The Question of Belonging: Gendered Concepts of Identity and Nation in Yael Dayan's Prose

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Abstract

The aim is to examine the various kinds of nation-building, which are intrinsic to the literary work of Yael Dayan[1]. Furthermore, it will elaborate on the promotion of particular performances and conceptions of Jewish as well as national (Israeli) constructions of identity. In addition, I will define the scope of "the other" in Yael Dayan's prose: firstly, the construction of "one people" will be analysed, secondly I will investigate the construction of a woman within the Jewish Community, and thirdly the construction of a non-Jew will be highlighted. As these issues will not be investigated separately, I will focus on interdependencies and mutual conditions instead. This is to say that I will try to explain the kinds of narratives that the texts serve in relation to dealing with "one people" as well as the impact of gendered fixations and break downs in the literary representation of constructions of nation, nationality and nationhood in Yael Dayan's work. The method of Close Reading will be employed for the analytical part of this piece of writing, in the course of which I will discern "hidden" or subversive elements, which are only marginally treated by critics and the scientific community.

Keywords: *nation, Israel, gender, identity, Yael Dayan*

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[1] The author and politician Yael Dayan was born on December 2nd, 1939 in Nahalal. Texts analysed here are: *Envy the Frightened* (EF), *My Father. His Daughter (MF), New Face in the Mirror (NF) and Three Weeks in October (TW)*. As a politician she was a member of the Knesset from 1992 – 2003. Yael Dayan is also known as a Peace Activist for Peace Now, Bat Shalom, International Center for Peace and The Council for Peace and Security, as an LGBT Activist and a Women's Rights Activist.