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FORM AND CONTENT IN THE WORKS OF GERSHON SCHOFFMAN

Avshalom Magidovitch

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

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DIGEST OF CONTENTS

This thesis undertakes a critical study of the works of Gershon Schoffman, a Hebrew writer born in Russia in 1880. He moved to Galicia in 1905, to Austria in 1913 and finally to Palestine in 1938. His collected works published in 1960 in five volumes, contain 800 titles. Of these, 624 are one page or less in length, and 99 more of two or less pages.

A great deal has been written about Schoffman during the years since he started publication in 1902. Much of this writing, however, is impressionistic, content oriented, and vague contributing little to a true understanding of his work. Only in recent years have some critics began to delve into his total effort to include technique as well as content. This thesis addresses itself to a void in present writing namely to two propositions: that the very short works ("vignettes") are sufficiently different, in more than length alone, from the longer short stories to be considered a separate genre; and that chronological development, involving both effects of time and change in physical environment, is an important factor in the short stories as well as in the vignettes.

The vignette is defined as to its composition and technique as a very brief and didactic word picture, with or

without plot, dealing with a very small number of situations and characters. It is austere in style and most typically employs a sharp "point" ending, relying on paradox, irony, contrast, or surprise for its effect.

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I: INTRODUCTION

The study of the works of Gershon Schoffman undertaken in this thesis is based on the 1960 edition of his Collected Works,[1] which will hereafter be referred to as "Ktavim". References to the "Ktavim" will be made in the text parenthetically by volume (Roman numeral) and page (Arabic numeral). Since the "Ktavim" are arranged in chronological order, and since a part of my thesis deals with the chronological development within the works, I will translate and cite below the entry for "Schoffman, Gershon" from Kressel's Leksikon, to provide the reader a ready reference. The material contained therein is offered without comment or elaboration (as much of it, such as the question of outside influences, the exact details and exact dating of many of his activities, including participation in literary publications, are outside the scope of this study) except on those items which deal directly with the concerns of this study, and are underlined below. These will be commented upon later in this introduction or later in the paper:

> Schoffman, Gershon (Ursha, Mohilov District, white Russia 16 Adar 5640/February 28, 1880---). The Landscape of his childhood left a great impression on him, and is reflected in his stories later on. He studied with his father and grandfather in the local yeshivot, and later in Dubrovna and Vitebsk . . . His older brother used to read with him, and his later correspondence with his brother was the first emergence of his writing talent. He was a diligent reader

in both Hebrew and Russian literature. Thus he was influenced by Mendeli . . . and by the Tschernichovsky . . . He brought his first stories to Warsaw at the beginning of the century where they were published by Ben-Avigdor in the collection Sipurim Vtsiurim (Warsaw, 1902). This first volume . . . already showed the uniqueness, which he has kept for many tens of years, of the condensing crystallization of his short story with the focus upon the closing. The subject matter changed frequently as did his way of life, but the form and contents remained as he had fixed them in the beginning . . .

He served some three years in the Russian Army, years that added motifs to his writing. During the Russo-Japanese War he befriended some of his contemporaries as Z. I. Anochi and A. N. Gnesin. He moved to Galicia at that time, where a new era in creativity was opened to him through participation in Hashilo'ach under the editorship of Bialik . . . who was particularly impressed with his sharpness of vision and far sightedness . . . In 1907 he was one of those who helped Y. Ch. Brenner with publication of Hame'orer, the monthly Hebrew Journal. When the journal ceased publication before a subscription year Brenner published most of his works in Reshimot (London, 1908). They finally met in Lvov where they formed a close friendship lasting until Brenners death (1921). There, in Lvov, he also had his first editorial experience, editing the collection Shalechet (1911, assisted by A. Barash, then in his early literary stages). He moved to Vienna in 1913, and there he lived through the First World War. Here he edited, with Z. Diesendruck the literary periodical Gevulot (vol. I number 1-6 published in early 1919). He was married that year and moved to the vicinity of Gratz, where he created most of the stories dealing with the relations between Jews and Gentiles . . . In 1938 he immigrated to Palestine where he first settled in Tel-Aviv, and later in Haifa. Here the Palestinian/Israeli experience gave him new creative material beginning with World War II, the struggle for Independence, and the absorption of new immigrants. Here he also engaged in literary criticism . . . wrote a play, "Nihyeh Na Yedidim" in a collection he edited, Me'at Meharbeh (1947) . . . established regular columns in Davar and Yedi'ot Acharonot. His collected works were published first 1927-1935 (4 volumes), next in 1946-1952 (4 volumes), and finally in 1960 in five volumes . . . Among his translations are works by Gorky . . . Peter

Altenberg . . . and the comedies of Tshechov . . .[2]

While Schoffman entered the arena of Hebrew literature at the same time as Gnesin, Anochi, Brenner, Shne'or and Berkowitz, he was noticed at once as bringing a newness to the field. Ya'akov Fichman compares him to Achad Ha'am as a person who gained immediate recognition. He saw Schoffman's strength in his power to transcend linguistic and stylistic considerations for the sake of the full expression of the matters of concern. He, therefore, considered him the first truly modern Hebrew writer.[3]

This sort of an evaluation of his "newness" as well as that of Bialik (see the second underlined portion in long quote from Kressel; Bialik's remarks will be cited more fully, and footnoted, in the next chapter) fall short of saying anything of real significance about Schoffman's work.

The first underlined section in the quote from Kressel "the condensing crystallization of his short story with the focus upon the closing" that comes closer to describing that unique form for which Schoffman is known, and which is akin to similar works by Gorky and Altenberg.

The second half of that underlined section of Kressel's seems to echo an older critic still bound to content oriented criticism, perhaps Israel Zmorah (who will be dealt with at greater length in the next chapter) who recommends that the works of Schoffman not be read individually, one at a time, but all together one after the other. This way, he says, one soon realizes that the newness is not really a form at all, but an unchanging theme.[4]

My own experience confirms that the reading of many of the works together gives a qualitatively different experience than reading them separately, but for different reasons.

My first encounter with Schoffman's work was in the middle 30's in a book called Sefer Hafeuillitonim,[5] a book which included none of his longer stories.

A preliminary description of his works could be: A very short story, perhaps better called a sketch or a vignette, tersely told with a contrasting double situation, the latter most usually condensed in the extreme into a single line, a single phrase, or perhaps even a single word, at the very end. This kind of an ending is what provides the story (or sketch, or vignette) with its power.

With the reading, more recently, of the works as a totality an entirely different aesthetic experience was provided. This description, then, appeared rather simplistic, as indeed the stories themselves may have appeared when read individually. When read together, the reader becomes aware of the great depth and complexity which can be found. And in comparison with the longer stories, the vignettes appear to be a chronological development of Schoffman's which eventually resulted in this form becoming his sole mode of expression.

That the short form developed chronologically can be very dramatically illustrated by a page count of the works through the "Ktavim":[6]

Length (pages)	Vol I	Vol II	Vol III	Vol IV	Vol V	Total
1 (or less)	4	106	125	183	206	624
2	7	22	44	24	2	99
3	6	7	10	2		25
4	5		1			6
5	1	5				6
6	3	3	1			7
7	4	1				5
8	4	2				6
9	6					6
10	1					1
11	1	1				2
12	1	1	1			3
13	1	1				2
14			1			1
15		1				1
16	1					1
17						0
18	1	1				2
19	1					1
20	1					1
28			1			1
Total	48	151	184	209	208	800

Note that there are only four one page works in volume I compared with 106 in II, 125 in III, 183 in IV and 206 in V. The twenty-eight page story "Adam Ba'arets" which opens volume III, was written shortly after Schoffman's arrival in Palestine. It is followed by the fourteen page

story "Eina'im Uneharot" and the twelve page story "Or Chadash". The six page work is the play Nihyeh Ha Yedidim, and all the rest of the stories are of the much shorter variety. Volume IV has only two works of three pages, and volume V only two works of two pages and the rest are one page or less. As indicated in the footnote, volumes IV and V also contain essay material, yet it too is short, and one can safely say that Schoffman all but abandoned writing in any greater length.

Brevity alone, however, certainly cannot account for the new aesthetic experience received when reading the works as a totality.

The purpose of this thesis is to study the development of the short form in Schoffman's work, and its relationship to the longer forms, and to analyze the fundamental factors which combine to provide the total aesthetic experience mentioned above.

It is my position that to reach the answers to the questions I posed in the paragraph above it is necessary to examine the works with a view towards determining exactly what Schoffman did, what his methods and techniques were, to make each of his writings a work of art evoking in us an aesthetic experience.

This goal cannot be accomplished solely by impressionistic evaluations dealing primarily in the effect on the reader-critic and his reaction to the work. It is necessary to find out what the writer did to insure such a reaction was

indeed forthcoming.

To illustrate what I mean: Many critics refer to the quality of "Tsimtsum" (reduction, condensation, or perhaps contraction) in the works of Schoffman. Few attempt to define it or explain its nature. I contend that if we are to understand "Tsimtsum", we must know exactly how it was obtained. What elements have been reduced? What elements eliminated? And so on.

In the next chapter I shall examine the works of selected critics who have dealt with the writings of Schoffman, and propose my own approach to analyzing and categorizing Schoffman's works. In subsequent chapters this approach will be applied to various works available in the "Ktavim" and tested. Works not included in the "Ktavim" will not be considered in this study.

II: ON CONTENTS AND FORM IN THE WORKS OF GERSHON SCHOFFMAN

In the summer of 1927 a "Triple Jubilee" celebration was held in Tel-Aviv to commemorate the twenty fifth anniversary of the writing of Z. Shneor, G. Schoffman and Y. D. Berkowitz. In his remarks about Schoffman, Chaim Nachman Bialik compared him to the far sighted youth in a group of youngsters watching a bird flying away. There are those in the group who are near sighted and very quickly lose sight of the bird. Others keep seeing it for a while. But there is one among them whose vision is so keen that he keeps on seeing the bird long after everybody else no longer does, what he describes, then, is something he alone sees. "So is Schoffman. He does not describe what everybody else can see. He only describes that which is lost in the air of life, and his eye alone can grasp."[1]

Much early writing about Schoffman dealt with him in such generalities. A good summary of this type of approach to Schoffman and to his writings is contained in the essay "G. Schoffman (the Psychological Work)" by M. Rabinson. In it Rabinson refers to Schoffman as "the most subjective psychologist in our young literature." This attribute, according to Rabinson affected Schoffman's literary methods: A reduction of the narrative elements to a minimum; a synthetic crystallization of personal impressions; sharpness,

clarity, and austerity of style. Furthermore, also as a direct result of this quality, he calls Schoffman the most universal writer in the new Hebrew literature.[2]

This type of critical writing piles adjective upon adjective in a clear intent to laud the person. It may say something about the man, but not enough that makes it possible to understand or appreciate his works or their distinct form.

One of the early attempts to describe Schoffman's unique forms and define its essence was made by Israel Zmora. He states that as one reads Schoffman's works separately, one at a time, "it appears to us" that the essence of his creativity is his form. (Zmora here uses the term "Tsimtsum", (see chapter I) a characteristic remark found in most critical writings about Schoffman.) Zmora goes on to say, however, that when one reads all of Schoffman's works, one right after another, "it becomes clear" that the true essence of his works is to be found in their content. He hastens to say that he is not speaking of "content" in the common sense of the term.

> It is not the plot which revolves around one or more protagonists. It is not the content of private worlds; not the picture of one country; neither an image of one particular people, nor a monographic-narrative picture of a generation or a family.

Rather, he is speaking of a recurring and unifying theme: "Man's inclination from youth is evil."

Zmora identifies several elements within this general theme. He considers the most fundamental to be Fear, fear of

Man. This fear is not caused because of the presence of evil and ugliness in the world, the static evil and ugliness which are the work of God. It is rather a fear of what happens when Man assumes control of evil and ugliness, and uses them as his weapons.

The second element he identifies is Hatred. Hatred towards the evil person. This hatred is an absolute and unconditional hatred without any hint of a promise or possibility of a better world.[3]

This analysis, speaking in terms of content (even if expressed as "The Great Theme") still does not help us to understand Schoffman's work. It fails to consider the techniques and formal aspects achieved by Schoffman which make the difference between reportage and literature. As Mark Schorer put it:

> Modern criticism has shown us that to speak of content as such is not to speak of art at all, but of experience; and that it is only when we speak of <u>achieved</u> content, the form, the work of art as a work of art, that we speak as critics. The difference between content, or experience, and achieved content, or art, is technique.[4]

There is a considerable critical literature dealing with Schoffman, but most of it until recently suffered from the same faults outlined by Schorer, and demonstrated by those mentioned above. That is, most critics write impressionistically, and are concerned primarily with contents. Only in recent years can we find some critics who are concerned with those aspects of the works which combine to bring about the "achieved content" which Schorer speaks of.

Of these Hillel Barzel is the only one who recognizes

the distinction between two classes of Schoffman's works. Gershon Shaked and Reuven Kritz are the most expert formalists in the field, each concentrating on another aspect: Shaked mostly on the longer stories and Kritz on the shorter forms. I have, therefore, selected these three to summarize their views, and examine their methods.

Barzel begins by recognizing that Schoffman's works come in different lengths, yet he believes that "special qualities" (though he does not say what they are) of Schoffman's works erase the boundaries between stories of different length, and make distinctions of form very difficult. As the unifying quality of the works he sees a feature of the effort to reach the "moment of revelation"; hence, the concentration on details, the focus on a single object such as an overshoe or an axe. But the artist, says Barzel, uses this detail merely as a bridge to the broader experience. This grasping for the moment of revelation leads to writing whose renown are the power of its "Tsimtsum" (contraction or sharp focus), concentration, and crystalization.

Yet within this general stylistic characteristic Barzel distinguishes between two sub-forms, each differing in structure and essence. The one, due to its length and inner qualities is comparable to what is generally known as the short story. The other, whose most outstanding feature is its extreme brevity, -- from two to three lines up to two pages -- Barzel calls the "Tmunah" (picture or Vignette). He notes that a quantitative difference is indeed sufficient to

warrant this distinction, "for is not the distinction between a novel and a short story based, until we find a better criterion, upon the respective number of words?" But Barzel goes on to indicate that other differences do exist in the elements which constitute these two divergent types.

The "short story" like the vignette, ends with a "sharp ending" (see chapter I and review of Krtiz' comments below); but the former is composed of a more complicated, multi-situational structure. Therefore, the ending carries much less weight than in the latter, single-situational (or at most double-situational), whose sharp ending "is the very reason for its existence." Denying the sharp ending as a distinguishing feature of genre and without delving further into the situational structure, Barzel goes on to seek other distinctive characteristics.

Thematically, he notes, the short stories often depict "extreme situations," common among which is the confrontation with death. Diametrically opposed to this motif is a major theme of Schoffman's Palestinian vignettes: the encounter with the biblical landscape, which creates associations of purity and of redemption (along with the fears and dangers that still accompany the narrative). Even the vignettes of an earlier era, written during the period of expanding Nazi power, do not have the depth of despair which abound in his short stories.

This thematic criteria leads Barzel to delineate periods in the life of Schoffman which are reflected in his

works: 1) childhood and youth in Russia, including three years of military service; 2) his stay in Galicia, Vienna and Gratz from before World War I to the eve of World War II; and 3) immigration to Palestine, and life in Israel. He notes (as was noted in chapter I) that the short story is associated primarily with the first period, and the vignette with the second and third. While these distinctions are not absolute, "it is possible to establish that Schoffman's short stories depict the lowest levels of Man's life, its failings, and meaninglessness; and the vignettes offer, in the main, a promising message, the news of redemption."

Other distinctions Barzel notes are as follows. 1) Point of view: the stories are for the most part narrated in the third person, but the vignettes read like pages out of a personal diary and are narrated mostly in the first person. 2) Characterization: in the stories they are identified at least by name and age, but in the vignettes they are very simply presented in pronoun form, as "he", "she", or "we"; and the presence of the first person observer ("I") is felt strongly. 3) Action: in the stories the narrator takes no part in the action, but in the vignettes he is not only the observer, but assumes a didactic teaching -- preaching role by adding philosophical comments on life as the closing remarks. 4) Time delineation: the stories are either narrated in the present or relate childhood events, in the form of reminiscences of things past. In the vignettes, however, the Palestinian landscape brings about a confrontation with

the distant past.[5]

Except for his opening statement I find Barzel's comments valid, at least to the limits of his own conclusions. Although he sees the need (and justification) of distinguishing between the two forms typical of Schoffman's work, he does not analyze the formal and structural distinctions which are not as blurred as he claims. In any case, his distinction between the story and the vignette at least suggests the necessity for a separate evaluation of the two forms.

Gershon Shaked in a different vein, delineates <u>three</u> types of short stories in Schoffman's works: the "leitmotif work," the "episodic short story," and the "writing based on an example" (the "exempla").

In the "leitmotif work" the central structural connective is constituted by the repetition of a word, a phrase, or a sentence, in the beginning, middle, or end of the story. The word "Katnut" for example, is repeated in a story about the ruin of a young man (I, 89-96); the word "lo" in "Lo" (I, 158-159); and the word "Ai" in "K'ev" (I, 187). These leitmotif usages, says Shaked, create the structure of the story without overtly pointing out the cyclical theme.

The "episodic short story" is a deviation from the classic definition of a short story of "a single character, a single event, a single place" in as much as it depends on the time relationships within it. This type of story may include a leitmotif, such as "Henya" (I, 178-181), which con-

sists of five episodes, separate in time but connected with the word "Od". This type may also be a story with a "plot", that is, a series of episodes with explainable causal connection, such as "Me'idach Gisah" (I, 162-173).

In the "exempla" type, we find the expression of a single viewer who learns a lesson applicable either to his personal life or to the universal human condition. Examples cited include "B'ad Hachalon" (II, 231), "Hasayad" (III, 59), and "L'fi Sha'ah" (III, 66-67).

Shaked summarizes his presentation with the observation that all three of these types end with a "point", and thus reveal Schoffman as a writer with a strong didactic tendency. The reader is led to accept specific "points" which go beyond the reader of simple realistic fiction. Realistic depiction is superseded almost always by Schoffman's thematic organization. A didactic message, extracted from experience, is more important to him than the abundance of concrete matter which lies within the framework of that experience. Thus he calls Schoffman one of the "sharpest" writers in our literature.[6]

Shaked's analysis clarifies many of the vague generalities of other critics, such as "the specieal qualities of Schoffman's writing," or "his unusual sharpness." He has analyzed structurally the mechanics of these "special qualities" and has showed how these techniques were applied in various stories. However, his analysis lacks any kind of distinction between stories written in different periods or

between stories of different lengths. Yet these distinctions are implicit in his very choice of examples. It is noteworthy that most of his examples for the "leitmotif work" are taken from volume I; and one example from volume III is specifically cited as being essentially different than those earlier ones. (As far as length is concerned, this type is found in both long and short works.) His examples for the "episodic work" are both from volume I, and are both of the longer variety. On the other hand, his examples for the "exempla" type are exclusively vignettes and all are taken from volumes II and III. These choices support my contentions that there are structural between the stories and the vignettes, and provide at least a hint of chronological differentiation.

Reuven Kritz furnishes some of the missing information in his studies of the types of endings of the very short story (sipur k'tsartsar). The general type of ending he refers to is called the "point" -- the sharp, stinging, biting ending. All of the examples he cites are of the very short variety appearing in volumes II through V.

In one article Kritz studies the general class of contrasting parallels. Two situations are depicted neither one of which is of great significance alone. Their contrast is what makes the telling of each worthwhile. Some vignettes of this class have two equally told situations. In most, however, the second situation is very much more condensed being depicted in a line, phrase, or even a single word, making a "point" ending. Often the "point" is reinforced by the title

of the story or by various literary devices, such as a leit-motif mentioned by Shaked, or it may transform the story from a literal to a metaphonic dimension. "It is this great variety within the limits of a contracted form that I believe well demonstrates Schoffman's power within the limits of the very very short story."[7]

In another article Kritz examines three other types of the "point": 1) the "unexpected association", which both provides an organizing principle and enables the author to "teach his lesson" in an indirect manner; 2) the "surprising connection" between seemingly unconnected situations; and 3) the "surprising explanation" (exemplified by "I have seen -- and I have thought") which also have many variations, and function in several different ways.[8]

In a third article Kritz studies the paradox as a structural motif in the very very short stories where the ending in itself may be very paradoxical, but becomes logical because of the situation which precedes it.[9]

These studies by Kritz help to explain the complexities of the "very very short stories" (what I would prefer to call the vignettes).

I certainly have no quarrel with his analyses or typology. However, I feel that he too, has a limited perspective, since he neither makes any distinction between the works on the basis of length, nor does he address himself to the question of chronological influences.

My own position is that there is development in the

works of Schoffman; that the works are clearly of two classes the long and the short, each deserving recognition in its own right to include a separate name (hence "stories" for the long ones, and "vignettes" for the very short ones); that each of these classes is distinct both thematically and structurally; and finally that it is the vignette which accounts both for Schoffman's uniqueness and (at least subjectively) his power.

III: A COMPARISON OF SHORT STORIES

In this chapter, I will compare two stories of different periods, in order to demonstrate the effect of the chronological development of Schoffman's works. The two stories selected for comparison are "Ha'ardal" (The Galosh, 1902),[1] Schoffman's first published story, and "Adam Ba'arets" (Man in the Land published in the late 30's),[2] one of a group of three stories which represent the end of Schoffman's use of the short story as a means of expression.

"Ha'ardal" is the story of a young man inextricably entrapped in a state of permanent poverty and deprivation. The main theme is expressed by the central character:

> One may not escape from poverty. What will be my end. When one has galoshes, he has no shoes. When one has shoes, he has no sandals. When one has a cloak he has no coat, and when one has a coat, one has no cloak. And the food, is this really food? (p. 10)

He blames his lot on the house they live in.

> "When I get rid of this cursed house I will have everything." (p. 6) "Since I was born and raised in this house the results could not have been otherwise." (p. 10) "The poverty here is nothing but an ancestral inheritance . . . here I shall have no chance to rise. I must escape!" (p. 10)

The main symbol of his condition, however, is the torn left galosh which stands as the focal point of the story almost continuously.

The plot is narrated in the third person by an omniscient narrator. It follows "Daniel, a lad of nearly seventeen" from the morning of one day to the morning of the next. The action shows Daniel moving from his poor home to the "respected and magnificient" home of one of his pupils (the only details given, however, are a cracked mirror, and many sets of galoshes in a state of good repair), and back to his own house.

The plot, mainly internal, is developed choppingly with time intervals unaccounted for; but the entire story is very strongly tied together with the frequently recurring motif of the left galosh with a torn toe. The right galosh is torn only on the bottom, but the left one is more conspicuously torn at the toe. Therefore, it attracts the attention of others. People are either nice to Daniel or avoid him because of it; in his perception, they talk about and are concerned only with galoshes. (p. 8-9) The galosh is personified: it has a "face"; it even has a sound of its own, "an odd groan", like the rooster in a dream sequence. When he throws away the hated symbol in order to escape, the right galosh is "sad, yearning for its brother". But in spite of his efforts to rid himself of the galosh, it reappears at the end of the story, as if to confirm his sad fate.

External characterization is very meager. The reader knows only that Daniel is nearly seventeen and has a thin, pale face. Other characters are his mother, his pupil, the land-lady, her neighbor, a girl of sixteen, several passers-

by, including one of Daniel's acquaintances. Internal characterization predominates, i.e., the reader learns about Daniel mainly through his thoughts and speech. In his thoughts Daniel tends to rationalize his condition. The depth of his despair, however, is revealed only in his direct discourse with his mother. He appears to be in conflict with his mother, but she is really just a sounding board he uses to voice his frustrations and anger.

Symbolic detail is depicted primarily in items of clothing, furniture, and house interiors: the galosh, the cloak, the couch, chair and clothing, the damp ceiling, the dingy plaster, the barren walls, and cobwebs in the corners. From nature we have only three symbolic details: moonlight (the dimming of reality); pale wilting grass (p. 7) (the deteriorating condition); and snow. Snow seems to symbolize several different things: the discomfort of winter penetrating into the cursed house; the uncovering of the dismal grass when it melts; and the covering up of the galosh, the offending symbol, when it starts falling again.

"To escape! to escape!" cries young Daniel. But he cannot escape his poverty, nor the curse of the house.

A single theme which assumes several shapes recurs throughout the story. It is the theme of ugliness coming through clean snow; of unpleasant actuality contrasted with pleasanter childhood memories or with fantasy. This theme is another recurring motif which opens and closes the story, and recurs several places through the story: the story opens

with a dream-memory of younger and happier days; but this immediately contrasts with Daniel's finding himself very much still in the ugliness of his present state. (p. 5) When he walks in the wintery grass he sees himself securely walking in the tall grass of summer, only to come to a rude awakening through what he imagines he sees in the eyes of passers-by. (p. 7) He looks at his left galosh in the moonlight, but it is still ugly. (p. 9) A dream sequence then takes him to his childhood days of relative plenty, to a rooster which sounds like his galosh, to a fish which looks like his galosh, and back to his galosh. (p. 11) And finally, when the discarded galosh is nearly covered with new snow, the torn toe was still "a dangling limb, sticking upwards and clearly visible as a black point from afar!" (p. 12)

The effect of this structure of dream vis-à-vis reality is to convey the message that there is no hope, no promise, no way out. This effect comes about as we read and are repeatedly reminded of the miseries of life, of the ugliness of existence, from the very beginning to the very end. At the end we are still left on the note that even the white snow cannot cover up the ugliness of the torn toe; hence no hope, no escape.

The austerity of detail, plot, and style may well be said to be the forerunners of the vignette, which did not appear in Schoffman's writing until much later.

"Adam Ba'arets" is a much more complex work: it displays a more externalized, action-oriented plot, and presents

a broader scope of detail. When read together with the two stories which follow it, "Einayim Uneharot" (Eyes and Rivers)[3] and "Or Chadash" (A new Light)[4] it may be said that these three stories reflect certain autobiographical elements which come out of the period of Schoffman's stay in Austria (from 1913 to 1938).

Characters, events and landscape are all described in great detail. The abundance of characters and episodic events are presented in close sequence and in depth. The vicious, ugly, and inhuman characters the narrator presents as typical of the Austrian countryside are all black with no redeeming qualities -- almost caricature like.

The story is based on a series of episodes, tied together by a double plot line. The main plot line deals with the search for a haven by the young couple David Lotte, the Jewish emigré from Russia, and his Christian wife, Helena, who is of a peasant family from Steier. The secondary plot line deals with the rise and decline of the peasant family of Alex Planck, Helena's father. The Lottes' search for living quarters goes on throughout the story and leads to the final catastrophe, when the roof is blown from above their heads, leaving them completely without shelter. A double irony sets in with the realization that at the same time they have confirmed their togetherness and escaped some of the ugliness of their environment. Their feelings are manifested in their child, whom they see as "a beautiful human being in a beautiful land."

All precious characterizations present the ugliness and evil of the inhabitants of this beautiful mountain land. So long as the evil Man is rooted and strong so is he also detached and unaffected by the beauty of the land. When uprooted the eternal wanderers (the Lottes) are confronted with the landscape and recognize the real beauty of their young son, who has not been tainted by the culture of his elders.

The catastrophe also reunites the family which was beginning to disintegrate because of David's dissatisfaction with his wife and his yearnings for other women. His frustration actually connotes his previous state of love and control, since the other women are seen in terms of his wife before she became his wife. At the end these yearnings also cease.

In the background there is another sub-plot, or better, a counter-plot. It deals with the uprooting of the village people, who have always drawn their strength from the land. They are being uprooted from the land and drawn inexorably to the metropolis, thereby bringing about their own decline.

Helena's father traded farm life for city life. At first he is depicted as a strong and authoritarian person ruling his family with rigid force. After losing a leg in the war, however, he can no longer control his family as well. He would have not permitted anyone so much as to touch his daughter, but then ends up sharing the couple's bed for a night. His decline is emphasized when he, formerly a

wealthy farmer, is given a little garden plot in the city, which he works with great delight. Another aspect of this plot line is the physical deterioration of Helena's mother to the point that consumption poses an immediate danger to her life. She is saved only by fresh goat milk, a symbolic return to the soil.

In addition to the plot lines and central setting (the rustic village) the story is held together by several sets of recurring motifs.

Landscape descriptions are placed at the beginning of several chapters. These descriptions are used as constant reminders of the contrast between the good land and the evil Man.

In his search for security David is always looking forward to places "lagur sham, lagur sham!" ("to live there!"). These recurring motifs sharpens the focus of narration on the main plot line.

The phrase "keveyimei hayaldut" ("as in childhood days"), occurs often, connecting the particular episode directly with the main plot, -- i.e., the eternal wandering and searching ever since childhood days.

Although "Adam Ba'arets" is Schoffman's longest story it can be said to be the child of the vignette, as "Ha'ardal" was said to be the vignette's parent.

Many of the episodes, and sub-plots in "Adam Ba'arets" demonstrate the structural characteristics of the vignette (see discussion of R. Kritz' structural study of the vignette

in chapter II). Perhaps the most outstanding example of this usage may be found on page 24, the pig-slaughter scene:

> . . . They began with the large pig. He oinked in the barn . . . then again in the yard. The dog pulled on his chain and whimpered. The roosters and hens gathered in a tight band behind the fence and stood there without a sound . . . At the threshhold of the barn Platl tied up his victim, tied him up at the ends of his legs, and he fell on his side. The butcher then stooped over him, stepped on his earlobe with his heavy boot, and put an end to his infernal shrieking by doing whatever it is he did. A stream of blood, terrible, steaming, gushed out noisily . . . and Zuzi filled one vessel after another with it. She stained her cold-blue hands with the blood and ran back and forth not knowing what to do with the full, bubbling pot. The aunt came out later after it was over, when the pig was already dead as a log.
>
> "I cannot help in this thing," she said, "I love my animals too much . . ."

This scene in itself already may be seen as a vignette with a "point" ending based on a paradox-irony principle. But the story continues:

> . . . There was a great slaugher in Ischelbach that day. The screams of the pigs surrounded the entire village. Only with nightfall did quiet finally return. The beautiful Paula wearing her white hat, her woolen hat, walked home from the post office through snow covered fields.

Here, in the total vignette, the "point" effect is achieved through the sharp contrast between the gory slaughter scene and the short scene that follows. Practically every word in the latter description furnishes a contrast which acts to reinforce the horror of the former.

A comparison between the two stories shows the following:

"Ha'ardal" has only a rudimentary external plot, just enough to provide an opportunity for the theme to be stated, and to carry the symbolic and thematic motifs. The narrative focus is on the single symbolic detail. External characterization is meager and only one character is described more fully through his speech.

"Adam Ba'arets" is a much more complex story, displaying a major externalized, action oriented plot and a significant counter-plot. These are developed by a series of episodes tied together by the double plot. The story is developed towards a surprise climax. The narrative focus is on the major plot. Characterization is full with individual characters described both externally and internally. Recurring motifs are used to reinforce the plot.

In Ha'ardal" symbolic details is drawn from clothing, furniture, and house interiors. Only one symbolic detail is taken from nature is the snow. Except for the scene where the snow covers up most of the galosh, the story contains no symbol for goodness.

"Adam Ba'arets" draws symbolic details from many sources. Most significant departure from earlier stories is the large group of symbols taken from nature. These include the earth, streams, rivers, mountains, the land, snow, snow capped mountains, fields, orchards, grass, trees, and many others, all representing various facets of goodness.

"Ha'ardal" displays the characteristics which eventually led to the development of the vignette (see my discussion

of "Ke'ev" in chapter IV). But does not neither resemble nor includes parts structurally resembling the yet undeveloped vignette. Once developed, the vignette could be used as a component part of a larger work, and was so used in "Adam Ba'arets". "Adam Ba'arets" is by no means simply a succession of vignettes. However, the vignette structure does appear in the depiction of certain episodes, or parts of episodes, as has been demonstrated above.

The comparison so far discloses significant changes occuring in Schoffman's work in the time between the writing of "Ha'ardal" and of "Adam Ba'arets". But most significant, in my opinion, is the major thematic difference.

"Ha'ardal" has no symbols representing goodness as it does not treat goodness at all. It deals with the permanently depressed state of Man's existence (as other early stories treat this and other aspects of evil and ugliness in the world of Man).

"Adam Ba'arets" poses the contrast between evil and ugliness in Man and beauty and goodness in nature. It addresses itself to the dilemma of Man's continued evil although confronted constantly with nature.

Even in this approach alone a change is discernible from earlier works. But the surprise ending brings more, it brings a note of hope, a glimmer though it may be. Speaking of the Lottes' infant son the closing lines are:

> . . . somehow, this sweet creature is in harmony with the splendor of nature all

around, with the wet, storm driven, purified nature. Blind forces, apparently not so blind after all, finally attained their goal: a beautiful person in a beautiful land.

IV: A COMPARISON OF VIGNETTES

In this chapter vignettes from volumes I, II, and III will be compared to determine what differences are attributable to chronological development.

Of the four works in volume I which are one page or less in length "Ke'ev"[1] is the most advanced in form, -- that is the more removed from the story form and closest to the vignette form as it is commonly known. (See discussion of R. Kritz' analyses of the most common forms of the vignette in chapter II.) "Ke'ev" is also one of the works cited by Shaked (see chapter II) as an example of the leitmotif work. (Another is "Lo",[2] which is over one page in length and a more complex work without the more typical features of the vignette.)

"Ke'ev" tells of two lovers who were destined for tragedy. Being illusory, their happiness was shakey and often disappointed. They are referred to as "he" and "she" and jointly as "they". The work is narrated in the third person (as are all the very short works in volume I) by an omniscient narrator. Description of the characters or setting is very brief (see below); and the narration deals mostly with the inner feelings and thoughts of the characters, depicting only their most essential actions.

The work begins with a comment on the illusory and

transitory nature of their happiness (and thus of happiness in general) and on the inevitability of tragedy. The comment is followed by fact: "vehem infredu" (and they parted). For the male character this was the first taste of "real pain." Unable to accept it he runs "through noisy streets, and chirping fields . . . to the sea" (a minimal description). As he falls from "a steep and tall mountain" he can almost hear his lover cry out: "Ai! . . ." She attempts to evade the memory of his "dreamy and yearning eyes" (another minimal description) and seeks the company of others. Yet when she does find them, she, too, has her first taste of "real pain," and cries out: "Ai! . . ." As she cries out, she can almost feel herself falling from "a steep and tall mountain -- into the abyss."

The very brief plot (they parted, he actually commits suicide, and she practically follows suit) is held together by the leitmotif "Ai" repeated at or near the end of each of the two sections (scenes).

The two situations are also linked by the repetition of other leitmotifs, such as "real pain." Thus, reality is both counterposed and linked to the illusion of happiness, and the narrative focus reverts to the "truth" of the narrator's comment in the introductory paragraph. The woman's sensation of falling from "a steep and tall mountain" links the physical and the emotional realities depicted in the story and thus conveys again the notion of the inevitability of human suffering. Finally, the repetitive focus on words

denoting depth -- "omek ha'ason" (introductory paragraph), "el hayam" (to the sea), and "el hatehom" (into the abyss) -- serves to emphasize the extent and finality of the human tragedy depicted.

Although this work does not meet all of the criteria for the vignette established by others (see chapter II) I believe it is qualified to be so classified under criteria I shall attempt to establish below in a general discussion of the vignettes.

From volume II I have selected two works illustrating the classic "point" ending of the vignettes, based on two different principles.

The first is "Elohim".[3] This vignette is narrated in the first person, as are most vignettes in volume II. The setting is established very very briefly in the first line: "The two of us were walking on a noontime in May through meadows, fields, and woods." The following six short lines present a dialogue through which the two are identified as father and son. The dialogue divulges the son's idea that he could see God up in the sky and the father's incapacity to share in this experience.

To this point the reader encounters a particular situation, with a particular father and a particular son who are unable to share an experience or to view the world in the same way. The reason underlying this unshared experience is offered as a "point" ending which is based on the principle of a surprise explanation: the child tells his father, "You

never see anything!"

This "point" ending turns the vignette into a universal comment on the plight of all fathers and sons everywhere and at all times. It becomes a story about sons who desperately wish to share their experience with their fathers, yet cannot; about the elders of each generation who stand accused of inertia, blindness, and insensitivity to the perspective of youth.

A second vignette, "Nifredu,"[4] utilizes the "point" ending based on the more subtle paradox principle. Speaking of a married couple which is separated or separating, the narrator ends with the comment: "The whole world celebrates: -- they have parted! . . ."

This paradoxical statement -- the celebration of someone else's misery -- is logical only in view of the attitudes described by the narrator in the first part of the vignette. Instead of a live situation, the narrator offers his comments on how "we" react with frustration and jealousy to the marriage or engagement of a beautiful women. Whenever this occurs, "we" consider it a personal affront, a deprivation of one of our dearest possessions. For as long as she is single or unattached, we are free to enjoy her presence among us; but not so after she becomes the possession of one man. Because of this frustration, we have a feeling of gloating when we see them parted.

It is this inner corruptness of ours, says Schoffman indirectly, that caused the frustration, the anger, the

jealousy in the first place. Since man is inherently corrupt and jealous, the celebration of another's misery is, then, quite logical. This paradoxical logic thus, serves to emphasize the attitudes described in the initial commentary, as do most of the "point" endings.

This vignette is also narrated in the first person as are most of the vignettes of volume II, but not those in volume I. In this vignette, inner feelings are commented upon rather than allow them to be revealed only through dialogue as in "Elohim," but both share a degree of condensation exceeding those of the vignettes of volume I, and the "point" ending which is introduced in volume II and remains an important feature of the vignette thereafter.

The general tone of Schoffman's works written in Palestine can best be understood after reading "Pe'ulah Hadadit,"[5] here translated in its entirety:

Interaction

> To look at the Gilboa, the Carmel, or to sit in Allenby Park in Haifa and see the narrow Kishon creek winding alongside the bay -- this is an entirely different experience than that of looking at rivers and mountains in other countries. The Bible endows the former with a special flavor. Here . . . here . . . "The torrent Kishon swept them away" (Judges 4:21) . . . and so on, and so on.
>
> But on the other hand . . . on the other hand such places on their part interact upon the Bible, and make it mundane (<u>chol</u>). After all, once you have glimpsed its inner core with your very eyes, it loses its antiquity and remoteness. It appears, rather, as a secular work written and published in our very own days.

This work belongs to a particular class of Schoffman's vignettes which are more essay-like than narrative. It is, nevertheless, patterned after vignettes without a "point" ending, in which two contrasting situations are presented in sequence with equal weight (length or emphasis), and in which it is the contrast itself that lends full meaning and significance to each of the two.

Although this vignette was written relatively late in Schoffman's Palestinian period, it demonstrates a phenomenon that became apparent long before. For after his arrival in Palestine Schoffman began drawing on biblical motifs and allusions very frequently.

A good example of this development is "Be'alim Rishonim,"[6] which is narrated in the first person (as are most of the vignettes in volumes III, IV, and V. This vignette relates the narrator's frequent observations of an old Jew riding a donkey on his way home "as, in their own time, rode Abraham, Gideon, Jephtah, Nehemiah . . ." It also depicts Jewish workers using camels to carry earth and sand on road building tasks. They make them kneel down and rise up "as it is written." In the closing comment the narrator says that these "biblical beasts" have a particularly satisfied look on their faces ". . . as if an age old yearning has been satisfied. They have finally returned to their original owners!" The "point" based on the unexpected association turns the idle observations into a poignant statement of national reconstruction, projected, as it were, on

the faces of the "biblical beasts."

"Banim Shovevim"[7] tells of the mischievous children of a suburban school for slow learners. A particular type of mischief they often perpetrate is directed against wagons. They hang onto the backs of the wagons and tease and annoy the driver. Yet when a wagon loaded with cement and hitched to a pair of thin, emaciated horses happens by and gets bogged in the mud, "behold what a miracle!" These unruly boys rush to its help, push hard, and free it. The final comment: "Take care with these mischievous children, for more than one of our wagons shall yet be freed by their hands!"

A particular act of helpfulness is contrasted to general acts of mischief. The unexpected explanation-admonition of the "point" connotes that although the youngsters appear to be an undesirable element, they are bound to mature to be responsible citizens. The mischievous youth are "shelanu" -- "ours," belonging to the nation; and the wagons freed from the mud obviously symbolize many types of difficulty to be confronted in building up "our" country.

The most significant aspect of this ending is that it clearly demonstrates the change of tone in the works of Schoffman's Palestinian period. Evil is no longer a permanent aspect of Man's personality. There is hope. Even these unruly children hold a promise for the future.

"Nochrim"[8] stands in sharp contrast to Schoffman's vignettes and stories of the Austrian period dealing with Jewish-Gentile relations. Arab workers are invited to a

party. They are terribly confused, striving to understand what's doing on. At times they get up and perform their songs and dances, which are received with a degree of condescension. Only one girl, a German convert, watches the Arabs seriously. They remind her of her own national customs and dances. The "point" ending of one word "Geyoret" (a convert) explains the feeling of earnestness and empathy between the girl and the Arabs, with whom Schoffman obviously sympathizes. For it is they who now confront the new ways of Jewish society; they are the ones who are suffering the loss of their own identities, and must conform to the new culture. In the Austrian situation it was the lone Jew in Steier who so suffered, and now he could very well sympathize with others who find themselves similarly alienated from their host society.

The illustrations given demonstrate the chronological development of the vignette. Originally it evolved in the Russian period as a further condensation of an already austere and condensed style and structure (see comments on "Ha'ardal" in chapter III). The nature of the condensation will be discussed below. At this Russian period the vignette does not as yet display the completely characteristic form of the vignette. Thematically these early vignettes continued the emphasis on Man's evil nature and its hopelessness found in the early stories.

It is only in the latter parts of volume II that we encounter the vignette in its full development of form. Here

the vignette is shortened to the extreme; and the element of contrast, as a structural principle, first appears. The "point" ending is constructed by further condensation of one of the contrasting situations. Thematically the Galician-Austrian vignettes still continue the old themes of conflict, tragedy, and suffering but, perhaps, as Barzel says (see chapter II) not in as vigorous a manner as in the earlier ones of the Russian period.

The further development of the vignette during the Palestinian period, from 1938 on, is quantitative in a formal sense (more ways in which the "point" is used); but very significant changes also occur in tone and theme. Biblical allusions abound and reflect Schoffman's attitude to Palestine in his observations of landscape and other scenes. Finally, the hopefulness of which we saw a mere glimmer in "Adam Ba'arets" (see chapter III) has blossomed and matured. All the problems of the Second World War, the War of Independence, absorption of new immigrants, were reflected in the vignettes of this latest period yet the balance is favorable.

We have examined a number of vignettes to demonstrate the chronological development in this class of Schoffman's works, as we have done with short stories in chapter III. In so doing we have encountered vignettes that belong to different categories.

I believe this thesis would be incomplete without a brief overview of the entire collection of vignettes, in order to identify, at least, the major categories. This I shall

proceed to do in the next few pages, after which I shall attempt to formulate a definition of Schoffman's vignette as a distinct genre.

In regard to setting, the majority of the vignettes have a recognizable locale and a specific time. Many vignettes have as their settings, for example, the cafes of Vienna in the aftermath of the First World War; some are set in the villages of the Steier District where Schoffman spent his last years in Austria; and some are set in Palestine during the Second World War.

There are many other vignettes, however, that have no particular locale or social context, and could refer to any place and any time. One such vignette is "Be'ad Hachalon."[9] Looking through the window the observer sees his son among some boys grabbing for nuts which fell off the walnut tree. His son turns out to be less aggressive than most, and the father is concerned about his survival in the world. "My only hope is that by the time he grows up the world will already have a new order in which grabbing is not necessary. My only hope."

With regard to plot, some vignettes have no plot as such but are character sketches, depicting some special person perhaps, such as the old farmer Brauchert in "Mibereshit".[10] In his seventies, he is still going strong running his mountain side quarry. He moves about always wearing the same old and worn out hat. "On his eightieth birthday he donned a new hat with a shiny visor, -- and began everything from the

beginning."

A third type of vignette is "Et Ha'adam Nishakti,"[11] which is structured with a plot-line going back many years through a flashback and continuing into the present. The narrative is held together by the leitmotif "Papotshka" repeated after each part, and ends with the usual "point" ending.

At the opposite end of the spectrum of types, there are vignettes which neither have a plot, nor portray a slice of life through character sketching, nor depict a dramatized scene. These vignettes merely examine philosophically some aspect of the quality of life or the nature of man. (See "Pe'ulah Hadadit" above.) This type may be called short essays. Yet the author himself included them with his "stories."

When we look at what is included by the author as Divrei 'Iyun (essays) -- all of which are very short (see chapter I) -- we find that some are just that: short essays. They are merely comments on matters of interest, without any effort to impart to them any aesthetic quality.

Some of these Divrei 'Iyun employ some of the techniques of the vignette. I would like to present one of these in translation:

Hunger ("Hara'av")

> I could not understand how, just how could the people in the death camps, Ausschwitz etc., find the strength to bear the terrible spiritual burden, this constant wait for the bitter end. How is it that they didn't break down in spirit even before . . . what saved them

from this horrible depression?

Then I understood: The hunger!

They were always hungry, always. All their thoughts were focused on this one point alone, on their hunger. They walked about always looking downward, to the ground, searching for something to eat, to swallow. Like a hen searching for grain.

The hunger saved them.[12]

The format of "I wondered -- I understood" is aesthetically equivalent to that of "I saw -- I thought" which is typical of many of the unexpected explanatory "point" endings. The "point" using the paradox-irony principle is as powerful here as in any of the vignettes, in which it is employed. In my opinion both this selection from the Divrei 'Iyun, and "Pe'ulah Hadadit" described above should be classified among the vignettes rather than among the essays since each has at least one active character accounted for: the observer narrator. (I am offering this as one of the criteria for the vignette -- see below.)

The "point" ending is the most characteristic feature of the vignette, and it serves a dual purpose: first, as an organizing principle which makes the preceding cogent; and second, as a means for the author to execute his didactic purpose, and teach a lesson in an indirect manner.[13]

A number of vignettes, however, do not end in a "point." Let us look at one:

Ravens ("Orvim")

We move about in silent anticipation

> for our great diaster. Ravens, as large as eagles, screech in the autumn skies. There are multitudes of people, multitudes, multitudes, people without end, but the great disaster lays in wait for each one of them, for each one of them.
>
> On the way home, to our wonderful children, our heart is fearful expecting our wife to come out wailing. This time, actually, it was a false fear: the children are playing innocently . . . but who knows what another day will bring? What will happen tomorrow, the day after, some day?
>
> Each man has his own disaster; each man has his own great disaster which is being kept for him. We are all prisoners under a sentence of death, prisoners under a sentence of death, whose execution has been postponed, due to some technical reason, for an unstated period.[14]

Even without the "point" ending, this vignette is able to evoke a universal sense of doom through a particular reaction to the cries of the ravens on a dismal autumn day. We are relieved when our uneasiness turns out to be unfounded; but then it returns much more intense, for after all, perhaps it is our sense of relief which is unfounded?

This review of the collection of vignettes makes no claim to be complete and all inclusive. Its purpose is rather to indicate the great wealth of the Schoffmanian vignette, and the difficulty of a rigid definition of composition techniques.

The following formulation, however, may be helpful to readers of Schoffman:

1. The Schoffmanian vignette is a brief word picture which makes a complete unit with its title.

2. It may or may not have a plot, and may or may not have an identifiable setting.

3. It employs a very limited number (or amount) of:

    a. Situations
    b. Description
    c. Characters (however, it has no less than one character, -- the observer-narrator)

4. The situations may be particular or universal.

5. It is generally didactic in nature, with the "lesson" taught indirectly.

6. The situations are linked, and the "lesson" taught by means of:

    a. (Most comonly) A "point" ending relying on paradox, irony, contrast, or surprise for its effect, or
    b. other structural devices including, but not limited to, leitmotifs, contrast, paradox, irony, or surprise used as organizing principles.

In this chapter I have demonstrated chronological change in the structure and dominant theme of Schoffman's vignettes through volumes I, II, and III and on, corresponding generally to different periods in Schoffman's life: the Russian period, the Galicia-Austria period, and finally the Palestinian period.

Following this demonstration I reviewed the total store of Schoffmanian vignettes in order to identify the major types contained in it. The composition and techniques of these major types were study and a single formulation developed which includes all the types encountered but excludes other works. This I believe, demonstrates that the Schoffmanian vignette is, indeed, a genre in its own right distinct from the Schoffmanian short story.

V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In chapter I, I noted that my early encounter with Schoffman's work was through a collection of his very short works ("vignettes"), which I considered for many years to be Schoffman's typical mode of expression. Subjectively, this form appealed to me because of its great impact in such a concentrated piece of writing.

It was only relatively recently that I became acquainted with the totality of Schoffman's works as collected in the "Ktavim" edition. It struck me that although there were certain similarities between the familiar short works and the longer ones, the two seemed so different as to be written by two separate authors. These initial impressions provided the impetus for this study. The methodology I have employed in this study, however, is based on critical methods which delve into all aspects of Schoffman's creative effort. My first hypothesis is that the very brief form is sufficiently distinct from the longer works even to warrant a different name (the "vignette"); but, upon further examination, I concluded that the distinction goes beyond a mere difference in length.

Even though brevity is not the sole differentiation between the forms, it is, nevertheless, a readily discernible one. In order to determine the relative numbers of these

types in Schoffman's works, I undertook a page count of all the works in the "Ktavim". This count demonstrated a chronological development which was not apparent otherwise; namely, that the longer story form rapidly decreased in time, while the shorter increased in number up to the first part of Volume III. Furthermore, after the first three stories in this volume, Schoffman no longer wrote any longer works (i.e., short stories), but devoted himself exclusively to the vignette. This fact holds true even in regard to the essays and eulogies written during Schoffman's long Palestinian period. This discovery led to the formulation of my second hypothesis: there was a chronological development in Schoffman's works, i.e., that both time and change of physical environment were important factors in Schoffman's use of various forms and genres.

There followed a third discovery, albeit an extrinsic one: the general critical interest in Schoffman in Hebrew literary circles far exceeded my expectations. The extensive bibliography appended to this paper is a mere fraction of the available literature. However, I also noted that, much of this critical writing was mainly impressionistic, content oriented, and vague, and it contributes very little to a true understanding of Schoffman's writings. Only a very few modern critics have recently begun to correct this failings. But there were still some critical lapses, in my estimation, to which I have attempted to address myself in the course of this paper.

A main gap I have concerned myself with is the idea of chronological development in both the short story and the vignette. This development manifests itself primarily in a continuous refinement of style and technique during the Russian-Galician-Austrian periods. During Schoffman's late Russian and early Galician period the vignette was created; and it manifests a further condensation of an already lightly austere style. During the Austrian period the typical "point" ending made its appearance, and the vignette was further developed in all its variations. Late in the Austrian period the vignette came into use as a sub-structure in composition of longer stories. Finally, a pronounced thematic change came about with Schoffman's move to Palestine in 1938.

After examining the vignettes in most of its variations I arrived at a definition of its composition and structure in terms other than mere brevity. Thus the vignette form excludes both the longer "short story" and the short essays. Above and beyond the technical formulations in this paper, I have been led in the course of this work full circle to my initial "impression": the Schoffmanian vignette, because of its brevity, because of its didactic nature, because of the use of the "point" -- or perhaps inspite of all of these -- evinces an emotional impact and a power of expression unequalled by the works of any author I know, or even by Schoffman's own longer works.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I:

[1]G. Schoffman, Kol Kitvei G. Schoffman (Tel-Aviv: The Dvir Co. Ltd. and Am. Oved. Ltd., 1960) 5 vols. Hereafter referred to as "Ktavim."

[2]G. Kressel, Leksikon Hasafrut Ha'ivrit Badorot Ha'acharonim (Merchavia: Sifriat Po'alim, 1967) II, 893-894.

[3]Ya'akov Fichman, "Gershon Schoffman", Kitvei Ya'akov Fichman (Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1960), 225.

[4]Israel Zmorah, "Yetsirato Shel G. Schoffman", Sifrut Al Parashat Dorot (Tel-Aviv: Machbarot Lesafrut, 1950) III, 45.

[5]My own memory. I can find no bibliographical reference to this book.

[6]The chronological order of the works in the "Ktavim" has been noted before. Now that the reader has at hand an outline of Schoffman's life it is well to note that Volume I comes from his Russian period, Volume II is of the Galicia-Austria period, and Volumes III, IV and V are of the Palestine/Israel period. Further, it should be pointed out that Volumes IV and V also contain essay type material, separated from the "fiction", but belonging to the same period, and also arranged chronologically.

Chapter II:

[1]C. N. Bialik, "Al Z. Shneor, G. Schoffman, VeY. D. Berkowitz" in Dvarim Sheb'al Peh (Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1935), vol. II, p. 188.

[2]Mordecai Rabinson, Dyokana'ot Misofrei Hador (Jerusalem: Dfus Hasolel, 1932), p. 30.

[3]Israel Zmora, "Yetsirato Shel G. Schoffman" in Sifrut Al Parashat Dorot (Tel-Aviv: Machbarot Lsafrut, 1950), vol. III, pp. 45-53.

[4]Mark Schorer, "Technique as Discovery", Hudson Review, I (Spring 1948), p. 67.

[5]Hillel Barzel, "Bein Sipur Litmuna Bitsirat Schoffman", Moznaim, XXX, 3 (February 1970), 209-215.

[6]Gershon Shaked, "Al Chod Hama'aseh", Moznaim, XXX, 3 (February 1970), 183-189.

[7]Reuven Kritz, "Hapointe Bsipurei Schoffman" Karmelit, XIV-XV (1969), 128-143.

[8]Reuven Kritz, "Assotsiatsia, Hesber Vkishur Mafti'im Bsipurav Shel Schoffman", Moznaim XXX, 3 (February 1970), 239-245.

[9]Reuven Kritz, "Hadgamat Haparadox Kmotiv Mivni Bsipurei Schoffman", Karmelit XVI (1970), 85-92.

Chapter III:

[1]"Ktavim", 5-12.

[2]Ibid., III, 5-32.

[3]Ibid., III, 33-46.

[4]Ibid., III, 47-58.

Chapter IV:

[1]"Ktavim", I, 187.

[2]Ibid., I, 158-159.

[3]Ibid., II, 207.

[4]Ibid., II, 223.

[5]Ibid., III, 326.

[6]Ibid., III, 167.

[7]Ibid., III, 263.

[8]Ibid., III, 100.

[9]Ibid., II, 231.

[10]Ibid., II, 312.

[11]Ibid., III, 79.

[12]Ibid., IV, 215.

[13]Reuven Krtiz, "Assotsiatsia, Hesber, Vekishur Maftiim Besiyumei Sipurav Shel Schoffman", Moznaim, XXX, 3 (February 1970), 239.

[14]"Ktavim", II, 232.

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