

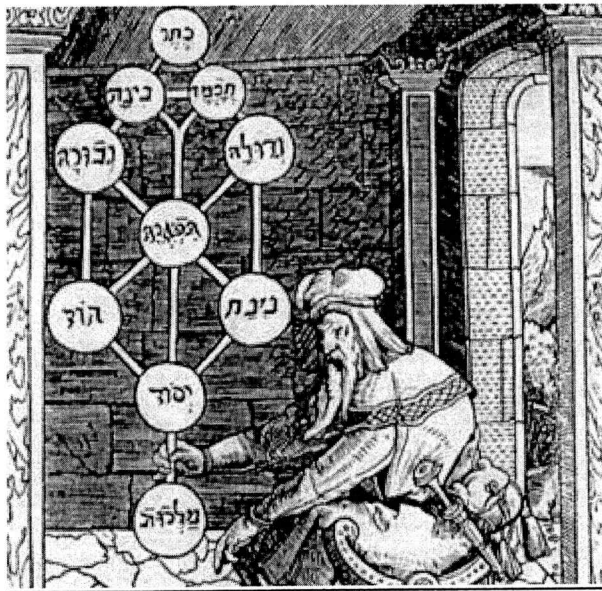
THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Fall 2017

Prof. David G. Roskies

LIT 5530x: **Demons, Dybbuks and the Problem of Evil in the Yiddish Literary Imagination,
1514-1981**

Tues/Th. 10:40-11:25



Course Description: Evil in classical Judaism is real, external, independent and metaphysical. In modern times there has been an opposite trend to see evil as allegory, metaphor, symbol, and as rooted in the psyche or society. Straddling the two poles are the masters of modern Yiddish fiction and drama: Reb Nahman, Abramovitsh-Mendele, I. L. Peretz, Sholem Aleichem, S. Ansky, I. B. Singer and Blume Lempel.

Course Goals: To explore how the powers of evil are both domesticated and vivified by means of story, drama and novel; to survey Yiddish literary culture from Hasidism through Modernism; to gain exposure to best practices of reading fantastical literature.

Course Objectives: To decode the Jewish demonic from early modern times until the present.

Expectations & Assessment:

- 1) A 10-12 pp. mid-term paper due on October 22nd, and a final paper, on Isaac Bashevis Singer, due date TBA. The midterm is worth 40% of the final grade and the final paper counts for the other 60%.
- 2) Students are responsible for all the readings, both primary and secondary. **All readings marked by an asterisk will be available on Canvas.**

Midterm Assignment: The gender politics of seduction. What makes women (of all ages) particularly susceptible to seduction? How do religious and other ideologies play into the drama? Compare and contrast two male-authored works.

The paper is due at noon on **Sunday, October 22**. Please submit the paper in WORD format only via Canvas.

Books:

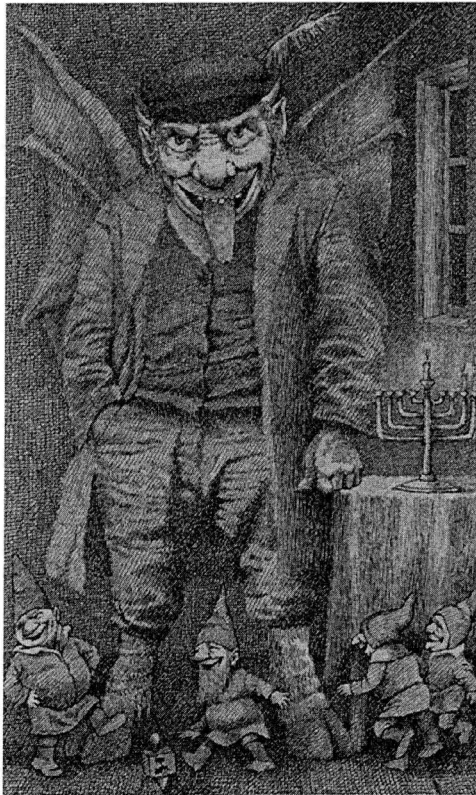
The dybbuk and the Yiddish imagination: A Haunted Reader / edited and translated from the Yiddish by Joachim Neugroschel. Syracuse University Press, 2000, pb. GR98 D93 2000
https://www.google.com/search?source=hp&q=the+dybbuk+and+the+yiddish+imagination+a+haunted+reader&oq=The+dybbuk+and+the+Yiddish+imagination&gs_l=psy-ab.1.1.0i22i30k112.6646.6646.0.9109.2.2.0.0.0.0.229.396.0j1j1.2.0...0...1.2.64.psy-ab..0.2.395.6..35i39k1.aEprxQbM4hY

Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Satan in Goray*, with an intro. by Ruth R. Wisse. FS&G. <https://www.amazon.com/Satan-Goray-Isaac-Bashevis-Singer/dp/0374524793>

Office Hours: Thursdays 1:00-3:00 in Unterberg 506, and may be contacted via e-mail (darsoskies@jtsa.edu).

The JTS policy on disabilities may be found at <http://my.jtsa.edu/ICS/Policies/Students with Disabilities.jnz>

Academic Integrity: Students in this class are expected to maintain academic integrity; academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. JTS Student Disciplinary Procedures can be found at <http://my.jtsa.edu/ICS/Policies/Student Disciplinary Procedures.jnz> JTS students are expected to bear sole responsibility for their work, to learn the rules and definitions that underlie the practice of academic integrity and to uphold its ideals.



Week of		TUESDAY		THURSDAY
Sept.	5	<p>Hitchhiker's Guide to the Jewish Netherworld Joshua Trachtenberg, <i>Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion</i> (NY, 1939), chaps. 3-4, 11. http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/jms/index.htm</p>	7	<p>Household Demons Mayse Worms / A Man Who Married a She-Wolf (1514); Jacob Ben Abraham of Mezritch - The Possession (1602) – Neugroschel *Dauber, <i>Demon's Bedroom</i>, ch. 4 *Goodblatt, Women, Demons, and the Rabbi's Son</p>
	12	<p>Household Demons The Tale of the Evil Spirit in Korets (1665) - Neugroschel Tsvi Hirsh Kaidonover - A Tale of Poznan (1706) – Neugroschel *Dauber, <i>Demon's Bedroom</i>, ch. 5 *Lüthi, "Aspects of the Märchen and the Legend"</p>	14	<p>Speak of the Devil Nahman ben Simha of Braslav –A Tale of the Lost Princess (1806); A Tale of a King and an Emperor (1807) – Neugroschel; *The Wise Man and the Simpleton (1809)–<i>The Tales</i> *Wiskind-Elper, pp. 115-40, 163-66. Roskies Podcast, Part One http://www.jtsa.edu/change-a-story-and-you-can-change-the-world</p>

	19	Speak of the Devil *S. Y. Abramovitsh (Mendele the Book Peddler) –The Mare, Part III(1873-1910)–Neugroschel, <i>Yenne Velt</i> *Wisse, The Jewish Intellectual and the Jews	21	Rosh Hashana – no classes
	26	The Psychology of Seduction I. L. Peretz–*A Passion for Clothes (1904) *Olrík - Epic Laws of Folk Narrative Roskies Podcast, Part Two.	28	The Psychology of Seduction I. L. Peretz–*A Pinch of Snuff (1906) *Roskies, <i>A Bridge of Longing</i> , 125-46
Oct.	3	Homegrown Evil Sholem Aleichem–The Haunted Tailor (1901) – Neugroschel *Roskies, <i>A Bridge of Longing</i> , pp. 160-66, 186-87	5	Sukkot – no classes
	10	Homegrown Evil *Sholem Aleichem –The Man from Buenos Aires *Miron, “Journey to the Twilight Zone”	12	Shemini Atzeret – no classes
	17	Demonic Romanticism S. An-ski, <i>The Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds</i> (1914-1917) – Neugroschel *Roskies, Intro. to <i>The Dybbuk & Other Writings</i>	19	Demonic Romanticism S. Ansky – A Letter to Khaim Zhitlovsky; [Sternberg & Ansky] from The Ethnographic Expedition The Grave of the Bride and Groom – Neugroschel
	24	Demonic Symbolism Der Nister –The Hermit and the Little Goat (1913) – Neugroschel *Hoge, “Andersens Mayselekh and Der Nister’s Symbolist Agenda” *Roskies, <i>A Bridge of Longing</i> , 193-201	26	Demonic Symbolism Der Nister–Demons (1918) – Neugroschel *Chambers, Story and situation
Nov.	10/ 31	Demonic Realism I. B. Singer – <i>Satan in Goray</i> (1933), Part I Wisse, Intro. to <i>Satan in Goray</i>	2	Demonic Realism <i>Satan in Goray</i> , Part II
	7	The Devil's Diary I I. B. Singer – *The Unseen *Problems of Yiddish Prose in America Roskies Podcast, Part Three	9	The Devil's Diary II I. B. Singer – *Zeydlus the Pope (1943) *Sherman, “Bashevis Singer and the Jewish Pope”;

				Seidman, <i>Faithful renderings</i> , 263-75
	21	American Fantastic I. B. Singer – *Alone (1960) *Tzvetan Todorov, <i>The Uncanny and the Miraculous</i>	23	Thanksgiving Recess
	28	American Fantastic I. B. Singer – *The Cafeteria (1968); *The Séance (1965) *The Lecture (1965)	30	Humor as Demonic I. B. Singer – *The Mirror (1956) Frieden, *I. B. Singer's Monologues of Demons
Dec.	5	Humor as Demonic I. B. Singer – *Mayse Tishevits / The Last Demon (1959) *Novershtern, "History, Messianism, and Apocalypse"	7	Traumatic Evil Blume Lempel - *Scenes on a Bare Canvas (1981) *Cassedy & Taub, Intro to <i>Oedipus in Brooklyn</i>



Bibliography & Additional Readings

S. An-ski, *The Dybbuk and other writings*; edited and with an introduction by David G. Roskies. New York: Schocken Books, 1992. PJ5129.A3.A55.A27 1992.

Delphine Bechtel, *Der Nister's Work, 1909-1929*. Berne : New York : P. Lang, 1990. PJ5129.A4.K27 .Z55.

Ross Chambers, *Story and situation: narrative seduction and the power of fiction*; foreword by Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Jeremy Asher Dauber. *In the demon's bedroom: Yiddish literature and the early modern*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. PJ5120.5 .D38 2010

Hugh Denman, ed. *Isaac Bashevis Singer: His Work and His World* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2002). PJ 5129 A4 S55 Z699.

Ken Frieden, "I. B. Singer's Monologues of Demons," *Prooftexts* 5 (1985): 263-68.

Chanita Goodblatt, "Women, Demons, and the Rabbi's Son: Narratology and 'A Story From Worms,'" *Exemplaria* 12:1 (2000), 231-253.

Kerstin Hoge, "Andersens *Mayselekh* and Der Nister's Symbolist Agenda," in *Uncovering the Hidden: The Works and Life of Der Nister*, edited by Gennady Estraiikh (Legenda Studies in Yiddish). Maney Publishing, 2014, pp. 41-54. PJ5129.A4 K27 Z8 2014.

Blume Lempel, *Oedipus in Brooklyn and Other Stories*, Selected, translated, and with an introduction by Ellen Cassedy and Yermiyahu Ahron Taub. Simsbury, Connecticut : Mandel Vilar Press ; Takoma Park, Maryland : Dryad Press, 2016. PJ5129.A4 L427 O4 2016

Max Lüthi, "Aspects of the *Märchen* and the Legend," in *Folklore Genres*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 17-33.

Dan Miron, "Journey to the Twilight Zone: On SA's Railroad Stories," *The Image of the Shtetl and other studies of modern Jewish literary imagination*. Syracuse, N.Y. : Syracuse University Press, 2000, chap. 7 PJ5129.A3 S5 Z7642.

Nahman of Bratslav, *The tales*; translation, intro., and commentaries by Arnold J. Band; pref. by Joseph Dan. New York: Paulist Press, c1978. BM532.N313 1978.

Joachim Neugroschel, ed. & trans. *The dybbuk and the Yiddish imagination: A Haunted Reader*. Syracuse University Press, 2000. GR98 D93 2000.

_____, *Yenne Velt: The Great Works of Jewish Fantasy & Occult*. New York: Stonehill Pub. Co., 1976. GR98 .Y4.

Avraham Novershtern, "History, Messianism, and Apocalypse in Bashevis's Work," *The hidden Isaac Bashevis Singer*, edited by Seth L. Wolitz. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001, chap. 3.

Axel Olrik, "Epic Laws of Folk Narrative" (1908) in *The Study of Folklore*, ed. by Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 129–41.

David G. Roskies, *A Bridge of Longing: The Lost Art of Yiddish Storytelling* (Harvard, 1995). PJ5124 R67 1995.

_____, "Change a Story and You Can Change the World." JTS Podcast, <http://www.jtsa.edu/change-a-story-and-you-can-change-the-world>

Seidman, Naomi. *Faithful renderings: Jewish-Christian differences and the politics of translation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. PJ5067 .S45 2006

Sherman, Joseph. *The Jewish Pope: myth, diaspora and Yiddish literature*. Oxford : European Humanities Research Centre, 2003. PJ5120 .S42 2003.

_____, "Bashevis/Singer and the Jewish Pope," in *The Hidden Isaac Bashevis Singer*, edited by Seth L. Wolitz. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001, chap. 2. PJ5129.A4 S55 Z695 2001
<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/1927>

Tzvetan Todorov, "The Uncanny and the Miraculous," in *The fantastic: a structural approach to a literary genre*; translated from the French by Richard Howard ; with a foreword by Robert Scholes. Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1975, chap. 3.

Ruth R. Wisse, "The Jewish Intellectual and the Jews: The Case of *Di Kliatshe* (The Mare) by Mendele Mocher Sforim" (San Francisco, 1992).

_____, "Introduction" to Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Satan in Goray*. FS&G. PJ5129.A4 S55 S5823 REF

Ora Wiskind-Elper, *Tradition and Fantasy in the Tales of Reb Nahman of Bratslav* (SUNY, 1998). BM532.W57 1998

