frequent attacks by Arab militias on communication lines, roads, and vehicles. The roads turned into battle zones with routine fighting between British forces, Jewish legal and illegal forces and Arab forces. Traveling, especially in northern Palestine, was a frightening experience.[[67]](#endnote-68)

After one character tries to reassure her that the roads to the city are safer now, her husband intervenes: “What danger! How can there be danger? It is not about that at all. She does not allow [me] to go simply because one has to add a few pennies to the bus tickets for *kofer ha-Yishuv*.” Another character, Levi, explains that he “would rather go by train. There I am not obliged to pay kofer ha-Yishuv. But first, people say that it is safer to go by car.” The husband adds: “Due to kofer ha-Yishuv.” Levi continues: “and second: the train doesn’t run”. Husband: “Ha, Ha, Ha! The government’s train isn’t operating, but our buses run despite everything.”[[68]](#endnote-69) This new information about kofer ha-Yishuv enabling the buses to run created a humoristic peak, due to the comic incongruity, and thus changed the emotional effect of the scene.[[69]](#endnote-70)

Kofer ha-Yishuv, literally “the Jewish community ransom fund,” was a tax imposed by the Jewish National Council on 24 July 1938, to meet the security needs of the Yishuv. As Assaf Likhovsky explains, it was one of many voluntary taxes that were levied on the Jewish population of Palestine by the National Council. This internal Yishuv tax system was separate from the compulsory system of British taxation. The British authorities encouraged internal community taxes designed to meet the religious and cultural needs of the Jewish community. During the second half of the 1930s and even more so during the 1940s, the voluntary tax system was a significant means of pursuing the pre-statehood national goals of the Yishuv. Nonetheless, there were communities that opposed these voluntary taxes and refused to pay. Among them were members of the Revisionist Party, which did not accept the authority of the National Council, and the ultra-Orthodox Jewish populations of Me’a She’arim. There was an intense public discourse intended to legitimize these taxes, encourage people to pay, and facilitate their collection. There was even an attempt to establish an honor court for the prosecution of those who refused to pay.[[70]](#endnote-71)

The emotions of this scene shift from the spectrum of anxiety versus security to one of honor versus shame. The woman does not explain or offer any ideological reasons for why she resents the additional payment for kofer ha-Yishuv. Moreover, her father and husband do not support her objections. Therefore, her exaggerated dramatic performance cannot be interpreted as justified anxiety for their safety, but rather as hysterical stinginess that echoes Moliere’s *The Miser*. Like the character of the miser, she becomes an obstructing figure who prevents the story’s continuation, namely, the men getting on the bus to travel to the city. She becomes the target of the humorous barbs in the scene.[[71]](#endnote-72)

Giselinde Kuipers claims that humor is a mechanism that enforces social norms and habits.[[72]](#endnote-73) Tzafi Sebba-Elran shows how humor was used to define the group identity of the Yishuv during the 1930s.[[73]](#endnote-74) Humor functions here in a similar way. The woman is shamed and humiliated because she does not fit into the desired social order. She was pushed aside, and her expulsion represents the fictional community’s success; the plot can continue, and the tax is justified. From a gender perspective, her expulsion celebrates the victory of the male characters. Even though the male characters in this scene are unheroic, and, like Haim and Sa’adia, somewhat effeminate, they manage to form a community that is masculine enough, and thus embodies, although only partially, relatively, and unheroically, the Zionist norm of the new Jewish male.[[74]](#endnote-75)

The scene demonstrates to the audience the nature of the desired conduct that leads to communal wellbeing. This occurs on two levels. One level is aesthetic: the audience gains pleasure by identifying with the representation of the community on the stage and joining in the laughter targeted at the woman. Henry Bergson describes laughter as a mechanism that engages individuals in a shared comic-cathartic experience of togetherness.[[75]](#endnote-76) As such, the laughter creates a sense of engagement, communality, and wellbeing throughout the performance. The unwanted egotistic conduct of the woman was rejected in favor of the wellbeing of the entire community, which does not tolerate a specific feminine perspective. The second level has to do with the non-fictional world. It portrays the payment of taxes as appropriate and honorable social conduct that enables individuals to be socially engaged and affiliated with the community.

Forsaken Children and Playful Engagement

In this scene, Bezalel London appears on stage as Albert, the leader of a juvenile gang. He scolds his fellows: “You should come on time! […] we decided to come in the afternoon. At twilight. When there is no day and no night. This is the perfect time for our work.” Miriam (Yehudit Farkal), challenging him, asks why he chose this place at the outskirts of the city, a place with no passersby. He answers: “The city center is not good for our job. There you need to ask, to plead, and eventually they do not want to give to you […] but here, at the outskirts of the city, […] I take it from them violently, with power, with terror.”[[76]](#endnote-77) This reference was easily understood by the theatregoers, especially residents of Tel Aviv. The scene represents the disadvantaged children who were swarming the streets of Tel Aviv at the time.

These children and youth, who dropped out of school, earned money in the streets by providing minor services or by selling small items. Some would hang out by the sea or in cafes of dubious reputation in Jaffa, hobnob with Jewish and Arab criminals, and even commit minor theft. The welfare discourse at the time portrayed them as an antisocial element. Most of these children were from poor and dysfunctional families, many of them new immigrants from Europe and the Middle East who resided in the suburban slums of Tel Aviv and Jaffa. Other children arrived in the city alone, after running away from their homes in other regions of the country. Some of them suffered from visible and non-visible disabilities that prevented them from attending school. Tami Razi argues that these children created an image of urban poverty and neglect that disturbed the bourgeois landscape of white, modern, European Tel Aviv. They were perceived with disgust and disappointment, as their appearance contrasted with the ideal, model society that people wished to see established there.[[77]](#endnote-78)

In the play, the violent and threatening juvenile gang assaults a couple on a romantic date. The young man in this couple (Shmu’el Rodenski) offers them money. Albert defies him: “We don’t give a damn about your money.” The young man asks in terror: “Do you desire only our lives?”[[78]](#endnote-79) No. Albert is not interested in his life either. At this point, the tenor of the scene changes to one of comic incongruity and creates a humorous effect. What the youths want to “steal” are the playing cards that were sold with packs of cigarettes.

This refers to two cigarette manufacturers, Dubek and the Brothers Masparo, which, at the time, distributed albums depicting vignettes from the life and history of the Yishuv. Picture cards, meant to complete the verbal descriptions in the albums, were sold along with cigarette packs.[[79]](#endnote-80) One of Dubek’s albums dealt with civil guards and sports, and contained pictures of Eretz-Israeli athletes and members of the Jewish auxiliary police (called the *notrim*) and special night squads.[[80]](#endnote-81) Another had about 200 pictures of Israeli landscapes taken from the collections of the Jewish National Fund.[[81]](#endnote-82) A third album dealt with the history of the Jewish people.[[82]](#endnote-83)

The young man will not give up his cards. Like the gang members, he wants to complete the albums. The card-collecting game changes the emotional tone of the scene. The juvenile gang members and the young man realize that they are on the same team, which exists in the liminal time between childhood and adulthood, symbolized by smoking cigarettes and playing cards. The young man’s devotion to the game even overshadows his romantic obligation to his date: he and the gang members lose themselves in the game.[[83]](#endnote-84) They are no longer subject to the real space and time, dominated by poverty, violence, and alienation. Rather, they share the broad historical period of the game –the hegemonic history of the Jewish renaissance in Palestine. The game replaces the landscape of the outskirts of the city with the symbolic locations portrayed on the cards: historic landscapes and milestones of the Zionist settlement in Eretz Israel. The game replaces the random violence of the gang with the organized and nationally channeled conflict represented in the cards: images of Jewish athletes and Jews serving in the Yishuv’s defense forces.

The appearance of the actors in the role of these youngsters further emphasizes the playful qualities of the scene. They are dressed in children’s clothes, wearing Zorro-like masks that signify them as robbers in a children’s game.[[84]](#endnote-85) The pleasure of the game creates a sportive moment of wellbeing: affiliation with a larger group, engagement in the collective Zionist narrative that was larger than themselves, and a sense of triumph while celebrating the symbolic achievements of the national project.

Famine and Security

In this scene, the actress Ester Gamli’elit appears as an elegant young woman who tries to cut in front of a line of customers waiting to be served at a grocery shop. The other customers push her to the back. Then, the actor Bezalel London enters the stage. His character, a middle-aged man, is referred to in the play’s text only as “a Jew,” namely—one of the people. He is confused and overwhelmed and tries to jump the line while pleading: “Gevalt, Jews, […] Let me stand in line!”[[85]](#endnote-86) As the people push him to the back, he pleads: “I have stood in the back of the line in the previous 20 shops. And each time my turn comes – […] no more products and the door shuts. Jews, have pity! My wife gave me a long list of all the things I must buy.”[[86]](#endnote-87)

The shopping hysteria and stockpiling of food show the deep and primordial fear of the upcoming war. This scene reflects the deep anxiety that was evident as a leitmotif in the play, which triggered the plot. Ofer Shiff, Yehuda Reinhardtz and Ya’acov Shavit describe the Yishuv’s deep concern about the war, focusing on reports in the Hebrew press and diplomatic efforts of the Yishuv to save the Jews of Poland.[[87]](#endnote-88) This scene also reveals the paralyzing effect of anxiety on the everyday life of the Yishuv. The purchase of large amounts of food was uncommon because most Tel Aviv apartments had small kitchens, and refrigerators were not yet in widespread use. Shopping and cooking were daily practices[[88]](#endnote-89) and storing large amounts of food was unusual.

As the scene unfolds, anxiety is overcome by comic hyperbole, transforming it into reassuring laughter as “the Jew” recites the shopping list his wife gave him, which becomes more and more absurd. It begins with food and cleaning products, perfumes, and kitchen utensils: “a can and boxes and oil for latkes. Bottles and scissors and poison for mice. Oil and fuel and paraffin candles. Toothpaste and shoelaces. Eau-de-cologne with an odor of honey that gives me strength. Lemons and citrus fruits and anti-flea protection.”[[89]](#endnote-90) As his monologue continues, the goods he is required to bring home become hilariously luxurious and exotic and include, for example, a Japanese cup, an African dog, a goat like that of Gandhi’s, a rabbit from Italy, Austrian mushrooms, a Chamberlain-style umbrella, a Parisian powder, a doll or an elephant for the young daughter and a groom for the older one. The list portrays the woman who dictated it as a spoiled and mock-worthy person who does not understand the appropriate norms.[[90]](#endnote-91) The anxiety in the beginning of the scene turns into a reassuring demonstration that nurtures realistic expectations. As in the scene at the bus stop, the community on stage adopts norms associated with social responsibility and realistic assessments of needs, while overcoming the hysterical demands imposed by the woman who dictated the list. As a result, Eretz-Israeli society becomes less effeminate and thereby less identified with the old Jewish world, even though it cannot fully adopt heroic masculine manners.[[91]](#endnote-92)

Haim and Sa’adia enter the stage, looking for their wives. Having no money, they have no interest in buying. But after the grocer closes the shop, the shoppers turn to the two men for advice. Alas, they know little about shopping, but have a profound understanding of eating, and as such, they are qualified to assist. Haim explains how to prepare jam: “You can prepare jam from any ingredient you want, as long as you have sugar. You can prepare jam from boiled radishes, crushed garlic, potato peels, eggshells, pitams of etrogs, beaten willows, straw, and wooden boards.”[[92]](#endnote-93) He explains jam can be preserved by boiling it for three days and three nights, and then storing it in a petroleum tin. Sa’adia the Yemenite is the chief authority for the preservation of falafel: “You take a pita, make a hole in the middle and put in the falafel. You block the pita, like that! Or paste it or sew it with wires. And if you want it to be stronger, much stronger, you can glue it with cement, or iron-reinforced concrete. It can keep for three years.”[[93]](#endnote-94)

Via the jam and the falafel, Haim and Sa’adia design the future wartime cuisine of the Yishuv. According to Nir Avieli, a community defines its identity and resilience through its cuisine.[[94]](#endnote-95) Haim’s and Sa’adia’s cuisine combines European dishes such as jam with falafel, which is associated with Jewish-Yemenite culture (although it was actually a street food developed in Eretz Israel that existed nowhere else in the region).[[95]](#endnote-96) The presentation of these two food types framed the cultural identity of the Yishuv, straddling the boundary of East and West. This ideal cuisine did not represent the real cooking habits of most of the Yishuv population, which continued to consume European Jewish food, with only minor adaptations to the region.[[96]](#endnote-97) With humorous incongruity, the semantic field of food preparation is blended with the industry of building. Thus, food, a fragile product that is in constant demand, subject to weather changes and political instability, becomes associated with modern, durable and secure building products. As such, it projects emotional security, warmth, and stability. The anxiety that dominated the beginning of the scene is thereby transformed into a feeling of strength and resilience.

**Conclusions**

Only one review of *Haim and Sa’adia* *Are Going to the City* was published, in *Davar*, written by a journalist using the pen name *Palit* (meaning “Refugee”).

As I was sitting in Beit Ha-am in the play *Haim and Sa’adia Are Going to the City,* I could have engaged in sad contemplation that these Haim and Sa’adia did not come out of the author’s pen as warriors of justice […]. But I preferred to be pleased and cast away the evil inclination to complain […] I sat and listened and relished and laughed together with the audience, as one of them. [...] The opportunity provided by the play is so valuable, as it enables us to be rid of the burden of resentment and anger that weighs upon the heart, not out of pain or a feeling of inferiority and helplessness, but out of sharp and prickly, humorous laughter […].[[97]](#endnote-98)

The writer begins with an apologetic observation about the unsophisticated qualities of the performance, but eventually submits to the pleasure and good spirit of the play. He shares this satisfying experience of wellbeing, which prevailed in the auditorium throughout the performance, with the rest of the audience.

Indeed, this study of the play reveals how it functioned as a mechanism to shape the theatregoers of the Yishuv into an emotional community that experiences the emotional cluster that constitutes wellbeing. The play and its performance referenced the reality outside the theatre and interpret it on stage. The scenarios of reality represented onstage encapsulated troublesome and difficult feelings, but the performance transformed these emotional mechanisms and replaced them with positive emotions. The estrangement between Ashkenazi and Yemenite Jews was overlooked, and the mise-èn-scene demonstrated empathy and sympathy as dominating the relationship. The landscapes of the shtetl that were left behind served as an emotional syntax to demonstrate the warm feelings of affiliation to the new homeland. The everyday fears and anxieties, which dominated the cultural scenarios in the non-fictional reality, turned their stage representation into humoristic expressions of pleasure, social engagement, success, and security.

Wellbeing was not portrayed as an individual experience, but always as a communal and collective one. The usage of humor enabled those elements of society that were perceived as hindering the desired general wellbeing to be expelled. Thus, the hysterical women — one who resents taxation and the other who had an unrealistic shopping list—were shamed, ridiculed, and expelled in favor of a positive, practical order that the other characters of the play, as well as the audience, were encouraged to adopt. Many of the hindering elements in the society were female characters. Their exclusion from the dominant order marked the symbolic masculinity of the Eretz-Israeli Zionist society, even though this masculinity was often portrayed as childish, effeminate, and ridiculous. The unheroic masculinity process of the society created a boundary work which differentiates the Yishuv’s society from the inhabitants of the shtetl, viewed as even more effeminate and emasculated men.

The performance not only shaped the spectators into an emotional community that learns how to develop a sense of wellbeing via the practices acquired in the theatre but also defined the boundaries of this community. Those members of the Yishuv who could not identify with the general sense of wellbeing, either for individual, gender, ethnic, class, or political reasons, were perceived as interfering with the dominant emotions that define the community, and hence, in this symbolic spectacle, they were deprived of their voice and legitimacy. The togetherness and of the community always gain priority, offering enjoyment, security, optimism and resilience.

1. “Kitzur tokhen ha-sefer ha-lavan: Kfi she-nitparsem be-iton Mitzri” [A Summary of the Contents of the White Paper as Published in an Egyptian Newspaper], *Davar*, May 16, 1939, 1; “Ha-vikhu’akh ba-parlament ha-briti be-yom bet ha-ba” [The Debate in the British Parliament to be Held Next Monday], *Davar*, May 16, 1939, 1; “Dvar ha-yom” [Talk of the Day], *Davar*. May 16, 1939, 1; “Be-yom pekuda yofi’a ha-yishuv me’ukhad u-melukad!” [On Command Day, the Yishuv Will Appear Unified and Cohesive!], *Davar*, May 16, 1939, 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. “Mizvaot ha-shilton ha-naẓi be-Slovakia” [From the Horrors of Nazi Regime in Slovakia], May 16, 1939, 2; “Plitey Czekhoslovaia be-Polin” [Czechoslovakian Refugees in Poland], May 16, 1939, 1; “Inuyey ha-student ha-yehudi be-Polin” [The Torment of the Jewish Student in Poland], May 16, 1939, 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Aviva Halamish, *Mi-ba’it Le’umi le-medina she-baderekh: Ha-yishuv ha-yehudi be-Eretz Israel bein milkhamot ha-olam* [From National Home to State in the Making: The Jewish Community in Palestine between the World Wars)], Vol. 3 (Ra’anana: The Open University of Israel, 2012), 238-297. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. The theatre program details which actors participate in each scene and their roles. See: *Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City*, Theatre program. ICDPA, File no. 227228. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Nathan Alterman, *Politika gvoha me’od* [Very Lofty Politics], lyrics published in: *Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City*, a play written and directed by Yizkhak Nuzhik with lyrics by Natan Alterman. Opening scene, no page numbers. The lyrics also appear in the theatre program of the play. Both play and program are available ICDPA. File no. 227228. Author’s translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Tom Lewy. *Ha-yekim ve-ha-te’atron ha-Ivri: Be-ma’avak ben mizrakh le-ma’arav Europe* [The German Jews and the Hebrew Theatre: A Clash between Western and Eastern Europe], (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2016), 165–204; Ya’acov (Yan) Timen, *ve-ele toldot ha-matate: Ha-te’atron ha-satiri ha-Israeli* [History of the Matateh: The Israeli Satirical Theatre]. Unpublished manuscript. ICDPA file 229412; Ilana Kleiman, *Hamatateh: He-te’atron ha-satiri ha-Eretz-Israeli* [The Matateh: The Eretz-Israeli Satiric Theatre] MA thesis. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1991. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Zalmen Zylbervweig, “Yitzkhak Nuzhik” in *Lexicon fun yidishen teater* [Lexicon of the Yiddish Theatre], Vol. 2 (Warshaw: Elisheva Verlag, 1934), 1394–95. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. Diego Rotman. *Ha-bamah ke-vet araʻi: ha-te’aton ha-satiri shel Dzigan ve-Shumacher*. (Yiddish Stage as a Temporary Home: Dzigan and Shumacher’s Satirical Theatre). Jerusalem: Magnes, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. Gilula, Dwora. *Mul tagmul mekhi’ot kapayim – Nathan Alterman ve-ha-bama ha-Ivrit* (Nathan Alterman and the Hebrew Stage). Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Ha-meuchad, 2008, 38–61; Timen. *Ve-ele toldot ha-mtate*. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
10. Timen, “Ve-ele toldot ha-mtateh”; Dwora Gilula, Mul tagmul mekhi’ot kapayim – *Nathan Alterman ve-ha-bama ha-Ivrit* [Nathan Alterman and the Hebrew Stage], (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Ha-meuchad, 2008), 38-61; Shelly Zer-Zion, “Hard to Be a Jew in Mandatory Tel Aviv: Relocating the Eastern European Jewish Experience,” *Jewish Social Studies,* 24 no. 1 (2018): 75–99. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
11. Timen details the performances throughout the country. See: Timen, *ve-ele toldot ha-mtateh*. Regarding these traveling performances, see, for example, also advertisements in Hadera and Petah-Tikva: *Haboker*, 12 July 1939, 6; Herzliya, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: *Davar*, 26 June 1939, 5; Kfar Sava, Rehovot and Rishon LeZion: *Haboker*, 30 May 1939, 5; Netanya and Haifa: *Haaretz*, 16 May 1939, p. 6; Herzliya and Jerusalem: *Davar*, 27 June 1939, p. 7; Ra’anana*: Haaretz*, 23 June 1939, 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
12. Aviva Halamish, “Demography and the Struggle for Palestine, 1917-1947,” *Israel Studies,* 26, no. 3 (2021): 46–65. See also: *Statistical Abstract of Palestine 1939* (Jerusalem: Office of Statistics Jerusalem, 1939), 6-37. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
13. Liora R. Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine 1920-1948*,(New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 1-25. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
14. Diego Rotman, “Te’atron Yidish be-Israel. 1948–1988” [Yiddish Theatre in Israel, 1948–1988], *Zemanim,* 99 (2007): 38–45. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
15. On the dynamics between the various theatre companies of the Yishuv, see: Dorit Yerushalmi. “Towards a Balanced History: ‘Ohel: The Workers’ Theatre of Eretz Yisrael’ as a cultural alternative to Habima (1935-1946),” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* (2014): 340–59; Gad Kaynar-Kissiner, “Habima memateget et atsma ke-te’atron le’umi (1931–1958)” [Habima Tags Itself as a National Theatre, 1931-1958] in *Habima: Iyunim khadashim be-te’atron le’umi* [Habima: New Studies on National Theatre], eds. Gad Kissinger-Kaynar, Dorit Yeruhalmi, and Shelly Zer-Zion (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2017), 83 –104; Tom Lewy, *Ha-yekim ve-ha-te’atron ha-ivri*, 165-204. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
16. The only newspaper review of the play is available in: Palit, “Misaviv: be-beit ha-am” [Around: In Beit Ha-am], *Davar*, June 9, 1939, 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
17. Gad Kaynar, “Pragmatic Dramaturgy: Text as Context as Text,” *Theatre Research International,* 31, no. 3 (2006): 245-259; Gad Kaynar, “‘Get Out of the Picture, Kid in a Cap’: On the Intercation of the Israeli Drama and Reality Convention,” in *Theatre in Israel*, ed. Linda Ben-Zvi (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 285-302; Allison P. Hobgood, *Passionate Playgoing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1–33. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
18. Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audience: A Theory of Production and Reception* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 49–98; Hobgood, *Passionate Playgoing*, 1–33. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
19. Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions,” *Passions in Context: International Journal for the History and Theory of Emotions,* 1 (2010): 1–33; Barbara H. Rosenwein. *Generation of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 1–15. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
20. HeeKyung Sung and Rhonda Phillips, “Conceptualization a Community WellBeing and Theory Construct,” in *Social Factors and Community WellBeing*, eds. Youngwha Kee, Sueng Jong Lee and Rhonda Phillips (Cham: Springer, 2016), 1–12. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
21. Martin E. P. Seligman, *Flourish - A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and WellBeing* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 5–29. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
22. Edgar Cabanas and Eva Illouz, *Manufacturing Happy Citizens: How the Science and Industry of Happiness Control Our Lives* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), Chap. 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
23. Alex C. Michalos and Daniel Weijers, “Western Historical Traditions of Wellbeing,” in *The Pursuit of Human WellBeing: The Untold Global History*, eds. Richard J. Estes and M. Jeseph Sirgy (Cham: Springer, 2017), 31–58; Hilde Eileen Nafstad, “Historical, Philosophical and Epistemological Perspectives,” in *Positive Psychology in Practice: Promoting Human Flourishing in Work, Health, Education and Everyday Life*, ed. Joseph Stephen (Hoboken NJ: Wiley, 2015), 9–30. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
24. Monique Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And Is that What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understand Emotions,” *History and Theory,* 51 (2012): 193–220. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
25. Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 28–51; Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 1–52. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
26. Melinda Alliker Rabb, “The Secret Life of Satire,” in *A Companion to Satire*, ed. Ruben Quintero (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 568–84. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
27. Yizkhak Nuzhik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia holkhim ha’ira* (Haim and Sa’adia are Going to the City). Play, picture 2, ICDPA. File no. 227228. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
28. P. N. Johnson-Laird and Keith Oatley, “Emotions in Music, Literature and Film,” in *Handbook of Emotions*, eds. Lisa Feldman Barrett, Michael Lewis, and Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones (New York and London: The Guilford Press, 2016), 82–97. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
29. Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskya Iris Jain (New York: Routledge, 2008), 27–74. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
30. Nuzsik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia Holkhim Ha’ira*. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
31. Nuzhik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia Holkhim Ha’ira*, picture 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
32. Nuzhik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia Holkhim Ha’ira,* picture 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
33. Nuzhik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia Holkhim Ha’ira,* picture 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
34. Michael Gluzman stresses that one of the outstanding characteristics of Benyamin and Senderl is their effeminate nature. See: Michael Gluzman, *Ha-guf ha-tziyoni: le’umiyut, migdar u-minuyut ba-sifrut ha-Ivrit ha-khadasha* [The Zionist Body: Nationalism, Gender and Sexuality in Modern Hebrew Literature] (Tel Aviv: Ha-kibutz Ha-me’ukhad, 2007), 96–135. On the effeminate perception of the Jewish male see also: David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles CA: University of California Press, 1997), 149-203. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
35. Gali Drucker Bar-Am, “Masa bein masa’ot: Diyun hashva’ati be-shalosh girsa’ot ‘Masot Binyamin ha-shlishi’ me’et Mendele Mokher Sforim” [A Voyage between Voyages: Three Versions of ‘The Travels of Benjamin the Third’ by Mendele Mokher Sforim] *Mekhkarey Yerushalayim Be-sifrut Ivrit* [Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature] (2011): 93–124. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
36. Shelly Zer-Zion, “The Shtetl in the Hebrew Theatre of Mandatory Palestine During the 1930s,” *New Theatre Quarterly,* 26 no. 2 (2020): 177–191; Dorit Yerushalmi, “Te’atron Yidish ke-tashtit omanutit ba-te’atron ha-Ivri: Mabat al ha-te’atron shel bi’ma’ey tekufat ha-yishuv” [Yiddish Theatre as an Artistic Infrastructure of the Theatre in the Time of the Yishuv] *Bikoret U-parshanut,* 41, (2009): 7–39. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
37. Aharon Ashman, *Mas’ot Binyamin ha-shlishi* [The Travels of Benjamin the Third]. Unpublished manuscript. Available in The Yehuda Gabai theatre collection, The municipal library of Tel Aviv - Beit Ariela; Nuzhik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia holkhim ha’ira.* [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
38. Collection of pictures taken from the performance. Available in The Yehuda Gabai Theatre Collection, The Municipal Library of Tel Aviv – Beit Ariela. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
39. Nuzhik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia holkhim ha’ira,* picture 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
40. On the size of the modern Jewish family in the Yishuv see: Ofra Tene, *Ha-batim ha-levanim yimal’u: Khayey yom-yom be-dirot Tel Aviv bi-tkufat ha-mandat* [The White Houses Will Be Filled: Everyday Life in Tel Aviv During the British Mandate] (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2013), 214–85; Tammy Razi, *Yaldey ha-hefker: Ha-khatzer ha-akhorit shel Tel Aviv ha-mandatorit* (Forsaken Children: The Backyard of Mandate Tel Aviv] (PUBLIHSER? 2009), 31–67. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
41. Zer-Zion, “The Shtetl in the Hebrew Theatre,” PAGE NUMBER? [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
42. Jeffrey Shandler, *Shtetl: A Vernacular Intellectual History* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 50–92. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
43. Shandler. *Shtetl: A Vernacular Intellectual History*, 50-92; Dan Miron, *The Image of the Shtetl* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 1 –48. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
44. Naomi I. Eisenberger, “Social Pain and Social Pleasure: Two Overlooked but Fundamental Mammalian Emotions?” in *Handbook of Emotions*, ed. Lisa Feldman Barrett, Michael Lewis and Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones (New York and London: The Guilford Press, 2016), 440–53. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
45. Yaffah Berlovitz, “Ha-moshava ha-ivrit: Reshita shel tarbut Eretz-Israelit” [The Hebrew Moshava: The Beginning of Eretz-Israeli culture] in *Lesokhe’akh tarbut im ha-aliya ha-rishona: Iyun bein tkufot* [Talking Culture: The First Aliya, In inter-period discourse], eds. Yaffah Berlovitz and Yosef Lang (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hame’ukhad, 2010), 70–109. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
46. Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, “Ha-yakhas el ha-’akher’ ba-tarbut ha-politit shel ha-moshava: Mikre Rishon LeZion” [The Attitude Towards ‘The Other’ in the Political Culture of the Moshava: The Case of Rishon-Le-Zion] in *Lesokhe’akh tarbut im ha-aliya ha-rishona: Iyun bein tkufot* [Talking Culture: The First Aliya, in Inter-period Discourse], eds. Yaffah Berlovitz and Yosef Lang (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hame’ukhad, 2010), 157–175. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
47. Hizky Shoham indicated the centrality of urbanity in the formation of a Zionist culture. See: Hitzky Shoham, *Mordecai rokhev al sus: Khagigot Purim be-Tel Aviv (1908-1936) U-bniyana Shel Uma Khadasha* [Mordecai is Riding a Horse: Purim Celebrations in Tel Aviv, 1908-1936 and the Building of a New Nation] (Ramat Gan and Beer Sheva: Bar-Ilan University Press and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2013), 81–110. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
48. Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, “Hityashvut po’alim teimanim ve-ashkenazim: Me-rishon Le-tziyon le-Nakhlat Yehuda u-bekhazara [The settlement of Yemenite and Ashkenazi Workers: From Rishon Le-Zion to Nakhlat Yehuda and Back] in *Yehudey Teiman Be-Eretz Israel* [Yemenite Jews in Palestine/ Israel], ed. Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman (Jerusalem: The Open University Press, 2006), 141–162; Eraqi Klorman, “Ha-yakhas el ha-’akher’ ba-tarbut ha-politit shel ha-moshava.” PAGE NUMBER? [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
49. Rosenwein, “Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions”; Rosenwein. *Generation of Feeling*, 1–15. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
50. Eraqi Klorman, “Hityashvut po’alim Teimanim v’Ashkenazim”; Eraqi Klorman, “Ha-yakhas el ha-’akher’ ba-tarbut ha-politit shel ha-moshava.” [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
51. Rachel Sharabi, “Masa u-matan hibridi: Ben koltim le-niklatim ba-hityashvut ha-ovedet” [translation?] in *Yehudey teiman be-eretz Israel* [Yemenite Jews in Palestine/ Israel], ed. Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman (Jerusalem: The Open University Press, 2006), 195–226. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
52. Tene, *Ha-batim ha-levanim yimal’u*, 214-285; Razi, *Yaldey ha-hefker*, 31–67. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
53. Shoham, *Mordecai rokhev al sus,”* 136-164; Nina S. Spiegel. *Embodying Hebrew Culture: Aesthetics, Athletics, and Dance in Jewish Community of Mandate Palestine* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 21–56. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
54. Spiegel, *Embodying Heberw Culture*, 97-131. See also: Henia Rottenberg and Dina Roginsky, eds. *Sara Levi Tanai: Khaim shel yetzira* [Sara Levi Tanai: A Life of Creation] (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2015) PAGE NUMBER?; Dan Urian. *Ha-be’aya ha-adatit ba-te’atron ha-israeli* [The Ethnic Problem in Israeli Theatre] (Tel Aviv: The Open University Press, 2004), 39–76. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
55. Na’ama Ramot, “‘Artzeynu ha-ktantonet’: Ha-kabaret ba-yishuv [‘Our Little Land’: The Cabaret in the Yishuv]” *Iyunim Be-tkumat Israel* (2014): 896-939. In this context, Shoshana Damari established her stardom during the 1940s, within the framework of the Li-La-Lo Theatre. See: Dorit Yerushalmi. “Legacies, Archives and Afterlife: Re-envisioning the Li-La-Lo Theatre (Tel Aviv, 1944–1948),” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies,* 17, no. 2 (2018): 173–190. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
56. Urian, *Ha-be’aya ha-adatit ba-te’atron ha-Israeli*, 39–76. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
57. Zer-Zion, “The Shtetl in the Hebrew Theatre.” PAGE NUMBER? [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
58. Nuzshik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia holkhim ha’ira,* picture 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
59. Pictures of the performance are available in Yehuda Gabbai theatre archive, the municipal library of Tel Aviv. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
60. Leah Goldberg, “‘Me-Hodu ve-ad Kush’ ba-matateh” [From India to Kush in Ha-matateh], *Davar*, August 7, 1939, 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
61. Pictures of the performance are available in Yehuda Gabbai theatre archive, the municipal library of Tel Aviv. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
62. Nuzshik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia holkhim ha’ira,* picture 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
63. Ruthie Abeliovich, *Possessed Voices: Aural Remains from Modernist Hebrew Theatre* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2019), 123–156. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
64. Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, 2013), 1–12. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
65. Willibald Ruch, “Psychology of Humor,” in *The Primer of Humor Research*, eds. Victor Raskin and Willibald Ruch (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2008), 17–100. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
66. Nuzshik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia holkhim ha’ira,* picture 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
67. Igal Eyal, *Ha-intifada ha-rishona: Dikuy ha-mered ha-Aravi al-yedey ha-tzava ha-Briti be-Eretz-Israel 1936-1939* [The First Intifada: The Suppression of the Arab Revolt by the British Army 1936–1939] Tel Aviv: Ma’arakhot, 1998, 354–499; Aviva Halamish, *Mi-bait le’umi le-medina ba-derekh: Ha-yishuv ha-yehudi be-Eretz Israel ben milkhamot ha-olam* [From National Home to State in the Making: The Jewish Community in Palestine between the World Wars], Vol 2 (Ra’anana: The Open University of Israel, 2004), 169–268. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
68. Nuzshik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia holkhim ha’ira,* picture 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
69. Giselinde Kuipers, “The Sociology of Humor,” in *The Primer of Humor Research*, eds. Victor Raskin and Willbald Ruch (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2008), 361–98. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
70. Assaf Likhovski, *Tax Law and Social Norms in Mandatory Palestine and Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 101–148. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
71. Northrop Prye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1957, 2020), 131–240. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
72. Kuipers, “The Sociology of Humor.” THIS IS A FIRST REFERENCE AND SHOULD HAVE COMPLETE INFORMATION [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
73. Tzafi Sebba-Elran, “Ha-bdikha ha-ivrit be-tkufat ha-yishuv ke-manganon tarbuti le-simun gvulot khevratiyim” [The Hebrew Joke During the Period of the Yishuv as a Cultural Mechanism for Delineating (and Blurring) Social Boundaries] in *Ha-olam ha-Yehudi mabatim mi-Israel: Dimuyim, yitzugim, ve-gvulot* (Through Israeli Eyes: Images, Representations, and Boundaries of the Jewish World), eds. Ofir Abu and Tanya Zion-Waldoks (Sede Boker: Ben Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism, 2020), 95–117. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
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76. Nuzshik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia holkhim ha’ira,* picture 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
77. Razi, *Yaldey ha-hefker*, 95–128. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
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79. Albom ha-tmunot ha-nadir shenishmar bizkhut ha… sigaryot [The Rare Picture Album That Was Preserved Due to…Cigarettes] in *Ha-safranim: Blog ha-sifriya ha-le’umit* [The Librarians: The Blog of the National Library], Hasifriya ha-le’umit [The National Library]. Accessed 20 April 2021. <https://blog.nli.org.il/chov-mishmar-and-sports/>; “Osef albomey tmunot le-hadbaka shel khevrat ha-sigaryot dubek ve-ha-akhim masparo” [A Collection of Picture Albums for Gluing from the Dubek and Masparo Brothers Cigarette Companies]. The National Library of Israel. Accessed 20 April 2021. <https://www.nli.org.il/he/archives/NNL_ARCHIVE_AL997009628332605171/NLI> [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
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81. Author’s name? *Da’at ha-aretz mi-tokh mar’e eynaim* [To Know the Land by Sight] (Dubek: Tel Aviv, 1939). [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
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83. Lipshitz, “Miskhak.” THIS IS A FIRST REFERENCE AND NEEDS TO BE COMPLETE [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
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87. Yaacov Shavit and Jehuda Reinharz, *Haderekh le-september 1939: Ha-yishuv, yehudey Polin ve-ha-tenu’a ha-tziyonit erev milkhemet ha-olam ha-shniya* [The Road to September 1939: The Jewish Community in Eretz Israel, the Jews of Poland and the Zionist Movement on the Eve of the Second World War] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2013), 19-116; Ofer Shiff, “Itonut ha-yishuv ve-ha-ma’avak ba-tfutza le-ma’an shivyon ezrakhi, 1929-1939” [The Yishuv Press and the Struggle in the Diaspora for Civil Equality, 1929-1939) in *Ha-olam ha-yehudi mabatim mi-Israel: Dimuyim, yitzugim, ve-gvulot*. [Through Israeli Eyes: Images, Representations, and Boundaries of the Jewish World], eds. Ofir Abu and Tanya Zion-Waldoks (Sede Boker: Ben Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism, 2020), 285–308. [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
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89. Nuzshik, *Haim ve-Sa’adia holkhim ha’ira,* picture 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
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