

- the Aristotelian fallacy in Yiddish criticism:
- Yiddish lit seen as recreating a part of Jewish reality; lit. on the backdrop of history

① Yiddish lit = anti-shtetl stance

- the example of Bashevis who was formed on Krochmalna Street: alphonoes and hasidim rubbed shoulders
- to understand the drama of his prose, unless we see the tension between holiness and profanity
- this is a new phenomenon!
- the Rebbe in Krochmalna, not in Chelm

- Terye is an anti-shtetl type
- metonymically combined with the forest
- Motel can never return to the shtetl

- Fishke's world - a world of anonymity
- convention of false identity: who is Beyle
- Alter Yaknehoz knows nothing about her
- cf Eugene Sue - type of abandonment
- no shtetl here!
- Hershel loses his identity as soon as he leaves for Ghyysk
- וויסן can get after him because he is not known
- Beyle in an "international" brothel

- Asch: as soon as he began to write novels, he too had to turn to cities, underworld, East River etc.

② Shtetl = a criterion to measure the non-shtetl experience of the modern Jew

- whenever the novel is approached, the shtetl can be used only as a starting point, but not as a realm of self-sufficient reality
- with the possible exception of Bergelson
- family sagas make a point of dissociating themselves from the shtetl right from the start,

- eg: 'סגולת פרי' '3 begins with a history of the Jewish pop. of Lodz - it is a new community with no traditions
- Lodz lacks: a graveyard, the basic sign of "קברות"
- no mikveh - they used the river, even in winter
- the neighbouring medieval town of פ'לג'רס has a cemetery but is providing scum labour to the Lodz garment industry

קבלן שחולן '3 : complete lack of spiritual contact between the parts of N. [Berditshev]

- וכן רחוקות '3 only works in the centre, but is otherwise alienated from it.

הצע הצע, הצע לך /k - the young revolutionaries came back to the shtetl to die

- of Gnessin's heroes who most influenced Bergelson
- this is what happens in פרי'3 נ"א
- we must presume that most of the projected 5 vols. would take place in Kiev, Berlin, Paris

- shtetl always associated with a feudal economy
- i.e., not with Russians but with Polish nobility
- shtetl as static backdrop to the changing times
- no longer the centre of interest

- where is the huge Greek Orthodox church in S-A's Voronezh?
- his brother describes it, but S-A does not in פרי'3 נ"א or anyone else
- his world is a real "הולך רגל"
- in פרי'3 נ"א there are foreign elements who will destroy the fabric of Jewish life
- usually you have a picture of a saturated Jewish place which is inundated with נ"א, on Mondays & Thurs.

* - the shtetl is a literary construct, an image

- movement between inn as a forum and the Ral-Shem's private room (dialogue)
- the inn scenes have many characters

VII Closing statement 26-27

- the room scenes are comic dialogues; can easily be staged
- the inn scenes depend more on omniscient author and his descriptive devices; actions themselves are not funny. (cf p. 2; pointed lang: $\text{על-פניו} / \text{כ} / \text{ש} / \text{נ} / \text{ז} / \text{ש} / \text{נ} / \text{ז}$)

The question of Dik's footnotes

1. influence of Hebrew periodicals
 2. German models
- 1st version of פרישע/ן of ש contains a definite dig at Dik's nonsensical notes; could also be against Zederbaum
 - Dik balances comic scenic technique of swindler; his victims plus description of public hysteria
 - slow moving $\text{ש} / \text{ש} / \text{ש} / \text{ש}$ \leftrightarrow inn (stock exchange where excitement is being bought and sold)
 - town vs. room; general excitement vs. dialogue
 - this technique will be used by all the comic writers.
 - foolishness conveyed by movement
 - the sin of exaggerated response
 - this builds up almost to the breaking point and then fizzles out
 - Melamed & Itzan = initial barrier to the excitement, which, when overcome, rushes onward to new heights
 - a product of extreme provinciality

Sexual Promiscuity

1. Maskilic convention
 2. Anti-religious European convention
- where life does not move, you have exaggerated, comic movement; centripetal movement, real life is elsewhere

ABRAMOVITSH

- saw סדרת עירייה as a history of the Jewish Pale
 - not artificial
 - $\text{העירייה היא לא מלאכה, אלא חיים}$
- planned a magnum opus to portray Jewish life from 1830-80.
- conscious that he was constructing images
- not symbolic but representative shtetlekh

- CRITICS - Frischman misunderstood; claimed Abram. gave a total picture like a 17th cent. Flemish painter who didn't leave out a fly.
- Kariv's critique is a valid criticism of the critics, not of Abramovitch.

"העירייה - תולדותיה", מנחם נדב

- Zemach's attack published immediately after Abram. death
- felt that Abram. wrote in tradition of picaresque novel, a reaction against romance, with its high manners and phoney heroism (Sorbonne school).
- there must come an author who combats this with extreme positivism
- Abram. knew nothing about the spirit, said Zemach
- Hebrew lit. should move on from "העירייה", ethnographic detail to the psychological novel
- saw Abram. as a block to Hebrew fiction.
- the prisoner in prison without his soul

PLACE NAMES

Tuneyadev = idler, bum

- a Haskalah convention: Hebrew decorum
- העירייה , העירייה , העירייה , העירייה , העירייה - העירייה , העירייה , העירייה , העירייה
- העירייה (1862) Glupsk (1864: "העירייה"); Kaptzansk (1865 ע"י "העירייה")
- העירייה (1868) Zalmona has a street of giants העירייה and Emek ahor [the Valley of Akhan's looting] (1862)
- The street of giants = rich street
- Valley of Undoing = place of squalour, \rightarrow העירייה in later version
- all names must be Hebrew, preferably biblical.
- Abram. retained this purity while putting the name to satiric use.
- העירייה referred to Kremenets his birth-place as העירייה
- העירייה - העירייה = Tsvuyatskets = valley of hyenas
- Russian literature also did this

Kaptsiel - Kaptsansk 1865, 1888 ff.

5821'500/11

- typical BILDUNGSROMAN

KÜNSTLERROMAN (youth of the artist)

ENTWICKLUNGSROMAN

ERZIEHUNGSROMAN (formal education)

// Harvard English Studies vol. 1.

- Kaptsank ethos is so unified & strong that all children are raped and shaped by it.
- the place thru the consciousness of a protagonist
- no where else in Abram.'s works do we see this

POINT OF VIEW

1865 Version - told in first person by Hershele Ratman in Germanized style after a preface by Mendele

- to be used as an introduction to a textbook for Natural History

ה'תקס"ה ה'תקס"ו

- a popular description of the whale: part of projected Yiddish zoology; the only extant fragment
- Ratman, educated in Leipzig was supposed to be the author of the text book.
- catch the imagination of the audience educated, as Hershele was, on proba - אלו, with the promise of a magic ring
- later they would discover that the real magic ring = science
- don't wait for miracles / messiah - live a natural life in nature

1888 Version - also an introduction

- to a kind of Judenstadt on the problems of Jewish life after the pogroms.

- prologue (later: epilogue) = meeting between Mendele & Ratman

- latter sends him the real Vintshfingerl, the system to change Jewish life

- not merely educational but political

- second unit = novel, autobiography

H = short passages said to be quoted from original ms. by Hershele; referred to as "ה'תקס"ו", at end of Tsipe-Sose ~~the~~ episode. Explains this device in Prologue

Reb Shmelke episode

- mock-myth which ties the shtetl to the Jewish past
- ushpizin, Matisyahu → Matis, Lot, Elijah etc.
- Myth of the Birth of the Hero
- extra-marital intercourse is elevated into divine intervention
- Reb Yudel = great-grandson of Reb Shmelke
- the time of שבתה ש"ג = Shpder Zeyde ~ 1800
- myth of miraculous wealth as an indication of grace
- why on Purim? the holiday of paupers & of catharsis
- the pauper's dream (when all the men are gone)
- Hershele develops biologically, surviving strong child
- erotic connotations associated with his birth
- animal spirits - vitality
- but these spirits are destroyed by hunger
- cf Motel Peysi: biological assertion of life
- add to this the mythology of passivity that produces great change in him

CHAP VIII : sense of apocalypse under economic duress

- collective stream of unconsciousness
- everything deteriorates: historically valid
- the interpretation, however, is eschatological
 1. nothing can be done, the old order is gone
 2. must be the end of time
 3. ready to take up arms - remember food in world to come - world politics - Jewish capital (a natural transition in the Jewish mind) - then to Reb Yudel - finally - ש"ג ש"ג ש"ג
- ש"ג ש"ג ש"ג = the essence of their messianism
- Kaptansk cannot exist without divine intervention: ushpizin - magic ring - messiah
- messianism boils down to the ring
- since they won't fight for their living, it has to be provided for
- a frontal attack on Jewish spiritualism
- their separation from nature = grossest form of materialism.

CHAP ONE: Mendele is defending the honour of Kaptzansk

- I know what you're going to say, but I have a counter-argument ready.
- Writing for a reader who is denigrating Kaptzansk
- an economic list of Kaptzansk types ב'צ'נאָס
- Hebrew: Kaptzansk trades in human lives
- taken from Ezekiel's hymn to Tyre (30)
- וְכָל־עַבְדֵי־בַיִת end of 1st category: made a false start after marriage = stale goods
- 2nd category - still have money בִּסְפָּרָה אֵין אֵין אֵין
- 3rd category וְיֵשׁ לָהֶם כֶּסֶף - potpourri including Hershele's father; they have a אֵין
- women divided into two groups: the non-productive and the still productive
- finally עֲבָדֵי־כַף = manual labourers

- mock defense of Kaptzansk

1. they obey the first commandment

2. they have an economic system - for giving names!

- zoological analogue:

mother = hen

father = rooster

Hershele = colt

- incongruity between names and things

- no respect for the child after it is born but they haggle over his name

- PRIDE rests on their productivity, which is all they do

- divine grace of naming Adam while still in Paradise

- senseless reproduction; de-eroticised

- reversal in the love affair because Leyzer Yankel's falsetto voice was appraised for its potential economic worth; ostensibly practical choice which fell flat

CHAP. II is sentimental while CHAP. I is viciously satirical

- if you produce human beings as commodities they can be misused and abused

- these Jews weren't devoid of feeling

- there is family intimacy

- productivity which is inhuman vs. real human qualities
- humanity disassociated from more comprehensive responsibility.

CHAP III: Kaptsansk as Jerusalem

- "אין די שטאט פון קאפטאנסק ווען עס רעגט" or "אין די שטאט פון קאפטאנסק ווען עס רעגט"
- this of course is exactly true of Kaptsansk
- why does God give grain?
- they don't use the rain, it's only good for the goats!
- the grotesque commercial nature of their religion

Hebrew version plays off midrashic sources [CHAP I]

- legend of Jews coming to David asking how to make a livelihood
 - Live off each other.
 - But the hole can't be refilled with its own dirt
 - Then go out in military units and attack others.
- Abramowitz uses this: go out an attack Jewish towns - Glupsk.
- Khoni hamegel! נס תבנות נס תבנות
- the texts explode each other
- the Hebrew readers of *Nife* already knew the work in Yiddish; had to supply a new enjoyment

צוויי אה"ם — געווען נס

- another comparison between Yiddish & Hebrew
- "in the hiding place from thunder"
- celebrated description of Glupsk

עין ישראלי גענוג כסלון בעל פה פארט [אמת געזאגט דער]

A Jew walking

: אמת נאך

הבנאים גענוג [אלא תבן בחוקותיהם] אמת אים

upright infringes on Shechina

קומה קופערט [אבחוזה כלפי שמים] אלא הם שמים, ו'ע

Ktuvat: In Palestine

הם גם כפופים וצוותיהם כפופים בקרב [אלא נתן ולא]

they wouldn't paint the bride

לקן [אלא כנכוס] וצוותיהם, [כי לקי האן והם היופי] ואינו

and still she would be beautiful

Psalms: the merit of a princess is within

שְׁנֵי בַּפֶּסֶס בְּרוּסָה אֶתְּ [כֵּן כְּבוֹדָה שֶׁל דִּינִית יְהוּדִי בְּנֵי מַה]

Isaiah: attack on foreigner

Psalms: I will use Moav as washing tub = revenge

שֶׁמֶ מִטְּבַל שׁוֹחֵחַנו וְסִיר = מַבְּרָא, [בְּרִי אֵימָה וְהַצְּעוּרֹת] כֵּן כִּטְו

wedge

מְכַלִּי מַמְצֵחַ וְדָד כֵּן גִּיט הַמַּעַשְׂלוֹת וְהַמִּטְּבָּל עִם [הַיָּמִינִי]

the whole kingdom stands on this wedge

הַתְּקוּעָה בְּאֵל

א biblical complaint, here - praiseworthy
a Biblical vindication of their malpractice
= godly behavior, he who stands
straight not to reduce God's eminence

אָזַע = self-abnegation

אָזַע = an ideal Jewish bride; no cosmetics [... nevertheless, a beautiful girl].

- but Abram goes on to say: beauty is falsehood
- antithesis between beauty & econ. considerations
- אָזַע = princess, her beauties are within → the washing tub thrown on Moabites, excrement slopped on the rich boor

- Glupsk is measured by criteria of absolute holiness
- Glupsk = city of God אֶרֶץ הַקֹּדֶשׁ
- sacrilegious satire
- 3000 yrs of tradition being molested

- description of Glupsk in 1912 afternoon
- Hebrew reference to God showing His behind to Moses
- Mendell: I will put you, readers, in this place [the left of the rock] so that the people of Glupsk may pass before you and you shall see them from both sides

- אֲזַע-אֲזַע אֲזַע אֲזַע אֲזַע אֲזַע אֲזַע אֲזַע אֲזַע אֲזַע אֲזַע
- the sun had a sheath, we never see the real sun
- only once, Wed-Sat on the first week of creation was the sun completely bare, new
- will only be uncovered when מֵשִׁיחַ comes

- וְיָבֵשׁוּ הַיָּם 1160 - an exact reference to Jerusalem
- then takes a messianic passage from Isaiah to describe the drying up of the streets of Glupsk in the summer
- equated with the drying of the Red Sea
- וְיָבֵשׁוּ vision of Jerusalem being filled with people after the exile = Glupsk ~~th~~ crowded streets.
- thus, the whole description is a parody of the coming of messiah
- when translating from Yiddish into Hebrew, he compensated for the lack of vernacular with allusions galore
- gave it a new thrust
- וְיָבֵשׁוּ הַיָּם is a hilarious discussion of ideologies which equates them with Karaitism, Sabbatarianism and other antinomian movements
- drew out the totality of cultural inheritance
- cf Perl's two versions of וְיָבֵשׁוּ הַיָּם
- the Yiddish version is super-idiomatic to compensate for the mutilated Hebrew text
- he, of course, didn't idolize. idiom as we do
- idiomatic expression was considered gross, using lang. at its lowest level

COLLECTIVE MONOLOGUE

45-47

Scene: Summer night in Kaptzanssk

1. Women about food, earthy
2. Men about God, universe

Joshua = the man in the moon

3. Development: stars are like וְיָבֵשׁוּ or #

וְיָבֵשׁוּ 1162

וְיָבֵשׁוּ הַיָּם

וְיָבֵשׁוּ הַיָּם

וְיָבֵשׁוּ 1113

וְיָבֵשׁוּ הַיָּם

"וְיָבֵשׁוּ הַיָּם" , וְיָבֵשׁוּ אִלֶּכ

3 אָקט II סטענענדיג

- satire delivered by Hershele
- פּאָלעזאָניק אַרױס אַ סאַטיר : "epic list" of inhabitants
- what new element is added here?
- a pathetic quality ; Hershele leaving behind his childhood
- going to sell themselves
- a deformed world which is paying the price for its deformity
אָפּגעצױגן אַרױס אַ פּאַטאַנאַט פּאַר פּאַר אַ פּאַטאַנאַט פּאַר אַ פּאַטאַנאַט אַ פּאַטאַנאַט אַ פּאַטאַנאַט
- what is lost :
total intimacy : the whole shtetl = one big bedroom
coherence , own values
- can express this intimacy only by wishing, their patterned response
- have no notion of how to live as individuals

Abramovitch's View of the Shtetl:

1. world of false values : religion as cop-out
 2. a real world, nonetheless
- grotesque picture with implicit sentimentality
 - a mountain of people piled onto a wagon in a Chagallian setting, don't catch cold because of the density
 - Book I : mainly summer
 - Book II : autumn
come next week! א'ס אַרױס, א'ס אַרױס = 'אַ - 'אַ
 - אַרױס אַרױס אַרױס אַרױס אַרױס : an outrage! you have to eat!
 - once more a comparison between animals & Kaptsansk
 - the birds going South = Kaptsansk must be abandoned
 - it's a [pathetic] law of nature.

THE KAPTSANSK UNIT

I CHAPS 1-2 : the main argument

- the meaning of Kaptsansk is its economic function
- to produce people
- the Tsipe - Sose episode as a case in point

(4)

II CHAPS 3-5 : Hershele in the state of nature (18th cent)

- culture is present in father, but still superficial
- chap. on Moyse - Yose meant as a satire on אַרױס - אַרױס

[Bal-toyve institution grew in stature when Kahal fell apart in 19th cent. Ostensibly disinterested position.] Had monopoly on meat.
פיר-מדינה

- III Chaps. 5-7 : the change
 - how natural man is molded into Kaptzamsker
 - hunger
 - Jewish child → יתום-א"י without a beard
 - Reb Shmelke
 - אדוק לדין

- IV Chaps. 8/9 : consequences
 - Hershele becomes a dreamer

- V BK II, 1-3 conclusion
 - Kaptzamsk left behind
 - all this leads to exile

II, IV show how environment forms individual
- Hershele at first opposed to shtetl, then influenced and finally as a victim.

טוונע'אדלעוווקע

- only one mention previous to Masochs — דופק'ס
- Gedalie Pikhols, the cynic, derides Shloyme Veker
- no connection to our shtetl

- Fishke : Alter Yaknehoz comes from there
- in a posthumously published work [1941], an exchange of letters from Kaptzamsk — Tuncyadevke
- between Mendele & Alter

פיר-דערצוין י"א י"א ג"ב זיך דערצוין

זיך דערצוין י"א י"א ג"ב זיך דערצוין

(אויף-לייבליך) און דע ליב-און = זיך דערצוין י"א י"א ג"ב זיך דערצוין

Abramovitch's Self-Censorship

- in Jubilee edition, deleted all venomous attacks on Hasidim
- also omits the passage on death/takse in Hebrew version

Points of View

- Binyomin has lost his innocence but by changing the point of view, we see him still in his naivete.

Tuneyadevke - Kaptsansk

- the men are feminized
- have no economic function
- both Binyomin & Sender don't work
- Sender is even sexually non-functional
- both Binyomin & Hershele now know better
- both saw their shtetl as centre of world

פ'יג'ב'פ'פ'פ'פ'

Differences

1. Tuneyadevke is sexless / frenetic sex-life in Kaptsansk
2. Tuneyadevke is a mock פ'פ'פ' town; can only exist within this framework
3. disaster cannot happen here, no hunger
Before the Fall - Eden
4. Nakedness: the torn kapotes.
cf. the preface to פ'פ'פ' where Hirsh Ratman comes to Tuney. dressed to the teeth and Mendele comments, here we all go around in פ'פ'פ' vs פ'פ'פ'
- ⑤ The town of eternal summer
the Rabbi in the river
the river dries up from the heat

פ'פ'פ' / פ'פ'פ' פ'פ'פ'

// hasidic habit of men walking around open-chested

פ'פ'פ'פ' ; misnagdim walked around all buttoned up

6. The verdant forest outside the town
lush vegetation; vast expanses of open country
Binyomin brought back in a cornucopia
primeval, mock-paradisical nature

7. Binyomin's departure = heroic feat / Kaptansk :
an everyday occurrence, produces but cannot contain / Tuneyadevke is totally self-contained -
- only an educated hero can leave it.
- you have to transcend Tuneyadevke
8. Poverty - happiness / poverty - pride

- $\gamma\sigma\prime\lambda\gamma\sigma\ \sigma\prime\lambda\gamma\ \mu\lambda\gamma\ \lambda\lambda\gamma\sigma\ \nu\prime\lambda\gamma\ \mu\sigma$
- the unimportant events became seminal for Binyomin
- pseudo-logic
- their messianism is trivial while in Kaptansk this same messianism is tragic.
- Binyomin is a great adventurer, his task is to make the world known
- therefore distance doesn't exist for him

Binyomin's Geographical Destination

- not $\lambda\kappa\gamma\sigma\prime\lambda\gamma\sigma$ except that it personifies the distant place; equated with legendary creatures
- Lord Beaconsfield, a great Jewish hero
- British imperialism, Disraeli bought the Suez Canal exactly when book is being written 1878
- mystique of geographical exploration
- remember that Abramovitch translated Jules Verne
- thought of it as an excellent way of teaching geography

* $\lambda\kappa\gamma\sigma\prime\lambda\gamma\sigma\ \epsilon\lambda\gamma\prime\lambda\gamma\sigma$ measures Jewish deficiency on background of Russian capitalism while

* $\lambda\lambda\gamma\sigma$ measures Jewish immobility against European expansionism

- may explain why he deleted the passage on $\gamma\sigma\prime\lambda\gamma\sigma$?

- Binyomin is the centre of the myth while Hershele grows beyond it.

ON"K 23, n'fe

- written for 31' 273, Russian Zionist weekly
- written almost at the same time in Hebrew
- called the town 27123, but later changed it to .p and even refers to it as Y'123p.

- the only work where there is an encounter between man & God
- not magic
- considered by many critics the greatest of his works, except for the Soviet critics

reasons for critical acclaim

- 1) changed attitude to Jewish life
 - interesting, sympathetic characters
 - kheyder description is idealized
 - 2) called epic / lyric etc.
 - 3) Abramovitch's life as a progress toward pure art
 - pure painter in him won out
- n'3' n'fe used it as a proof that that Kaptzansk was not the real shtetl.

Differences:

- 1) No Mendele persona
- 2) Methodic ethnographic description - first time "we must preserve it for future generations"
- 3) No great attitude change however
 - horrible description of Slutsk Yeshiva in Bk II
 - even kheyder description is indirect satire, since it is so atypical
 - young man has nothing to do in the shtetl
- 4) Artificial structural links between chapters
 - vignettes of beautiful description
 - obviously contrived connections
 - a) ethnographic thread: static aspect
 - b) historical thread
 - c) biography of Shloymele's consciousness

- only historical references in his works
 - Moses Montifiore
 - ד'בראשית ח"ט
 - reference to Lillienthal
 - אברהם יחיאל'ס : marriage of Reb Khayim 1827
- where, oh where is the structural coherence of old?
- the framework is still the same, a boy growing up in a self-contained town who is forced to leave
- this is not falsification as the Soviet critics argued
- Abramovitch lost his maskilic vision

// Stanley Hyman The Tangled Bank treats Freud, Darwin, Marx, Frazer as works of art

- ethnography inimical to artistry
- Abramovitch's movement from home, to school, to ritual is bad ethnography and questionable art
- Glupsk was presented as pseudo-ethnography
- what do the Glupsker eat?
- just look into the bog!
- followed by pseudo-archeology and mythology
- leads logically to the scene of Binyomin seeing the mermaids.
- in אברהם יחיאל'ס there is no unified statement on Jewish life.

- animal comparisons is continuous
- in intro. - decisions are made by the species, not the individual.
- general conception is zoological
- not as artistically functional as before

פּרעט: די צווייטע טייל - די צווייטע

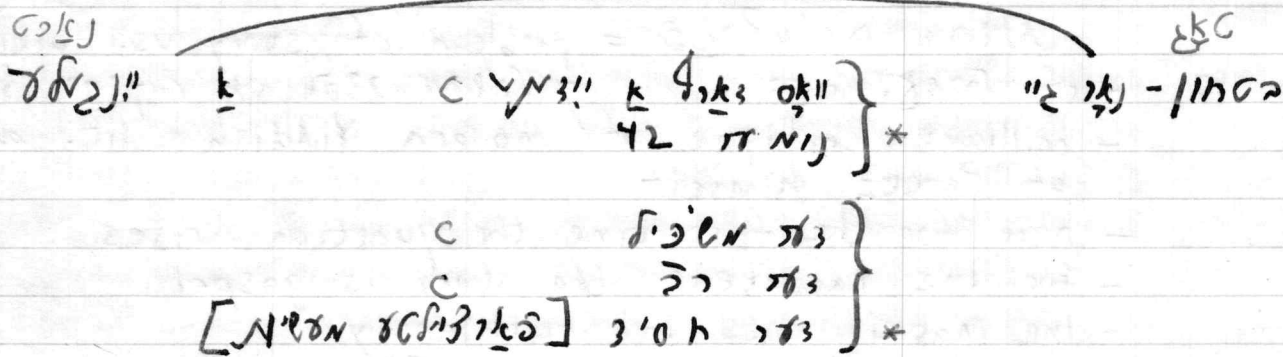
- first major piece of prose fiction in Yiddish
- 1891 real beginning of his 'true' prose style
- Miron questions the accepted notion of Peretz's rise and fall
- considers 'Bilder' to be his best work

FORM

- critic accepted Peretz's trick of presenting a casual reportage.
- actually, the structure is exceptionally sound
- perhaps the last unit is a bit shaky
- in the Hebrew version he omitted last 2 chaps.
- די צווייטע טייל is a typical puente point-of-view story
- build up the suspense and end with a twist

I Tishivits Unit: א-ב

- family of a widower
- chap. 9 refers us back to 2-3
- family = framework
- 2 stories about houses 42 טעם, און אין אין אין



C character sketch

* tragic tales about breakup of a family, told by a raconteur, not by reporter

- he introduces an intriguing story to break up the string of character sketches
- contrasts between 3 major intellectual forces in shtetl
- khosid is such a believer that he is willing to forfeit his livelihood
- contrast between empty house & no. 42

- old house metonymically represents the whole shtetl
- p. 125 image of a shell that is now much too big for its inhabitants
- once this house was full of children
- now the last inhabitant lives on nothing

Ironic contrasts

- aggressive stupid Maskil who almost destroys the whole mission ↔
- passive, cowardly Rabbi
- shtetl is so deadening that all roles loose their context
- the maskil has none of the zeal he once had & the rabbi has " " his authority
- Khosid is the only one who is at all sympathetic
- has been destroyed but is still a valuable asset
- the other two have no convictions
- the rabbi can be bent in any direction
- Kapote: metonymic symbol of a proud tradition gone threadbare

- p. 177
- of פּרעט'ס אָפּזאָג: *פרעט'ס אָפּזאָג* = problem of story vs. faith
 - brilliant critique of modern Yiddish lit. and of Peretz himself
 - here, for the first time the question arises
 - for the raconteur, the story is gospel
 - the Maskil cuts in ruthlessly
 - whose side are we on?!
 - ambiguous role of the writer
 - he, as revitalizer of Jewish tradition is also an outsider
 - what am I doing, retelling these tales, isn't it a hoax?
 - Peretz, unlike his naive followers, uses this ambiguity in his work

The Classicists and the Shtetl

- all three are equally alienated
- Peretz is no less of an outsider than Hershele
- Abramovitch needed an intermediary
- Peretz explodes the persona
- wears a different mask in every story
- Yokhanan melamed, folksmentsh, reporter from Warsaw
- S-A persona gives coherence to the narrative voices of the monologues.
- why did Peretz break with the Persona School in 19th cent Yiddish fiction?
- Bider repeats the classic situation of the alienated, responsible Jew returning to the shtetl
- all the inherent ambiguities are brought to the surface
- whose narrative voice do we believe?
- day sequence: raw statistics without embellishment
- night sequence: 19th cent rationalistic stance of ~~nation~~ examination is untenable
- progression into night, dream, legend, madness
- science, statistics replaced by hallucination
- no other way to deal with the shtetl
- collecting numbers as a meaningless activity
- attacks the basic assumption of the mission
of the VOIC 's is the logical conclusion

fathers ambivalent 111562 → daughters → boy

II Chaps 10-15 : Mock Idyll [Lashtsiou]

- Yartsiewer Rov: satisfied with everything
- Skuler Rebetsin: lives totally in the past
- more relaxed rhythm
- the difference between Kaptsansk & Tuniedevke
- typical animal metonymies of Abramovitch
- Eve's house - a house of plenty
- this plenty is part of the decay
- ironic contrast to the beggar woman's room
- Skuler Rebetsin: aristocratic widow

- 2 interviews

Chap. 12 : cf. Tuniadevke interview in NITON

Chap. 13 : exercise in comedy ; she doesn't want to tell him anything but does Senderl di yidene situation.

Chap. 10 : the rabbi is happy because the town is empty ; can sit and study

- cf. teeming streets of Tishevits

- Tishevits'er Rabbi : sour man, tense relations with community

Yartsiever Rabbi : couldn't be happier

- neither is a real rabbi, leader

- Yartsiever Rabbi takes אנש' נרמ to its logical absurd - now he can live with the ר'סו

- two versions of rabbinic authority gone bankrupt

- metonymic device of animals who live in blissful ignorance but are destined to die soon

III Chops. 16-19

- more pervasive night element

- cf. Agnon's cycle of Polin tales : there the context is natural : this is the place for Jews to sojourn until מ'ל'נ comes

- even Polish landscape, by implication, has been Judaized

- Peretz's way of showing the depth of Polish Jewry

- a realistic statistical account is meaningless

- here the reportage breaks down and hallucination takes over

- allusion to the type of Jew for whom knowledge is divorced from נ'ר'נ'ן נ'ר'נ'ן, whom any wind can blow over

- statistical mission was supposed to disprove the rumours of Jewish criminality

- Peretz recognizes the invalidity of this stance

ר'י'ק'ן א'ו'ח'י'ן ר'ב'ק'ע - Peretz himself, and the Jew of grand, aristocratic past who must resort to crime

- tragic contrast : the man who made good who burned down his own wealth
- counterpointed to mock-idyll of Unit II
- the lowly Jew who is now a petty bootlegger comes from a grand past → how low he has fallen!
- chap 17 : the tone is half legendary
- Polish Jew : a bird without wings waiting to be fed on
 נִיבֵּל נֶאֱרָא = redemption

2 character sketches :

chap. 18 : brings us back to reality : נִיבֵּל / 2 גִּיט
 נִיבֵּל / 10 גִּיט
 he returned for the sake of the landscape

chap. 19 : a sane conversation of insanity
 he shrieks like a rooster three times a day
 because he has to eat!

chap. 20 : poet himself on the verge of insanity
 series reaches its climax
 telegraphic, non-literary jottings

chap. 21 : must return to a more relaxed narrative tone

- chap 22 : brings series to a conclusion
 nature itself is so impoverished
- different levels of myth & reality connected by hidden links
 - the end of a great culture

MYTH

Abramovitch

incorporates the myth into the structure

S-A

does the same with the treasure

Peretz

will indulge himself in the myth itself; here they are separate

Bergelson

couldn't care less about the myth

- eventually the choice will be made between Asch & Bergelson

Narrator introduces himself in chap. 13

- at that time the story-teller accepts the norms of the apikoris
- polarity of bes-medresh for men & theory and the home where the theory is borne out

- 1) avowed ethnographic purpose
- 2) unrelated vignettes and stories
- 3) satiric purpose: Jew = turkey, too stupid to shake its head and get rid of the straw
- 4) medieval pilpul turned on its head
- 5) carnival aspect of the house: nighttime promiscuity

- complicity between author & reader
- immense scholarship to tear down tradition
- Apikoris calls for reinterpretation of biblical sources
- ends with ~~the~~ mini-rebellion in shtetl

series of monologues; the shtetl as seen from the perspective of an old man

- tremendous energy of description, even in 2nd-rate writers; cf 18th English letters
- S-A had nothing to add to the female monologues in Shatzkes
- redundancy is meaningful, cumulative
 - < a. animal element: the ritual preparations for 102 all involve animals + they are also tormented like the husbands
 - b. series of victimizations
 - c. climax of 133NA oatmeal - pigs attack
 - < d. dictatorial matriarchal house - sexual life is hell in a poverty culture
 - < e. intellectual pleasure of men in Bes-medresh hearing interpretations of 171, 1-71
- 102-103 = ~~Jana~~ little sister with no breasts [means of sustenance] but with spiritual sustenance [towering breasts]. Attack on culture of holy poverty.

1. זצו האָט ז' אונזר קוויטבאָן קומט ז' אין אַסעס.
2. ז' אַסעס'עס פֿאַר זיך (אָק).
3. נג בנין האָט אַסעס קומט ז' אין זעט אַסעס'עס.
4. זעט יונג פֿאַרשפּאַרעט זעט קאַנג פֿונדא אומאס אַסעס'עס.
5. זעט יונג, ז' האָט אַסעס'עס אַסעס אַסעס'עס.
6. זעט האָט אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס = ז' אַסעס'עס.
7. זעט יונג " " " " אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס.
8. זעט אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס.
9. זעט יונג פֿאַר זיך זעט זאַנג אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס.
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27. זעט אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס.

CREDULITY IS A BUILT-IN COMMODITY

- > זאַל
1. Rivtsh's precedent in being aided by magic
 2. Easily fooled by outer trappings: זעט אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס
 3. זעט אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס אַסעס'עס [4]
 4. Everyone's loose morals hinted at → guilt

5. They have their own Rebl in whom they believe
6. The gentiles are also credulous
7. The biblical references.
8. The shtetl acts as a unit; public opinion sways the individual