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

**and the Demonstration of Wellbeing**

**This article aims to explore the mechanisms by which The Matateh, an Eretz-Israeli satirical theatre, created a sense of wellbeing among its audiences during a time of crisis. The article focuses on a Matateh revue entitled *Haim and Sa'adia are going to the City*, which premiered in May 1939. This was a highly stressful time in the history of the Yishuv: extreme anti-Semitism was flooding Europe, diplomats were engaged in feverish efforts to prevent another war, and a new White Paper jeopardized the existence of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The production of *Haim and Sa'adia are going to the City* referenced this troublesome reality outside the theatre. The present article will demonstrate how these everyday fears and anxieties, which dominated the cultural scene in the non-fictional, real world, were transformed through a stage presentation into humoristic expressions of pleasure, social engagement, success, and security.**

A glance at *Davar* of 16 May 1939 left little room for optimism. The headline of the Hebrew daily newspaper with the highest circulation in the Yishuv, as the Jewish community of Mandatory Palestine called itself, dealt with the assessments of the soon-to-be published *White Paper*, which would detail the new British policy in Mandatory Palestine. At the time, sources indicated that His Majesty’s government was planning to limit both Jewish immigration to Palestine and the ability of Jews to purchase land—a policy that would jeopardize the future of a Jewish national home.[[1]](#endnote-1) The second page reported the news from Europe: the suffering of Czechoslovakian refugees flocking to Poland; anti-Jewish violence in Nazified Slovakia; and anti-Semitic discrimination against Jewish students in Poland.[[2]](#endnote-2)

These headlines sharply articulated the stressful situation of the Yishuv, the Jewish population of Mandatory Palestine. Since 1929, the triangular relationship between the Jews, the Arabs, and the British forces in the land, deteriorated, reaching a point of crisis in May 1939. The Jews, who aimed to build a national home in Mandatory Palestine, wished to open the borders for mass-migration of Jews from Europe. It became an urging need, due to the Fascism and anti-Semitism in that was sweeping Europe, and the hectic speculations about an outbreak of a global war. The Arabs became increasingly hostile towards the political ambitions of the Yishuv. Since 1936 they struggled openly and violently against the Jews of the land and the British forces. The British mandatory authorities aimed to walk between the raindrops while pursuing the interests of Great Britain in the Middle East, preparing the diplomatic ground for the nearing war. In May 17, 1939, they published the McDonald White Book in which they retracted from the Balfour declaration.in this document they imposed restrictions about Jewish immigration to the land and about purchase of land - regulations that would jeopardize the future existence of Jewish national home in Palestine.[[3]](#endnote-3)

 A night before, on May 16, 1939, the highly 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 opened with a cheerful song whose lyrics were written by Nathan Alterman and set to music by Moshe Wilensky:

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.[[4]](#endnote-4)

A group of five actors performed this cheerful song.[[5]](#endnote-5) Thus, their stage performance turned a reality of uncertainty and anxiety into a delightful performance of pleasure and wellbeing.

In this article I would like to analyze *Haim and Sa'adia are going to the City* and explore how this satirical revue created a sense of wellbeing among the theatregoers of the Yishuv. This satirical revue did not only create a fictional world existing solely within an autonomous domain of the Arts. Quite the contrary—it echoed, intervened in, and commented on the experiences of everyday life. As such, the performance transformed the audience into an implied embodied spectatorship that were embedded in the poetics of the play.[[6]](#endnote-6) Thus, the play text negotiated and regulates, within the timeframe of the spectacle, the appropriate emotions this community should apply toward the scenes of reality represented on the stage and experienced in everyday life.

This article comprises three parts. In the first part, I contextualize this revue within the history of the Matateh and present the theoretical framework. The second part considers Haim and Sa'adia and the mechanism of empathy and warmth. Finally, the third part focuses on the analysis of three exemplary scenes in the play and examines how they transformed the disquieting emotions linked to the reality they represented, while negotiating the notion of wellbeing.

**Emotions as Performance / Emotions in Performance**

*Haim and Sa'adia are going to the City* was a typical Matateh revue. Yitzkhak Nuzshik, the artistic director of the company, authored and staged the play, Natan Alterman wrote the lyrics, Moshe Vilensky the music, and Emmanuel Luftglas designed the scenery. The company was founded in 1928, but its ensemble and artistic style only crystallized after Nuzshik, a Yiddish light theatre artist from Warsaw, joined the troupe in 1933.[[7]](#endnote-7) Under his artistic directorship, the company put on about four original satirical revues a year, in addition to one translated, full-length comedy. Nuzshik also shaped the poetic format and authored many of the Matateh’s satirical revues. Each program was conceived as a collection of short scenes exhibiting scenes from the lives of the Yishuv, which were linked by a character or two and shared a thematic framework.[[8]](#endnote-8) In the present case, 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 Matateh plays, this one was extremely popular. The Matateh was an urban satirical company, based in Beit Ha-am in Tel Aviv, which was the largest hall in the city during the 1930's. In addition, the company performed the play throughout bourgeois rural and urban locations the country: in Rehovot, Hadera, Jerusalem, Netanya, Haifa, Petah-Tikva, Kfar Sava, Herzliya and Ra'anana.[[9]](#endnote-9) The theatregoers who attended the play were typically the inhabitants of those cities and settlements. During the 1920s and 1930s, the local Jewish population grew from 56,000 in 1917 to 425,000 in 1939. About 80% of the Jews had immigrated primarily from central and eastern Europe: Poland, Germany, and Austria. About 20% of the Jewish population belonged to non-Ashkenazi Jewish communities, namely Sephardic, Yemenite and Middle Eastern.[[10]](#endnote-10) Therefore, most of the theatregoers who resided in the Zionist settlements of Palestine had originated from Jewish bourgeoisie or petit- bourgeoise families in Central and Eastern Europe and had immigrated within the preceding decade or two. Given common European bourgeoisie norms, they were accustomed to attending the theatre. We may assume that they had mastered Hebrew sufficiently to enable them to follow a comedic performance, were prosperous enough to afford the tickets, and took an interest in contemporary Hebrew-Zionist popular culture.[[11]](#endnote-11)

In contrast to the play’s popularity among a wide audience, reactions of theatre critics were more restrained. The Matateh was a successful satirical theatre, which the critics perceived merely as light entertainment. Before arriving in Palestine, Nuzshik was a leading figure in the Yiddish light theatre scene of Warsaw and was a member in the satirical theatre Sambation.[[12]](#endnote-12) The Yiddish light theatre and cabaret scene in Warsaw and Lodz boasted flourishing and vibrant artistic activity.[[13]](#endnote-13) The Matateh actors, who were looking for an artistic leadership, invited Nuzshik to Palestine and join them, based on his artistic achievements in Warsaw. He accepted and, after joining the Matateh, continued his artistic activity in Jewish light theatre, but now in Hebrew.[[14]](#endnote-14)

However, Hebrew theatre critics and the literati of the Yishuv disapproved of the heritage of Yiddish popular theatre and looked down at its Hebrew incarnation as manifested by the Matateh.[[15]](#endnote-15) They favored the elitist Hebrew dramatic theatre, which had aimed to differentiate itself from the popular Yiddish theatre already upon its founding back in Eastern Europe. Instead, the intellectual elite of the Yishuv celebrated Habima, the esteemed national theatre company that was founded in 1917 as a dramatic Hebrew studio near the Moscow Art Theatre of Konstantin Stanislavski and was moved to Palestine in 1931. Somewhat minor attention was given to the Ohel, a theatre company that was founded by Moshe Ha-Levi in 1925 as a worker’s theatre affiliated with the *Histadrut*, the General Federation of Jewish Labour in Eretz-Israel.[[16]](#endnote-16) As such, the works of the Matateh were rarely discussed in the press.[[17]](#endnote-17)

How then can we reveal the emotional influence of *Haim and Sa'adia are Going to the City* on the audience, when no published or other reactions to the play were documented? Gad Kaynar and Allison P. Hobgood explain that the implied spectator to whom the work was designed appears as an embodied structural construct within the artwork.[[18]](#endnote-18) Hence, a study of the documents remaining from this performance, that is, the play’s text, program and pictures enable one to extract from them the implied audience, namely, the community for which the performance was designed and to uncover the emotional perception of the theatregoers of the time. Susan Bennett and Hobgood stress that the theatrical performance shapes the audience's emotional reaction, and this may vary from identification-based cathartic reaction to alienation.[[19]](#endnote-19)

 Barbara H. Rosenwein explores the role of emotions within communities from a socio-historical point of view. She links sociological communities and emotions by positing that each community stresses a specific set of emotions that dominate its culture. The ways in which a community handles its emotions, hushes some, articulates others, and uses them to enforce ethical and political norms, makes the analysis of emotions an effective tool in learning about the communities, identities and characteristics. Rosenwein further explains that emotions are articulated and expressed in the cultural products of a society and in the community's public sphere. Theatre performances, she elaborates, are one of the vehicles to articulate a community's emotions and to negotiate them as a socio-cultural construct.[[20]](#endnote-20)

What are the mechanisms that construct emotions in performance? Monique Scheer points to the performative nature of emotions. The individual member of the society enacts emotional scripts that encapsulate social habitus.[[21]](#endnote-21) Theatre functions as one of many performative modes, along with other social performances, that create scenarios of embodied knowledge, a corporeal repertoire that is learned, rehearsed and practiced.[[22]](#endnote-22) Thus, theatre exhibits embodied emotional knowledge and scenarios that correspond and correlate to other social performances of emotional scripts.

The satirical revues of the Matateh comprised scenes that echoed non-artistic, everyday scenarios. The dialogue this play conducted with the reality outside of the theatre, was characteristic of the satirical genre, which draws its strength from the ability of the audience to identify the references hidden within the artwork and enjoy the artistic commentary on them.[[23]](#endnote-23) Most of the reality portrayed by the Matateh’s performances, contained emotional scenarios of a disturbing nature—fear, anxiety, frustration, anger and other extreme emotions. Thus, the Matateh’s actors demonstrated, throughout their scenes, how these disturbing non-artistic emotional scenarios can be transformed into positive emotions that are linked to humor, pleasure, confidence and joy, all emotions that generate wellbeing.

Yet, before delving deeper into the analysis of the play, we should keep in mind that "wellbeing" is not an emotion per se, because it combines subjective feelings with environmental factors.[[24]](#endnote-24) Martin Seligman sees in wellbeing 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.[[25]](#endnote-25) Edgar Cabanas and Eva Illouz criticized Seligman's notion of wellbeing, arguing that it encapsulates a contemporary neoliberal worldview.[[26]](#endnote-26) Other scholars historicized wellbeing, elaborating that despite the prevalence of this concept in Western philosophy since antiquity, it has changed throughout history and echoed evolutions in religious and political thought.[[27]](#endnote-27)

In light of these theoretical approaches, I will relate to wellbeing within the framework of this article as a cluster of positive emotions that are linked with self-fulfillment, communal engagement, security, and a sense of achievement. In this analysis of *Haim and Sa'adia are going to the City* the focus will be on the ways in which the performance articulated these positive emotional scripts on the stage, embodying, inter alia, emotions such as joyfulness, pleasure, confidence, satisfaction, and empathy, while echoing disturbing emotional scripts and transforming them into a source of pleasure and social empowerment.

**Appearances of Empathy and Warmth**

Following the opening song, entitled "Very Lofty Politics", the first scene immediately introduces Haim (Moshe Khurgel) and Sa'adia (Yosef Oxenberg). The audience meets them in a construction site and learn that the two have just received a job to build a cowshed together for the landlord, who is a well-established Yekke, (a German-Jew), who recently arrived in the country and wishes to establish himself as a farmer. However, Haim is so engaged in reading newspapers that his right hand does not know what his left is doing. He explains at length to Sa'adia what was reported in the newspaper about a minister, who had heard about it, and what was said about the minister in the radio. While they are engaged in a conversation, the cement dries, making it impossible to produce bricks. The Yekke landlord scolds them for not performing their job, but he soon feverishly joins their discussion, sharing what he had read in the German Zionist newspaper, *Der Judische Rundschau*. Thus, the workday is lost. The cement has dried, and it is impossible to build. Now they must seek another occupation for the rest of the day, which leads them to embark on a journey to the city.[[28]](#endnote-28)

Haim and Sa'adia are not protagonists in the traditional sense. They neither went through a process of development, nor were they the focus of the picaresque scenes they were involved in. They function primarily as does a cabaret conferencier: figures that guide the audience from one performative scene to the next. Nonetheless, 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, explain P. N. Johnson-Laird and Keith Oatley, lies at the heart of narrative-based artforms. Empathy enables spectators or readers to experience complex emotions such as vulnerability and compassion, while expanding their own emotional spectrum and identifying with a fictional character. Furthermore, a sympathetic and morally amiable fictional character even intensifies the empathic reaction of the audience, as it reassures the emotional and social norms of the audience.[[29]](#endnote-29) As a live medium, the theatre enhances empathy even further, as the focus of empathy is split between the fictive character and the actor portraying it. While exploring avant-garde performances, Erika Fischer-Lichte concluded that there is a feedback loop between the performer and the audience. The former intervenes in the reality of the audience, and the latter reacts emotionally not only to the artwork, but also to the performer, due to the vulnerability of her/his corporal presence. In extreme performance art events, audience members go as far as stopping the show when they fear for the wellbeing of the performer.[[30]](#endnote-30)

The literary intertextuality embedded in the characters of Haim and Sa'adia enables a better comprehension of how the emotional reaction they evoked contributed to a sense of wellbeing. Haim and Sa'adia, besides being unpractical "luftmenshn", are also characterized as emasculated men, unpractical, chatterbox, and subordinate to their wives in the domestic hierarchy. In the second half of the first scene, the wives of the two enter the stage. Hanna, Haim's wife, chastises him to travel to the city that very instant: "All our neighbors in the village ("Moshava" in Hebrew) have hastened to the city; hurry up to buy food products, to stock up!"[[31]](#endnote-31) Rachel, Sa'adia's wife, echoes her. But the women soon realize that their men are not to be trusted with this mission and they should go instead. Hanna demands from her husband: "Give me the money! Whatever you have – give! Everything! Everything!"[[32]](#endnote-32) And Rachel does the same. Haim begs her, in vain, to "Leave me something! At least a penny for cigarettes […]!"[[33]](#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!"[[34]](#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 emasculated luftmenshn to the nearby city and back home echoes another journey of a pair of men: Benyamin and his assistant Senderl in Mendele Moykher Sforim's *The Travels of Benyamin the Third*.[[35]](#endnote-35) Abramovich wrote three versions of the novel in Hebrew and Yiddish; the last version and most canonic is dated to 1911.[[36]](#endnote-36) This work was adapted twice to the Hebrew theatre in 1936-1937. In 1936 Moshe Ha-Levi staged an adaptation of the novel in Ha-Ohel, and in 1937 Barukh Tchemerinski and Avraham Baratz put on their adaptation of the novel. Whereas the Habima production gained little success, Ha-Levi's production was a box office success, and was still running in 1939.[[37]](#endnote-37)

There are 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* resembled Aharon Ashman's adaptation of *The Travels of Benyamin* in Ha-Ohel. In both journeys the two men run into robbers, visit the marketplace, and are eventually brought to an army barracks.[[38]](#endnote-38) Second, both Moshe Khurgel and Rosa Lichtenstein, as Haim and his wife, appeared as shtetl Jews. Khurgel, a stout, Polish-born actor, was dressed in a ragged bourgeois suit that was too large for him and a fedora, which bestowed upon him an image that echoed Sholem Aleichem's character Menahem Mendel, an aspiring yet helpless shtetl Jew. Lichtenstein, a German-Jewish actress, was a large woman, and in 1939 she was in her fifties. She wore a heavy dress and an old-fashioned coiffure, and appeared as the prototypical large, emasculating Jewish woman.[[39]](#endnote-39) And last, toward the end of the play, we learn that Haim and Hanna have six children.[[40]](#endnote-40) Such a large family was atypical of modern Zionist segments of the Yishuv and more associated with the old Jewish world.[[41]](#endnote-41)

*The Travels of Benyamin the Third*, by which we refer here to the three variations of the novel and its various stage adaptations, were all iconic works depicting the Eastern European Jewish shtetl.[[42]](#endnote-42) The shtetl was a historic settlement that developed in Poland during the late Middle Ages and flourished till the mid-19th century. In its afterlife, argues Jeffrey Shandler, the shtetl became a central location of Jewish imagination, a powerful, post-vernacular cultural paradigm that found rich expression in Jewish literature and intellectual life from the Enlightenment and until the post-Holocaust era.[[43]](#endnote-43) The shtetl was a powerful metaphor of modern Jewish imagination, explains Dan Miron, because it encapsulated longing and nostalgia, a sense of belonging, warmth and humor, along with criticism and a wish to distant oneself from this rigid way of life.[[44]](#endnote-44)

The shtetl reflects a cultural syntax of identity and belonging, of feeling at home and secure. This cluster of warm emotions, as explained by Naomi Eisenberger, is closely linked with the experience of pleasure and wellbeing.[[45]](#endnote-45) The analogy between *The Travels of Benyamin the Third* and *Haim and Sa'adia are going to the City* transplanted the shtetl and the warm emotions associated with it to Palestine. The home base of Haim and Sa'adia, their shtetl, is the Eretz-Israeli *Moshava*. The *Moshava* was the first Zionist form of settlement in the Land. Most of the *Moshavot*, such as Rishon Le-Tziyon, Zikhron Ya'akov, Rekhovot and others, were founded during the 1880's and were the cradle of Zionist Hebrew culture in the Land, yet unlike the *Kibbutz* or *Moshav*, they were not linked with the Socialist Zionist movements.[[46]](#endnote-46) By the 1930s, these *Moshavot* were well-established. They boasted an upper class—the core of the founding families who were farmers and landowners, along with a lower class of farm workers and service providers.[[47]](#endnote-47) Haim and Sa'adia belonged to the lower class: they were amiable representatives of the simple people. Locating the fable of the play in the route between the Moshava, that is, local embodiment of the Shtetl, and the Hebrew city, which was the embodiment of the Shtot, marked the spectrum of bourgeois urbanity as the main location of Zionist arena.[[48]](#endnote-48) Evoking in the audience of new immigrants warm and domestic emotions toward the Moshava and the city was an act of ideological production of wellbeing.

Whereas Khurgel and Lichtenshtein created on the stage the image of the Ashkenazi shtetl Jews, Sa'adia and his wife Rachel were Yemenite Jews, who were indeed among the inhabitants of the Moshavot. Yemenite Jews settled in Rishon Le-Tzion and Rehovot during the first and second decades of the 20th century.[[49]](#endnote-49) In the Moshavot they constituted a distinct sociological community that was also a separate emotional community.[[50]](#endnote-50) Bat-Tzion Eraqi Klorman, showed 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 was a plethora of growing emotions such as anger, disappointment, and frustration.[[51]](#endnote-51) Rachel Sharabi draws a similar picture while studying the interaction between Jewish-Yemenite Settlers in the Moshav Ravid, and the hegemonic Ashkenazi establishment of the Yishuv. She elaborated how the settlers felt threatened by the implied demand of the Zionist institutions to change their lifestyle and norms.[[52]](#endnote-52) In the larger cities, the situation of this community was not easier, as they found themselves also on the margins of urban society. In Tel Aviv, they used to live in poor neighborhoods on the outskirts of Jaffa, earning a living as laborers and simple service providers.[[53]](#endnote-53)

Even though there was a profound feeling of alienation between the Ashkenazi and Yemenite communities in the social sphere, in the fields of the performing arts, actors, the audience was enchanted by the exotic Yemenite appearance. The young Tzipora Tzabari won the 1928 Adloyada beauty pageantry,[[54]](#endnote-54) and Yemenite-Jewish actresses, singers and performers, such as Sara Levi (Tanai), Ester Gamli'elit, the Yemenite dance company of Rina Nikova and others, found their place in the performing arts scene of the 1930's.[[55]](#endnote-55) In addition, performances of Yemenite Jewish characters gained popularity on the light Hebrew stage.[[56]](#endnote-56) Appearances of Yemenite-Jewish characters in original Hebrew plays of the time delineated a more complex picture, in which Yemenite Jews were perceived on the one hand as the reincarnation of the authentic Biblical Jew and, on the other, as estranged to the modern pioneer-socialist ethos.[[57]](#endnote-57) The cultural meaning and emotional impact of the appearance of Yosef Oxenberg as Sa'adia and of Gamli'elit as his wife Rachel can be understood in the context of the tension between the Yemenite-Jewish performance tradition and everyday reality.

On the simplified level, Haim and Sa'adia was a performance of inclusiveness and reaffirmation of the Eretz-Israeli Jewish peoplehood. 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.[[58]](#endnote-58) Haim and Sa'adia, like their inter-textual reference pair, functioned as an empathy-evoking metaphor for Jewish peoplehood. The Eretz-Israeli version included Ashkenazi and Yemenite Jews alike. Haim and Sa'adia cared for one another and exhibited a gentle brotherhood. Sa'adia even mentions that Haim is his partner "born and bred".[[59]](#endnote-59) The inclusiveness and warmth were also apparent in the performance. Gamli'elit, who was a Yemenite Jew herself, portrayed an authentic and sympathetic Jewish Yemenite woman, whose appearance follows the desired exotic model of Yemenite beauty.[[60]](#endnote-60) Poet and theatre critic Leah Goldberg defined her stage appearance as "sweet", praised her singing abilities, even though, in her opinion, her acting skills were poor.[[61]](#endnote-61)

Oxenberg also portrayed a gentle and sympathetic character. He was dressed in regular working clothes.[[62]](#endnote-62) His Yemenite identity was apparent in his headcover, sideburns and usage language, which orientalized him and stressed his pious identity. He mentions the name of God in almost every phrase he utters, often using the archaic Aramaic phrase "Rakhmana Litzlan", that is "May God protect us". In picture 6, for example, as he complains that he does not find his wife, he confesses that

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

His words paraphrase *The Song of Songs* 2, 12 and 3, 2, thus ridiculing the deep religiosity of the Yemenite Jews. Even though there is no recording of the performance, we may assume that Oxenberg imitated a Yemenite accent. The creation of a stage-Hebrew inspired by Yemenite liturgy was practiced in the Ohel biblical performances.[[64]](#endnote-64) We may assume, therefore, that it was practiced by the Matateh as well.

The act in which Oxenberg, the Lodz-born actor, embodied 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 while blackening his faces. This practice encapsulated a deep inter-racial power-relations. The white actor robs the character of color of its unique individuality, culture, and ethnic authenticity, while turning the skin color into an image of dirt, mimicry, and ridicule. Moreover, this praxis prevents from actors of color to prosper in the field of performing arts and limits their ability to exhibit onstage their racial heritage. 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 wider audience, and eventually changed the perception of people of color.[[65]](#endnote-65)

In the Eretz-Israeli context, this acting technique delineated the boundaries between the two sociological and emotional communities and constructed the performance as a site of negotiations between the two. For the majority European community, the portrayal of Oxenberg as Sa'adia would have been a delightful performance of empathy and warmness that generated a feeling of wellbeing. It projected a curiosity toward Yemenite Jews, good humor and inclusiveness. Moreover, the metaphor of the shtetl situated the engagement between the different Jewish communities in the country in a domestic environment located in Eretz-Israel. While there is no documentation on the effect of this performance on a Yemenite-Jewish audience, we may speculate that the emotional reaction that this performance generated would have been more ambivalent. Indeed, it is possible that these feelings of acceptance and inclusiveness were also shared by the Yemenite audience that attended the performance. However, we may assume that the audience, which was charged with more complex feelings towards the Ashkenazi majority, found this Yemenite imitation mocking and insulting.

**Demonstrating Wellbeing**

*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 any moment. Worried people are engaged in the obsessive reading of newspapers; others rush to the city, to frantically buy food to be prepared for the unknown. The rest of the everyday scenarios, which that the play reflects upon, express various notions of fear and anxiety. However, on stage, these scenes were portrayed in a humoristic manner. Willibald Ruch argues 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 and dark humor, as a whole, a humorous reaction is associated with good spirits and with the ability to react creatively and playfully to a given situation.[[66]](#endnote-66) As such, humor is an important tool in evoking positive emotions and producing wellbeing.

In the following section I will explore three scenes, explaining both their reference to the outside reality and the original emotional reaction they would have evoked. I will analyze 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

The scene takes places at a bus stop. A bus arrives and Bronka Salzman, in the role of an unnamed woman, runs hysterically and blocks 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!"[[67]](#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 was an intense scene that expressed an emotional habitus of fear and urgency. For the theatregoers of the Yishuv and Tel Aviv, the reference was clear. During the Arab revolt, which took place in waves between 1936 and 1939, there were frequent attacks by Arab militias on communication lines, roads, and vehicles. The roads turned into battle zones in which British forces, Jewish legal and illegal forces and Arab forces fought on a routine base. Traveling, especially in northern Palestine, was indeed a frightening experience.[[68]](#endnote-68)

After one of the figures tries to reassure her that the roads leading 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, further 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 pops in: "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".[[69]](#endnote-69) This new information about Kofer Ha-Yishuv created a humoristic peak due to the comic incongruity and thus changed the emotional effect of the scene.[[70]](#endnote-70)

Kofer Ha-Yishuv, literally – "the Jewish community Ransom fund" was a tax issued by the Jewish National Council on 24 July 1938, in order to meet the security needs of the Yishuv. Kofer Ha-Yishuv, explains Assaf Likhovsky, was one of many voluntary taxes that were levied on the Jewish population of Palestine by the Jewish National Council. This internal Yishuv tax system was separate from the British taxation, which was compulsory. This system developed because the British authorities encouraged internal community taxes that were 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 procedural means to pursue the pre-statehood national goals of the Yishuv. Because these taxes were voluntary, there were opposing communities that refused to pay them. Among them were members of the Revisionist Party, which did not accept the authority of the national council, and the ultra-orthodox groups of Me'a She'arim. The efforts to collect these taxes involved an intense public discourse intended to legitimize these taxes and to facilitate their collection. There was even an attempt to establish an honor court for the persecution of those who refused to pay.[[71]](#endnote-71)

The emotional scenario of this scene changes from a spectrum of anxiety/security to one of honor/shame. The woman does not explain why she resents so much the additional payment for Kofer Ha-Yishuv, nor does she appear to have any ideological reason for that. Moreover, her father and her husband do not support her objection. Her exaggerated dramatic performance can no longer be deciphered as an expression of justified anxiety, but rather as a hysterical stinginess that echoes Moliere's *The Miser*. Akin to the character of the miser, she becomes an obstructing figure who prevents the fable’s continuation, namely, to get on the bus and travel to the city, thus becoming, instead, the comic target of the scene.[[72]](#endnote-72)

Giselinde Kuipers sees humor as a mechanism that enforces social norms and habits,[[73]](#endnote-73) while Tzafi Sebba-Elran showed how humor defined the group identity of the Yishuv during the 1930s.[[74]](#endnote-74) This humorous mechanism functions here in a similar way. The woman, who is the target of humorous barbs, is being shamed and humiliated because she does not fit into the desired social order. Her expulsion turns into the success of the fictional community: the plot can continue, and the tax is justified. From a gender perspective her expulsion celebrates the achievement of the masculine figures. Even though the male characters in this scene are gray and, like Haim and Sa’adia, somewhat effeminate, they manage to form a community that is masculine enough, and thus embodies, partially, relatively, and unheroically, the Zionist norm of the new Jewish male.

The scene demonstrates to the audience sitting in the dark 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 sees in laughter a mechanism that engages individuals in a shared comic-cathartic experience of togetherness.[[75]](#endnote-75) As such, the laughter created a sense of engagement, communality, and wellbeing throughout the performance. The other level has to do with the non-fictional world. It associates tax payment with social conduct that is appropriate, honorable and that enables individuals to be socially engaged and affiliated with the community.

Forsaken Children and Playful Engagement

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." But then Yehudit Farkal, as Miriam, challenges him and 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-76) The non-theatrical reference of the scene was easily understood by the theatregoers, especially those who resided in Tel Aviv. The scene represented the forsaken children who were swarming the streets of Tel Aviv at the time.

These forsaken children and youngsters had dropped out of the school system. They used to earn some money in the streets while providing minor services or by selling small items of merchandize. Some of them would hang out on the seashore, sit in dubious cafes in Jaffa, hobnob with Jewish and Arab criminal elements and even commit minor theft. The welfare discourse at the time viewed them as an antisocial element. Most of these children were sons and daughters of poor and dysfunctional families, and new immigrants from Europe and the Middle East. Most of the families resided in the suburban slums of Tel Aviv and Jaffa. Other children arrived in the city by themselves, after escaping from their homes in other regions of the country. Some of them even suffered from visible and non-visible disabilities that prevented them from attending school. Tami Razi argues that the neglected appearance of these children created an urban spectacle of poverty and neglect that disturbed the bourgeois landscape of white, modern, European Tel Aviv. They encapsulated emotions such as disgust and disappointment from the model society that should have been built there.[[77]](#endnote-77)

The juvenile gang in the play was violent and threatening, especially when the youngsters attack a couple on a romantic date. Shmu'el Rodenski, as the young man, offers the gang members his 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-78) No. Albert is not interested in his life either. At that point the comic incongruity changes the tenor of the scene and creates a humorous effect. The youths want to "steal" the playing cards that were sold with the cigarette packs.

Indeed, in 1939, the two Eretz-Israeli cigarette manufacturers, Dubek and the Brothers Masparo, distributed albums depicting vignettes from the life and history of the Yishuv. Picturesque cards that were meant to complete the verbal descriptions in the albums were sold with the cigarette packs.[[79]](#endnote-79) One of Dubek’s albums dealt with civil guards and sports, and contained pictures of Eretz-Israeli athletes along with members of the Jewish police (called the “Notrim” or Jewish auxiliary police) and the Special Night Squads.[[80]](#endnote-80) Another dealt with Eretz-Israeli landscapes and was constituted of about 200 pictures taken from the collections of the National Fund.[[81]](#endnote-81) A third album dealt with the history of the Jewish people.[[82]](#endnote-82) But the young man will not give up his cards. Like the youths, he also wants to complete the albums.

The participation in the card-collecting game changes the emotional tone of the scene. The juvenile group and the young man realize that they are all on the same team, which exists in the liminal timeframe between childhood and adulthood, symbolized by smoking and playing. The young man's devotion to the game was so great that it overshadows his romantic obligation to his date: he and the juvenile group lose themselves in the time and place imposed by the game.[[83]](#endnote-83) They are no longer subjected 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 Eretz-Israeli locations exhibited in the cards: historic landscapes and milestones of the Zionist settlement in the Land. The game replaces the random violence of the gang with the organized and nationally channeled violence represented in the cards: images of Jewish athletes and Jews serving in the Eretz-Israeli defense forces.

The appearance of the actors in the role of these youngsters stressed even further the playful qualities of the scene. They were dressed in children's clothes, wearing Zoro-like masks on their faces that signified them as robbers in a children's game.[[84]](#endnote-84) 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

Ester Gamli'elit appears as an elegant young woman who tries to cut in front of a line of buyers waiting to be served at the grocery shop. The rest of the buyers push her to the back. Then, Bezalel London, as a middle-aged man, enters the stage. His character is referred to in the play’s text as "a Jew", namely—one of the people. He is confused and overwhelmed and tries to jump the line while pleading: "Gevald, Jews, […] Let me stand in line!"[[85]](#endnote-85) As the people around him 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-86)

The shopping fever and stocking of food products expose how deep and primordial the fear of the upcoming war was. This scene encapsulated the deep anxiety that was evident as a leitmotif in the play and one that triggered the plot. Shiff, Reinhardtz and Shavit delineated the Yishuv’s deep concern about the war, focusing on the journalistic reports in the Hebrew press and the diplomatic efforts of the Yishuv regarding the Jews of Poland.[[87]](#endnote-87) This scene also reveals the paralyzing effect of anxiety on the everyday life of Jewish Palestine. In routine life, 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 was a daily practice.[[88]](#endnote-88) In this context, the storing of food seems even more unusual.

As the scene proceeded, the comic hyperbole took over the performance of anxiety, transforming it into a reassuring and powerful laughter. The humorous transformation takes place as the monologue of "the Jew" continues. He cites the shopping list his wife gave him, and as he reads, the endless list becomes more and more absurd. It begins with an accumulated list that blends food with cleaning products, perfumery and kitchen dishes: "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-89) As the monologue continues, the goods he is required to bring 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 constructs the woman who dictated it as a spoiled, comical victim that does not understand the appropriate norms.[[90]](#endnote-90) The anxiety in the beginning turns into a reassuring demonstration that nurtures realistic expectations. Like in the scene of the bus stop, the community on the stage adapts norms associated with masculinity, that is, realistic assessment of needs, while overcoming the hysterical demands imposed by the woman who dictated the list. As a result this Eretz-Israeli society becomes less effeminate, even though it cannot adopt masculine heroic manners.

Haim and Sa'adia enter the stage while looking for their wives. They have no money and hence 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 and to conserve it: "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 wood planks".[[91]](#endnote-91) And it is conservable after you boil it for three days and three nights, and then store it in a petroleum tin. Sa'adia the Yemenite is the chief authority for the conservation 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."[[92]](#endnote-92)

Via the jam and the falafel, Haim and Sa'adia design the future wartime cuisine of the Yishuv. A cuisine, explains Nir Avieli, is a way in which a community defines its identity and resilience.[[93]](#endnote-93) Haim’s and Sa'adia's cuisine includes a blend of Oriental and European dishes such as jam but also falafel, which was a dish associated with Jewish Yemenite cuisine, even though it was an original Eretz-Israeli street food that existed nowhere else in the region.[[94]](#endnote-94) 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 the majority of the Yishuv population, which continued to consume European Jewish food with only minor adaptations to the region.[[95]](#endnote-95) The humoristic incongruity blended the semantic field of food preparation with building materials and industry. Thus, food, a fragile product that is in constant demand, subject to weather changes and political instability, became associated with modern, durable and secure real estate. As such, it projected emotional security, warmth, and stability. The anxiety that dominated the beginning of the scene turned, therefore, into a feeling of strength and resilience.

**Conclusions**

Only one journalistic column was written about *Haim and Sa'adia* *Are Going to the City*. It was published in Davar and written by a journalist using the pen name "Refugee" (Palit). He began his column with an apologetic attitude:

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 […].[[96]](#endnote-96)

The writer begins with an apologetic observation about the unsophisticated qualities of the performance, but eventually he 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 that attended the show.

Indeed, the analysis of the play reveals how it functioned as a mechanism to form the theatregoers of the Yishuv into an emotional community that experiences the emotional cluster that constitutes wellbeing. The play and its performance reference the reality outside the theatre and interpreted it on stage. The scenarios of reality represented onstage often 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 mis-en-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 an individual experience but was always communal and collective. 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 resenting taxation and the other producing an unrealistic shopping list—were shamed, ridiculed, and expelled in favor of a positive, practical order that the characters of the play as well as the audience in the auditorium were encouraged to adopt. In this respect, the performance not only shaped the spectators into an emotional community that learns how to develop a sense of wellbeing via the practice acquired in the theatre; it also defined the boundaries of this community. Those members of the Yishuv who could not identify with the general wellbeing, either for individual, ethnic, class or political reasons, were perceived as interfering with the dominant emotions that define the community, and hence were deprived of their voice and legitimacy in this symbolic spectacle.

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. P. 1; "Ha-vikhu'akh ba-parlament ha-briti be-yom bet ha-ba (The debate in the British Parliament to be held on next Monday). *Davar*. May 16, 1939. P. 1; "Dvar ha-yom" (Talk of the day). *Davar*. May 16, 1939. P. 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. P. 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. "Mizvaot ha-shilton ha-naẓi be-slovakia "(From the horrors of Nazi regime in Slovakia). May 16, 1939. P. 2; "Plitey czekhoslovaia be-polin" (Czechoslovakian refugees in Poland). May 16, 1939. P. 1; "Inuyey ha-student ha-yehudi be-polin" (The torment of the Jewish student in Poland). May 16, 1939. P. 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Halamish, Aviva. Mi-ba’it le’umi le-medina she-baderekh: ha-yishuv ha-yehudi be-eretz isra’el bein milkhamot ha-olam. (From National Home to State in the Making: The Jewish Community in Palestine between the Wrold Wars). Vol 3. Ra’anana: The Open University of Israel, 2012. 297-38. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Natan Alterman. *Politika gvoha me'od* (Very high-level politics). Lyrics published in: N. Yitzkhaki (Yikzkhak Nuzhik) author and director, Natan Alterman – lyrics. *Haim and Sa'adia are going to the City*. Play. Opening scene. No page no. 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-4)
5. 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-5)
6. Gad Kaynar. "Pragmatic Dramaturgy: Text as Context as Text." *Theatre Research International* 31/3 (2006): 245-259; Gad Kaynar. “’Get Out of the Picture, Kid in a Cap’: On the Intercation of the Israeli Drama and Reality Convention.” *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-6)
7. Tom Lewy. *Ha-yekim ve-ha-te'atron ha-ivri: be-ma'avak ben mizrakh le-ma'arav erope* (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-mtate: ha-te’atron ha-satiri ha-isre’eli* (And this is the history of the Matateh: The Israeli satirical theatre). ICDPA file 229412; Ilana Kleiman. *Hamatateh – he-te'atron ha-satiri ha-eretz-yisra'eli* (The Matateh – The Eretz-Israeli Satire Theatre). MA thesis. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1991. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. 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. Pp. 38-61; Shelly Zer-Zion. “Hard to Be a Jew in Mandatory Tel Aviv: Relocating the Eastern European Jewish Experience.” *Jewish Social Studies* 24/1 (2018): 75-99. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. 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: *Ha-Boker*, 12 July 1939, p. 6; Herzliya, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: *Davar*, 26 June 1939, p. 5; Kfar Sava, Rehovot and Rishon Le-Tzion: *Ha-Boker*, 30 May 1939, p. 5; Netanya and Haifa: *Ha-Aretz*, 16 May 1939, p. 6; Herzliya and Jerusalem: *Davar*, 27 June 1939, p. 7; Ra'anana*: Ha-Aretz*, 23 June 1939, p. 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Aviva Halamish. "Demography and the Struggle for Palestine, 1917-1947". *Israel Studies* 26.3 (2021): 46-65. See also: *Statistical Abstract of Palestine 1939*. Jerusalem: Office of Statistics Jerusalem, 1939: 6-37. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Halperin. *Babel in Zion*. 1-25. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Zalmen Zylbervweig."Yitzkhak Nuzshik". In: *Lexicon fun yidishen teater* (Lexicon of the Yiddish theatre). vol. 2. Warshaw: Elisheva verlag, 1934. 1394-1395. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. 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-13)
14. 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-14)
15. Diego Rotman. "Te'atron yidish be-yisra'el. 1948-1988" (Yiddish theatre in Israel 1948-1988). *Zemanim* 99 (2007): 38-45. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
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18. Kaynar. "Pragmatic Dramaturgy”; Kaynar. “Get out of the Picture”; Hobgood. *Passionate Playgoing*, 2014. 1-33. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audience: a theory of production and reception.* London and New York: Routledge, 49-98; Hobgood. *Passionate Playgoing*, 2014. 1-33. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
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35. Michael Gluzman stresses that one of the outstanding characteristics of Benyamin and Senderl has to do with 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. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. 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 Nendele Mokher Sforim), *Mekhkarey yerushalayim be-sifrut ivrit* (Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature) (2011): 93-124. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Shelly Zer-Zion. "The Shtetl in the Hebrew Theatre of Mandatory Palestine During the 1930s." *New Theatre Quarterly.* 26/2 (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)
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41. On the size of the modern Jewish family in the Yishuv see: Ofra Tene. *Ha-batim ha-levanim yimal'u: khayey yomtom 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. 214-285; Tammy Razi. *Yaldey ha-hefker: ha-khatzer ha-akhorit shel tel aviv ha-mandatorit* (Forsaken Children: the Backyard of Mandate Tel Aviv), 2009. 31-67. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Zer-Zion. "The Shtetl in the Hebrew Theatre". [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Jeffrey Shandler. *Shtetl: A Vernacular Intellectual History*. New Brunswick NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2014. 50-92. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
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58. Zer-Zion. "The Shtetl in the Hebrew Theatre". [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
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60. Pictures of the performance are available in Yehuda Gabbai theatre archive, the municipal library of Tel Aviv. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
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62. Pictures of the performance are available in Yehuda Gabbai theatre archive, the municipal library of Tel Aviv. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
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