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| Yizhar, Smilansky (1916–2006) |
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| Acknowledged as the first *Israeli* writer since his first story ‘Ephraim khozer la-aspeset’ (Ephraim Goes Back to Alfalfa) from 1938, Yizhar Smilansky has been the first Israeli-born Hebrew writer to use modern *sabra* Hebrew as a literary language. He was 22 at the time, and has since come to be considered Israel's most illustrious writer.  Born September 27th 1916 in Rehovoth, educated in Jerusalem, he served as an intelligence officer in the IDF, an experience later reflected in his writing. He was elected to Parliament six consecutive times (1949–1966). Following the Six Days War he refrained from formal political activity and concentrated on education and on his writing. He was a guest lecturer in the New York Theological Seminary (1968), lecturer in the department of Education in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1970–1980), Professor in the Hebrew Literature Department of Tel-Aviv Universiy (1980–1988), and a Fellow in the Research Institute for Jewish Studies at Harvard University (1967, 1987). From 1988 almost to his last day he taught Literature at the Levinsky Seminary in Tel-Aviv. His work was translated into several languages, mainly English, German and French. *Khirbet Khizeh* alone was translated into nine languages. |
| Acknowledged as the first *Israeli* writer since his first story ‘Ephraim khozer la-aspeset’ (Ephraim Goes Back to Alfalfa) from 1938, Yizhar Smilansky has been the first Israeli-born Hebrew writer to use modern *sabra* Hebrew as a literary language. He was 22 at the time, and has since come to be considered Israel's most illustrious writer.  Born September 27th 1916 in Rehovoth, educated in Jerusalem, he served as an intelligence officer in the IDF, an experience later reflected in his writing. He was elected to Parliament six consecutive times (1949–1966). Following the Six Days War he refrained from formal political activity and concentrated on education and on his writing. He was a guest lecturer in the New York Theological Seminary (1968), lecturer in the department of Education in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1970–1980), Professor in the Hebrew Literature Department of Tel-Aviv Universiy (1980–1988), and a Fellow in the Research Institute for Jewish Studies at Harvard University (1967, 1987). From 1988 almost to his last day he taught Literature at the Levinsky Seminary in Tel-Aviv. His work was translated into several languages, mainly English, German and French. *Khirbet Khizeh* alone was translated into nine languages. Various volumes of Selected Stories appeared in German (1998), Arabic (1988) and French (2000). *Yemei Ziklag,* his major work,has not been translated.  Yizhar’s early writing was published in the 1930s and 1940s, and was a dramatic breakthrough in modern Hebrew literature. *Ephraim khozer la-aspeset* was published in the literary journal *Gilyonot* edited by Yitzhak Lamdan, who gave him his pen-name S. Yizhar. After *Ephraim* he published more stories, then the novella *Be-faatei Negev* (On the Edge of the Negev, *1945),* and the short story collection *Ha-khorsha ba-giv'a* (A Forest on the Hill, 1947). In 1949, at the age of 33 he published two of his most controversial stories, ‘Khirbet Khizeh’ and ‘Ha-shavuy’ (The Prisoner), raising moral issues of occupation and injustice. In ‘Khirbet Khizeh’ he described the expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from their village by the IDF during the War of Independence. It was a singular voice at the time, though it did not prevent his nomination to the Knesset in the ruling Mapai party, the youngest MP. In 1950 he published *Shayara shel khatzot* (Midnight Convoy) and a collection of stories for youth *Shisha sipurei qayitz* (Six Summer Stories). At 42 he had already written his incontestable masterpiece *Yemei Ziklag* (Days of Ziklag, 1958), comprising 2 volumes and more than a thousand pages, and by the age of 43 he had been awarded the prestigious Israel Prize for literature.  Several collections of stories followed: *Sipurei Mishor* (*Stories of a Plain*, 1963), as well as some stories for children published in the *Davar Li'yladim* journal, such as *Ha-kirkara shel ha-dod moshe* (*Uncle Moshe's Carriage*, 1960). Indifferent, sometimes hostile response from editors and critics made him renounce prose writing.  A thirty year period of literary silence followed, which he devoted to teaching, to obtaining a PhD in Education, and to non-fiction writing of a distinct non-conformist nature. On education: *Al khinuch ve-al khinuch le-arachim* (*On Education and Education for Values*, 1974), Kria le-khinuch (*A Call for Education*, 1984), *Preida min ha-khinuch*, (*Farewell to Education*, 1989), *Shnei pulmusim* (*Two Controversies*, 1990); on reading literature: *Liqro sipur* (*To Read a Story*, 1982), *Sipur eyno* (*A Story Is Not*, 1983); on political issues: *Dapei riv* (*Quarrel Pages*, 1988).  His late writing appeared in the 1990s and was enthusiastically acclaimed by public and critics. It was triggered by the request of publisher Zmora to reprint his *Yemei Ziklag*. Yizhar was 76 years old when he broke his by now legendary literary silence with *Miqdamot* (*Preliminaries*, 1992), followed by five more masterpieces: *Tzalhavim* (1993), *Tzdadiyim* (*Asides*, 1996), *Etzel ha-yam* (*By the Sea*, 1996), *Malkomia yefefia* (*Lovely Malcolmia*, 1998), and *Giluy Eliyahu* (*Discovering Elijah*, 1999). He stopped writing at 83, and spent the next years teaching and reading until his death in August 22nd 2006.  Yizhar was awarded many honorary doctorates, by the Weizman Institute (1991), by the University of Haifa (1994) and by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1996). He was awarded the Brenner Prize and the Israel Prize (1959) for his *Yemei Ziklag*. He was also awarded the Rupin prize (1948), the Lamdan Prize for children's literature (1960), the Usishkin Prize (1963), The Akum Prize (1989), the Bialik Prize (1993), The Israeli Literature Prize (1994), the Ben-Gurion Prize (2001) and the Emet Prize (2002).  Yizhar brought a unique and innovative style to modern Hebrew literature. His perfect knowledge of the Bible and ancient sources, his mastery of modern Hebrew in its various registers, combined with his inventiveness and his acute ear for musicality make his style inimitable and difficult to translate. The complexity of his writing, the stream of consciousness he uses contributes to its uniqueness. So does his knowledge of Israeli geology, geomorphology, climate and flora, evident in his landscape descriptions and his emphasis on the relationship between person and place. List of Works *Be-fa'atei Negev* (*On the Edge of the Negev*) (stories, 1945). Tel Aviv: Am Oved; Hakibbutz Hamechad, 1978.  *Ha-horsha ba-giv'a* (*The Wood on the Hill*) (stories, 1947). Bney Brack: Sifriat Poalim; Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1979; Zmora Bitan, 1990. <<http://www.ithl.org.il/book_info.asp?id=1336>>  *Sipur Khirbet Khizeh ve Ha-shavuy* (*The Story of Hirbet Khizeh and The Prisoner*) (1949). Bney Brack: Sifriat Poalim; Zmora Bitan, 1989, 2006. <<http://www.ithl.org.il/book_info.asp?id=1336>>  *Shayara shel hatzot* (*Midnight Convoy*) (stories, 1950). Bney Brack: Hakibbutz Hameuchad; Tarmil, 1971.  *Yemei Ziklag* (*Days of Ziklag*) (1958). Tel Aviv: Am Oved. Zmora Bitan, 1989.  *Arba'a sipurim* (*Four Stories*) (1959). Bney Brack: Hakibbutz Hameuchad.  *Sipurei mishor* (*Stories of a Plain*) (1963). Bney barck: Hakibbutz Hameuchad. (Zmora Bitan, 1990)  *Ephraim hozer la-aspeset* (*Ephraim Goes back to Alfalfa*) (1978). Bney Brack: Hakibbutz Hameuchad. (Zmora Bitan, 1991)  *Beterem yetzia* (*Before Departure*) (stories, 1991). Or Yehuda: Zmora Bitan.  Mikdamot (*Preliminaries*) (1992). Or Yehudah: Zmora Bitan.  *Tzalhavim* (1993). Or Yehudah: Zmora Bitan.  *Tzdadiyim* (*Asides*) (1996). Or Yehudah: Zmora Bitan.  *Etzel ha-yam* (*By the Sea*) (1996). Or Yehudah: Zmora Bitan.  *Collected Works* (1996). Or Yehudah: Zmora Bitan.  *Malkomia yefefia* (*Lovely Malcolmia*) (1998). Or Yehudah: Zmora Bitan.  *Giluy Eliahu*(*Discovering Elijah*)(memoirs, 1999). Or Yehudah: Zmora Bitan. Children *Shisha sipurei kayitz* (*Six Summer Stories*) (1950) Sifriat Poalim, 1950. (Zmora Bitan, 1970; 1990).  *Alilot Humit* (*The Adventures of Humit*) (1958). Bney Brack: Hakibbutz Hameuchad.( Zmora Bitan, 1992).  *Be-raglayim yehefot* (*Barefoot*) (1959). Jerusalem: Tarshish.  *Tapu Ve-Puza* (*Oran and Ange*) (1960). Bney Brack: Sifriat Poalim.  *Harpatka ba-agam (Adventure in the Lake)* (1956). Bney Brack: Hakibbutz Hameuchad.    *Shiv`a sipurim* (*Seven Stories*) (1971). Bney Brack: Hakibbutz Hameuchad.  *Ha-kirkara shel ha-dod Moshe* (*Uncle`s Moshe`s Carriage*) (1973). Bney Brack: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, ( Even Hoshen, 2007). Non-Fiction *Al hinuch ve-al hinuch le-arakhim* (*On Education and Education for Values*) (1974). Tel Aviv: Am Oved.  *Liqro sipur* (*To Read a Story)* (non-fiction, two volumes) (1982). Tel Aviv: Am Oved.  *Sipur eyno* (*A Story Is Not*) (essays, 1983). Bney Brack: Hakibbutz Hameuchad.  *Kria le-khinukh* (*A Call for Education*) (non-fiction), Sifriat Poalim, 1984.  *Preida min hakhinukh* (*Farewell to Education*) (essays), Zmora Bitan, 1988.  *Dapei Riv* (*Quarrel Pages*)(non-fiction)*,* Zmora Bitan, 1988.  *Shnei pulmusim* (*Two Controversies*), (non-fiction), Zmora Bitan, 1990. |
| Further reading:  (Aberbach)  (Ben-Ari)  (Ben-Ari, S. Yizhar: A Monograph)  (Negev)  (Nevo)  (Shapira) |