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Title: ‘Bashtendikayt’ and ‘Banayung’: theme and imagery in the earlier poetry of Abraham Sutzkever

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Abstract: This study analyses the poetry which Sutzkever wrote between 1935 and 1954, emphasising the themes of the poetic word and the poet's role. During this formative period Sutzkever established his complex of images, and laid the foundation for the often hermetic later poetry. The earlier work is characterised by tension between the aesthetic and the ethical, the ikh and the world. The earliest manifests both strands, combining Romantic individualism with awareness of the social nature of poetry. In 'Valdiks' (1940), nature imagery develops into an inner language expressing an aesthetic vision, giving way in the war years to doubts, but also to a conviction of the poet's ethical task ('Di festung', 1945). In Israel Sutzkever achieved new confidence in his poetic identity, which he expressed through Jewish and biblical imagery ('In fayer-vogn', 1952). The African environment gave him a sense of freedom and renewed nature inspiration, and he explored new imagery of paganism, sensuality and myth ('Helfandn bay nakht', 1950-1954). The poem 'Ode tsu der toyb' (1954) is the climax of the first period, resolving the conflict between aesthetic and ethical, past and present, and pointing the way towards the mature aestheticism of the later work. The study focusses on significant aspects of this process. Sutzkever's constant underlying theme is the nature of poetry itself. He investigates this through permanent images which develop specific symbolic connotations and become a metapoetic language. The resolution of the conflict between the aesthetic and the ethical lies in Sutzkever's belief in the equivalence of the spiritual and the corporeal, in the power of the word, and in the unbreakable goldene keyt of birth, death and renewal. The later aestheticism is foreshadowed in this period by the idea of the essence of poetry as the ineffable silence which the poet struggles to reach through the word.

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The entire poem is imagery that conveys deep feelings of contemplation and subtle remorse for things left undone to the reader. Romeo and Juliet – W. Shakespeare. O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! Later the lines there is olfactory imagery in 'the winter evening settles down/ with the smell of steaks in passageways'. Summer Night – Alfred Tennyson. And like a ghost, she glimmers on to me. Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars, And all thy heart lies open unto me. Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me. Now folds the lily all her sweetness up, And slips into the bosom of the lake So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip into my bosom and be lost in me. These poetry imagery elements have the ability of triggering the five senses even beyond the scope of the visual imagery. With the use of vast literary tools such as; simile, metaphor onomatopoeia, metonymy and personification and synecdoche amongst others, writers can successfully bring to our consciousness the beautiful picture of things that exists and those that don’t. The pleasure most people get from imagery alone, makes them prefer poetic imagists to non imagist. The love for imagery made it seem, to the poets of the early 20th century, as though it was the most important aspect of poet... Visual Imagery: it consists of elements which allures the sight. Its scenery capabilities give poetic lines the ability to paint an event in the reader’s head. The early troubadour was a wondering singer or minstrel who traveled from place to place singing for gaining his living. But the French troubadours were mostly of noble birth that wrote and sang for the upper-class audience. II- Second phase witnessed the poetry reaching a certain internal maturity. The kind of material appearing in the earlier books continued and the same themes are treated but two distinct attitudes among the authors gave rise to two kinds of work, the straight literary tradition and the ethically oriented work. Ibn al-Jawzi wrote Dham al-Hawa (Love Forced Himself In), then Mughltai wrote al-Wadih al-Mubin fi Dhikr Mn Estushhida min al-Muhibbin (The Clear and Obvious in the Mention of the Martyred Lovers).