


Nostalgia in Oral Histories of Israeli Women

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**Abstract:** In her article "Nostalgia in Oral Histories of Israeli Women" Yael Zilberman explores the narration of nostalgia of elderly women about the city of Be'er Sheva. In their narration, the subjects of the study create textual and spatial practices which are engendered and create analogies between the city, their maturing/ed bodies, and by-gone youth. Further, the grief owing to the perceived condition of the city intensifies the idealized description of the city and the longing for its past. Zilberman's study brakes new ground in that the study of urban experience within folklore is a lesser explored field as the urban environment is considered by many folklore scholars as a deterioration folklore in the country side. Since the 1980s, however, urban folklore has been gaining scholarly attention and women and more so elderly women represent one such group.

**Yael ZILBERMAN**

### **Nostalgia in Oral Histories of Israeli Women**

In the present study I analyze oral histories of older women who settled in the capital city of the south of Israel, Be'er Sheva, after the founding of Israel. These by now elderly women aged 60-90 settled in Be'er Sheva hailing from different countries or were born in Israel and their experiences and perspectives in their personal narratives prove valuable for several fields of study including urban studies and the study of memory and narration. I analyze interviews conducted with thirty women 2007-2009 and interviews recorded over the last forty years and deposited in the Tuviyah Archives at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. The said oral narratives form a complex mosaic, a sort of "longitudinal archive" of personal stories as "orally communicated history" (see Allen and Montell; on memory and cultural studies, see, e.g., Erll and Nünning; on Israeli immigrant women, see, e.g., Herzberg). The subjects of the study are long-term residence in Beer-Sheva and some were pioneers and founders of professional sectors in the city. By using interdisciplinary methods borrowed from literary studies, cultural studies, the study of folklore, socio-linguistics, and women's studies my study sheds light on the women's "sense of place" and "sense of self" in the context of urban life (see, in more detail Zilberman).

My theoretical framework draws on studies of urban and regional folklore and human geography in order to gauge the subjective daily aspects of urban experience. In addition, I follow feminist oral historians such as Susan Artimage and Elizabeth Jameson who studied women in the Western frontier of the United States. One of their main points is that regional history and stories are gendered (see also Daley). Armitage calls this "Hisland" and "Herland": the west as "Hisland" is populated by male figures and deals with "masculine" issues such as conflicts, wars, and work. As opposed to "Hisland," "Herland" includes female figures who actively participated in building the West, although unofficially, and therefore they are not included in the place's history (Artimage 11-13). The western U.S. is but one example of places where there is a tendency to minimize or ignore the part and contribution of women. This criticism is relevant to the urban context because women are the main absentees in studies about the building and founding of cities in Israel, especially in places considered peripheral such as Be'er Sheva. As stressed by Dina Vaiou, urban studies rely on analytical tools and concepts which reflect mainly male experience and thus habitually exclude women. Therefore, in order to understand the meaning of urban life for women, we need to focus on their daily practices and viewpoints, although these may seem at times repetitive and trivial. Elderly urban nostalgic discourse can be seen as "marginal" or "trivial" history, which is not "formal" or "important," but helps us to understand the lives of its speakers. In general, places are significant to oral history because they function as catalysts to the narratives and concretize them. At the same time place descriptions moderate and vivify local views (Ryden 81). Hence, personal narration is a recaptured localization of subjective space (Nicolaisen 9). Since urban space constantly changes, urban personal folklore includes nostalgic discourses about urban sites which changed or disappeared.

The fact that folklore is characterized by a multitude of versions caused folklorists early on to focus on the manner in which folklore changes from region to region. However, only at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s did folklorists begin to address the regional-geographic awareness of the residents themselves. During those years of research a transition occurred from the "folklore of regions" to "regional folklore" thus expressing an interest in and sensitivity to the regional residents' senses of place. Thus, the concept of "regional folklore," in its current sense, relates not only to materials of folklore gathered from a given, clearly delineated, geographic area, but to the specific folk knowledge gleaned by taking a regional approach dependent on local culture and the unique historic-geographic factors of the region (see Allen; Ryden). Local folk knowledge relates to the place as the site that provides the physical connection to important personal and social events and expresses the senses of local identity and belonging (Allen and Montell 8-10). Further, traditionally regional folklore studies dealt solely with the rural environment. Rural society was perceived as folk society and the processes of modernization and urbanization as destructive and denigrating to the farmers' "genuine" folklore (Laba 161). During the 1970s, some studies were dedicated to urban folklore, but they focused on the continuity and "salvaging" of rural folklore (see, e.g., Paredes) or on the negative phenomena associated with urban lifestyle, such as crime, alienation, and inter-group conflicts (Dundes and Pagter). In addition, consideration of urban lifestyle was marginal when dealing with the ethnic components

and various genres of folklore. Thus, just as 1980s researchers such as Martin Laba commented, the development of a suitable framework for the research of urban folklore will only be possible when folklorists are able to overcome their romantic notions of rural life and pathological perceptions of urban life. In order to attain a new, more positive perspective, scholars must view the city and its culture as a relevant object of research by developing a theory of the city that emphasizes its human perspectives and practices. According to Laba, a city in and of itself influences people's expressive behavior and as such deserves serious research on the ways in which the urban experience is expressed (168). This experience goes beyond the context of the city per se, for the city, as argued by Robert E. Park, is first and foremost a mental/psychic state of mind, so that the knowledge of or about it express ideo-philosophical-psychological stances expressed in narrative (Warshaver 169).

Since the 1990s newer approaches began to emerge in folklore research, striving to shift the focus from the way in which places in general and cities in particular influence folklore to the reverse process of investigating the ways in which folklore influences and shapes local history and geography. This approach is no longer satisfied with the perception of folklore as an expression of or reaction to processes, but stresses its power to shape places (see, e.g., Tangherlini 101). This perception is consistent with the narrative-descriptive approach of the Yi Fu Tuan, since it considers speech to be a central means of foundation, settlement, and residence in a given place. Tuan claims that one cannot explain the founding of places only by means of considering the physical and economic factors which created them because it is speech and the use of language that transform a landscape or a construction into a human place and a space into a home ("Language"). Like Laba, Tuan contends that the human urban encounters, including speech, create and preserve urban life ("The City"; for a bibliography of work on narration and landscape, see Verraest and Keunen). Still, words by themselves are not sufficient to pass on the urban experience. As shown by Michel de Certeau, daily physical and spatial practices in the city like walking create a sense of belonging to and ownership of a place. For Stark experience is an embodied component that cannot be reduced to discourse; likewise people cannot be related to as merely disembodied minds shaped by language alone. Instead we should take into account how active and physical experiences derive from our notions as young or old people, men or women, healthy, or sick. True, language is our means of transmitting human experience, but theories of praxis offer a path to refer to linguistic conventions such as practices related to the human body and its social context (Stark 10). This stance matches the studies of Tovi Fenster, who dealt with local embodied knowledge of men's and women's daily experiences. One of her claims is that patriarchy damages women's sense of belonging and "right to the city" because it interferes with women's ability to freely use municipal and public spaces, since some of the places are perceived as "masculine." This partly includes private sphere, the home, although it is usually considered "feminine." Fenster concludes that this spatial exclusion harms the senses of comfort and belonging of the city's female citizens ("Hazkhut" 37-38; for further scholarship about the masculinity of the city see, e.g., Lister; Wolff). Fenster also points that personal memories create just as important a sense of belonging to the city and its various sites so that the repetitive nature of place remembrance comes parallel to daily practices of attachment like walking ("The Global" 157).

In my fieldwork it became evident that most of the women have developed feelings of belonging and a feminine-citizen identity by means of their oral local histories, all the while criticizing a variety of city-related issues. In this respect, the narrative they created resembles the "urban text" discussed by Certeau. He argues that the text that evolves after wandering in town creates a "space for enunciation" allowing one to "read" the city in a personal manner, in light of shortcuts, deviations from the path, and other spontaneous movements chosen by the walker. Like Italo Calvino, Certeau also claims that this daily wandering stresses the fact that different places in the city are experienced as the presence of absences, since what is revealed to the eye necessarily points to what used to be and is no longer there as expressed in the nostalgic narratives discussed in the present study (Certeau 98, 108; for the *flâneur/se* motif, see, e.g., Ferguson Parkhurst; Turcot; Van Godtsenhoven). It is based on the above outlined approaches that I analyze the Beer Shevite women's narratives as stories which create a personal enunciation of space. They demonstrate knowledge of local history and of the processes of urban change and perpetuate their part and contribution to the city. They re-visualize the "invisible landscape" of the city by describing the old neighborhoods and the commercial and recreational areas which no longer actually exist, but still form part of the mental scenery of the city. They wrap their private

biographies in the biography of the city and thus creatively build both the city and their own identities.

Be'er Sheva was built at the beginning of the twentieth century during Ottoman rule to strengthen control over the region against Bedouin tribes. The Turks built impressive public buildings which exist to this day. In 1917, the city was conquered by the British Empire, which developed Gaza because of its location near the sea-side route to Egypt. Jewish settlements of the south of Palestine/Israel, also known as the Negev region, began later, in the 1940s, than that of the other regions in the country and was sparsely populated because until the 1930s this desert area was considered unsuited for settlement. The first decades of the State of Israel were a time of mass immigration and the country absorbed twice the number of its pre-state 600,000 Jewish inhabitants. Naturally, in strategic and financial terms, the vacant south was calling for settlers (see Rosen, "Far from") and became the homestead for three types of settlement: 1) co-operative-socialist *kibbutz*, 2) *moshav* (village), and 3) development town. The concept of development towns was adopted from other countries for the purpose of settling new immigrants by scattering them in remote unsettled areas similar to, for example, the method of settlement in Canada's west in the nineteenth century. Within two decades, the Israeli South became the locus for the largest number of development towns. The new settlers of Be'er Sheva first lived in the Old City (meaning the Turkish era) and later new neighborhoods were built. Over the years, many immigrants reached the city, especially from North African countries including Morocco and in the last two decades of the 2000s from countries of the former Soviet Union. Be'er Sheva has now for years been the capital of the Negev region, although it still bears stigmas of an under-developed development town (see Fenster, Harman, Levinson).

The first planning map of Be'er Sheva disregarded the Old City's uniqueness and viewed it as merely a marginal residential area. The planners of the 1950s and 1960s regarded the Old City as non-Zionist (Turkish, Arabic), old-fashioned, primitive place. Yet, this old center somehow developed alongside the new city and functioned as a central commercial area up to the late 1980s, when the first mall was built near the Be'er Sheva Central Bus Station. At the end of the 1990s, a large open mall called Big was built and within a decade two other ones — One Plaza and The Seventh Avenue — were built nearby. The new malls were built on vacant lots near the city's vanishing outskirts, but simultaneously inner-city "mile-stone" buildings were destroyed in favor of smaller commercial centers and high-rise apartment buildings. Today, the Old City serves primarily a low-income population and foreigners and it is widely perceived as an undeveloped and neglected "third world" zone, although in recent years several revitalizing projects were set in motion (see Markowitz and Uriely).

I now present examples of oral narratives by Beer Shevite women about their past city (translations from the Hebrew are mine). The first two are Iby (Ibolya), a 93 year-old physician, who arrived in the city in the early 1960s and Rachel, aged 79, who served as a soldier in Be'er Sheva in 1948-49 and later came to live there. Both are Holocaust survivors of Hungarian origin. The third is Shosh (Shoshana), aged 62, who arrived as an infant (her parents are Holocaust survivors from Romania) and also served as a soldier in the city. All three describe their life in the "small Be'er Sheva" in sentimental and nostalgic terms. Ottoman and British sites, as well as newer Israeli movie theaters, restaurants, and cafés fill large parts of their memories and descriptions. These narrative and discursive units symbolize the women's personal past: their youth, soldier-hood, young and mature motherhood, and work life. Moreover, this indirect or metonymic self-narration enables the women to express sentiments, worries, and messages they might find too hard or anxiety provoking for explicit expression, especially with regards to aging, physical decline, and the inevitable prospect of death.

Iby: I remember that in the evening there were, there were places. There was La Chance [La Dernière chance], a bar. But going there was a pleasure. When I was working, people often came from the Joint [the Joint Distribution Committee] to visit me. I was very active there and I was also the chairperson of the hospital ... You know, we had a beautiful life here. We had a social life, good company. I don't know, we took walks with the children in the Old City. We used to go to the Mocca Café to drink coffee on Fridays. ... I remember Friday afternoons, every Friday we'd meet — Olga and Emile and Gabi and myself — and we'd go to eat in a restaurant. There was Ilya, but it's the previous-previous Ilya, in the corner, in the Old City. So we all went to this *passage* [French pronunciation] in the Old City. Where was the first restaurant in Be'er Sheva? In the corner of Keren Kayemt street. There was this restaurant called Srul [Hebrew and Yiddish short form of Israel]. We used to go to Srul's on Friday. There was an open-air cinema (with no roof) where we went with the kids on Saturday afternoon. There was a life here. We went for walks in the Old City. Well, we started at Srul's and we went down to the shoe-shop. What was it called?

Rachel: You go to town. Everything took place in town, the town was full of life. The Beer-Shevites, the town, [all] were young, most of them were young. If they were Holocaust survivors, they were definitely young, because only the young survived. Most of them were immigrants, meaning they just arrived. On Friday evenings we went out. There was the Arava Café, where we danced. There was Kassit Café. We were happy and everyone loved the city. There was togetherness, you didn't have to, there were no phones, you didn't have to call someone to say you're coming, you just came, visited. At that time, like on the *kibbutz*, we all had small children and we took walks together ... She was so ... Be'er Sheva was so ... even though there were no roads, there were places. I remember that there was no road, no sidewalks, but it was planned and bustling. Everyone knew each other, everyone knew each other.

The meaning of the places described is assigned to them by the familial, social, and professional associations through which the narrators perceive them. In both excerpts the memories are anchored in urban leisure places like cafés and restaurants. Having functioned as physician and in fact having been one of the founders of the Negev medical branch, Iby is reminded of places where she took donors or visiting colleagues. Yet, like Rachel, she too focuses on family and social relations which the city's by-gone places symbolize for her. The discourse of both women exemplifies David Sopher's contention that human relations and not mere landscape are the primary content and meaning of home views (136). Rachel's remark that "though there were no roads and sidewalks there were places" illustrates and vivifies this idea.

The two narrators describe their life routines as young women with families and small children. Rachel emphasizes also that many pioneer Beer-Shevites were young Holocaust survivors, like herself. Their lives included Friday night parties and dancing, going to restaurants and cafés with friends, and walking in the city center. The specific names of places and/or their owners, as well as the names of the people visiting them create a literal/verbal environment and thus enriches and enlivens the otherwise flat listing of past places and experiences (on this, see, e.g., Wirth-Nesher). This is manifested in Iby's effort to recall the name of a specific shoe shop. In addition, the authenticity and primacy of some places is stressed, like the previous-to-the-previous Ilya restaurant, and the "mythological" Srul Restaurant.

One of the most common features of nostalgic discourse is the use of extra-thematic orientation. This orientation tends to be detailed, specific, and serving additional goals beyond tying a story to a certain place and time (see Johnstone, "Midwestern"). Extra-thematic orientation is achieved by both extra- and intra-textual units. For example, many of the subjects asked me repeatedly if I knew exactly where the place they were referring to is or was. Alternatively, they offered pointers — i.e., spatial orientation — to construct their narrative worlds. By using extensive place descriptions, the narrators encouraged me to apply my imagination and "see" them in my mind's eye, while stressing their significance to their lives. The two previous excerpts partly exemplify this orientation, but the following segment, in which Shosh describes the Keren movie theatre (built in 1953 and demolished in the early 2000s), is a prime example of extra-thematic orientation:

Shosh: If there's something I feel sorry about it's Keren movie theatre at Be'er Sheva. They shouldn't have demolished the Keren cinema, simply shouldn't have. This was the first luxurious place ... The Keren movie theatre was built with beautiful architecture. I mean, when I looked at it ... Its lobby had all glass on the outside, just glass facing out. It was very pretty ... I remember, for example, one of my best memories from there was the movie *An Imitation of Life* ... It was a marvelous movie with Lana Turner, she was a star in the 1950s ... There was a scene when the mulatto daughter was embarrassed by her mother ... who came looking for her in some stripper and singing bar in New York. So the daughter goes: "Go away! Get out of here, you embarrass me." And this and that, and she [the mother] was depressed and everything, died in the end. And then the daughter returned home, heard that her mother had died and ran after ... the coffin, let's call it, in the vehicle, yelling: "Mother, mother, forgive me, forgive me!" and so on. I remember that everyone cried. It was one of those emotional movies, but the trick was to leave the theater, the doors were on the sides, and along the entire wall stood girls like this [covers her face with her hands], sobbing, leaning on that wall and sighing. I'll never forget that scene. There were all kinds of things that became ingrained, you know, that can't be dismissed, that latch on to you whether you want them to or not ... That place is etched in me. Also etched in my mind is when I made the rounds of the social salons ... I'm talking about the age of 16 or so. We used to go out and the main place was Keren cinema, and I remember those stiletto high-heels of mine, even after I was married and such, indeed I remember the floor there. There were huge brown paving stones of, I estimate, 1/2 a meter by 1/2 a meter, but with gaps between them, not filled-in, and all the heels went in there. You got stuck and left shoeless. Things like that happened there. I happened to have a nice figure, and I remember that it took me a long time to realize that. God, I was a moron, naïve, and I didn't look at myself in the mirror, but all the boys liked to grab me by the waist. I remember it was winter and I came wearing a slightly maxi dress and one of the boys there, I remember, opened my coat to see the ... I'll raise my shirt and show you what I mean. At age 62, I can still boast a bit, despite the bloating, because of my thyroid gland. That was the place, one of the places.

Speaking about the Keren movie house floods Shosh with memories and longing. Her description is full of minute details of the cinema's visual aspects, like its paving stones and the shoe that stuck in there, just like Cinderella's. All this serves Shosh as an anchor of her own memories of the cinema. The detailed delineation of a scene in the movie plunges in her listener and serves as a "story with in a story." The scene concentrates on mother and daughter relations, but the crying respondents, and Shosh and I, are also all women. As argued by Caroline Daley, memories are gendered not just because man and women have different experiences but also because people narrate their memories in light or in accordance with gendered values and norms. The last part of the narrative discloses Shosh's clinging to her youth, to having a young body, and to romance. Her talk about the movie house's "body" leads Shosh to talk about (and later even showing me) her body's decline and expressing sorrow at it. Her use of the verbs "ingrain," "latch," and "etch" likewise stresses the power of these scenes, their physical-sensual suggestiveness, and the analogy to the long gone movie house.

All this leads us to the complementary part of the idealized and nostalgic narrative about times past, namely the expression of disappointment, sadness, anger, and grief about the destruction and lack of preservation of places. This "elegy" refers to the vanishing of open fields and spaces which became malls and residential towers. Accordingly, the language of these portions is intense and extreme, including repetition, superlatives, question marks, broken phrases, gaps, and other signs of emotional intensity. Shosh and Rachel describe dramatically the moment when they discovered the destruction or alteration of an old place. However, note that the officers' club, lamented below by Rachel, as opposed to the Keren movie theater, was not entirely destroyed, but rather restored and renovated. Nevertheless, this caused her a strong emotional reaction. The officers' club is a Turkish edifice that served the British era Bedouin district governor, public wheeler, and historian Arif al-Arif between 1929 and 1939. In the early Israeli era, this building served as the military government's headquarters including its officers' club. In later decades it was turned into a military canteen until in 2003 when a contractor named Peretz Luzon bought the building, renovated it, and placed his company offices in it. Rachel gave a dramatic description of the moment when she found out about the building's present function and that its plaque does not even mention the officers' club, although it does Arif al-Arif's rule. By using "extra-thematic" reported speech (see Johnstone, "Community"), Rachel constructs the following dramatic-emphatic narrative:

Rachel: I remember that someone had previously said: "Do you know that they renovated the officers' club? They rebuilt it." I went into town [The Old City] and I actually saw it. Another woman was also standing and looking at it. I can see that there is a plaque, that this had been the home of some sheikh or judge, and then I see that it says on the building "Luzon House." I stand there and say to the woman standing beside me: "You know it's really desecration; it says 'Luzon House'." And I tell the woman standing there: "But this was the officers' club. It's really desecration", and I said: "I was a soldier here; it happened here." This is how we complain. Suddenly someone comes out of there or he may have been there. Then he said: "Ms. Rachel." So, I looked up and it was the contractor, Luzon, saying: "Rachel, What happened?" So I said: "Here, it says 'Luzon House'; why not the officers' club?" So he said: "Come, I'll tell you, now come inside. Tell me, was this how it looked?" I said: "Yes." The garden hadn't been so well-kept, but the building was just the same. They actually restored it and it was very beautiful on the inside. I also know who planned it to make it so beautiful, but they preserved the façade [not the real place]. So I said: "Tell me what is this meant to be?" Then he said: "You know I bought it. The Ministry of Defense or whoever owned it were about to sell it and there were many, not necessarily Jewish, bodies that were ready to buy it. None of them would have rehabilitated? O.K. I bought it. I restored it, preserving the place as it was.

Here, Rachel describes two conversations she recently held: one with a passer-by woman, apparently also one of the city's old timers and the other with the contractor Luzon. Rachel's descriptions and suspensions slow down the narrative and make the story more dramatic and emphatic, thus turning the listeners into her co-critical audience. Drama or intensity is likewise created and maintained by her conflation of the past and present tenses. The plot thickens when Rachel notices the sign saying that it is a contractor company (Luzon's), while the plaque detailing the building's past does not mention that it had ever been the officers' club. The harsh expression used twice by Rachel to describe what had happened — "desecration" — expresses her association of sanctity to the place. Her statement "I was a soldier here; it happened here" comes through as a vain call of a disregarded eye-witness. No wonder that it is heavily burdened with intense emotion. Then comes a dialogue with the contractor Luzon. Notwithstanding his kind and polite address of her, Rachel bombards him with questions while she admits that the restoration of the building inside and out is beautiful and that the garden is even better tended than before. She

does, however, note that all this is a "façade." The contractor's reply sounds convincing, since apparently had he not purchased the property it would have remained neglected or passed to non-Jewish owners. Although this argument may be his manipulation of her patriotic sensitivity, for Rachel the changes have "erased" or rendered invisible her memories of her past as a young soldier in the young State of Israel.

The gap between the memory of past places and their present appearance constitutes a repeated theme in Rachel's inclusive life-story. These segments echo the nostalgic meta-narrative of a number of my interviewees about "the Be'er Sheva that once was." For example, this occurs when Rachel describes returning to the city of her birth in Hungary after fifty years immediately after the story about building now owned by Luzon. Revisiting the place of her birth in light of the harsh tearing away from her childhood home kindles in her complex and ambivalent feelings (on nostalgia by first- and second-generation Central European women Holocaust survivors, see, e.g., Tötösy de Zepetnek; Vasvári). In light of all these, Rachel reaches some fundamental conclusions regarding the return to places of the past: "I want to tell you, you don't always have to go back. Some things should be left as they were, untouched, because everything changes, and nothing stays the same, and you see things differently at each age."

In conclusion, the imagined past serves as an ideal escape. However, we are actually nostalgic not for the past as it really was nor for the past as we would have liked it to have been, but for a coherent, certain condition not found in the present, but only in hindsight. Buildings, objects, and images from the past play an important role in the development of nostalgic feelings. Although the objective, casual observer may consider these entities trivial and insignificant, the nostalgic person experiences them as his/her means of "touching" the past (see Chase and Shaw 4; Lowenthal 29). In general, old age arouses elegiac nostalgia (see Chase and Shaw 6). Further, the elegiac in the nostalgic narrative appears to be particularly strong in elderly women's narrative and discourse. In the modern elegy, unlike the traditional one, women may lament themselves and not others (Rosen, "Holocaust" 47; see also Rosen, "Exile"). The three narrators, Ibbi, Rachel, and Shosh lament the city and to no lesser extent their own decline and aging. Therefore, it is possible that the feminine urban elegy represents, on a deeper level, the processes of aging and bodily changes/decline. As shown by Elizabeth Grosz, a city is an environment and a context in which physicality becomes socially, sexually, and discursively meaningful. Therefore, the body fashions the city, but is also fashioned by it, or becomes citified and urbanized. Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto likens the pain of remembrance of past significant places to the illusory pain of amputated, phantom limbs. This powerful image demonstrates the tight connection between body and place and the pain involved in the alternation of significant and memorable places (29). This refers not only to the corporal body, young or old (or young to old), but also to its socio-cultural aspects, practices, experiences, and conceptions. The Be'er Sheva that once was — that actually was/had much less compared to today — is presented as "the Golden Age of the City," but actually represents 1) the Golden Age/the youthful days of the narrators, 2) traditional values (such as making do with the simple necessities or direct interpersonal contact, rather than by phone, etc.), and 3) the social activities in which the narrators participated. The nostalgic narratives I analyze stress the above aspects, but they also present the "revival" of the "invisible landscape" of the Old City. By rhetorical means, such as extra-orientation, reported speech, and comparisons to other places and times, an empty place can be "filled." The grief owing to the perceived condition of the city intensifies the idealized description of the city and the longing for its past.

Note: The above article is an excerpt from Yael Zilberman, *Folklor feministi urbani: siporet vesiah ishiyim al hagira hityashvut, hitmaktseut veyisud mipi vatikot beersheva* (Feminist Urban Folklore: Personal Narratives and Discourse about Immigration, Settlement, Professionalization, and Foundation by Old-Timer Women from Be'er Sheva). Ph.D. Diss. Be'er Sheva: Ben Gurion U of the Negev, 2011. Copyright release of the excerpt to Purdue University.

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