

EN EMIES: A LOVE STORY (1966)

I. Real & Symbolic Landscapes

- A. POLAND: legendary, extremely remote
"Polish" parakeets Woytus & Marianna [8]
Polish radio = realest emblem of the past
Q: Tsvikew/Lipsk = fictional place names
[13] studied in Warsaw
father-in-law's dacha in Nalecow

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B. CONEY ISLAND

- [5-6] Mermaid Avenue: mermaids remain loyal to the sailors they rescue
Jadwiga's fear of the ocean
the cafeteria on Brighton Beach
[12] eat popcorn here, don't read boks
[15] Boardwalk / surf: noise, sun & stench
[16] immigrant enclave
[17] sweet smell of popcorn = AMUSEMENT
[18] richness of color, abundance, freedom --
cheap & shoddy & perpetually surprising
young dominated by lust for enjoyment, not for mischief
[148] YOM KIPPUR by the sea
Herman's moment of grace
Jadwiga's decision to convert
merges w/his mother
[155] The party's over -- meeting Tortshiner

Place of contradiction

Yiddish-speaking enclave
but total opposite of EE
Jadwiga's fake Sabbath, holidays, serenity
all-too-perfect FUTURE
shoddy, fake, rotting

C. LOWER EAST SIDE = identical to Poland

- [67-68] same smells, slowness
[79-80] same halachic bedrooms

Tamara = time-warp effect
curtained off
will open a used book store
hallowed, severed PAST
little Masha will be raised there

D. THE BRONX

- [26-38] subway ride; 1st visit
concretizes transition from 1 world/another
- [31-32] descent into Hell
- [33] demonic description: torments him
- [34] Shifra Puah always wears black;
something's always burning
- [41] heavy soot; mice crawling underfoot
- [42] constant cigarette glow
- [94] the room so hot it could burst into flames

demonic PRESENT

E. BRONX BOTANICAL GARDEN & ZOO

- [52] Jewry = hothouse growth
- [53] animals; like Jews, dragged her from everywhere to die of boredom

F. KOSHER HOTELS

- [116] satiric portrait

Triangulated Landscape; 3 Boroughs / 3 worlds: anonymity of the New World

II. Triangulated Desire

A. **JADWIGA = SUPER-EGO**

establishes "kosher" home
capacity for gratitude

B. **MASHA = ID**

vitalism, no limits

C. **TAMARA = ALTER-EGO**

open, nothing to hide
intellectually honest

States of mind projections of his own neurosis

Specificity of America ↔ legendariness of Poland

III. Enemies: The Holocaust

A. Author's Note

1. Poetics of Fiction: author freed from constraints of mimesis
he wasn't there
employs same technique as always
the exception, not the [sociological] rule
2. Pathology of character
victims twice over
not only...but also...

B. Reality of the camps = fantastical

since these events are literally incomprehensible
whoever did not experience them will never understand
[71-80] Herman knows that Tamara cannot reveal the truth

IV. Differentiated responses to the Holocaust

A. HERMAN

History-as-recurrent-nightmare
[9] Herman recreates the experience in his imagination
[117] war years reinforced his isolation, solitude
[121] not a victim of Hitler; victim long before that
lest we think he's a product of the Holocaust
along comes tamara to show that he hasn't changed a bit
creates complications in order to relive the Holocaust

B. MASHA & SHIFRA PUAH

[42-43] trapped in the past
neglected by her mother in childhood
love making enlivened by the camps
[45] Masha's antimoralistic tales
[46] her nightmares leave **physical** scars
[184] Shifra Puah's verdict

"Well, evil spirits are playing with us. We came out of Gehenna, but Gehenna followed us to America. Hitler has run after us."

[242] Holocaust in everyday life
Masha imagines Nazi forcing her to go to work

Holocaust as Demonic Realism

C. TAMARA

[102] time does not heal her wounds
[137] communes with her children
[141] their memory saves her from sin

D. TORTSHINER

[163] his speech

life in extremis; man turned into beast
only Shifra Puah suffered every hell & remained pure

E. YASHA KOTIK

[219] laughing his way through hell

F. REB ABRAHAM NISSEN

[67] he and Sheva Haddas fast every Monday

[245] rejects Orthodox Holocaust denial

V. Holocaust Metareality

A. A New Haggadah

[247] the PHILOSOPHY OF GUILE

his metahistorical speech @ seder

abrogation of the Covenant

denial of all hope of progress

can praise only the smugglers

B. Survivors = living dead

homeless, no community

no escape from the nightmare

can marry only each other

Holocaust reductio ad absurdum

search for relatives in the paper

can he hide in the bathroom?

Herman himself rendered superfluous by disappearing

replaced by...Rabbi Lampert!

C. Survival instinct of the collective, no matter how absurd

therefore Little Masha must be born

D. No distinction between Hitler/Stalin

ever since *Shadows on the Hudson* (1957)

still lampoons the Communists

VI. Marrying the Demoness

A. *Ma'aseh yerushalmi*

realistic tale of a married man who marries a demoness

by mistake

demons are human, law-abiding, study Torah

she allows him to return home on condition of secrecy

condemned to death the moment he betrays her

B. **Masha = Demon-Wife**

[29] gypsy fainted when telling her fortune

[167-68] Masha's seductive doodling = his fantastic drawings

the demonic within her won't let her rest

in MA = witch

Shifra Puah = "good witch," 1/2 rebbetzin,
1/2 fortuneteller

[210] her private hell [chapter 8]

despite her nightmares, transforms her rags into
gorgeous gown for the PARTY
enchants all the men

[221] a firebrand

illicit marriage

false pregnancy: demoness cannot bear a human child

Chap. 9: last meeting in vandalized, **darkened** apt.

[262] redness of her hair

[265] cries out for doctor in primitive catlike voice

[268] afraid to stay there alone all night;

Shifra Puah's spirit would haunt him

tries to destroy his one moral act

denial of God & humanity

after the "good witch" dies

Masha commits suicide--

Herman is bewitched--dragged him down to hell—disappears

[273] I always knew she was my Angel of Death

MASHA: abandons her mother on her deathbed

HERMAN: abandons his child