Sholem Aleichem: Language and World Views of Male and Female

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The contrast between male and female discourses reveals essential dissimilarities that Sholem Aleichem attributes to the world view of the two sexes. While **Menakhem-Mendl** [1] clearly poses this confrontation between the universes of discourse via the epistolary style, it is portrayed in **Tevye Der Mylkhiker** [2] through Tevye's monologues and dialogical encounters between male and female characters.

The following examination of these speeches shall cast light upon multiple aspects that comprise the structuring pair male-female.

Menakhem Mendl and Sheyne-Sheyndl

The discourses of Sheyne-Sheyndl and Menakhem-Mendl represent two opposite poles. One of the main ways in which this polarity is expressed is by the use of the categories of female concreteness vs. male abstraction. Menakhem-Mendl's tendency to loose himself in the abstract machinations of his own imagination is parallel to the insubstantial nature of the market he pretends to be thriving in. Moreover, Mendl's letters exude a striking lack of concreteness despite the profusion of detailed information often carrying specific names and exact numbers that will inevitably prove useless. This vague network developed through his letters imitates the abstract nature of distances, relationships, procedures and documents in the modern big world.

Sheyndl's speech, on the contrary, seizes many forms of the concrete *Shtetl* world she lives in. Her demands for specifics and her distrust of Mendl's language follow the pragmatism of her mother's "philosophical" credo that these two phrases condense brilliantly:

״קרעפלעך אין חלום איז ניט קיין קרעפלעך, נאָר אַ חלום״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו ח׳)
״כל זמן געלט איז אויפן פּאַפּיר, איז דאָ פּאַפּיר״ (״פּאַפּירלעך״, בריוו י׳)

* You actually cannot break up their double names.

A central indication of this concreteness is Sheyndl's obsessive reference to the body, that is the substance par excellence. Her letters often begin with references to body diseases:

- ״שרייַב איך דיר, אַז עס האָט זיך מיר ווידער אָנגערופן די אַמאָלעדיקע ספּאַזמע...״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו ב׳)
- ״שרייַב איך דיר,אַז איך האָב שוין ווידער צו טאָן מיט די ציין...״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו ו׳)

״ס׳איז גאָר אַ סברא, אַז איך וועל דאַרפן אַ ״רעפּאַראַציע״, אַזוי זאָגט דער נייַער דאָקטער...״ (״פּאַפּירלעך״, בריוו ב׳)

״אונדזער משה-הערשעלע האָט אייַנגעשלונגען אַ קאָפּיקע !...נאַ דיר בויכוויטיק !״ (״פּאַפּירלעך״, בריוו ד׳)

״שרייַב איך דיר,אַז איך שפּייַ מיט בלוט פון דייַנע זיסע בריוולעך.״ (״אַ בכבודיקע פּרנסה״, בריוו ד׳)

The real, imagined, or metaphoric quality of Sheyndl's diseases does not annul their significant role in the portrayal of the feminine world. Also the butt of Sheyndl's curses tends to be the body, or consists of some sort of corporal disease (for instance, ״...מייַנע וויטיקן אויף זייַן קאָפּ !״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו ח׳), מכות,,מיתה, קדחת).

Family is another realm that substantiates Sheyndl's attachment to the close and the concrete. While in Sheyndl's letters, family or quasi-familial characters achieve a consistent and individualized entity, in Mendl's world family figures progressively disappear. Except for his uncle portrayed at the very beginning of Mendl's adventures, the narration that follows only mentions family members ~~scarcely~~ infrequently and tangentially; moreover, they appear mostly in post-scriptum paragraphs or in fixed formulas, and generally not providing additional information to the reader but rather repeating what Sheyndl had previously discussed. Furthermore, as time passes, Mendl becomes increasingly unresponsive to his wife's concerns and even to the rage that she pours out on him. In contrast to Sheyndl who carefully smashes each of Mendl's words without missing an issue, he just comments upon her sharp sayings with the phrase "You are wrong" and ignoring her fury.

Sheyndl's limited parameters of space (home and Shtetl) and time (religious) are challenged when faced with the public spaces of big cities (cafes, streets, offices, trains) and their secular time. The only defense she has is the atemporal framework of her family models, as voiced in these examples:

״איך בין באַ מיַין טאַטן נישט געפּרווט געוואָרן צו אַזעלכע לופטיקע פּרנסות...״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו ד׳)
״מיַין באָבעס באָבע איז דאָרטן קיינמאָל ניט געווען און האָט זיך באַגאַנגען אָן דעם, וועל איך זיך מסתמא אויך אָן דעם באגייען״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו י׳)

The gap between the world views is furthermore emphasized by the different categories used by each gender. For Sheyndl all humanity could be classified in these few groups: גבירים/קבצנים, ידן/שונאים, מאַן/וויַיב, מאמע-טאַטע/קינדערלעך. Unlike the familial categories of Sheyndl's *Shtetl* experience, the bombastic impersonal categories that appear in Mendl's letters mostly refer to the new characters in modern cities: businessmen, brokers, speculators, writers. Even to speak about his new experiences, Mendl is forced to use foreign language. The language of the market is not Yiddish but foreign. Foreign words, ״עפּעס מאָדנע דבורים, טערקיש לאָשן!״ to Sheyndl's ears, are used in the shaky, unpredictible and unstable world of the market:

״סטאַלאַזשי״, ״רעדאַקציע״, ״שפּעגעלאַנט״, ״דעלעזאַנס״״דיפערענצן״, ״וואַריאַציעס״, ״ראַליזאציע״

Many grammatical devices reinforce Mendl's sense of impersonality and anonymity. Unlike Sheyndl's quotes that always carry a signature and a source behind the words (״בשם אומרו״), Mendl's language is marked by impersonality like in ״מע זאָגט, מע עסט, מע באַדאַרף״ and the use of the plural is very common, like in ״באַ אונדז אין אַדעס, באַ אונדז אין יהופּעץ, באַ איַך אין כתרילעווקע......מיר שרייבן, מיר וואַקסן״ The impersonal phrases like ״ווי מע זאָגט באַ אונדז אין אַדעס״ that attempt in vain to delude individual responsibilities. The contrast between personalization and anonymity is also developed around the institutions of both worlds: on the one hand, the caring *g'milus hesed;* on the other, the mercenary pawn shop ("London", letter XI), and the bank, the offices, the newspaper office. Mendl thus finds refuge in the anonymous winds of the market as expressed in his common phrase ״און איך אויך בתוכם״. Statements like the following exhibit Mendl's comfort in an imagined shared fate lacking personal imprints:

״די שפּעגעלאַנטן זייַנען זיך צעלאָפן, אויסגעטרינקט געוואָרן, און איך אויך בתוכם, אויס בערזע !״
״שפּעגעלאַנטן זייַנען געוואָרן אָפּגעקאַכט, און איך אויך בתוכם״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו יא׳)
״...די מעקלערס ווערלן פֿאַרדינען געלט, און איך אויך בתוכם״ (״מיליאָנען״, בריוו ג׳)
1 ״איך אַמעריקע ידן ווערן גליקלעך״ (״שלים-שלים-מזל״, ז׳180)

Sheyndl's elaborate speech reveals her rejection of abstraction also by extensively developing the body of language. Sheyndl's language acquires the solid entity of *sprachfolklore*, much richer than Mendl's. Her speech is spicy and colorful while Mendl's simpler style is replete with cliches like the following:

״ווי אַ טויטן באַנקעס״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו א׳)
״רוף מיר קנאַקניסל״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו יב׳)
״ווי אַ פֿאַרסאַמטע מויז״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו יא׳)

In contrast with his overused similes, Sheyndl inserts popular yet more sophisticated comparisons, such as in this example:

״מייַנע שונאים זאָלן אזוי כּוח האָבן צו לעבן, רבונו של עולם, ווי איך האָב כּוח שוין צו שרייַבן דיר אפילו אַ בריוול...״ (״פּאַפּירלעך״, בריוו ב׳)

She possesses much broader vocabulary and uses synonyms from different linguistic sources like ״מסחרים״ ״געשעפטן״ ״משא-ומתן, (״פּאַפּירלעך״, בריוו ב׳) . Mendl seeks assertiveness through simple repetition while he tries to give the impression that he is a man of action. For instance

״איך, אַז איך זאָג געלט, איז געלט״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו א׳)
״וויי אזוי בערלין זאָגט, אזוי איז דאָס״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו ג׳)
״וואָס דו ווילסט - דאָס טו איך״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו ה׳)
״בא מיר איז שבת - שבת״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו ז׳) excellent

In his attempt to show that he is in charge of his situation, Mendl simultaneously reveals that he has less control over language than his counterpart.

To further develop the contrast between the two characters, other oppositions that complete the scene should be mentioned. In addition to the pairs inside/outside, Shtetl

* cf. what Erik has to say about the איך איך בתוכם

/city-big world, personal space/public space, familiarity/impersonality-anonymity, concrete body/abstraction-vacuum, the contrast between Sheyndl and Mendl is also set in terms of movement. It is clear that while Sheyndl almost never leaves home both physically and within her universe of discourse, Mendl has no home and is continually vacillating physically and in all endeavors. But the most interesting aspect of the contrast between oscillation and stagnation is the form it adopts n the realm of Sheyndl's language. While her speech is dominated by the fixed framework of her mother's statements and philosophy, the unique case of movement within Sheyndl's letters is the rumor initiated by her sister-in-law about Mendl's trip to America. (״פּאַפּירלעך״,בריוו ח׳). It is significant that the content of a rumor is by definition a deformed speech that repeats itself and progressively degenerates. Still, ~~the~~ rumor is the only strong enough impetus that makes her move out of her house and this seems to be the extent to which there is change in her world.

Tevye and his Women

In **Tevye Der Mylkhiker** differences between female and male characters ~~do~~ not only become clear through the nature of their discourse, but ~~moreover~~ Tevye addresses this matter directly in his speech. The main dissimilarity between the sexes according to Tevye's expressions is of an intellectual character. He uses numerous examples to support his view on the intellectual weakness of women and especially, of his wife Golde:

״אַוודאי, זאָג איך, ביסטו איצטער אַ חכמה, ווי זאָגט מען : אַז עס קומען די מאות, קומען די דעות, און אַז מען איז אפשר ריַיך, איז מען געוויס קלוג...״ (״דאָס גרויסע געווינס״, ז׳212)

״שבעה דברים בגולם - אַ יידענע האָט אין זיך ניַין מאָס רייד. מע רעד תוך-זאַכן, איז זי דאָ מיט איר מילכיקן באָרשט !״ (״חוה״, ז׳287)

This argument of inferior intellect is often alluded to by the comparison of women with cows or animals. It is ironically settled by the misconstrued interpretation of the Biblical verse: ״ווי אין דער תורה שטייט געשריבן אתה - דו, ושורך - און דיַין וויַיב, וחמורך - און דיַין פערדל...״ (״האָדל״, ז׳274) In the case of Golde, the disparaging remarks are

straightforward:

״ביסט אַ בהמה, זאָג איך, גאָלדע !״ (״שפרינצע״, ז׳305)

״זאָג איך : ,,אַז דו ביסט אַ בהמה און ווייסט ניט, וויפל איז אַ מיליאָן, היינט וואָס האָב איך מיט דיר צו ריידן ? ״ (״שפרינצע״, ז׳311)

When speaking about his daughters, Tevye softens his speech. In the cases of Chava and Tsaytl he keeps the woman-animal analogy: the interchangeability between Tsaytl and a cow is alluded to in Tevye's negotiations with Leyzer-Wolf; and with regard to Chava, even though she is also referred to as a "beast', the expression "בהמל׳ה" at the same time portrays Tevye's mixed feelings of closeness, protection, love, and sorrow

״ס׳איז חדש ימינו כקדם - דער אייגענער שלים-מזל, וואָס פריער, אַ בהמלה, זאָג איך, איז באַ מיר געפאַלן״ (״חוה״, ז׳ 294)

The only woman that receives Tevye's intellectual respect is Hodl. This positive regard for Hodl's mind is expressed as boldly as his disdain for Golde's. Tevye himself declares, he is no woman: when he wants to say something, he does. For instance, when Hodl challenges her father's interpretation of the hen and duckling story, Tevye proudly acknowledges:

״איר פאַרשטייט דיבורים ? טביהס טאָכטער רעדט נישט גלאַט...״ (״האָדל״, ז׳278)

Tevye's intellectual supremacy over women is ultimately supported by the wealth of his speech, that is incomparable to that of any other male or female character in the story. However, female speeches confirm some of Tevye's theories about femininity: to be a woman according to his declaration is to be impatient, have quick anger, cry, and keep silent when they have something to say. Conversely, all of Tevye's sons-in-law speak straightforwardly presenting their demands and defending their viewpoints in speeches that are much longer than those of female. Chava and Shprintze certainly opt for silence rather than having lengthy discussions with their father. As a matter of fact all the women except Hodl cry at some point in their dialogues. This tear-jerking trick works on Tevye, he seems unable to deny anything to a crying woman. Moreover, with the exception of Hodl,

women play the victim and make threats. In a display of dramatism, Tsaytl tells her father:

״,,טאַטע, טאַטע, האַרציקער, געטרײַער, זאָגט זי, דעם דריטן טאָג ברויט, האָב רחמנות, זאָגט זי, אַף מײַנע יונגע יאָר״...,,אוי, טאַטע, זאָגט זי צו מיר ווידער מיט אַ געוויין, איך וועל מיך שטעלן, זאָגט זי, פאַר אַ דינסט, לײם וועל איך טראָגן, ערד וועל איך גראָבן! ״... ״ (״הײַנטיקע קינדער״, ז׳248)

And with increasing emotion, Chava begs:

״,,טאַטע! זאָל איך שטאַרבן, אויב דו וועסט זיך רירן פונעם אָרט! איך בעט דיך, הער מיך אויס פריער, טאַטע-פאָטער!״...״ (״חוה״, ז׳ 296)

As discourse is the best descriptive device in **Tevye Der Mylkhiker**, the individuality of the female characters is manifest by their direct speech. Golde's language reveals her simplicity, pragmatism, her concern for a livelihood, and together with Sheyne-Sheyndl, both are superstitious (the two women dream of Bobe Tsaytl!) and reject abstract ideas. Golde's down-to-earth personality is condensed in her answer to Tevye's attachment to textual sources:

״,,דער מילכיקער באַרשט, זאָגט זי,, איז אפשר אַזאַ תוך-זאַך, ווי אַלע דײַנע תוך-זאַכן״...״ (״חוה״, ז׳287)

could be your motto!

An interesting intellectual difference between Tevye's daughters arises from a comparison of their speeches, with regard to form and content. Hodl faces her father immediately when she sees him; she speaks defiantly in plural about the feelings shared by Fefer and herself and she appears to be totally in charge of her speech, measuring each word. In control of her emotions, Hodl's dialogue with Tevye is the longest of any male-female exchange in the text. Although the strongest ideological statements are voiced by Fefer, Hodl herself expresses rationales in supports of her behavior. But Chava, situated between the more eloquent Hodl and the terse Shprintze, is the only one who opposes Tevye's "textual world" bringing up another text, Gorki's. Insofar as Tevye's world view is supported and expressed by traditional texts, Chava's mention of an alternative text is quite

very interesting

daring.

Shprintze's talk is the least ideological: unlike her sisters, she does not make general statements of any sort and her speech refers exclusively to Ahron. And the fate of Shprintze's relationship with Ahron is defined by three males, Ahronchik, his uncle and Tevye.

Sheyne-Sheyndl and Tevye

In these two works by Sholem Aleichem the richest discourses are by far those of Tevye and Sheyndl. It is their linguistic wealth that turns them into the most interesting characters. The richness of their language is basically supported by the use of quotations. In both cases this strategy of quoting sources is an exclusive feature of these characters and they use it in a strikingly profuse manner. Furthermore, the story-lines emphasize an idea suggested on the linguistic level: that Tevye and Sheyndl are the main holders of traditional values against the modern mores introduced by the daughters and Mendl.

The following pungent phrases exemplify Tevye's ironic strategy that he uses to cope with disillusionment and to face problematic situations. For instance, forced to accept Tsaytl's decision about Leyzer-Wolf, Tevye adds to his surrender this ironic corollary:

״נישט באַשערט, זאָג איך, דיר, טאָכטער מײַנע, קומען אפֿן גרייטן, טטערן אַ בעל-הביתטע אַף אַלדאָס גוטס, טון אונדז אַ שטיקל נחת דערלעבן, זאָג איך, אף די עלטערע יאָרן, פֿאַר אונדזערע האָרעוואַניע, זאָג איך, טאָג ווי נאַכט אין דער טאַטשקע אײַנגעשפּאַנט, קיין גוטע מינוט, נאָר דלות, נאָר דחקות, ואָר שלים-שלים-מזל אָרום און אַרום !...״ (״הײַנטיקע קינדער״, ז׳248)

When Tevye found Hodl and Fefer lying together on the grass, irony mediates his impulses triggered by the uncomfortable scene:

״,,מזל טוב אײַך, זאָג איך, מיט מזל זאָלט איר לעבן ! וואָס איז די מעשה ? איר האָט געפֿונען, זאָג איך, אַן אוצר אין וואַלד ? צי איר זײַט נאָר וואָס ניצול געוואָרן, זאָג איך, פֿון אַ גרויסער סכנה ?״ ״ (״חוה״, ז׳270)

Humor is the other way through which Tevye manages to cope with reality. He makes the following humorous remark instead of directly expressing deep disappointment about his

prospective son-in-law:

„אַזוי ? גאָטס וווּנדער ! - זאָג איך - טאַקע זייער אַ פײַן בחורל, כּילעבן ! צום העמדל, וואָס ער גייט איבער די הויזן, מיט די לאַנגע האָר, ווען גאָט העלפט אים נאָך אַ האַרמאָניע, אָדער אַ הונט זאָל אים נאָכלויפן פון הינטן, דעמאָלט האָט דאָס שוין גאָר דעם זיבעטן חן ! " ("האָדל", ז' 272)

The ultimate sign of Tevye's linguistic uniqueness is his use of traditional sources. While women do not quote any authority at all but rather refer to their urgent earthly needs, and Hodl quotes ideology but not Jewish tradition, Tevye finds in the text of tradition as a whole a framework to interpret reality, to cope with it and to find consolation when the old forms seemed to be crumbling.

In order to cope with Hodl's departure to Siberia after Fefer| the atheist stand of the couple's socialist ideology notwithstanding, Tevye puts his daughter's behavior and his own sorrow in a Biblical framework:

„איך זע ארויס, זאָג איך, טאָכטער מײַנע, אַז דו ביסט מקיים, ווי אין דער הייליקער תורה שטייט געשריבן : *על כן יעזוב* - וואַרפסט אַוועק, זאָג איך, צוליב אַ פעפערל, טאַטע-מאַמע, זאָג איך, און לאָזט זיך אַוועק אין אַן אָרטת טטאָס מע ווייס ניט ווו, ערגעץ אין די מדבריות..." ("האָדל", ז' 277)

In a similar way Tevye prepares himself to narrate the painful disgrace of Chava's behavior:

"*הודו לה' כי טוב* -ווי אַזוי גאָט פירט, אַזוי איז גוט"

"דער אייבערשטער האָט אונדז געגעבן צער-גדול-בנים, איז די טײַטש : פון קינדער האָט מען צרות און מע מוז דאָס אָננעמען פאַר ליב."

And only communal rituals and old familiar words enable Tevye to face the pain caused by Chava:

"...לאָמיר זיך אַוועקזעצן שבעה, אַזוי ווי גאָט האָט געבאָטן, *ה' נתן ה' לקח* - מיר זײַנען ניט די ערשטע, מיר זײַנען ניט די לעצטע." ("חוה", ז' 293)

But tradition also provides Tevye with material to confront daily and less dramatic issues, as shown by this ironically humorous interpretation of the Biblical verse adorned with a play on words ("...גאָט האָט געוואָלט אַ טובה טאָן טביהן..."):

"*רצה הקדוש ברוך הוא לזכות* - גאָט האָט געוואָלט אַ טובה טאָן טביהן, גייט ער און בענטשט אים מיט זיבן קינדער נקבות, טעכטער הייסט עס, אַלע אויסגעשפילטע, געראָטענע, קלוגע און שיינע, פרישע, געזונטע, איך זאָג אײַך - סאָסנעס " ("חוה", ז' 284)

* This strikes me as untrue. Tevye's ironic usage of prooftexts is an implicit challenge to the absolute authority of received wisdom. Sheyne - Sheyndl is never so bold or playful, probably because her personality is more rigid, her position more vulnerable than Tevye's.

Sheyndl makes a similar use of quotations although she obviously reports to another source, her mother. Like Tevye, Sheyndl brings the authoritative statements within her discourse without ever challenging them. While Tevye's sacred texts serve him in his quest for comfort by enabling him to imagine a more predictible reality, the rules of Sheyndl's mother exude bitterness and inexorable pessimism. Unlike the comforting and soothing effect of Tevye's quotations, the credo of Sheyndl's mother serves to further inflame her reactions.

Sheyndl's speech includes the quotations based on more or less fixed paradigms. According to one model, Sheyndl tells the story and sets the case, and finally uses her mother's saying as its prooftext. For example:

״...זי האָט געהאַט א צווילינג. דאָס צווילינג לעבט, און זי איז געשטאָרבן...ווי זאָגט די מאַמע : ,,גאָט איז אַ גרויסער צו-להכעיסניק״ ״ (״פּאַפּירלעך״, בריוו ח׳)

״און וואָס איז דאָס פאַר אַ משוגענער דאָרטן באַ אַייך אין אַדעס, טאָס סע חלומט זיך אים, אַז מע שיסט, געשאָסן זאָל ער ווערן פון גאָט ? מלחמות גלוסט זיך אים. ווי זאָגט די נאַנע, ,,לענעטמס בלוט איז באַ אים וואַסער״...״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו ח׳)

The quote is also used in order to provide advice. When Sheyndl has to feign calmness before her neighbors despite her bitter situation, she claims to follow her mother's saying

״אַ קניפּ אין באַק, די פאַרב זאָל שטיין״ (״פּאַפּירלעך״, בריוו ד׳)

With regard to Brayndl's preference for local charlatans, this scandal is settled by her mother's advice:

״גלייַכער מיט אַ היימישער גנב, אַדער מיט אַ פרעמדער רבי״ (״מיליאָנען״, בריוו ד׳)

In a second model that contextualizes the quotations, Sheyndl quotes her mother and then proceeds with the story that proves how the facts confirm and therefore legitimize the opening authoritative statement. For instance:

״די מאַמע זאָל לעבן - אירע ווערטער מעג מען פאַרשרייַבן : ,,אַ קראַנקער, זאָגט זי, וועט געזונט ווערן,אַ

שכור וועט זיך אויסניכטערן, אַ שוואַרצער וועט ווייַס ווערן, און אַ נאַר וועט בלייַבן אַ נאַר״...גייסטו
אף דער עלטער און פאַרשטעלסט זיך פאַר אַ מאַרשאַליק ! ״

(״אַ בכבודיקע פרנסה״, בריוו ב׳)

An additional example of the second model opens Sheyndl's story about the rumor of Menakhem-Mendl leaving for America that her sister-in-law spread widely:

״אַז פון אַ חזירישן עק, זאָגט די מאַמע, קען מען קיין שטרייַמל נישט מאַכן״ (״פּאַפּירלעך״, בריוו ח׳)

There is one distinctive effect of Sheyndl's speech that differentiates it from Tevye's language of quotations. While Tevye's sources are easily identifiable as such, sometimes Sheyndl's speech and her mother's get mixed and confused; so much so that it becomes hard to identify whose voice it is.

The two voices of mother and daughter seem to intermix when Sheyndl refers to Mendl in the third person. In those phrases the effect of the reading is that Sheyndl is either talking to her mother about her husband, or quoting her mother talking about her son-in-law, or talking to herself in her mother's voice which Sheyndl had internalized and appropriated. These examples attempt to recreate women's discourse in any of the variations mentioned:

merged quotation

״...איך שלאָף נישט קיין נעכט, און ער טרינקט דאָרטן קובעבע מיט לאַקריץ ! וואָס גייט אים אָפּ...ער
האָט זיך אַ ביסל צעהעצקעט ! יען אַדעס וויל ער מיך ארויסנעמען ! ער מיינט, אז ער וועט מיר זאָגן
אַדעס, פלי איך באַלד ! הערסטו, מענדל...״ (״לאָנדאָן״, בריוו י׳)

״איך דאַרף האָבן צו טאָן מיט זייַנע קינדער, מיט דאָקטוירים, מיט רוחות און מיט שד, און ער, דער
גאָלדשפּינער, גאָרנישט...״ (״פּאַפּירלעך״, בריוו ד׳)

In contrast, Tevye makes a point of distinguishing his own speech from the venerated sources and furthermore indulges in echoing the voice of tradition to legitimize his own.

very important difference

Conclusion

These two works by Sholem Aleichem have similar themes and textual strategies. Mendl's unsuccessful jobs spell out the three subject matters of **Menakhem-Mendl**: market

(trader), language (writer) and relationships, between male-female and families (matchmaker). Tevye Der Mylkhiker deals with similar issues: the impact of the big, modern world, the ability of language to explain reality and to reach understanding with opposite world views, and the crisis of human relationships.

The most interesting aspect with regard to the issue of language is that the most elaborate characters in both works achieve this rank not mainly because of the story line (especially Sheyndl, whose life is far less boring than Mendl's) but through their linguistic development. Sheyndl and Tevye's common strategy of mediating reality through texts reveals their need for a reliable and stable framework in the face of threats to the insulated world of the *Shtetl*. They use the artillery of language to defend their endangered fortress. The gimmicks of a language of quotations point to increasing tension between the new and the old world.

A language of quotations that stands for the traditional reassuring world proves successful only in the literary realm, providing highly sophisticated and enjoyable speech. However, Sholem Aleichem seems to suggest, and may have foreseen, the ultimate inefficiency of this strategy: except for the readers, the of holders of tradition are eventually left without interlocutors.

[1] שלום עליכם, **מנחם-מענדל**, 1892-1909, **אלע ווערק פון שלום עליכם**, איקוף פארלאג, באנד III, בוענאס איירעס, 1952.

[2] שלום עליכם, **טוביה דער מילכיקער**,1895-1914, **אלע ווערק פון שלום עליכם**, איקוף פארלאג, באנד III, בוענאס איירעס, 1952.

This is an extremely sophisticated & innovative analysis. Were you to incorporate previous scholarship, it would be a publishable piece.