

Yiddish Life on Page, on Stage, on Screen

Contrast and compare Abe Cahan's 1896 story "Yekl A Tale of the New York Ghetto" with its 1974 film adaptation "Hester Street" by Joan Micklin Silver.

Final Submission date: November 13, 2019 by noon

1. *The written assignment should be in the form of a short essay (not more than 3.5 double-spaced pages).*
2. *Please, note that it is far better to write a well formulated, coherently presented, and succinct shorter paper, than fill out numerous pages with loosely connected facts or statements. You must try your best at striking a balance between brief summary, well-argued analysis, and appropriate use of concrete examples.*
3. *Points will be taken off for insufficient editing of the submitted paper (A. misspelling, B. "loose" sentence structure, C. incorrect use of proper and geographical names, and -- D. unjustified repetition of information or statements within the same paper, E.. unauthorized use of „secondary" sources).*
4. *The essay must be submitted as an MS Word or PDF Attachment*
5. *In the essay you are most strongly encouraged to focus on many, most, or all of the following points:*
 1. In the novel, and even more so in the film, the opening and the closing episodes/scenes offer two different approaches to introducing and finalizing the narrative. It may even be claimed that the film's beginning and closing scenes actually offer a neat general frame of the entire work (a frame inside which the entire narrative is being presented).
 2. Note the actual titles given to the story and the film. Discuss the the role of the story's title. How significant is the film-maker's different choice of titles and chapters for her cinematic reconfiguration of Cahan's original work?
 3. How is the old/new (i.e. Yiddish versus American) private names issue is being treated in each case? What's its role in the protagonists' inherited, perceived and changed personas? Are there characters whose names are not being an issue and how are they called?
 4. Which aspects, episodes, or moments of the original story remain outside of the film adaptation and conversely what does the film offer or adds to the story's narrative?
 5. How did you imagine the story's main characters before you saw the film? Were you reassured, disappointed, or positively (conversely: negatively) surprised? Offer concrete examples.

The Contents of Ab. Cahan's novel
Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto, 1896

C O N T E N T S .

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.—JAKE AND YEKL	I
II.—THE NEW YORK GHETTO	25
III.—IN THE GRIP OF HIS PAST	50
IV.—THE MEETING	70
V.—A PATERFAMILIAS	82
VI.—CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES	112
VII.—MRS. KAVARSKY'S COUP D'ÉTAT	136
VIII.—A HOUSETOP IDYL	158
IX.—THE PARTING	175
X.—A DEFEATED VICTOR	185

The Chapters as they are detailed in the DVD edition of the 1975 film
Hester Street

(note, some whole episodes are in some case subsumed under one chapter)

1. Dancing
2. Sweatshop
3. Your Father Has Been Freed
4. Ellis Island
5. Homecoming
6. Hester Street
7. An Educated Country
8. Gitl and Mamie
9. American Fashion
10. A Pox on Columbus!
11. Central Park
12. I Don't Want Him Back!
13. Two Couples
14. Divorce
15. New Beginnings