

THE MAGICIAN OF LUBLIN (1960)

Last Week: How to tell a Yiddish love story

Childless Love

Spinoza of Market Street

The Short Friday

Gimpel the Fool

Taibele & Her Demon

Natural Love

Cut off from the Jews!

In a state of nature.

This Week: **The Place of the Artist in (Jewish) Society**

A. Artistic freedom vs. Bourgeois Morality

Stempenyu (1888) vs. Rokhele di sheyne

B. Jewish loyalty vs. Worldly-Christian fame & fortune

Der Vilner Balebes!

Hazzan Yoel Dovid Levenshteyn-Straushunsky

a melodrama by Mark Arnstein, later a movie

cannot marry the countess, goes mad, and dies

The Jazz Singer: can eat his cake and have it, too

C. Singer combines them both!

Rokhele = Esther (MC) + Zeftl (LC)

Countess = Emilia (UC) + Madga (LC)

D. Raising the Stakes

Magic, sex & thievery vs. strict adherence to the Law

Judaism vs. Hellenism

=major theme for Cynthia Ozick

How to Tell 2 Stories-in-One

The Slave

- As Judeo-Christian myth
- As response to the Holocaust

Magician of Lublin

- As Künstlerroman
- As veiled AB

Structure / Diachronic

1. Shvues in Lublin

Yasha stuck @Home w/Esther

Love-as-mindreading

Bella's Tavern: Yasha/Shmuel the Musician

Best local talent; envies Yasha's mobility

Calls him master of deception

Debate his sword-swallowing trick

Lublin = island of stability

[16/8-9] 1st Besmedresh scene: push & pull

Yasha/Khaskl the Watercarrier

Yasha ruminates as Esther goes to shul

2. Yasha in Piask

Sets out right after Shvues

w/Elzbieta, Magda, Bolek

w/Zeftl: reveals all to her

3. At home w/community of thieves (50-59)

Chaim-Leyb, Blind Mekhl, Black Bella

Blind Mekhl tests his skill @ breaking a lock

4. Yasha @ the Crossroads [62-64/29]

[65/30] 2nd besmedresh scene: escape

WARSAW: w/Emilia & Halina

love = hypnotism

5. Between Farce & Fatherhood

Warsaw: vanity of vanities [96/44]

in Polish theater

Emilia wants to birth his son but refuses to sleep w/him;

Begins to address him as "du"

6. The Bungled Robbery

in bed w/Magda

Zeftl comes to Warsaw

w/Herman the Pimp: demonic counterpart [121/54]

beats him @ card tricks

the attempted robbery

3rd besmedresh scene: affirms his Jewishness

7. The Day of Reckoning

soup kitchen

1
day

returns to apt. w/Wolsky
refuses to treat injured foot
Magda curses him
Yasha confesses to Emilia; They break up
the evidence of the crime = informed on himself

8. The end of the road

4th besmederesh scene: escape to same studyhouse
Magda's suicide; strangles the pets
in the tavern
discovers Herman screwing Zeftl

Epilogue 3 yrs. later

from sinner to saint
Return of Shmuel the Musician; fate of the others
Emilia's letter
Returns to the womb

Problem w/ besmederesh scenes: People who inhabit them are not
individualized vs. underworld characters, who are

The Magician

[4/3] socially marginal

[3] the laws he fails to observe;

his menagerie [=very unJewish]

[6/4] in the tavern: plays the atheist

[7/4] ½ gentile, ½ Jew

[10/6] can read Esther's thoughts;

love-as-hypnotism

The Underworld

[24] thieves = magicians

[25] one of them

Know him since childhood

Thieves of Piast = his only community

artists, master dissemblers

[58/27] everyone = lock

beyond the pale of respectable society

always testing limits

Herman, the Pimp and White Slaver

International commerce

Can also quote Gemara!

Also does card tricks

The Robbery

steps on Greek goddesss to commit the robbery! [137/61]

betrayed by his own writing [81]

[67] A sinner or a saint?

The Jew

[12/7] soul-searcher

marriage = sacred

The Studyhouse

[8] know him from childhood

Khaskl the Watercarrier

[30-32] shelter from the storm

[65-67] escape from the robbery

[154/68] Streets vs. Shul

could he really live like his father had?

[85-86] Returns to same after breakup