

Em 509
W 1:20-3:00

THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA

Fall 1988

Profs. Holtz & Roskies

Lit 7118x Modern Jewish Literature as a Key to Jewish Cultural History

Course objectives: The destruction of European Jewry and the establishment of the State of Israel have radically altered Jewish self-understanding. One measure of the change is the number of competing theories and critical approaches to the study of modern Jewish literature. This course will examine two historical schools of thought that have gained prominence since the Second World War: the internal approach that studies continuity and change in terms of Jewish politics, demography, linguistic behavior and reader response, and the more external approach that studies the formal aspects of Jewish writing within a cross-cultural framework. The attempt will then be made to arrive at a new synthetic understanding of Jewish cultural history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Requirements: One seminar paper that examines a literary journal (such as Hashiloah, Di yidishe velt, The Menorah Journal), a series of literary anthologies or a school of writers-and-artists in the light of the various approaches studied in class.

Aug. 31 Definition of terms (Roskies)

Sept. 7 Setting the Boundaries I: Sifrut Yisrael (Holtz)

דב סדן - מתוך "על ספרותנו: מסת מבוא" (1950)
דן מירון - "ספרויות חיחודים: שיבח אל המציאות", מתוך
אם לא / חיה ירושלים (הקיבוץ המאוחד, 1987), עמ' 143-162.

Background: Terry Eagleton - Literary Theory: An Introduction (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1983).

Sept. 14 Setting the Boundaries II: Polysystem theory (Roskies)

Itamar Even-Zohar - Papers in Historical Poetics (Tel Aviv: Porter Institute for Poetics & Semiotics, 1978).

Sept. 28 Literature & Ideology I: Zionism (Holtz)

Simon Halkin - Modern Hebrew Literature From the Enlightenment to the Birth of the State of Israel: Trends and Values (New York: Schocken, 1950)

דן מירון - "מיוצרים לבונים לבני בלי בית" (1985), מתוך
אם לא יחיה ירושלים, עמ' 89-11.

Oct. 5 Literature & Ideology II: Marxism

Raphael Mahler - Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment: Their Confrontation in Galicia and Poland in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century [1942](Phila.: JPS, 1985), chaps. 1-2, 6.

Marcus Klein - Foreigners: The Making of American Literature 1900-1940 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981), preface, chap. 5.

Ruth R. Wisse - "The Politics of Yiddish," Commentary (July 1985); "The New York (Jewish) Intellectuals," Commentary (Nov. 1987).

Mark Shechner - After the Revolution: Studies in the Contemporary Jewish-American Imagination (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1987), chap. 3.

Background: Marxism & Art: Writings in Aesthetics and Criticism, ed. Berel Lang & Forrest Williams (New York, Longman, 1972), part I.

Xerox

Oct. 12 Literature & Ideology III: Feminism (Holtz)

Esther Fuchs - Israeli Mythogynies: Women in Contemporary Hebrew Fiction (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), chaps. 1-2.

Nehama Aschkenazy - Eve's Journey: Feminine Images in Hebraic Literary Tradition (Phila.: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), chap. 1.

Background: Sandra M. Gilbert - "Literary Paternity" (1979) and Alice A. Jardine - "Gynesis" (1982), in Critical Theory Since 1965, ed. Hazard Adams & Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 485-96, 559-70.

Xerox

Lit 7118x /3

Oct. 19 Three Cultural Centers I: Odessa & the Odessa School (Holtz)

יעקב פיקמן - "עם ביאליק, " מתוך שירת ביאליק (ירושלים 1946), עמ' 229-237.

פישל לחובר - ביאליק: חייו ויצירותיו (ת"א, 1955), כרך א'. עמ' 101-108.

* Peter Shaw - "A Social History of the Odessa Jewish Community," (Ph.D. dissert., The Hebrew University, 1988).

Xerox

Background: Boris Ejxenbaum - "Literary Environment" (1929), in Readings in Russian Poetics, ed. Ladislav Matejka & Krystyna Pomorska (Michigan, 1978), pp. 56-65.

דן מירון - "בין דור לתקופה, " מתוך בודדים במועדם: לדיוקנה של הרפובליקה הספרותית העברית בתחילת המאה העשרים (עם עובד, 1987), עמ' 115-150.

Oct. 26 Three Cultural Centers II: The Lower East Side & Di yunge (Roskies)

Hutchins Hapgood - The Spirit of the Ghetto [1902], ed. Moses Rischin (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967).

not yet

*Ruth R. Wisse - A Little Love in Big Manhattan (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

Nov. 2 Three Cultural Centers III: Jaffo & the Second Aliyah (Holtz)

Alan Mintz - "Agnon in Jaffa: The Myth of the Artist as a Young Man," Prooftexts 1 (1981): 62-83.

זוהר שביט - חיים הספרותיים בארץ ישראל 1910-1933 (אוניברסיטת תל אביב, 1982), פרק ב'.

Nov. 9 Writers and Their Readers I: S. Y. Agnon (Holtz)

ש"י עגנון - "עידו ועינם, " מתוך עד חנה.

מאמרי ביקורת של יואב אלשטיין, גרשון שקד (מס' 21) ומשה צוקר, מתוך "עגנונות" ו"עידו ועינם": מקורות - מבנים משמעויות, ערך חלל וייס (חאוניברסיטת הפתוחה, 1979). יחודית חלוי-צוויק - ראשיתח של ביקורת עגנון (תרס"ט-תרצ"ב) (אוניברסיטת חיפה, 1984), עמ' 178-198, 207-120; פרק 4 (רשות).

Nov. 16 Writers and Their Readers II: Sholem Aleichem (Roskies)

Sholem Aleichem - Hodel, Chava, Shprintze

Sholem Aleichem: The Critical Tradition, special issue of Prooftexts 6 (1986), essays by Ba'al Makhshoves, Meyer Wiener, Michael Stern.

Ruth R. Wisse - Sholem Aleichem and the Art of Communication (Syracuse Univ., 1979).

*Hillel Halkin - intro. to Teveye the Dairyman and Railroad Stories (New York: Schocken, 1987), pp. xvii-xxxii.

Herod
Janet Hadda - Passionate Women, Passive Men: Suicide in Yiddish Literature (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), pp. 43-55.

X8 2X
Background: Walter J. Ong, "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction" (1975) and Umberto Eco, "The Role of the Reader" (1979), in Twentieth-Century Literary Theory: An Introductory Anthology, ed. V. Lambropoulos & D. Miller (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), pp. 401-33.

Nov. 23 Writers and Their Readers III: Isaac Bashevis Singer (Roskies)

X8 2X
Isaac Bashevis Singer - Problems of Yiddish Prose in America (1943); Gimpel the Fool (1944).

Isaac Bashevis Singer: A Reconsideration, ed. Daniel Walden: essays by Barbara Frey Waxman, Alvin H. Rosenfeld, Leslie Fiedler, Ruth R. Wisse. PJ 5129 A4 S55 Z7.

David Neal Miller, ed., Recovering the Canon: essays by Sheldon Grebstein, Chone Shmeruk, Yankev Glatshteyn. PJ 5129 A4 S55 Z81 1986.

Ruth R. Wisse, The Schlemiel as Modern Hero, chap. 4. PN 6149 J4 W5 1971.

Nov. 30 Seminar papers / wrap-up

Dec. 7

What is decisive?

- 1) Nation (Zionism) - as ideology (Hizkin) or
- as political entity (Miran)?
- 2) Class (Marxism) - as utopian dream or
- as political entity (CPA)?
- 3) Gender (Feminism) - as critical tool or
- as political entity?
- 4) Language, but which one(s)?
Hebrew: n3, n per
Yiddish: ns, n per; fusion lang par excellence
La'az
- 5) Literary environment - how can something so unstable confer stability?
Odessa
Lower East Side
Nove Zedek } all transit points; "the same water that
brought you there could take you away"
- 6) Audience - do you forfeit one in favor of another?
highbrow (young SA)
lowbrow (mature SA)
Jewish (young IBS)
Gentile (mature IBS)
- 7) Polysystem
center + periphery
canonized vs. non-canonized
Cultural Darwinism - only stragglers is bad!