

Summary:

Shund (yid. "trash") is a pejorative term to describe booklet novels widely read among Yiddish speaking audience, starting from mid-19th century. The main goal of this dissertation is to present Yiddish literary shund printed in Eastern Europe in the first period of its development (the 1860s to 1914). This phenomenon, despite being the majority of Yiddish literary production and having a significant audience, is currently understudied in comparison to the cultural canon of its time.

The phenomenon, its influence on the readers and its role in creating modern literary canon is characterized based on *shundromanen* – a source that until now was not extensively researched. The dissertation covers the main topical tendencies in the novels. The main argument of the thesis is that shund played a significant role in the modernization: of both Yiddish literature and the Jewish society of that time. On a cultural level, it helped in shaping the modern literary canon as we know it today and creating mass readership. On a societal level, it was one of the main sources of modernizing content.

The dissertation consists of 5 Chapters and a Bibliographical Annex. In Chapter 1. the phenomenon is characterized and described using bibliological and literary features. Shund is also compared with similar literary phenomena. Chapter 2. Depicts writers, distribution and readership of shund. Based on memoirs is described the influence of *shundromanen* on its readers. Chapter 3. is an analysis of the approach of shund novels to Jewish tradition and modernity. It consists also of a question of adaptation and judaization of the stories written originally in other languages. The main topic of Chapter 4. is the construction of new models of womanhood, manhood and love. Chapter 5. describes main tendencies in depicting Jewish and non-Jewish spaces in shund. The abovementioned characteristics are presented in comparison to canonical Yiddish literature. The Bibliographical Annex consists of a bibliography of shund novels printed in Eastern Europe up to 1914 that includes online library catalogues.

Keywords: Yiddish Literature, Popular Literature, shund, modernization, modernity, 19th Century, Nokhem Meir Shaykevitsh, Shomer, Yeshua Mezah, Gershom Khaim Levner, Avrom Yitskhok Bukhbinder, Shimen Bekerman.

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