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Special Issue: HEBREW AND YIDDISH: LITERATURE, LANGUAGE, CULTURE

Edited by Itamar Even-Zohar and Benjamin Harshav

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not their ultimate destruction but rather the certainty of the endless repetition of these cycles.

These historical dynamics are best revealed in *Di brider Ashkenazi* whose central comparison is not, as the title suggests, between the two brothers but between Max Ashkenazi and the city of Lodz. Max's rise parallels the development of Lodz and both decline at the end of the novel. Yet Lodz can be rebuilt while Max and all that the Jews have built there is tenuous and ultimately destroyed. Max's brother, Yakub, fails in a different and even more terrible way. He attempts to live according to the dynamics of Polish and Russian history, ignoring Jewish fate and thus remaining incapable of understanding it. Neither resistance nor acquiescence makes any difference when facing external forces. Similarly, all political or messianic solutions are dismissed by Singer who favors truth in the form of self-awareness rather than illusory promises of salvation.

In both novels, the narrative itself demonstrates the stagnation that Singer regards as peculiarly Jewish. In setting, characterization and tense, it moves from the

present to the past and back again with no real change. The differentiation of past from present is blurred, imbuing the present with a sense of ongoing time. In *Di mishpokhe Karnovski*, the sense of time is even more concentrated and frenetic than in the earlier novel, with all sense of historical distance destroyed by the paralyzing, immediate presence of World War II.

The three generations of Karnovskis make different attempts to accommodate to their world, but none, of course, is successful. Their different paths are not differentiated by the outside world and their destinies are therefore identical.

Singer's conclusion that Jews experience a different constellation or historical patterns means that they can never expect to move in tandem with worldwide movements. Trying to place Jewish history within the process of world history, Singer has, in fact, made the Jews subject to different rules and structures. In effect, he has removed the Jews from the very dynamics of world history into which he sought to place them.

THE FUNCTION OF YIDDISH LITERATURE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEBREW CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

by ZOHAR SHAVIT

This article suggests a historical model for the development of Hebrew children's literature at its outset, the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th. It focuses in particular on the function of Yiddish literature in this development.

The point of departure for the entire argument is (a) an understanding of the functioning of Yiddish literature as the non-canonized member of Hebrew literature and (b) an understanding of the similarity between the model of development of various European children's literatures and the development of Hebrew children's literature.

This similarity led to inquiry into the similarity between the function of the non-canonized literature in the development of European children's literature and the Hebrew's and hence to the following working hypothesis:

- (1) The inventory of Yiddish literature was similar to that of non-canonized European literature as far as chapbooks were concerned.
- (2) Yiddish books could offer children more attractive reading material than the first Hebrew children's books

which had a strong pedagogic and moralistic tendency.

- (3) Children, even those who studied in the schools of the Enlightenment Movement (or perhaps those children in particular), did read Yiddish books enthusiastically. The followers of the Enlightenment Movement (later of observant Jewry as well) were forced to fight such "uneducational" reading if they wished to secure what they regarded as valuable reading.
- (4) Fighting the reading of Yiddish meant not only its official prohibition, but the ability to offer children alternative reading material. This was done by various means including translations from Yiddish, imitating Yiddish texts and even disguising Hebrew texts in Yiddish format to attract children and enhance the appeal of the texts. Naturally, all this resulted in a change in the inventory of Hebrew texts for children.

However, since Hebrew children's literature, due to the special circumstances of its development, lacked almost any commercial motivation and was based on a firm ideological one, it was limited in its options of response and failed to fight Yiddish reading (and later the reading of German texts).

It was not until late in the Israeli period, in the forties,

that Hebrew children's literature became both heterogenous and stratified like other national

children's literatures, which meant the end of the historical process briefly described in this article.

THE DIBBUK: ANSKY'S YIDDISH PLAY AND ITS HEBREW TRANSLATION

by SHMUEL WERSES

This paper surveys the versions and interpretations of the play, *The Dibbuk*, at the time of its first publication in Yiddish and Hebrew and its early stage productions in both languages. The critical reception focused on its generic traits, the integration of folkloristic elements and structural aspects.

The article examines inter-textual links of both versions of the play which are based on diverse cultural memories. It reviews the process of the crystallization of the folkloristic material which Ansky collected on his anthropological expedition to the Pale. Evidence is presented of the structural changes that took place in the Russian version. In addition, there is an examination of the hitherto unknown text of a prologue in Yiddish which, although previously published, has never been included unabridged in the play.

The author discusses the question of chronology, whether the Yiddish or Russian text was first and the relations between Bialik's Hebrew translation (with Zitrin's additions) and the Yiddish version, of which only eight pages have survived. The Hebrew translation shows Bialik's personal imprint: The idiosyncratic use of linguistic phrases and expressions identical to those found in his poetry. Though Bialik uses Hebrew

expressions that are infused in the Yiddish language, there is a noticeable tendency to avoid such Hebrew expressions which had lost the idiomatic nature of the original. On the other hand, expressions from the traditional world and religious literature regain their former connotations while alluding to the original Hebrew sources.

The Hebrew translation does not fully measure up to the original not only because of the limitations of the Hebrew language at the time but also because of Bialik's uneven translation. The Yiddish version is often very highly expressive as a result of its manifold use of language - word repetitions, synonyms, equivalents, diminutives, compared with the more reserved and restrained nature of the translation. However, the translation is certainly preferable in terms of lyricism and pathos.

There are several textual divergences and deletions as well as additions. These textual differences in the two versions are also clearly evident in the stage directions to director and actors, integrated into the dramatic work itself. Their general aim in the Yiddish is to give visually realistic details while in the Hebrew we are left with succinct abbreviations.

"BEAL KORKHOKHO ATO KHAY":

SHOLEM-ALEYKHEM'S TEVYE AND HIS DAUGHTERS

by JANET HADDA

Everyone knows Sholem-Aleykhem's Tevye as a marvelously warm, concerned, and empathic father, a man who feels for his girls and nourishes them in every respect. How is it, then, that his daughters have such a difficult time of it? How is it that one of his children chooses to end her life? Through subtle cues which he himself does not understand, Tevye influences his daughters, trains them to act in a certain way. This applies even to Shprintse and Tevye unwittingly plays a role in her suicide.

It is significant that Tevye delivers his tales in monologue form, because he thus re-creates for the listener/reader his private musings and interpretations as well as his discussions with others. Precisely because this work is a monologue, it is possible to make extensive use of psychoanalytic techniques; that is, to follow Tevye's characteristic speech patterns, his associations, fantasies and even his defenses.

A major clue to the dynamics of this interaction can be