

The Tanks of Tammuz and The Seventh Day: The emergence of opposite poles of Israeli identity after the Six Day War

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The Six Day War generated two books that can be added to the pantheon of literary works that have shaped Israeli identity: *Soldiers' Talk (Si'ah lohamim)* and Shabtai Teveth's *The Tanks of Tammuz (Hasufim ba-tzariah)*. Over the years these books came to symbolize key paradigms in the public discourse – the former representing the figure of the anguished soldier who “shoots and weeps,” and the latter reflecting the cult of generals, with all the arrogance, intoxication with power, and scorn for the enemy associated with it. This article presents a comparative analysis of the two books, arguing that they indicate totally different ways of processing the abrupt transition from the anxiety of the “waiting period” before the war to the euphoria after the rapid victory.

Keywords: Six Day War; *The Seventh Day*; *The Tanks of Tammuz*; Steel Division; Shmuel Gonen; Shabtai Teveth; Avraham Shapira; Amos Oz

Certain events and documents have gradually come to symbolize crucial points of time, when Israeli identity diverged along two distinct paths. The Six Day War produced at least two such documents that can be added to the pantheon of literary works that have shaped the nation's identity – *The Tanks of Tammuz* on the one hand and *The Seventh Day* on the other.¹ In the course of time these books have become symbols of different tendencies that developed in the wake of that war – legendary signposts: the latter reflects the figure of the agonized soldier “shooting and weeping”; the former represents the cult of the arrogant generals, drunk with power and filled with contempt for the enemy.

As soon as the two books were published, they earned a wealth of accolades, including such praise as “The best book published about the Six Day War.”² The poet Hayim Guri wrote that the *The Seventh Day* was “The most important document written so far about that war. . . . This book tells about a series of meetings that may shape the soul and consciousness of a whole generation.”³ And Mordechai Bar-On (who served as the chief education officer during the Six Day War) wrote that *The Tanks of Tammuz* “has joined the books that we in the IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] will have to teach so that the future generations of soldiers realize what can be achieved.”⁴

The enthusiastic reactions to the books and an analysis of Guri's and Bar-On's comments illustrate how these books rapidly came to shape the identity of generations of soldiers who were brought up in their spirit. This article presents a comparative analysis of the two books, which point to two very different ways in which the experiences during the “waiting period” preceding the war and the six days of the war itself were processed by the nation. These are books that have become benchmarks and key concepts within Israeli public discourse.

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Manic depression: From the profound anxiety of waiting to the intoxication of victory

The nineteenth Independence Day of the State of Israel, which fell on 14 May 1967, marked the start of three nerve-racking weeks of overwhelming anxiety, known as the waiting period. The repeated threats of extermination voiced by Arab leaders, the sense that “the whole world is against us,” the image of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol as a weakling, the assumption that war would cause hundreds of thousands of casualties, the paralyzed Israeli economy, all these generated a dynamic of growing anxiety. The euphoria that prevailed in the country after the war cannot be understood without an awareness of the tremendous anxiety that preceded the six days of fighting. Israel before the war was a different country: it was crisscrossed by thousands of trenches and ditches, sandbags were piled around houses, at night the population remained enveloped in utter darkness, windows were plastered over with strips of masking tape, and many shops had signs stating “Closed due to the situation.”⁵

And then the fear of thousands of casualties and the widespread gloom caused by the perceived danger of annihilation were followed by six days that transformed the identity and image of Israeli society. The abrupt transition from existential fear to overwhelming victory was expressed by an outburst of joy and relief. What happened in Israel can best be described by borrowing from the field of psychology the term for the psychotic state of mood swings from overly “low” (depressed) to overly “high” (manic) – the bipolar disorder.

The country was swept up in the euphoria of victory, which sowed the seeds of arrogance and contempt for the enemy. Illustrated victory albums proliferated; books of disdainful jokes presenting Arabs as miserable cowards became bestsellers; books, films, records, plates, cups, and keyrings portrayed the victory and its heroes from every possible angle. IDF generals were glorified and became celebrities much in demand. The encounter with the “Cities of the Fathers,” the biblical cities on the West Bank, and in particular East Jerusalem, gradually planted the seeds of the subsequent messianic fervor, and Israelis swarmed to the occupied/liberated territories to see the biblical sites for themselves.

The “pressure cooker” atmosphere and the anxiety of the waiting period, the tremendous victory in a war that no one had expected to end in six days, and the subsequent euphoria, all combined to create the basis for the disparate ways the war was processed in the two books under discussion.⁶

The Tanks of Tammuz

Shabtai Teveth was born and grew up within the Labor Movement, where the figure of the indomitable “Sabra” (the cactus used to describe native Israeli Jews) was presented as a model to be emulated. His parents arrived in Palestine with the Third *Aliyah* (wave of immigration) and he graduated from two renowned educational institutions: first the School of Education for Workers’ Children in Tel Aviv and then the educational institution of the left-wing youth movement Ha-Shomer ha-Tza’ir in Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek. As a youngster he contributed to the newspaper *Ha-Mishmar* (The guard, which later became *Al ha-Mishmar*, meaning “On guard”), and after serving briefly in the third battalion of the Palmah (an acronym for Assault Companies, the crack military force of the 1940s), he became deputy editor of the army weekly, *Ba-Mahaneh* (In the camp). In 1950 he joined the *Ha’aretz* newspaper and soon became one of its prominent journalists.

As noted, immediately after the war Israel was swamped by a commercialized flood of memorabilia celebrating the victory. This “festival” soon came to include many books about the war, mostly written at lightning speed: Aviezer Golan wrote *Shishah yemei*

tehilah (Six days of glory) within twenty-two days; Eli Landau wrote *Yerushalayim le-netzah* (Jerusalem forever) within a week; and Arie Avineri outdid them all by writing *Ha-yom ha-katzar beyoter* (The shortest day) in just four days.⁷ Eitan Haber called this phenomenon “the war of the books” and deplored the fact that they were all superficial and published hastily to reach the greatest number of readers as fast as possible. Authors and books fought for the hearts and pockets of Israeli readers, who lapped up any tale of heroism with great enthusiasm.⁸

Teveth maintains that he did not intend to publish a book in the wake of the war, but Gershon Shoken, the editor of *Ha'aretz*, urged him to do so and gave him leave for that purpose.⁹ Unlike the books published at breakneck speed, Teveth chose to carry out thorough research lasting seven months, interviewed many people, and tried to investigate the development of the armored corps in the IDF in general and its functioning in the Six Day War in particular. It is noteworthy that most of the critics who wrote about Teveth's book expressed appreciation for his thorough research and his refusal to participate in “the war of the books” immediately after the war.¹⁰

This is how Teveth subsequently described the circumstances in which *The Tanks of Tammuz* was conceived:

A short time after Nasser closed the Straits of Tiran I was dispatched by the IDF spokesman's unit to the “Steel Division” [an armored division, commanded by Israel Tal, which fought in Sinai during the Six Day War] and from there to the 7th Brigade. I spent the whole waiting period and the war with them. I came to the division and the brigade from the fearful home front and the terrified journalists. It's impossible to understand *The Tanks of Tammuz* without taking into account this overwhelming fear. This book was mainly a sigh of relief at finding “the unshakable” in the division and the 7th Brigade, and in the same breath an expression of gratitude to them for their courage.¹¹

During that interview Teveth disclosed the event that had made him choose the original (Hebrew) title of the book, “Exposed in the Turret”: “In Giradi – a blazing furnace of lead – Gorodish [Shmuel Gonen, commander of the 7th Brigade] took off his helmet to inspire his soldiers with courage to face the inferno.” The book was published early in 1968 and very soon became a bestseller, was highly praised, and earned a place of honor in the pantheon of books about the war. It became an influential factor in the forging of Israeli identity: generations of soldiers of the armored corps were brought up in the spirit of this particular book.¹²

The bulk of the book describes the battles of the armored corps during the war. It focuses mainly on the battles in Sinai by the Steel Division of Israel Tal (Talik), and also includes a briefer survey of the battles of the armored corps on the Golan Heights. However, Teveth did not confine himself to a description of the armored corps' battles but provides a broader perspective, presenting a kind of historical survey of its development. He describes the commanders' attempts to improve its performance and image; the struggle to enforce strict discipline, in harsh confrontation with the ethos of the Palmah that despised disciplinary rules; its sense of inferiority as compared with the prestige and acclaim of the paratroopers; and the commanders' struggle to position the corps in the role of the decisive force in the IDF.

Teveth's book is a blend between a historical-documentary novel and a journalist's investigative report. It is constructed in such a way that the reader reaches the description of the battles after becoming acquainted with the heroes of the book, some of whom will die in the course of the war, exposed in their tank's turret. This creates empathy and imbues the description of the battles and their heroes with greater intimacy, since we have already become acquainted with their families, their dilemmas, and the difficulties they

experience. However, even though the book gives us a glimpse of the civilian life of the main characters, Teveth seems to have insisted on doing so in the language of the Sabra, which focuses on actions and leaves the readers to process their emotional import on their own. The book's language is descriptive and restrained, deliberately avoiding any emotional undertones in the account of the events (this will be elaborated upon below). It is most likely that it was precisely this blend between the private stories of its heroes and the "historical" account of the battles in which they participated that was one of the main reasons for the tremendous success of the book, making it a bestseller, reprinted many times and translated into several languages.

*The Seventh Day*¹³

The soldiers returned home in the turmoil of the exhilarating victory and found it hard to handle the transition from the constant anxiety and tension of the waiting period to the intoxicating victory, marred by the pain of bereavement – the loss of their best friends. Some of them felt that the glorification of the victory shunted aside the terrible price it entailed. Out of the 679 fallen in the Six Day War, a quarter came from the kibbutzim, which at that time constituted less than 4% of the country's population.¹⁴ The kibbutz movement, more than any other sector, was engulfed not only by jubilation, but also (and maybe mainly) by mourning for the loss of life.

Dov Tzamer the secretary of Ihud ha-Kvutzot v'ha-Kibbutzim (the kibbutz movement affiliated with Mapai, the Labor Party), approached Amos Oz, at the time a young author and literature teacher in his kibbutz, Hulda, and Avraham Shapira of Kibbutz Yezre'el, the founder and editor of the journal *Shdemot* (Fields) – which had become the main intellectual platform within the kibbutz movement, with a significant influence on the second generation in the kibbutzim – and asked them to try to break through the silence of the young soldiers who had returned from the war. For several weeks they each visited the kibbutzim of the three kibbutz movements, but none of the various members they met were able to explain this subdued, even inhibited, emotional state. Shapira had already given up and returned to his kibbutz to pick pears, when Amos Oz suggested that he participate in an attempt to record a discussion with several members of Kvutzat Geva. Oz and Shapira expected to be confronted by pent-up reactions and a protective shield, typical of the kibbutz-born, and expected little cooperation on their part. To their surprise, as soon as the tape recorder was turned on, a flood of previously dammed-up feelings, thoughts, and war experiences gushed out. This was the first of many talks, which were later published in the book *Siah lohamim* (Soldiers' talk, translated as *The Seventh Day*). The success of the first session created the desire to hold similar meetings in other kibbutzim. The kibbutz members enlisted by Shapira and Oz to lead the discussions can be divided into two groups: people connected to the journal *Shdemot*, edited by Shapira from the early 1960s, and young members of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Artzi (the kibbutz movement affiliated with the left-wing Mapam Party), most of whom were involved with *Hotam* (Seal), the journal of the younger generation of that movement. Sometimes the discussion was profound, sometimes it was more superficial. Some of the participants chose to deal with the subjects more cognitively, while others gave vent to their grief and distress. However, every time, they succeeded in surprising the initiators of the talks by responding willingly, and they appeared to be glad to be able to unburden themselves of their war experiences. "We pushed the tape recorder button and the lava gushed out," recalls Shapira.¹⁵

The discussions revolved around a wide variety of subjects related to the war: fear and ways of overcoming it, the tendency to switch to an "automatic state" in the course

of battle, the confrontation with death, and the swift transition from revulsion to callousness. Many dealt with “the shock of the seventh day,” the difficulty of returning to the daily routine after the war. Many talks focused on the attitude to the Arab as an enemy and the tough dilemmas caused by the subjugation of the civilian population; they spoke extensively about their encounter with the lands of the Bible, their entry into Old Jerusalem, and above all their encounter with the Western Wall. Some talks dealt with experiences related to the waiting period and the associations with the Holocaust it had generated.

Unlike *The Tanks of Tammuz*, *The Seventh Day* was not written; it was spoken. The editors included in its 283 pages an accumulation of experiences, silences, and faltering remarks, deliberately avoiding the imposition of a specific style or linguistic editing (apart from considerations of censorship). Thus the book reflects a great variety of opinions and styles; each participant speaks in his/her own voice and remains silent when he/she chooses to do so.

The first edition of twelve thousand copies, published in October 1967, was distributed in the kibbutzim. Given the increasing demand to publish the book for the general public, the third edition came out in May 1968, with minimal changes, dictated only by the requirements of the military censorship.

The Seventh Day served as an alternative pole to the culture of the victory albums. Intellectuals and journalists heaped praise on it and perceived it as “a unique testimonial of that generation’s soul.” Dozens of articles were written about it, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs used it for propaganda purposes to display the appealing face of the Israeli soldier in order to counter the increasing condemnation of Israel, the occupying power. The book became a bestseller and was translated into English, French, German, Spanish, Swedish, and Yiddish. The Ministry of Education, the IDF, and the youth movements used passages from *The Seventh Day* in their curricula and instructional programs. Plays based on it were performed in Israel and abroad, and the radio (to which a huge percentage of the population listened in that pre-television era) devoted programs to it, including readings of passages from the book.

The book’s editors had not expected such intense public interest. What had begun as a hesitant attempt to give voice to the speechless soldiers, turned within a few weeks into the manifesto of an entire generation, without any intention on their part. “The spirit of *The Seventh Day*” became a constantly invoked expression and a focus of arguments about the characteristics of that generation and in particular of those born on the kibbutz.

The impact and similar features of the two books

Despite the great difference between these two books, they shared certain characteristics: Both books were reprinted an unprecedented number of times: *The Tanks of Tammuz* came out in fourteen editions and sold 85,000 copies.¹⁶ *The Seventh Day* was reprinted in five editions and sold 95,000 copies.¹⁷ Neither Shabtai Teveth nor the editors of *The Seventh Day* had expected that their books would earn such popularity and resonance. When they were interviewed, they emphasized their total surprise at the intensity of reactions to their books.¹⁸ In the course of time, the impact of the public’s reactions produced a number of articles that attempted to follow up what had happened to the main characters as time passed. Headings such as “*Soldiers’ Talk, Part Two*” and “*Exposed in the Turret, Part Two*” are just one example of the many retrospective articles written about the books.¹⁹

Nonetheless, there was a gap (sometimes a very wide one) between the image and the contents. In the collective memory, *The Seventh Day* is engraved as the embodiment of the

figure of the “shooting and weeping” soldiers, agonizing bleeding hearts, tormenting their conscience about the extreme cruelty of fighting a war; while *The Tanks of Tammuz* is perceived as a symbol of the adulation of generals, and in particular of Gorodish. However, the actual texts belie these perceptions.

Indeed, the opinions expressed in *The Seventh Day* are far from homogeneous. The discourse expresses the feelings of some 140 people, some of them men and women serving in the regular army, others in the reserves, most of them from combat units, and some who had experienced the war in the rear. They did not speak with one voice. Some had been excited by their entry into East Jerusalem, others had felt alienated; some had felt they were writing a new chapter of the Bible, while others felt no emotional connection to the places conquered; some identified with the enemy, expressing empathy, while others felt hatred and a desire for vengeance. We do find homogeneity in the editors’ worldview, but not in that of the participants themselves.²⁰

Since October 1973, *The Tanks of Tammuz* has been blamed for having contributed to the glorification of the generals and the arrogant complacency that had been one of the factors in the failure to foresee the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. However, as already noted, the book is far more complex. It describes the development of the armored corps and also mentions blunders such as those of the battle in Nukheila (3 November 1964), or an occasion when the deputy brigadier commander of the 7th Brigade went to war without maps.²¹ The book not only praises the imposition of “iron discipline” in that unit but also includes the harsh criticism of these attempts by some of the commanders.²² These aspects have been erased from the collective memory, demonstrating how changing circumstances affect a book’s status and image over time and how one aspect of a book or document can become a symbol, without any relation to the actual text as a whole.

Another significant feature shared by the two books is the great appeal they had for young people and the significant influence they wielded on their worldview and/or their military careers. Avshalom (Abu) Vilan from Kibbutz Negba, who served in the elite GHQ reconnaissance platoon (and until recently was a member of the Knesset on behalf of the left-wing Meretz Party), has described the impact *The Seventh Day* had on his life:

If there is a book that succeeded in penetrating into the depths of my soul and had a great influence on my worldview, it is *The Seventh Day*. . . . As a young reader, enjoying the tales of heroic deeds and songs of praise about conquests and power – I suddenly grasped that there is another side, that war is something dirty and there are no winners. . . . I read the book in one go when I was in the eleventh grade. By the time I finished it, my feelings and thoughts had consolidated into a worldview.²³

Similarly, *The Tanks of Tammuz* became a decisive factor in forging the identity of other youngsters. Yuval Neriah, who received the Medal of Valor in the wake of the 1973 war, describes how reading that book affected the course of his life in the army:

I read it avidly at the age of 14, and at the time was not aware of all its defects. It followed directly on [the children’s adventure stories] *The Exploits of Hasamba* [by Yigal Mossensohn] and *The Secret Seven* [by Enid Blyton]. It had an overwhelming impact, projecting power. After my unsuccessful attempt to join the reconnaissance company, the obvious thing to do was to join the armored corps because of this book.²⁴

As the years passed, both these books were transformed from an object of admiration into a target of criticism. While during the “six years of the empire” – from 1967 to 1973 – the books were extolled and became crucial in shaping the IDF’s image in the eyes of the general public, after the Yom Kippur War a different tendency can be discerned. The intense sense of rupture caused by the shock of that unforeseen war led to harsh criticism of the two extremes of the reactions to the Six Day War, leading to a rejection both

of “the album culture” and of “the cult of confessions” in the spirit of *The Seventh Day*. As one journalist wrote after the 1973 war:

While the war was still at its height, we had already decided that this time there would be no albums. Even before the armistice, the publishers’ association determined not to assist in the publication of war albums. . . . The ’67 victory albums were considered by many to have contributed to the complacent atmosphere and arrogant spirit that prevailed in the country. . . . Publishers, when asked if they would publish albums, replied that the public was by now sick of them and it wasn’t worthwhile. They wouldn’t buy them.²⁵

But just as there was opposition to the culture of albums and *The Tanks of Tammuz*, so was there rejection of self-indulgent discussions of dilemmas. Gad Ofaz, who belonged to the group that had initiated *The Seventh Day*, wrote immediately after the war: “The time has come for soul-searching. Let’s be frank and ask: ‘What was our own contribution, that of *The Seventh Day* circle, to the failure that brought the Yom Kippur War upon us?’ If we hadn’t wallowed in our own righteousness, our bleeding hearts. . . .”²⁶

In the course of time, and despite the differences between the two books, both of them have been subjected to extensive criticism, and both have become a type of warning sign or “red rag” among sections of Israeli society. As mentioned above, *The Tanks of Tammuz* was accused by many of having been one of the main factors that enhanced the euphoria and cult of generals after the 1967 war. One of the heroes in Teveth’s book, possibly the main one, was Shmuel Gonen (Gorodish), commander of the Seventh Brigade. A great deal has been written about this tragic figure who reached the pinnacle of glory in the wake of the Six Day War and descended into the depths of shame due to the Yom Kippur War.²⁷ Indeed, many journalists suggested that his main problem was that Gorodish began to believe what was written about him in *The Tanks of Tammuz*. As Yehuda Meltzer commented:

If it had not been for *The Tanks of Tammuz* and its amazing success, it is unlikely that Gorodish and other sensible people would have become so totally blind to what was happening. *I can’t think of any book that caused such damage*. What a pity that no one came to Gorodish and pointed out one of the passages that portrayed him as a mythical figure, and winked at him to make him realize it, patting him on the back and saying – “Is that really you, Shmulik?”²⁸

In November 1993, some two years after Gonen’s death, the play *Gorodish* by Hillel Mittelpunkt opened at the Cameri Theater in Tel Aviv. The play was a great success in Israel and abroad, and reawakened the public outcry and lively debate about the factors leading to the 1973 war. Mittelpunkt’s *Gorodish* became the figure symbolizing most of the failings of Israeli society at that time. However, he was a tragic figure, because he was not the main culprit. Israeli society in general, “the court writers and journalists” in particular, along with Shabtai Teveth and *The Tanks of Tammuz* were the most to blame for having created the golem that had turned on its master.²⁹ In many of Mittelpunkt’s interviews about the play, he maintained that the tragedy of Gorodish was that he had believed what was written about him in *The Tanks of Tammuz*. In an interview with theater critic Shosh Avigal he said about the book: “There are passages there that I couldn’t forget, like a passage from the Bible one learns by heart. . . . The *Hasamba* element in the book embellishes its heroes. . . . Gorodish, who was actually small, chubby, and shortsighted, is portrayed like a Greek god. It’s a book about the war of the gods against the plebeians. . . .”³⁰

Just as *The Tanks of Tammuz* was put in the dock for its contribution to the sin of hubris that had led to the Yom Kippur War, so *The Seventh Day* turned into a punching bag and an object of harsh criticism by those who perceived it as the symbol of the “shooting and

weeping” soldiers – a term that emerged in many of the discussions of the book and became a key concept in public discourse. The book was criticized for its theme, as though both shooting and “weeping” meant trying to have the cake and eat it, that is, agonizing about the difficulty and cost of shooting, while continuing to shoot. Criticism was increasingly directed against the dynamic that makes the process of purification through weeping a substitution for taking action against injustice, especially after the 1973 war. Thus Boas Evron wrote accusingly:

What is the extolled *The Seventh Day* after all, if not an orgy of narcissistic self-admiration disguised as soul-searching? How wonderful we are, even though we fought and killed; we did it grieving for the victims, so our conscience has remained pure. Our sensitivity, doubts and dilemmas attest to it.³¹

This criticism of the book’s contribution to making “the purifying ritual of confessions” a substitute for action intensified during the First Lebanon War of 1982, in particular on the part of those who supported conscientious objection to the war. Hayim Minski (the first soldier to refuse to serve in Lebanon, who was sentenced to 28 days in prison for his refusal) perceived *The Seventh Day* as the symbol of “tormented Zionism”: “To protest and obey, obey and protest. Its classic manifestation was *The Seventh Day*, after the Six Day War – shooting and weeping, shooting and weeping. Fifteen years later you feel you must bring it to an end.”³²

The metamorphosis of both *The Seventh Day* and *the Tanks of Tammuz* from being admired classics to serving as warning signs is part of the well-known process in which changing circumstances lead to a reassessment of events, symbols, and images. The changing attitude to these books is part of an overall change in the perception of former national heroes. Just as the zealots of the Great Revolt against the Romans who committed suicide at Masada in 73 CE, or Bar-Kokhba, leader of the second revolt against the Romans in 132–35 CE, were initially perceived as the heroes of the Zionist revolution, but subsequently became a symbol of messianic fanaticism that had caused a national disaster, so the books that had been so admired and had had such an impact on Israeli identity were transformed from a code of expected behavior into an object of criticism.³³

“What I did” vs. “what I experienced”: A confrontation between different generations

In spite of the various similar features of the two books, they can be perceived as signposts pointing in the two different directions in which the path taken by Israeli society was to diverge after the war. The essential difference between the two books is revealed by comparing the motives and intentions underlying them. As mentioned above, Teveth explains that the main motive for writing his book was the striking difference between the profound anxiety of the “frightened rear” before the war and the “sigh of relief” and tremendous self-confidence and sense of heroism emanating from the frontline soldiers, or as he describes it, the discovery of “the unshakable.”³⁴ By contrast, Oz and Shapira had sought to forge a language for “the silent, voiceless generation.”³⁵ A circular formulated by Amos Oz and sent to the kibbutzim to prepare the backdrop for the talks indicates the atmosphere after the war and the editors’ aims:

Not a victory album, nor a collection of accolades of heroism, but episodes of attentive listening, talk, and reflection: If we succeed in expressing in words the silences between the words, it will be a booklet of silences. Today, if a person from Mars were to land in Israel and try to see it through its press, speeches, and commentators, he would be misled into thinking we are happier than we have ever been before. . . . That is not the song we wish to sing; for

anyone truly listening will hear beyond the tumult of voices the voice of silence. The newspapers rejoice; the soldiers are speechless. . . . They are confused, downcast, and maybe feel guilty. Because the living are alive by the grace of blind chance, and the best of our friends fell because of that arbitrary blind chance. . . . We have not been trained to be right and strong. . . . We wish to make some of that “silent generation” talk, those who experienced the fury of that war. Not about the fighters, not on their behalf, but from their own mouths. . . . *Not stories about “what I did,” but stories about “what I experienced”*. . . . Many speak on our behalf. . . . we are unable to make a whole generation speak; we intend to get a few of them to talk. . . . When we returned, we were different – we had changed. . . . We will try to give expression to our inner thoughts. We will listen to ourselves and to our friends.³⁶

The circular deals with all the topics and issues that Shapira and Oz sought to deal with: the contrast between the joy of victory and the soldiers’ despondent silence: “The newspapers rejoice; the soldiers are speechless”; the protest against the proliferation of the victory albums and the desire to convey a different “song”; the desire to make the silent generation speak, not as a chorus of homogenous voices, but through its silences, confusion, and the faltering voice of the individual; and above all, the desire to express feelings (“what I experienced”) and not tell of heroic deeds (“what I did”).

This circular and Teveth’s testimony reflecting his enthusiasm about “the unshakable” indicate the totally different ways in which the waiting period and the war had been processed: while Teveth wished to “express gratitude for the soldiers’ great courage,”³⁷ Oz sought to apprehend “the silences between the words.”

The differences between the two books can be seen from the very first pages: Teveth chose to open his book with a speech by the commander of the Steel Division before they went into battle (which appears only in the Hebrew version of the book). *Soldiers’ Talk* opens with the words of Yariv Ben-Aharon (this introduction also appears only in the Hebrew version). The former projects total confidence, strength, and power; the latter despondency, incoherence, and confusion. “To shatter,” “uproot,” “crush,” “destroy” are the dominant words in the order of the day; “shock,” “anguish,” “dilemmas” express the theme underlying Ben-Aharon’s reflections. On the one hand, the beating of drums and blood: “Today we’ll shatter the hand striving to strangle us. . . . With blood, fire and iron this time we’ll uproot from his heart that evil design”; on the other hand, a confused, faltering tone of voice: “Out of the initial shock a welter of dilemmas sprang forth. . . . The slight hesitancy and groping for words bear striking witness to this generation.” On the one hand, the unifying force of the first person plural: “We shall start out today,” “We shall leap,” “We shall uproot from our hearts”; and on the other hand, the doubts and dilemmas of individuals: “The words in this compilation have no single melody – these are very personal revelations, disjointed, secret thoughts.” This is the prologue – two ways of entry into two different worlds: one inviting readers to join in a tempestuous march of war, of blood and fire, brimming with self-confidence and power: “Today the Sinai Desert will get to know the driving force of the Steel Division, and the land will shake beneath it”; the other murmuring in hushed hesitant tones about a “violin with broken strings.”

The Tanks of Tammuz presents the words of commanders; the ordinary soldiers are barely mentioned, and the few times they are mentioned, they are the objects – the tools for the fulfillment of their commanders’ tasks. It is a book written from the point of view of the commander, high up in the hierarchy. In *The Seventh Day*, the approach is totally different. In most cases we do not know who is speaking – an officer or one of the soldiers. Rank is meaningless. Teveth does not seem to see the soldiers or hear their questions. His book is a song of praise to the spirit of the commanders, exposed fearlessly in the turret, while the editors of *The Seventh Day* seem constantly to be seeking the individual human being within the soldier – his fears, dilemmas, weaknesses.

It should be noted that Teveth did not invent the cult of the generals and in particular that of Gorodish, but merely contributed to the general fervor expressed in all the media. Immediately after the war, the generals became the most sought-after victorious heroes, whose photos adorned the front pages of all the weekend supplements,³⁸ and whose lives and deeds were described in all the newspapers.³⁹ These eulogies became increasingly more bombastic. Thus, for example, Colonel Rafael (“Raful”) Eitan was described in one report as “the admired, legendary Raful,” while another report recounted how “In the four days of the war, this legendary commander managed to get into the tank and fire shells just like any ordinary gunner. This happened when he was clearing the way into blazing Khan Yunis in order to rescue one of his units that had been cut off.”⁴⁰ Ariel Sharon was described in similarly hyperbolic terms: “This battle was fought under the command of the paratroopers’ legendary Major General Ariel Sharon, Arik. . . . Major General Sharon also continued to charge ahead. He did not need to spur his soldiers on. ‘Like knights on unbridled horses’ they surge forward.”⁴¹ Or, as another reporter wrote gushingly: “Three days and three nights with Major General Arik Sharon. Seventy-two hours in the command car, within touch, side by side with the commander who has turned into a legend. . . . I am one of Arik’s admirers – the rare combination of battle spirit, might, and humane feelings.”⁴² While Geula Cohen, also writing about Sharon, wondered how she could “interview a legend, a legend of flesh and blood, a legend in uniform.”⁴³

The cult of the generals was not only reflected in the superlatives that were heaped on them by journalists. Evenings of interviews, dining in fancy restaurants, parties in clubs and private houses, “cultural evenings” at army headquarters in the company of artists, journalists and prominent social figures, all these became a ritual throughout the six years of the “empire” – until the Yom Kippur War.

Nor did Teveth invent the cult of Gorodish. His book was preceded by many newspaper articles that prepared the ground for the appearance of “the new Judah Maccabee” or “the Israeli Patton.”⁴⁴ Under the title “This Is How the Desert Was Conquered,” two journalists reported on their interview with Gorodish: “How did it happen, Shmulik? The commander smiled. A rare smile on his usually sealed lips, and as often happens in such cases – a lovely, kind smile. . . . He had been both planner and executor, both the commander and the least of his soldiers.”⁴⁵

A week later, one of the interviewers, Aviezer Golan, published a long article about Gorodish, under the title “The Commander,” which described the awe that “the commander” inspired in his troops: “They say in his brigade that no one can look [Gorodish] straight in the eye.” After two days in his presence, Golan was so enchanted by him that he could no longer call him Shmulik, but always “the commander.” He described him with admiration, like a romantic Hollywood hero: “He has a large head and broad shoulders. When he sits behind his desk, he looks like a giant. . . . His steps are springy like those of a menacing animal.” The figure he draws is that of a tough, brave, chauvinistic, awe-inspiring commander. “‘That’s the whole point,’ Shmulik interrupted. ‘A tank is a male, not a female!’ . . . ‘He is awful,’ said one of the secretaries, as she left the room, after being reprimanded for not having something ready just as the commander had demanded, ‘but he is great!’”⁴⁶

Teveth’s book was therefore merely a continuation of the cult of the generals. He presents infallible commanders, in a style reminiscent of the descriptions of heroes of Hollywood Westerns:

Everyone sprang to attention. Colonel Shmuel entered with quick decisive steps, his gait somehow creating the impression that he was struggling upstream against a strong current. He was of average height, his rump protruding somewhat in his tight trousers, and with a slight

paunch so that in profile his figure resembled the letter S. He was muscular, without an ounce of flaccidity, and as taut as a bullet. . . . Utter silence enveloped the darkened field, with Colonel Shmuel and Major Ehud looming out of it like legendary giants.⁴⁷

By contrast, *The Seventh Day* is totally devoid of bombastic descriptions of this kind. The commanders speak prosaically about what happened; they do not appear as “legendary giants,” but tend to deal with what they felt, not what they did. The book contains many descriptions of heroic deeds and self-sacrifice, but the stories are totally devoid of pomposity and pathos.

Teveth’s book portrays the ethos of the commander, manly and fearless, eager for battle, and overawing his subordinates: “Colonel Shmuel knew that in the brigade it was jestingly said that they were more scared of him than of the war . . . he relied to some extent upon the reputation he had as a fearless fighter.”⁴⁸ His deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Pinko, is described as being bored when faced with light shelling, waiting for the moment when he could go into a proper battle. Later, during the battle, “Rifles and machine guns spluttered around him but he was not worried.” Pinko was impatient and dashed into the next battle (forgetting to bring the map with him).⁴⁹ While Teveth presents the heroes of *The Tanks of Tammuz* as fearless and eager for battle, in *The Seventh Day* fear is a palpable experience. Although almost all the speakers maintain that it vanished during the actual battle, there are many reports of existential dread:

One of the hardest moments was when they told us we were going to Kseime. I was in shock. Again in mortal danger. . . . The guys got into a terrible mood. Some of us had been killed the night before. We were shattered by the loss of our best friends. . . . Honestly, I can tell you that I was afraid.⁵⁰

This emotional language is absent from *The Tanks of Tammuz* (except for one passage relating to the soldiers’ reactions to the death of Company Commander Shamai Kaplan);⁵¹ the book describes the dead and wounded with restraint, without mentioning the soldiers’ feelings: “Solomon went up to 1st lieutenant Munitz. Munitz’s left eye was blocked by congealed blood and a wound in his cheek impeded his speech.”⁵² Accounts in *The Seventh Day* are not limited to plastic descriptions of the injuries; the editors also seek to understand the soldiers’ emotions: “But later on, especially towards the end, whenever I heard that cry I felt physically sick. My stomach would tighten up. I didn’t feel angry with anyone in particular. It was fury with the whole world, together with a feeling of despair and exhaustion.”⁵³ While the editors of *The Seventh Day* tried to elicit from the participants in the talks their emotions relating to their encounter with death, *The Tanks of Tammuz* describes the soldiers’ deaths as part of the sequence of events in battle. The reactions to the postwar mourning are also described in different ways. The editors of *The Seventh Day* devoted a whole section to this topic (in the Hebrew version only) under the heading “Bereavement,” containing poems, eulogies, and parents’ letters about the death of their dear ones, while in Teveth’s book Gorodish consoles Ehud Elad’s widow with typical Sabra restraint: “‘He was a tiger,’ was all Colonel Shmuel said in consolation, and he repeated it again and again. ‘He was a tiger.’”⁵⁴

Thus while the editors of *The Seventh Day* made every effort to help the soldiers shed the mantle of toughness and reveal their feelings, in *The Tanks of Tammuz* this apparent insensitivity is regarded as one of the manifestations of the ethos of the tough commander. Expressions such as “nausea,” “how disgusting this war is,” “we’ve got to fight against wars” that are scattered throughout *The Seventh Day* do not appear in *The Tanks of Tammuz*.

The different attitudes to women in the two books are also interesting. *The Tanks of Tammuz* perpetuates (consciously or unwittingly) two stereotypes of women: the wife who

worries about her husband and the woman whose function it is to serve the commander. With a sprinkling of covert irony, Teveth portrays the figure of the naïve wife in contrast to her heroic husband, who seeks to protect her by concealing the truth. Thus, Ehud Elad's wife is reported as asking her husband where he sits in the tank when they go into battle. "Ehud sighed again, giving his deputy a secret, knowing wink: 'Inside the tank'. 'Your head's inside and the cover's closed?' [she asked]. 'My head, arms, legs and ears are inside, and the cover is closed. Come along now, the driver will take you home.'"⁵⁵ Ehud, like many of the other armored corps commanders, was killed while exposed above the tank's turret, but obviously this "heroic courage" must be concealed from the anxious wife: "The commander gave the order to keep our heads inside. Don't worry."⁵⁶ The figure of the female soldier is also presented in a somewhat ridiculous light, as she switches abruptly from tears to smiles:

Now Major General Tal saw that Liora's eyes were red from weeping. . . . "How come dolls cry in my headquarters?" "Commander, the head of the office said that during the war I won't be with the command group on the frontline," she said, and opened her eyes a little wider so they would dry. "Of course not." "Commander, I want to be with the command group on the frontline during the war." "And I want to be in a submarine, when will you understand that. . . ." ". . . the army isn't a pub. . . ." the officer [Liora] completed his sentence with a smile.⁵⁷

Thus "the doll," who started the conversation with tears in her eyes, ends it with a smile, having internalized the "philosophy" of her commander regarding the difference between the army and a pub.

The women in *The Seventh Day* express very different reactions. Ayelet from Kibbutz Na'an describes the switch from nausea to rage to callousness when faced with the horrors of the war in Sinai, the smell of death, and the shattered bodies.⁵⁸ Tamar confesses: "I was thinking all the time, 'I'm glad I've got a daughter [rather than a son]' Sometimes I really had rebellious thoughts; in the shelter, for example, as I held my two-week-old baby in my arms, I wondered whether this war was really necessary. Was it that vital that we could or couldn't sail through the Straits of Tiran?"⁵⁹ Thus, while the women in *The Seventh Day* reveal their authentic feelings and doubts, the women in *The Tanks of Tammuz* are presented as "dolls" or anxious wives who can be manipulated by their husband or commander.

However, the essential difference between the two books may perhaps lie in the fact that they reflect the attitudes of two different generations. *The Tanks of Tammuz* is the product of the Sabra ethos, written by a person brought up within the Sabra culture and who adopted its basic characteristics. *The Seventh Day* is a document permeated by dilemmas, edited by a group of people who sought to undermine the basic elements of the figure of the Sabra.⁶⁰

Avraham Shapira, the editor of *The Seventh Day*, was only ten years younger than Teveth. However, each one belonged to a different generation, which shaped its identity through the different processing of different formative events. Teveth belongs to the generation that, in poet Nathan Alterman's words, handed the state to the nation on a "silver platter," the generation whose identity was decisively shaped by the War of Independence. Shapira was still a boy during that war. For him and for many others of the first generation of the state, the formative event was the lackluster reality of everyday life after the establishment of the state.

In 1960 the first issue of the periodical *Shdemot le-Madrikh* (later called *Shdemot*) was published on the initiative of Avraham Shapira. This periodical became the main platform for a group of sensitive young people from the kibbutz movement who sought to challenge

the existing situation and create a different identity for their generation and the kibbutz in opposition to both that of their parents and to the image of the Sabra as the behavioral code they were expected to adopt.

From the early 1960s, a generation gap gradually emerged, caused by the divergent ways in which events were processed. There is a significant difference between the pre-1948 “Sabra generation” and the post-1948 “generation of the state” in the way they coped with their experiences. While the struggle for the establishment of the state and the War of Independence had bred the Sabra generation’s total dedication to the armed struggle for security, for the younger generation, the transition from the *Yishuv* (pre-state Jewish community) to the state gradually led to a waning of the romantic aura of the gun and the plough, which no longer filled them with a sense of satisfaction and self-fulfillment. The widening gap between the world of slogans and ideologies and the daily routine on the kibbutz created a spiritual vacuum. In terms of the biblical story of Isaac, this was a transition from Isaac the willing sacrifice to Isaac the rebel, from the Isaac who willingly fulfilled the tasks his parents set him to the Isaac who rebelled against his role and sought to determine his own course of action. The former did not challenge the division of labor between the generations – what Amos Oz termed the generation of the architects versus that of the builders.⁶¹ The latter wished to be involved in the planning, not only to participate in the building. Instead of plowing the furrows their parents had marked for them, they wanted to cultivate new fields of their own.

The participants in the *Shdemot* forum wished to mold a spiritual world for themselves in accordance with their personal anxieties and desires. The demand to continue on the same course, and the figure of the Sabra as a model they were expected to emulate, weighed heavily on those who sought new paths to self-fulfillment. The first step was to legitimize the dilemmas themselves. Then they had to revolt against the imposition of the ideal of self-sacrifice and create their own goals.

The *Shdemot* group was aware of the sources of the unease the second generation had felt for many years before the outbreak of the Six Day War, but until the war the group had attracted few participants. The waiting period and the war itself served as formative events, which motivated many more members of their generation to join the group in its search for a new identity. The powerful reaction to *The Seventh Day*, which provided an authentic expression of the soldiers’ feelings, enabled its initiators to create what they termed a “discussion movement” (*tnu’at mesohehim*)⁶²

Starting with the tales from the time of the Palmah and continuing with the dozens of anthologies of battle stories and soldiers’ testimonies, the Sabra culture developed a language devoid of emotions that reflected the characteristics of the Sabra. Oz Almog has described this *dugri* language (an Arabic word meaning blunt) as rough, instrumental, simple, and straightforward.⁶³ Tamar Katriel, arguing that the style of speech reflects the style of a culture, has analyzed the various characteristics of the Sabra culture: spontaneity, gruffness, assertiveness, stylistic simplicity, and daring, and related the action-oriented ethos to the development of a “lean” style, contemptuous of all embellishments:

This preference reflects an “anti-style” attitude. . . . Speech is not a form of social activity, but rather a means to retreat from, even to avoid, such activity. The less attention people pay to the form and style of their speech, the more they are perceived as committed to real action. This is manifested in the preference for simplicity of style – for speaking briefly and using concrete language that refrains from embellishments and rhetoric, metaphors and eloquence.⁶⁴

Hence, not only the content but the very style of *The Seventh Day* manifests the editors’ desire to create an alternative to the figure of the Sabra. *The Seventh Day* opens

with the words of Yariv Ben-Aharon and ends with those of Avraham Shapira (on behalf of the editors). These few opening and closing lines reveal the concerns that underlay this project. The style and vocabulary reflect the quest for a different, “anti-Sabra” style, challenging the previous ethos and its blunt and lean style. The text is replete with eloquent, self-exploratory phrases such as “a well of dilemmas,” “the dying beat of footsteps,” “voices from the depths,” “an upsurge of despondency, bewilderment, anguish,” “the creation of a personal language,” “an expression of innermost feelings,” “again and again we’ll hear words coming from the depths of our being,” “a person’s soul and his inner truth.”⁶⁵ This language seems to be taken from the confessions of the pioneers who came during the first waves of immigration, not uttered by “the sweet and prickly Sabras.” It is a language rich in imagery that implicitly challenges the Sabras’ gruff and unadorned style.

One of the conventions accompanying the ethos of the Sabra was the willingness to reveal a person’s emotions only after death, in the booklets published in memory of the fallen. It was only when encountering the soldier’s framed photo and reading the commemorative booklet that people became acquainted with his inner world. They were suddenly exposed to his lyrical letters, or even found out that he had even, perish the thought, dared to write poetry. The Sabra culture thus created a world on two levels – on the outside, the prickly, cynical Sabra who rejects any sign of sentimentality and “emotional striptease”⁶⁶ and, the “sweet inside,” a world of emotions and dilemmas that was revealed only after his death. The commemorative booklets are replete with expressions perpetuating the cliché of the gap between the prickly outside and the sweet inside:

Outwardly, Amnon was all thorns and gruffness. . . . Amnon was always ready to carry out what had to be done and had little use for words. . . . Inwardly he was sensitive to the suffering of others. Not everyone who met him was able to peel off the rough façade and reveal the soft sensitive inner world.⁶⁷

The Seventh Day, for the first time, dared to expose people’s doubts, difficulties, weaknesses, and reflections while they were still alive. What caused a generation characterized by its reticence and its scorn for “talk,” in particular talk about feelings, to suddenly open up? What cracked the external shell of toughness and caused the breach in the wall of silence? The answer lies both in the editors’ aspiration to replace the language of description by that of emotion, or in Amos Oz’s words: “Not stories of what I did, but of what I experienced,” and in the particular historical juncture. Without any knowledge of therapeutic devices and without deliberate intention, the editors were able to meet the soldiers’ psychological needs. The dam of tough restraint burst under the impact of the profound need to release what had been repressed during the fighting. This was a time when, as Menahem Shelah noted, the traumatic war experiences had not yet been repressed, and the fatalistic attitude to the never-ending conflict that emerged during the following War of Attrition had not become dominant.⁶⁸ In this particular period, Shapira’s desire and daring to document war experiences coincided with the soldiers’ profound psychological need to unburden themselves of the traumas of the war and willingness to create a crack in the armor of toughness and contempt for words. Whether the participants in the talks were aware of it or not, their willingness to convert the question “what did you do?” into “what did you experience?” was an important stage in the decline of the anti-emotional Sabra ethos in Israeli society.

The *Shdemot* group, through its anti-Sabra style, its opposition to the anti-intellectual and anti-emotional ethos, its struggle against the limitations imposed by the all-consuming focus on building the kibbutz and fighting to defend it, and its challenge to the cult

of “togetherness” at the expense of fostering the uniqueness of the individual, attempted to establish a different image for the younger generation.⁶⁹ The significance of *The Seventh Day* can be fully understood only in this context.

Teveth’s book is devoid of concern for any of the dilemmas described above. The book is a song of praise to the image of the Sabra, which received a significant boost in the wake of the victory. The book constitutes yet another cultural agent, along with all the other books, albums, and films, that molded the norms of Sabra behavior that Shapira and his colleagues criticized.

Thus, during exactly the same period, the public was exposed to two completely different books about the war, both of which were overwhelmingly successful. One described deeds, the other emphasized feelings; one idolized commanders, the other revealed their shortcomings; one projected determination, the other reflected confusion; one glorified victory, the other deplored its price; one extolled toughness, the other stripped off its protective armor; one boosted the cult of toughness, the other sought to undermine it; one used purely descriptive, unemotional language, the other is replete with silences and pauses for the readers to fill in. If, to borrow the poet Saul Tchernichovsky’s well-known phrase, people are “nothing but the image of their native landscape,” then *The Tanks of Tammuz* reflects the image of its author’s Sabra landscape that the editor of *The Seventh Day* wished to undermine.

So far we have analyzed the differences in the authors’ intentions and strategies, but we should also be attentive to the reactions of the readers. The fact that both these books became bestsellers and that in many Israeli homes both books could be found side by side on the bookshelf reflects the yearning of many in Israeli society both for the assertive voice of *The Tanks of Tammuz* and the hesitant one of *The Seventh Day*. The great demand for both these books indicates that during that period, these were the books that most resonated with the mood of a nation that was willing to seize upon any means of expression that would enable it to assimilate the abrupt transition from profound anxiety for the very survival of the country to the euphoria of victory.

Notes

1. Teveth, *The Tanks of Tammuz*, is the somewhat shortened English translation of the Hebrew version, *Hasufim ba-tzariah* (Exposed in the turret, suggesting the fearless behavior of the tank commanders). Quotations that do not appear in the English translation will be cited from *Hasufim ba-tzariah*. *The Seventh Day* is the somewhat shortened English translation of the Hebrew version, Shapira, ed., *Siah lohamim*. Quotations that do not appear in the English translation will be cited from *Siah lohamim*.
2. For such accolades about *The Tanks of Tammuz* see, for instance, the following newspaper articles: Ze’ev Schiff, “Hasufim ba-tzariah le-Shabtai Tevet” (Shabtai Teveth’s *Hasufim ba-tzariah*), *Ha’aretz*, 30 April 1968; Shmuel Segev, “Alilot gayasot ha-shiryon” (Deeds of the armored corps), *Ma’ariv*, 15 March 1968. For examples of similar praise for *The Seventh Day*, see Uri Oren, “Kasheh lihiyot lohem yehudi” (It’s hard to be a Jewish soldier), *Yed’iot Aharonot*, 16 February 1968; Meir Pa’il, “*Siah lohamim*” (*Soldiers’ Talk*), *Be-Mahaneh Nahal*, 1 January 1968.
3. Hayim Guri, “Al Siah lohamim” (About *Soldiers’ Talk*), *Lamerhav*, 12 June 1968.
4. Mordechai Bar-On on the cover of the 3rd edition of *Hasufim ba-tzariah*, written 11 March 1968.
5. Three books have recently been published on these issues: Gluska, *The Israeli Military*; Oren, *Six Days of War*; Segev, *1967*. For the war no one wanted, see Shamir, “Mekorah shel ha-haslamah,” 56.
6. For details on the anxiety and the euphoria, see Gan, “Ha-siah ha-gove’a.”
7. Shraga Har Gil, “Aharei mabul sifrei ha-milhamah” (After the flood of books about the war), *Ma’ariv*, 10 November 1967.

8. Eitan Haber, "Adam bein kotlei ha-pladah" (A human being between steel walls), *Yedi'ot Aharonot*, 22 March 1968.
9. Yair Sheleg, "Yoshev be-pa'amon tzlilah, mashkif al ha-historiyah" (Sitting in a diving bell, observing history) (interview with Shabtai Teveth), *Kol ha-Ir*, 7 January 1994.
10. See for instance Segev, "Alilot gayasot ha-shiryon"; Schiff, "*Hasufim ba-tzariah*"; Haber, "Adam bein kotlei ha-pladah."
11. Sima Kadmon, "Hasufim ba-tzariah, perek bet" (*Exposed in the Turret*, part 2), *Ma'ariv*, 5 June 1992.
12. As Major General (reserves) Uri Or one of the book's heroes noted, "This book contributed a great deal; generations were brought up on it." See *ibid*. The tremendous influence of this book will be discussed later.
13. The description of the way the conversations in the book gradually accumulated is based on the following sources: Ora Armoni, "Niv le-dor shotek" (An idiom for a silent generation) (interview with Avraham Shapira), *Ha-Kibbutz*, 5 June 1997; lecture by Avraham Shapira in Kibbutz Gan Shmuel on the 20th anniversary of the book's publication, 28 May 1987, in Avraham Shapira's personal archive, Kibbutz Yizre'el; and my interviews (in 2000) with the editors, Avraham Shapira, Amos Oz, Amram Hayisra'eli, Yariv Ben-Aharon, Muki Tzur, Shlomit Tene, Avishai Grossman, Eli Alon, Gad Ofaz, Mordechai Bar-On, and Racheli Bar-David.
14. Ariel Ranan, "4% ba-ukhlosiyah ve-25% meha-noflim," (4% of the population and 25% of the fallen soldiers), *Davar*, 7 November 1967. The data on the number of fallen were taken from the memorial booklets published by the kibbutz movement: *Ba-drakhim: Havrei ha-"Ihud" she-naflu ba-milhamah* (On their way: Members of the Ihud who fell in the war) (1968); *Asher naflu ba-milhamah: Halalei ha-"Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad"* (Those who fell in the war: Casualties of Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad) (1968). *53 me-hem: Halalei "Ha-Kibbutz ha-Artzi" be-milhemet sheshet ha-yamim* (35 of them: Members of the Kibbutz Artzi who fell in the Six Day War) (1967). The booklets include the names of those killed after the war during the War of Attrition. In my calculation I have only included those who fell during the Six Day War. In 1967 the kibbutz population numbered about 83,000, i.e. 3% of the total Israeli population, 3.5% of the Jewish population. *Shnaton statisti le-Yisrael 1968* (Israeli yearly statistical bulletin 1968), 19 (November 1968): 24.
15. Avraham Shapira speaking in Kibbutz Gan Shmuel (n. 13 above).
16. Sheleg, "Yoshev be-pa'amon tzlilah."
17. Testimony by Avraham Shapira to Ora Armoni (n. 13 above).
18. Kadmon, "Hasufim ba-tzariah"; Armoni's interview with Avraham Shapira (n. 13 above).
19. Rubik Rosental and Amiram Cohen, "*Siah lohamim*, perek bet" (*Soldiers' Talk*, part 2), *Al ha-Mishmar*, 13 April 1987; Kadmon, "Hasufim ba-tzariah."
20. For a discussion of the multiple voices in *The Seventh Day*, as opposed to the value-laden worldview of its editors, see Gan, "Ha-siah ha-gove'a."
21. Teveth, *The Tanks of Tammuz*, 53–58, 142.
22. See, for example, the criticism of these rules by Shamai Kaplan (who was killed in the battles in Sinai) (a passage that does not appear in the English version), in *Hasufim ba-tzariah*, 142–43.
23. Avshalom Vilan, "Ha-tzad ha-sheni shel ha-nitzahon" (The other side of the victory), *Ha-Kibbutz*, 16 June 2005.
24. Sheleg, "Yoshev be-pa'amon tzlilah."
25. Tamar Avidar, "Be-khol zot albomim" (Albums after all), *Ma'ariv*, 8 January 1974.
26. Gad Ofaz, "Sha'atah ha-gedolah shel ha-tnu'ah ha-kibutzit" (The kibbutz movement's great hour), *Igeret le-Haverim*, 10 December 1973.
27. The journalist and writer Adam Barukh contributed a great deal to the focus on Gorodish. On 29 May 1987 he published a long article in the *Yedi'ot Aharonot* weekend supplement *7 yamim* (7 days) about Gorodish, who was in Africa at the time, involved in diamond mining. This article was quoted extensively and later served as a basis for Hillel Mittelpunkt's play *Gorodish* (see also below).
28. Yehuda Meltzer, "Megulah ba-tzariah" (Shaved in the turret), *Hadashot*, 24 September 1994 (emphasis added). For additional examples of accusations against *The Tanks of Tammuz*, see the comments by Amnon Abramovich, "Ha-yom Gorodish lo hayah koreh" (Today what happened to Gorodish would be impossible), *Ma'ariv*, 4 October 1991: "Gorodish began to believe what they wrote about him in books and newspapers"; and Tami Luvitz "Sodi beyoter"

- (Highly confidential), *Ma'ariv*, 1 October 1993: "Maybe Gorodish would not have died as a result of the war, if he had not been born in *The Tanks of Tammuz*, the book by Shabtai Teveth that transformed him from a major general into a myth and a symbol."
29. For the play *Gorodish*, see, for example: Emanuel Bar Kadma, "Moto shel Gorodish hayah zmani bilvad" (Gorodish's death was only temporary), *Yedi'ot Aharonot*, 19 November 1993; Tzipi Shohat, "Lo kol kakh gadol, lo kol kakh ashem" (Not so great, not so guilty), *Ha'aretz*, 18 November 1993; Shabtai Teveth, "He'arot ahadot le-Gorodish" (Some comments about *Gorodish*), *Ha'aretz* 10 December 1993.
 30. Shosh Avigal, "Aluf Shmulik" (Major General Shmulik), *Hadashot*, 19 November 1993.
 31. Boas Evron, "Eikh nehenim mi-kol ha-olamot" (How to enjoy both worlds), *Shdemot*, no. 71 (Spring–Summer 1979): 45–48. The article was originally published in *Yedi'ot Aharonot*, 8 December 1978. The article relates to an earlier article "Monolog shel gaz madmi'a" (Tear gas monologue) that was published in *Shdemot*, no. 68 (Winter 1978): 4–8, in which a soldier describes how he and his friends fired tear gas into a school.
 32. Leah Inbal, "Ha-kav ha-adom shel ha-sarbanim" (The red line of the conscientious objectors), *Koteret Rashit*, 2 March 1983. A similar opinion was voiced by Ilan Ben-Israel from Kibbutz Barkai: "The time has come to draw the brave and hard conclusions and stop following the old path of the good kibbutz boys – to kill and weep, shoot and moan."
 33. About the changing attitude to the heroes of the past, see, for example, Harkabi, *Hazon, lo fantazyiah*.
 34. Kadmon, "Hasufim ba-tzariah."
 35. Terms such as the "speechless" or "silent" generation were often used in the wake of the success of *The Seventh Day* to characterize the generation that was reticent about its emotions.
 36. The circular was published in *Shdemot*, no. 27 (Fall 1968): 127–28 (although it was unsigned, the author was Amos Oz). (Emphasis added.)
 37. Kadmon, "Hasufim ba-tzariah."
 38. See for example the photo of Mordechai Gur in *Yed'iot Aharonot*, 7 *Yamim*, 23 June 1967; photo of Shmuel Gonen, *ibid.*, 30 June 1967, with the caption: "Colonel Shmulik, commander of the unit that subdued the desert."
 39. See, for example, Eitan Haber, "Mefakdei ha-hazitot" (The commanders of the fronts), *Yedi'ot Aharonot*, 7 *Yamim*, 16 June 1967 (profiles of three commanders in the war, Major Generals Yeshayahu Gavish, Uzi Narkis, and David Elazar); Uri Oren and Aviezer Golan, "Kakh hudbar ha-midbar" (This is how the desert was conquered), *ibid.*, 30 June 1967; Aviezer Golan, "Ha-mefaked" (The commander), an interview with and profile of Gorodish, *ibid.*, 4 August 1967.
 40. Gamzu, *Shesh aharei ha-milhamah*, 41; Eli Landau, "Raful yarah ke-tothan min ha-shurah" (Raful fired like a regular artilleryman), *Ma'ariv*, 29 June 1967.
 41. Eli Landau, "Be-derekh le-Su'etz" (On the way to Suez)" *Ma'ariv*, 16 June 1967.
 42. Oded Kapelyuk, "Im Arik derekh ha-midbar" (With Arik through the desert), *Ma'ariv*, 23 June 1967.
 43. Geula Cohen, "Be-arba einayim im aluf Ariel Sharon" (Tête-à-tête with Major General Ariel Sharon), *Ma'ariv*, 15 December 1967.
 44. For the extensive use of these epithets, see Barukh, *Mah nishma be-vayit*, chap. 3, "Gorodish: Ha-esh veba-etzim" (Gorodish: The fire and the trees), 15–43.
 45. Oren and Golan, "Kakh hudbar ha-midbar."
 46. Golan, "Ha-mefaked."
 47. *The Tanks of Tammuz*, 100, 111.
 48. *Ibid.*, 109.
 49. *Ibid.*, 142.
 50. *Siah lohamim*, 73.
 51. *The Tanks of Tammuz*, 282.
 52. *Hasufim ba-tzariah*, 194.
 53. *The Seventh Day*, 80.
 54. *The Tanks of Tammuz*, 282.
 55. *Hasufim ba-tzariah*, 40.
 56. *Ibid.*, 164.
 57. *Ibid.*, 99.
 58. *The Seventh Day*, 76–79.
 59. *Ibid.*, 81.

60. I have termed the “generation of the state” the “generation in a dilemma” (Gan, “Ha-siah ha-gove’a”). One of the salient characteristics of the *Shdemot* group was the transition from exclamation marks to question marks, the transition to a faltering speech that made “the right to confusion” a justification for the quest for their own path.
61. Oz, *Be’or ha-ikhelet ha-azah*, 142–51. Oz used this image to describe the division of labor between the State of Israel and the kibbutzim. I have “translated” this image into a division of labor between the pioneering and the native-born generations.
62. The idea to create a “discussion movement” emerged in the wake of the success of *The Seventh Day*. The *Shdemot* group decided to hold a number of additional discussions on the problems of the second kibbutz generation. Muki Tzur wrote the editor’s comments on the booklet *Bein tze’irim*, a supplement to *The Seventh Day*. In his postscript, “Letter to the Reader,” he called for creating a “discussion movement” to define the identity of that generation, particularly in the kibbutzim (279).
63. Almog, *The Sabra*, 144–46.
64. Katriel, *Milot mafteah*, 210.
65. *Siah lohamim*, 5–6 and 282–83.
66. The concept “emotional striptease” is also used in *Siah lohamim* by Avino’am Brug, a soldier in the elite commando unit (and Ehud Barak’s brother): When Brug sensed that he was going too far in his description of how depressed he had become by the stench of death and the sight of the shattered corpses in Sinai, he immediately felt the need to stop and apologize: “I am slipping into a kind of emotional striptease” (90).
67. A booklet in memory of Amnon Harodi and Hanan Buch, who fell during the Six Day War in the battle for the Old City in Jerusalem, published by Kibbutz Ein Shemer, 1967.
68. His words are cited in Avraham Shapira’s lecture in Gan Shmuel (n. 13 above).
69. One of the harsh critics of the anti-emotional and anti-intellectual ethos was Karl Frankenstein. After the Yom Kippur War, when analyzing the reasons for the sense of crisis that had emerged in the wake of that war, he viewed the power of that ethos as one of the main sources both of the Sabras’ problems and of the hubris that had led to the nemesis of the Yom Kippur War. See Frankenstein, “Yisrael mul mashber.”

Notes on contributor

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