

## Producing the Modern Hebrew Canon: Nation Building and Minority Discourse (New Perspectives on Jewish Studies)

Hannan Hever



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A people's writings can play a dramatic role in nation building, as the development of modern Hebrew literature powerfully illustrates. Since the end of the nineteenth century, Hebrew writers in Europe and Palestine/Israel have produced texts and consolidated moments in the shaping of national identity.

Yet, this process has not always been a unified and continuous one. The processes of canon formation and the suppression of heterodox discourses have been played out publicly and vociferously. Producing the Modern Hebrew Canon offers a sweeping view of the entirety of modern Hebrew literature, from Berdichevski and Agnon to Shammas and Habiby, shedding light on the moments of rupture and reversal which have undermined efforts to construct a hegemonic Zionist narrative. It provides a model for understanding the relations between minority and majority voices in postcolonial situations, showing these processes working and changing over time, from the earliest days of the creation of a labor Zionist sensibility for literature to Israeli state culture and the discourses of Arab otherness.

By illuminating both the process of canon formation as well as the voices excluded from the canon, Producing the Modern Hebrew Canon offers a powerful alternative reading of twentieth century Hebrew fiction.



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