Edith Post

1990

Tevye

It has become commonplace to regard Tevye as a Job-like character who is beset with innumerable problems but manages, in the end, to transcend his difficulties. We read this in Professor Dan Miron who says:

> ...Every story thus portrays a Tevye revived and refreshed who is entertaining, timeless, and immutable, ready for the next trial, for death and resurrection-*1.(p.1281)

Professor Ruth Wisse seems to concur.She says:

> Tevye, who is actually defenseless against the barrages of challenges and attacks that lay him low, should have been a tragic victim. Instead, balancing his losses on the sharp edge of his tongue, he maintains the precarious posture of a comic hero."*2

I think differently, and in this paper I propose to show that despite a facile tongue and what ever postures he may assume, Tevye is ultimately an unheroic, declining figure whose story represents a tragic episode in a larger comic narrative which focuses on several of his daughters as the real heroines of Tevye der milkheker. Three of the daughters, anchored firmly by strong commitments and personal courage, bring the promise of change and renewed life to the disintergrating world of east European Jewry, and they accomplish this without completely abandoning their Jewish traditions, values, and beliefs.

PART 1.BACKGROUND ON TEVYE'S THREE OLDEST DAUGHTERS.

Each of Tevye's three older daughters*3 Tsaytl, Hodl, and Khava-- departs in a different and significant way from Jewish custom. The oldest, Tsaytl, initiates the pattern when she takes control of her life and chooses love with a poor young tailor rather than economic security with a rich widower favored by Tevye. Her behavior signals, first, that the HasKala*4 has finally reached that last stronghold of Jewish orthodoxy in eastern Europe, the dorf (village), and secondly, that Tevye's oldest daughter represents a new breed of Jewish woman, who, like Nora in Ibsen's A Doll House, signals the end of an old order and the beginning of something new.

Tevye responds to Tsaytl's non-conventional behavior with understandable concern. While he has himself departed from tradition by raising his daughters to have minds of their own, he has difficulty accepting them unless they conform to his rules, and no where more so than in the area of marriage.For like other Jews of the day, he regards marriage as a practical economic relationship, and the idea of a union based solely upon love strikes him as fremd (strange) and foolish.

> Vos heyst "zey aleyn hobn zikh gegebn dost vort." vos iz dos far a velt gevorn? a bokher bagegent zikh mit a meydl un zogt tsu ir: "lomir zikh gebn dos vort, az mir ziln zikh nemn." epes glat hefker-tsibeles...!
>
> p. 88-89
>
> What do you mean, "They pledged their word to eachother." What is becoming of the world? A young man meets a girl and says to her: "Let's pledge our word to become engaged." Just like that!

So he is relieved when Tsaytl, after shaking the foundations of Tevye's authority as a father and of Jewish marital customs, quickly settles down to a

conventional courtship with Motl. The usual formalities are observed; a standard Jewish wedding follows; and order is restored to the troubled father.

But the peace is short lived, for soon Hodl, Tevye's second daughter, shatters the calm by revealing she has also chosen her future husband without benefit of a shatkhin (Jewish marriage broker) or parental input. UnKnown to Tevye, she has become engaged to Feferl a Jewish university student and an ardent revolutionist. A true son of the Enlightenment, Feferl has by-passed the two conventional occupations open to Jewish men -- trade or torah study -- and instead, has chosen to commit his life to the revolution. The couple inform Tevye that they plan to wed with a minimum of religious fuss: no engagement party, no nodn (dowry), no trousseau, and no large wedding. This violates Tevye's sense of propriety and he feels outraged, but he restrains himself and agrees to the match. Following the wedding, Feferl leaves immediately on a secret political mission, is soon arrested, imprisoned,and exiled for life to Siberia. To Tevye's intense sorrow, his second daughter, the idealistic Hodl decides to accompany her husband and to share his fate.

Despite serious reservations, Tevye accepts the two marriages, partly because he likes both young men, but more to the point, because he knows that he cannot persuade his independent and wilfull daughters to change their minds. They are spirited and determined young women, unlike both their mother, Golde, or the simpler bas yisroel heroines of the author's earlier novels, Stempenu and Yosele Solevey-*5.

For times and heroines have changed, and parents and children now have different perspectives on social, political and religious issues. This is a constant source of grief and conflict for Tevye, who frequently comments about tsa'ar gidul bonim, ("the sorrows of child raising")-*6. This conflict is espcially evident in the conflicting attitudes toward change expressed by the

two generations. Like a leit motif in the novel, Tevye reiterates continually that he cannot alter the world and therefore, must accept conditions as he finds then, which is to say, as God decrees.

> hoydu lashem ki toyu-*7 vi azoy got firt, azoy is gut, --dos heyst es badarf zayn gut. vorem pruft zayt a hokhm un makht besser! ot hob ikh gevolt zayn a kluger, gedreyt dem posek aher, gedreyt dem posek ahin, gezen es helft nisht, hob ikh tsugenumen di hant funm hartsn un hob gezogt tsu zikh aley: tevye bist a nar! du vest di velt nisht ibermakhn.
>
> (p.120)
>
> (.."Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good"--Which ever way God leads/directs is good. That is, it has to be good. Because try to be wise and do better yourself! Here I wanted to be clever, turned the posek (verse) this way, turned the posek that way, saw that it didn't help, so I took my hand away from my heart and said to myself: Tevye, you are a fool! You won't remake the world-*8.

On the other hand, Tevye's daughters seem less inclined to rely upon externals such as God or Fate. They seek to alter the world through personal commitment to love, revolution, universalist ideals, materialism and/or to immigration.

Khava, the third daughter, rapidly escalates her sisters' rebellious pattern by covertly marrying a young Russian villager and converting to Christianity. Her duplicity and apostasy cause Tevye deep shame and pain, and he refuses to accept her marriage. In fact, he regards it as one more punishment from God, Whom he thinks inflicts more difficulties upon him than

upon others. Tevye sinks into a profound depression, and it is in that frame of mind that he begins the story of his third daughter.The chapter is one of only two in the entire book which begins without greeting or address to Sholem AleyKhem-*9. The omission is an indication of Tevye's extreme distress.

PART 2.STRUCTURE OF "KHAVA":

A. Manifest Level: Plot

On the manifest level, plot is structured as an oral monologue addressed to Sholem AleyKhem, the implied author-*10, who listens silently to all that Tevye has to say and at a later date, so the fiction goes, transcribes Tevye's words verbatim.Sholem Rabinovitch, the real author, uses the restricted monologue form with virtuoso skill. From the conventional novel, he adapts the narrative technique of alternating summary and dramatic scenes for use in the monologue. This means that speaker, Tevye, wears two hats and functions both as a character in the dramatic scenes, and as a dramatized narrator who intrudes on the story with digressive commentaries. From his comments, the reader learns what Tevye thinks, while from the scenes of dialogue the reader learns what others also have to say also. By permitting Tevye to interact wiith different characters (Khava, the priest, Golde, townspeople, God, and even l'havdil, the horse) in different settings, the author opens up the claustrophobic monologue so that it reads like a conventional short story narrated in the first person by a folksy reliable narrator.

No literary form offers the reader a more direct, intimate, and sympathetic view of a character than the dramatic monolgoe. Regardless of how unpleasant a character may be, hearing his story from his point of view, makes the character agreeable. In Tevye der milkheker we see the story through his eyes, and the sympathy this engenders tends to persuade the reader to suspend

moral judgment and to overlook Tevye's faults and limitations. However, the reader must exercise caution, for Tevye is a biased and self conscious character, acutely aware that what he says will be published by Sholem Aleykhem, and so he makes an effort to "compose" himself,-- i.e to present himself in an admirable light, most often by means of humor-*11. However, a smug Tevye does report what other say reliably even when they disagree with him, for he is certain that Sholem Aleykhem will agree with him. This unintentional reliablity permits the reader to evaluate incidents and characters independently of Tevye's biased comments.While the implied author says nothing, the real author's attitude toward his characters can be discerned by the way he presents the characters and by what they reveal of themselves. I will expand upon this in part below.

A masterfull "digression" precedes the first scene. Of considerable length, it gives the full cosmic range of Tevye's interests, beginning with an ambivalent, qualified statement about God in the upper world (see page); moving to a review of Tevye's family affairs on earth; and ending with a curse hurled at the village priest whom Tevye identifies with Satan in the lower world.

A brief summary of plot follows: in scene 1, Tevye intercepts Khava and KhvedKa talking together outside his house. Tevye's suspicians are aroused, and when the young Russian writer leaves, Tevye warns his daughter not to continue her relationship with the gentile. Khava deflects the reproof and finesses the conversation into a long debate with Tevye which discloses their conflicting beliefs and values.

Sometime later, returning from Boyberik (Sc.2), Tevye meets the Russian priest on the street and learns that he has taken custody of Khava, for she has defected from the family and from Judaism, plans to convert and to wed

Khvedka. Tevye is shocked, but he hides his feelings from the priest and returns home (sc.3) where he finds the family distraught by Khava's defection. Here he vents his anger, first by shouting at everyone and then by beating his horse. Later in a long talk with his wife Golde, Tevye learns that she knew of Khava's visits to the priest but remained silent because Tevye seldom paid attention or listened to her.

The author points out how Tevye tends to deny responsibility by having him begrudingly admit that she might be right, and then promptly dismissing the thought.

a bisl iz zi gerekht, trakht ikh mir. p. 131.

(she might be a little right, I think to myself)

As a result of their conversation, however, Tevye resolves to see Khava in the morning and to talk sense into her. However, the next day,(sc.4) when Tevye visits him, the Russian prelate refuses to allow Tevye to speak with his daughter, and she remains in hiding. So (sc. 5) Tevye returns home, declares her dead to the family, and all sit shiva-*12 for her.

Not long thereafter, (sc. 6), Tevye resumes work in Boyberik, and in a parody of Job being comforted by his friends, several wealthy customers tease Tevye about his many problems and he withdraws angry and alienated. That afternoon, as he rides homeward through the woods lost in thought, suddenly (sc. 7) Khava appears and runs after his wagon, begging to talk with him. At first Tevye is confused and thinks to listen to her, but when she attempts to wrest the horse's reins from Tevye, his symbol of masculine control, he determines she is satanic and drives quickly away from her. In his closing commentary, he shares with Sholem Aleykhem the pain of his situation,his feelings of guilt and sin,and urges the writer to forget him.

B. Latent Level. Myth

On the latent level, below the structure of scenes, commentaries, narrators, and perspectives, the Edenic myth emerges to shape events and lend meaning not only to the chapter but to the novel as well. As God exiled Adam and Eve (Khava in Yiddish) from Eden for disobeying his commandments, so Tevye exiles Khava from their edenic home-*13 for disobeying him. Thus Tevye in the microcosim is analagous to God in the macrocosim-*14 and Khava is analagous to Eve.

In both stories, the sin, error, or action which provokes each parent to anger involves the transgression of religious taboos associated with knowledge. In the Bible, God cautions Adam (before Eve is created) not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge or he will die. In "Khava", Tevye cautions his daughter not to continue her relationship with Khvedka, who is clearly forbidden fruit on the Russian tree of Enlightenment. Khava, however, asks troubling questions and an alarmed Tevye warns her that her defiance will lead to her death. The following excerpt from their dialogue highlights their impasse.

TEVYE: I'd be happier if you were less acquainted with him (Khvedka). You must not forget who you are and who he is.

KHAVA: God created all people equally.

TEVYE: Yes, yes,God created Adam the first man in his image. But one must not forget that each must seek out his equal, as it is written in the verse: ish kematnas yodoy, ("Everyman as he is able"- Deut.,16:17) . (Tevye distorts the posek when he translates it into Yiddish-*15)

KHAVA: An antique idea. You have a verse for everything. Perhaps among your verses you can find a verse which shows how people went and divided themselves into Jews and non-Jews, into bosses and slaves, into rich and beggars.

TEVYE: Teh,teh,teh! You have already, I think, gone astray, daughter, into the sixth millenium. This is how the world has been going since the sixth day of creation.

KHAVA: Why should the world be that way?

TEVYE: Because that's the way God created the world.

KHAVA: Why did God create the world that way?

TEVYE: Eh, if we start to ask questions--why this and why that, then it's a story without an end, in idover sof.

KHAVA: But that's why God gave us understanding, so we should ask questions.

TEVYE: We have this kind of custom that says if a hen begins to crow like a rooster, then let her immediately be taken to the shoykhet (ritual slaughterer). As we say in the blessing: hanoyseyn lasekhui binah.-*16.

The blessing says nothing about death, but since Khava knows no Hebrew, Tevye interprets it to suit his purpose and conspicuously fails to translate it into Yiddish. The demonic element-* 17 embedded in the story, suddenly surfaces here in the submerged image of the rooster as a sacrifical kepore hen-*18 .It suggests a scapegoat role for Khava/Eve linked to the father.

As a result of their behavior, Eve and Khava grow in knowledge and sexual awareness. Eve's "sin" is a matter of public record in Genesis where in conversation with the crafty serpent, she is direct, morally unaware, and easily influenced. In other words, she emerges as an inexperienced adult/child and regardless of whatever misdeed she is accused of, she remains innocent by virture of her position as an immature grown child injured by her first experience with an adult world she is does not understand. Nor is Adam different from her; yet throughout history, in books written by men, Adam is held blameless and duped by Eve, who is linked to weakness of character, corruptibility, evil,-- and in what must be the classical example of the principle of projection, she alone is held responsible for the introduction of sexuality and lust into the world. Although Judaism does not believe in primal transgression, or what Christians call original sin, Eve and all women are nevertheless viewed with suspician and ambivalence in the rabbinical commentaries, and all observant Jewish men to this day thank God daily that they were not created female.

Unlike Eve, Khava "sins" offstage, yet it is easy to make observations about her character also, for Tevye says repeatedly that his daughters commit themselves to love and ideas with a single minded itensity. Judging from her conversation with Tevye, Khava is also inexperienced,direct and easily influenced. She looks upon herself and Khvedka as a new breed of enlightened Russian intellectual and, with all the impatience and confidence of youth, she thinks that she has progressed beyond the narrow confines of her father's antique religion. As we shall see below, the author does not entirely disagree with her.

When their transgressions are discovered by their parents, the frightened children hide. God, who is All Powerful, easily locates Adam and Eve in the

Garden, but Tevye, who is merely a limited literary analogue of God, is less successful. Just as the Satanic snake tempted Eve to defy her Father, the unctuous priest now uses Khava's love for Khvedka to persuade her to deceive and defy Tevy. As the two men wrangle about who has authority over Khava, muted echoes of an older conflict between God and Satan for the soul of man and woman, resound in the background. Like the serpent in the Garden, the priest wins this first round. Is it any wonder, then, that Tevye regards the priest who leers at him with a cold blooded smile, as an emissary of the devil and pronounces the ultimate Jewish curse upon him: yimakh shemoy vesikhoy,-*19. May his name and memory be erased forever, and indeed, the author never mentions the name of the priest. As an added demonic touch Sholem AleyKhem places threatening dogs in the priest's yard who bite at Tevye's heels, suggesting the three-headed dog that stands guard to the entrance of Hell.

The trangressions of the children threaten both F/fathers. God is overt about this and say openly:

> 'Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.' Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. Genesis 3:22-23 -*20

Tevye is less direct, but he is also threatened by a loss of authority. As early as chapter 2, with Tsaytl, this has already become an issue.

> zey hobn zikh gegebn dos vort, as zey zoln zikh nemen? nu, un vu bin ikh? epes hob ikh oykh a shtikl daye tsu zogn af mayn kind, tsi mikh fregt men shoyn gor nisht? (p. 87)

> They pledged their word to each other to become engaged? well, and who am I? Don't I also have a bit to say with regard to my own child, or isn't anyone asking my anything anymore?

Adam and Eve are punished with exile and forced to leave the mythic pastoral world of Eden where they lived in animal-like unawareness and god-like immortality. Similarly, Khava is punished with exile from the security and protection of her innocent Jewish home. The world of experience all are forced to enter is difficult and different, and for the first time they must cope with full consciousness, independence, responsibility, and the need to work.

*

I use the word mythic as a literary term to mean stories about gods or demons in which nothing has to be believable, since gods and demons live at the limits of what people desire or dread. Claude Levi-Strauss says:

> ...in the course of a myth anything is likely to happen. There is no logic, no continuity. Any characteristic can be attributed to any subject; every conceivable relation can be met. With myth, everything becomes possible-*21

As a literary mode, myth is at one end of a literary continuum and realism is at the other. As narration moves away from myth to more realistic forms of fiction, characters and events must be adapted to plausibility in a process called displacement.In myths proper, relationships can be expressed as direct metaphors , e.g. the sun is a god. But as we move toward realism, relationships are displaced and can be (1) linked by similies or analagies; for example, the sun is like a god or (2) suggested by incidental imagery and

associations; for example a halo. Again, a structural principle in myth such as death when displaced in realistic modes of literature can appear as illness, disappearance, or exile.

The story of Khava is a displaced version of the Edenic myth. It is structured as a sequence of events,-- birth, death, disappearance, rebirth/restoration/redemption.-*22. That pattern of death and rebirth is seen world wide in other stories about dying gods and goddesses associated with nature (trees, rivers, vegetation, or solar systems). The rebirth of these divine beings is modeled upon the qualities of self-renewal and fertility observable in nature, for example in the rotation of the seasons: spring (birth), summer (maturity) autumn (harvest), and winter (death)-*23. This cyclical pattern guarantees a desired continuity of life and a continuum of identity. The same god is re-cycled, so to speak, over and over, without change or development, like Persephone. A second and different method of mythic organization or movement is a dialectical pattern rather than cyclical.It is associated with oppositions in nature, such as life/death, heaven/hell, and death/rebirth. Clearly the focus here is upon conflict betweem two opponents, and implicit in this mythic pattern is the principle of change.*24

In the stories of Khava and Eve both the cyclical and dialectical patterns occur simultaneously. At one extreme of the dialectic, we find an inexperienced young woman, associated by her youth and innocence with the cyclic pattern of spring and rebirth. Opposed to her is an older authority, who by virtue of his age and his fear of loss of power, is associated with winter and decline, sterility and death. To make the story more plausible the author adds a philosophical/historical/social dimension to the dialectic. Thus Khava is (also) linked to liberalism, non-conformity, change, individual

autonomy and reason, while the aging authority,Tevye, is associated with conservatism, tradition, status-quo, and faith.

Obviously, the implications of a dialectical mythic design in "Khava" raises questions about the outcome of the conflict, such as who wins, who loses, who is the hero, the enemy, and what does this say about God? As the paper proceeds, I will address those questions.

*

PART 3. SHOLEM ALEYCHEM'S RE-WRITES THE MYTH.

Sholem Aleykhem makes changes in the original myth which significantly affect not only the meaning of the chapter, but the entire book as well.

I. First Change..

In the Edenic myth, God has only one role, that of a divine Father. In "Khava", on the other hand, Tevye has two roles: he is both a father figure analagous to God, and also a child of God upon Whom he himself is dependent. When he orders the family to sit shiva, he is acting as a god-figure, expelling a disobedient child who has rebelled against his rules and who threatens to usurp his authority. But when Khava pursues him in the woods, and he refuses to speak or listen to her, he functions as a child of God who fears that she may undermine his OWN relationship with his Father. The dual roles cause Tevye untold difficulty, because he cannot reconcile them.

II. Second Change

In the Bible, God exiles Adam and Eve only once and has no conflicts or remorse over His behavior. But Tevye exiles Khava twice, first as a God/father figure and secondly as a child of God and is very troubled both

times by his actions. After the first exile, Tevye is haunted by memories of Khava and wonders whether he has been just. The author, seemingly of two minds himself, sets up an opportunity in the woods (sc. 7) for Tevye to revoke his death sentence and to "restore" Khava to life-*25.

> "Tevye,du shtelst af zikh tsu fil! vos vet dir arn, az du vest zikh opshteln af a vayle, oyshern vos vil zi? efsher hot zi dir tsu zogn azelkhes, vos du darfst dos visn? efsher a kashe af a mayse, hot ze harote un vil zikh umkern tsurik? efsher ligt ze bay im in der erd un bet bay dir, du zolst ir helfn aroys fun gehena?" efsher un efsher, un nokh a sakh azelkher efshers flien mir durkh in kop. (p. 139)
>
> ("Tevye,you make it too hard for yourself. What harm would it do you if you stopped for a while to listen to her? Perhaps she has something special to tell you. Perhaps she has regrets and wants to return home. Perhaps she is having a bad time with him and wants you to help her out of the hell she is in." Perhaps and perhaps and still more perhaps fly through my mind.

However, Tevye farshpils,(forfeits/ squanders) this opportunity to cancel her exile, because her critical, probing questions strike a responsibe chord in him:

> un es krikht mir in kop arayn mshune-modne makhshoves un gedanken: vos iz dos azelkhes yid un vos is nit-yid? ...un far vos hot got bashafn yidn un nit-yidn?...un az got hot shoyn yo bashafn yidn un nit-yidn, far vos zshe zoln zey zayn azoy opgeteylt eyns fun dos andere, nisht

> Konen onkukn eyns dos andere, glaykh vi der iz fun got un yener iz nit fun got? (p. 139)
>
> (Strange, weird thoughts crept into my head: actually what is this thing, Jew and non-Jew?...and why did God go ahead and create Jews and non-Jews?...And since God did go ahead and create Jews and non-Jews, why then should they be so divided, one from the other, not be able to look at each other, just as if this one is from God, and the other is not?...)

Speculation of this kind, Tevye fears, led to Khava's death as a Jew. While he is thinks that as a man, he is wiser and less vulnerable to error than a woman, he fears her ideas could lead him astray for he has his own doubts which he would prefer to keep dormant-*26 . Rather than acknowledge this, Tevye denies the problem, projects the blame of sinfull thoughts upon Khava, then rejects her. Acting as a faithful child of God, Tevye responds to Khava as if she were the serpent who is tempting him into sin; so he exiles her a second time, saying:

> Tevye veyst vi azoy me iz noyeg mitn sotn meKeteg.(p.138)
>
> (Tevye knows how to conduct himself with Satan the accuser.)

This second rejection places Tevye in an untenable position for in order to remain an obedient child of God, he has had to become a bad father and to sacrifice his favorite child. Long ago God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Abraham passed that cruel test and God stayed his hand. But in a replay of that situation, Tevye is afraid to test his

faith against Khava's questions, and instead offers her up for sacrifice. To complete the ironic reversal, no God intervenes to stop him.

He feels great anguish and attempts to justify his actions:

"zi hot dos den bay mir nisht fardint?" (p. 137)

(didn't she deserve this then from me?)

But an inner voice replies:

ikh bin oser l'rakhem, nist vert vos di erd trogt mikh

(I am not worthy for the earth to bear/out up with me). .

As a result of his double roles, a discrepancy arises between what Tevye professes in verse as a father-figure, and what he practices in reality as a child of God.

As a father he says:

(1). tsa'ar gidul bonim-*27

Tevye translates this into Yiddish as:

fun kinder hot men tsurus un me muz dos onemn mit lib.(p.21)

(One has sorrow from children and one must accept this with love.)

But he fails to accept the sorrow Khava brings with love.

He also says:

(2). kerakheym ov il bonim-*28

Tevye translates this into Yiddish as:

nishto keyn shlekht kind bay a tatn (p.139)

(There is no bad child to a father.)

Tevye makes pity synonymous with love, but then he shows neither to Khava and rejects her as a bad child.

As a father he says:

(3) eyl rakhum vekhanum-*29

Tevye does not translate this into Yiddish because he is speaking to Sholem Aleykhem, but obviously he feels he has not been merciful and gracious (or longsuffering and abundant in goodness) as God the Father is supposed to be.

His conflicts and behavior leave Tevye extremely depressed, and he passes a harsh judgment upon himself. In his final comments to Sholem Aleykhem he says:

> in mir fargest: vi in posek shteyt: "vay ishkakheyhu"-*30
> --oys tevye der milkheker. (p.114)
>
> Forget me: as it says in the verse: "And he forgot him."
> ---no more Tevye the dairyman.

This is the same judgment he meted out to both the priest and to Khava, and it establishes that he identifies with them as a sinner.

*

As we have seen, Tevye's double role leads him to reject Khava twice. Although he can defend his behavior intellectually, he does not feel right about it and suffers a deep sense of sin which he can not explain.

... un (ikh) shlog zikh "asmoni" un veys nit far vos" (p.140)

.... I confess, and don't know for what.

I believe that the sin Tevye fails to understand is related to responsibility and complicity in Khava's apostasy. While he feels guilty and depressed for having twice rejected her, he fails to question whether he contributed to the direction Khava took and blames everyone for her misconduct except himself. He blames God for making her so attractive to men; he blames their village for containing only gentiles.And he blames the priest for leading Khava astray. There is certainly truth to what he says, but he when he blames Khava's apostasy upon the powers of magic, he goes too far and incriminates himself. He says that Khava's apostasy is the result of magic and he assumes that when Sholem AleyKhem hears about Khava's enchantment in scene 7, that the writer will agree.

> vorem vos den iz dos, as nit keyn kishef? ot vet ir horkhn vayter, vet ir aleyn oykh zogn dos eygene. (p.135)
>
> (Because what else is it, if not magic? Just listen further and you yourself will say the same.)

Significantly,however, the author makes it clear that nothing magical occurs in their last encounter in the woods,--where magical events do indeed often occur in Sholem AleyKhem's fantasies-*31. Instead, Sholem Rabinovitch (playfully parodying his use of magic and fantasy) uses the scene to expose the emptyness of Tevye's argument and also to level criticism at the layers of superstitious belief that inflitrated and corrupted orthodox Jewish belief.

In refusing to assume responsibility for a share of Khava's transgression and then in punishing her for it, Tevye is as remiss a parent as

God was when He made it not only a possibility that Adam and Eve might break His rules, but insured that they would. He did this when he placed two inexperienced and pre-conscious adult-children, who lacked the ability to exercise mature judgment and restraint, into a limited area with a tempting, attractive forbidden object,and then told them to resist it.

*

The fact is, of course, that like God, Tevye is also the tempter. He has knowingly and unknowingly assisted all his daughters in their movement away from tradition and from him.

Tevye influences his daughters on a conscious level in three ways: (1) by his tremendous pride in their intellectual accomplishments; (2) by allowing Feferl, that arch fiend of orthodox belief and values, to tutor his girls(!) and thus expose them to non-traditional perspectives; (3) by his insistence that they become independent and assertive, and not behave like Yidenes, i.e. like women. The qualities Tevye fosters ultimately lead his daughters to newer perceptions of the world and of themselves; and this in turn leads them away from traditional belief and observance. In Khava's case it contributes to her ultimate conversion to Christianity.

Tevye also influences his daughters on an unconscious level, and here the problem is more complex, for Tevye has competing impulses in a number of areas (life/death; male/female roles; love/hate; conformity/rebellion; spritual/material values) and sends signals of this to his daughters. Hillel Halkin says, the daughters are "...the actor-out of the fantasies and values that he has transmitted to them."(p.23) Professor Janet Hadda says Tevye's daughters "read and respond to his unconscious messages...(and) fulfill destructive and self-destructive wishes of which he is unaware."-*32. For the

purpose of this paper, the last two areas of conflict above are important and I discuss them below.

A. Conformity vs. rebellion:

Along with overt words praising faith and comformity, Tevye has strong unconscious rebellious urges against God and tradition which helps to explain his attraction to Feferl, who expressed the rebellious thoughts Tevye could not.-*33

. Tevye's rebellious thoughts find expression in the statements he makes about God. While he makes many positive statements about God, he also makes an equal number of negative ones.which fall into two groups:(1) a few out and out negative statements like:

-Got hot lib tsu spilen zikh mit menshen. ....
-aroyf un arop. (p. 199)

(-God likes to play with people
- (He picks them) up and down.)

and (2) many more mixed messages that begin with a positive statement about God which is refuted and cancelled by a follow up, often outrageous, final statement. For example:

+Got is a foter. er firt oys, dos heyst,er zitst oybn
-un mir mutshen zikh untn.(p.36)

(+God is a father. he arranges all, ie he sits above,
-while we suffer below.)

*

+mir hobn a groysn got, un a gutn got, un a shtarkn got,nor fun

- dest vegn,lom ikh hobn di brokhes vifl mol der reboynu shel oylm tut-op a shtikl arbet (p. 165)

(+ We have a great god, a good god, a strong god

- nevertheless I wish I had a blessing for how many time God plays a dirty trick)

*

+...faran a got af der velt, an al rakhum v'khnon, vos bavayst zayne groise vunder un mackht mit mir zumer un vinter aroyf un

-arop. (p. 67)

(+ There is a God in the world, Who shows His great wonder and power with me, summer and winter, (He picks me) up

- and (dashes me) down.

*

+ God says to Tevye: "vart-oys,Tevye, ot makh ikh azoy az du vest fargesn fun ale dayne tsorus!"(p. 122)

- (and he sends Tevye more troubles to forget the first.)

(+God says to Tevye: "Wait a bit, Tevye, and I will arrange things so that you forget all your troubles!"

-and He sends Tevye more troubles so as to forget the first.)

*

*

+mir hobn a shtark got un er firt de velt (p. 196)

-...far vos lernst men mit zey (brotski un roytshild)

nit di sedre lekh-lekho?...lozn zey oykh zen az mir hobn a shtarkn got.(p.209)

+ We have a strong God and He runs the world. (p. 196)

-...why don't you teach them (Brotski and Rothchild the section on Lekh-Lekho. Let them also see that we have a strong God.

(That is, strong is synonymous with punishing).

*

+ a mentsh trakht

- un got lakht.

+ Man thinks,

- and God laughs. (p. 65)

The mixed messages are deadly because it is difficult to forget the "punch lines" which make an indelible negative impression on the listener.because they are so outrageous and irreverant. Yet readers tend to take them lightly, to laugh and say that Tevye is an ironic fellow who likes to argue with God, which is after all an old Jewish tradition.

Hillel Halkin defends Tevye on these grounds, noting that arguing with God is taken with great seriousness and as a form of religious service "..provided, of course that it comes from a spiritually ripe individual" p 25. The word "provided", however, is a large qualification, and it is not clear how one determines who is "spiritually ripe". Does Tevye qualify? He is hardly the man of faith that his father or grandfathers were, and though we think of him as a last bastion of tradition and culture in east European Jewry, he is in fact aa transitional figure, uncomfortably stradling two worlds; the old order of orthodox belief which he is linked to by deep emotional ties which he

can't sever, and a newer world which attracts him as a thinking, speculative person, but which he mistrusts and fears.

As such, Tevye is a far more complex and problematic character than has been generally perceived in the past. He is not the genial, benign, naive, unselfconscious shtetl bumpkin whose faith in God and sense of humor enable him always to land gayly on his feet despite all trials. Perhaps we wish he could be, but the character Sholem Rabinovitch presents us, like the author himself, is troubled and conflicted. His negative comments about God function like Freudian slips to reveal unconscious attitudes; beneath the humor one finds anger, ambivalence, bewilderment, pain. While he claims to be an acquiescent child of his Father, what he really transmits to his daughters is a very weak and uninspiring faith which continually sends the message that God is punitive, capricious, remote, indifferent, and unloving, but that we must believe in Him anyway because we have no other choice.

> er zitst oybn un mir mutshen zikh untn. me horevet,me shlept kletse, a brie hot men? (p. 39)
>
> He sits above and we suffer below. We labor, we pull logs, we have a choice?

*

> Ikh bin,vi ir veysst, a groyser bal-b'tokhn un hob tsi dem vos lebt eybik keyn mol keyn tones nist. vi azoy er firt azoy is gut. vorem pruft zikh aderabe, farkert, hot yo tones vetzikh aykh epes helfn? (p. 95)
>
> I am as you know, a man of great faith and I have no complaints againt Him Who lives forever. However He runs things, is good.

Because try, on the other hand, reverse it, have some complaints, would it help in anyway?

But his daughters do not share Tevye's necessary acceptance of God/fate. They beleive that other options exist.

In addition to rebellious messages about God, Tevye also cuts corners on ritual and custom, thereby sending subtle signals to his daughters that they may do the same. For example, Tevye allows Feferl to eat without ritual handwashing and shrugs off Avrontshik's desciration of Shavuos by riding a horse. He ignores the butcher, Lazer Wolf's careless attitude toward the slaughter of a suspect cow. At no time do we read of a truly pious, reverent celebration of a sabbath or holiday. Instead the daughters are exposed to Tevye's continuous negative messages about God and ritual on both a conscious and unconscious level. When the three older daughters part from tradition they are responding to Tevye's covert rebellious signals to do as he wishes, not as he says.

B. Tevye sends a second set of messages which influence the younger daughters. These place a high value on wealth and prestige and denigrate spiritual values. When he introduces Shprintse and Beyle to men who possess status and riches, wishing to please him, the younger daughters respond by becoming involved with the men, both of whom lack the values which Tevye had previously acclaimed, such as learning, culture, modesty, honesty. Obviously the prospect of gaining a rich son-in-law induces a severe case of moral amnesia in Tevye, which permits him to overlook all the men's deficiencies.So the same impulse in Tevye at work earlier to sell Tsaytl to the rich, old, boorish Lazer Wolf whom Tevye also disliked, is repeated with the younger girls, except that now it falls on fertile soil.It is increasingly clear that

often the measure of what is good for Tevye's daughters is what is good for Tevye, and in his favorite fantasy he spends hours daydreaming about how he will spend his daughters' wealth.

Tevye's refusal to admit responsibility for his daughters' behavior is an expression of a larger pattern of denial that he exhibits throughout the novel.The author reveals this first by what others tell Tevye about himself. Hodl and Khava tell him that he does not understand them. Golde says he does not listen, and the priest tells him he is blind and does not see what is going on around him. The author also reveals Tevye's pattern of denial by what Tevye fails to say or do. For example, his consistent surprise and lack of knowledge about all the love affairs going on under his nose is hard to accept, and or what's even harder to believe, is his failure to notice that Golde is ill and dying until it is too late.

*

As the book comes to a close, Tevye's world narrows, and his powers decline.By chapter 8-*35, "Tevye fort keyn yisroyl", Tevye has been widowed and his children have dispersed. Hoping to benefit at last from a rich son-in-law, he finds, ironically, that he is a social emabarrassment to Podhotzur, Beyle's parvenue husband who, like Tevye, is also a social snob who aspires to a place in high society where a father-in-law who is a dairyman would be an impediment. Podhotzur solves his problem by deciding that Tevye should emigrate somewhere. Beyle not only does not oppose the plan, but stands by her husband and explains his reasoning to an incredulous Tevye who vows silently not to sell himself to his rich son-in-law. He fantasies how he will throw any money offered to him back into Podhotzur's face, yet when Podhotzur holds out cash, Tevye takes it and agrees to depart. Only now, with his last daughter altered beyond recognition, does the critical author who has understood Tevye clearly all along, allow Tevye to admit how vain all his wishes for wealth have been. Tevye also finally admits that he alone is responsible for Beyle's unhappy situation, and by extension, for the other daughters as well.

> gey zay a novi, un treff, az baylke vet tsulib mir nemn un farkoyfn zikh far gelt un opshikn dem tatn af de eltere yorn keyn eretz-yisroyl! molt aykh, es redt zikh nor azoy. zi is in dem azoy shuldik punkt azoy vi ir. in gantsn is do shuldik er, ir oysdervaylter, ikh vil im nit sheltn--a kozarme zol af im aynfaln! un efsher, az mir zoln veln gut bartrakhtn, griblen zikh a bisl tifer, kon zayn, az ikh aleyn bin do mer kheb fun alemen. (p. 167-168)

Go and be a prophet, and guess that Beylke would sell herself

> for money because of me and send her father in his old age to Eretz-Yisroyl! Imagine, I am just saying this. In this matter she is as guilty as you are. Completly guilty is her redeemer, I won't curse him--barracks should fall on him! and perhaps, if we want to really think about it, dig deeper into oneself a bit, it might be that I alone am more guilty than everyone.

The qualifications which Tevye hedges his "confession" with are placed there by the author to make the reader aware of to how difficult it is for Tevye to relinquish his patterns of denial. First he blames Beyle; then her husband; and only then is he able to accept sole responsibility for the situation.

Tragedy closes in on an increasingly isolated Tevye, and the mood of the chapter turns elegaic as he sells his possessions prior to departure for Eretz-Yisroyl and then catalogues all the things he had complained about that he will miss: his horse, the village, the police, the summer homes in Boyberik, his rich customers, and even Ephriam, the matchmaker whom he loves to hate. As the chapter ends, Tevye is without identity again, just as he was in the beginning of the story, and his quest for wealth and social prestige has failed. He has no idea what he will do with himself in Palestine and feels adrift. The death of Golde earlier was a severe blow. He tells Sholem Aleykhem:

> Az men zet far zikh dem toyt,muz men vern an apikurs un men heybt-on nokhtsuklern,mah onu umeh khayeynu,("What are we and what is our life?"-From the morning prayer) vos iz in gantsen ot di velt mit de gilgilem, vos zey dreyen zikh, mit di vanen, vos loyfn meshugenervayz,mit dem gantsn tareram arum-un-arum, un afile brotski mit zayne milyonen --hakol hovl, gor nisht shebgornisht!

(p. 166)

(When you see death before you, you have to become a heretic and begin to think "What are we and what is our life?"--what is this whole world with its wheels/planets which go around, with the trains that race crazily, with the whole fuss going around and around, and even Brodski with his millions, it all vanity, nothing with nothing.)

Tevye seems temporarily to have lost his faith and his bearings, and this places him perilously close to the existential world of Kafka. Yet as we have seen time and again, Tevye copes with difficulty by denying his thoughts and feelings. So he "composes" himself for his audience, and begins the following chapter, "Lekh-Lekho" with another broad hello to SA. He explains that he was packed and ready to leave for Eretz-Yisroyl when suddenly Motl died, leaving Tsaytl a widow and her children yosim (orphans). So she returned home to her father and soon that problem compounded by another. First they became the victims of a pogrom and, then ironically, the whole family was exiled from their edenic home by the government.

Tevye's account of the pogrom is a Kafkaesque vision of pain and absurdity. The village pogromchikes are polite, orderly, and reasonable. They discuss the details of the pogrom with Tevye at leisure detailing when it should take place, what should be destroyed, and even why it is necessary to have one. It is required, they explain because the villagers do not wish to lose prestige in the eyes of their neighbors who have all already completed their quota of pogroms.

Despite the humor, the demonic world with its threats of death, torture, and its sense of nightmare is not far away. This is the ironic mode of narrative-*36 which Kafka employed in all his works. Kafka wrote to awaken

frozen minds to suffering-*37, in a mirror image of that intent, Sholem Aleykhem wrote to ease suffering-*38. Regardless of Sholem Aleykhem's stated purpose, what emerges is the most negative section of the book. What is Tevye negative about? Virtually everything:

about the world, it is a foolish place (p.200);

about life and death. It is time to think about the next world (p. 198); and Golde was smart to die (p.200);

about God, He sends the wheel of fortune butter side down (p. 198);

about children, it is better to live in the earth and bake bagels than to feel the sorrows from children (p. 200);

about his health and spirit, he is a broken vessel and without strength to fight (p. 209);

about work, it is slavery (p. 199);

about America, it is a place where the beloved holy Sabbath disappears (p.199).

As Tevye reaches the end of his life cycle, a sense of injustice, folly, crime is taken for granted in his world, and like Kafka's guilt, the fact of the pogrom is a given. Tevye asks:

> un vu iz got? der alter yidishe got? vos shvaygt er?
> vi derlozt er aza zakh? (p. 204)
>
> Where is God? The old Jewish God? Why is he silent?
> How does he permit such a thing?

But there is no answer to his question. God is silent or absent and He appears unattainable, imperfect, capricious, and punitive.-*39

When after all this, at the end of chapter 10, "vehKalaKlaKoys", Tevye affirms " unzer alte Got lebt!" (p. 227), (our old God lives!) his words seemed forced and ring false, for no development occurs in chapter 10 to justify such a comment. Structurally, Tevye's story ended in chapter 9 with Tevye powerless and unable to affirm God. Yet it is as if having brought Tevye to that tragic and ironic conclusion, the author found his vision too bleak and wished to deny it himself. I am reminded here of Professor Miron's comments about a late comedy of Sholem Aleykhem's where emotional needs prevailed over reality, that is, where the romantic impulse for wish-fulfillment triumped in the face of known fact.

> In Di Goldgreber,the young hero returning to Kasrilevke on visit from America, plays a trick on the whole town and teaches it that a "treasure" can only be acquired through hard work in the American style; but the town and Shalom Aleichem refuse to recognize the realism of the hero. The town persists in believing in the existence of the treasure, since without this faith it cannot live.(p. 1284)

**

After the pogrom and expulsion,Tevye makes plans to emigrate to America, Tsaytl, as she did in the beginning of the novel, makes a second remarkable decision and insists that Tevye reconcile with Khava. Having heard that the family had become homeless, Khava has left her husband to return to her God and her family (p. 218) to share in their plight. At first, Tevye resists Tsaytl's efforts to bring about a reconcilliation, but she and the author pull out all the rhetorical stops, and in a scene that balances Khava's earlier verbal duel with Tevye, an impassioned Tsaytl squares off to do battle

with Tevye for Khava's life. She insists that he not farshpil this third opportunity to forgive and accept Khava. First, she appeals to him on the basis of reason and law but when she is unable to sway him through words, she changes her tactics and appeals to him on the level of feelings. She throws herself at his feet and kisses his hand; then she shows him Khava's packed torba (sack)-- the archetypal symbol of the exiled Jew; and finally, she summons Khava herself from the adjoining room.

The prodigal daughter enters like a queen, beautiful and poised. Tevye says to Sholem AleyKhem:

> un vos zol ikh aykh zogn, liber fraynt? take, punkt azoy vi bay aykh in di bikhlekh vert bashriben, bavayst zi zikh, khave heyst es, fun alkir aroys, a gezunte, a glate, a sheyne, vi geven, nit geminert a hor, nor dos pnim a bisl farzorgt, di oygn a bisl fartsoygn, un dem kop halt zi hoykh, mit gedulus, blaybt shtey a vayle, kukt af mir, ikh--af ir, dernokh tsit zi oys tsu mir beyde hent un nor eyn vort kon zi aroysreydn, eyn un eyntsik vort, un shtil:-- ta-te. (p. 217)
>
> (And what shall I say, dear friend? Really, just as you describe in your books, she appears, Khave, I mean, from out of a small adjoining room, healthy, slender, a beauty as she was, not changed a hair, only her face a little worried, her eyes a bit despondent, and she held her head high, with great pride, remained standing a short time, looked at me, I-- at her. Then she stretched out both hands to me and could only say one word, only one single world, softly:--"Pa-pa.")

If we didn't know before that Khava is the main heroine of the book and the object of both Tevye and the author's unbounded love and admiration, we know it now for she stands like the great Jewish heroine from the world of romance, Queen Esther, who dared to appear before her king in order to save the Jewish people from death, which of course is her function here also.

III. Third Change.

I said earlier that Sholem Rabinovitch makes three basic changes to the mythic text. The first was to give Tevye a double role, both as God/Father-figure and as child of God; the second was to exile Khava twice. At the end, the author makes a third change in the mythic text: he rescinds the exile of Khava, and restores her to life, and at last, Tevye is able to act in accord with the verses he previously quoted. With love and pity, he accepts the daughter who has brought him such sorrow. Coming after his admission of responsibility for Beyle in the previous chapter,his behavior with Khava offers further proof that he has grown and matured and is becoming a long suffering, merciful and gracious father. Tevye explains to Sholem AleyKhem and his readers that he made his decision with his heart,-*40 not his head and he suggests that others think about this. It is a major implicit criticism of narrow orthodox practices and belief by the author.

So in the end, Khava is reborn and Tevye approaches the end of his days. There is life in him yet, and he talks about becoming the father of children again, Tsaytl's yosim, but it is only a jest-*41 since it is hardly likely that Tevye will rise again, either spiritually or materially in America. With the advantage of hindsight, we know what his life in the Promised Land will be like, and he suspects it, for he says that only heavy hearts go to America where the blessed Sabbath goes away. Even if Tevye's life in America proves to be better than it turned out to be for the older generation in Shmates-*42, it

will never be as good for him as it was earlier, back in chapter one, when he was on top of the wheel of fortune, and with God's help became a milkheker, a dairyman.

*

In the light of this, it is difficult for me to accept Professor Miron's judgment that Tevye is timeless, immutable, and continuously reborn. (p. 1281) This is true of Tevye only in the chapter 2 ("dos groyse gevins)" ("Tevye Strikes It Rich") and chapter 3 ("a boydem"), ("Tevye Blows A Small Fortune") where Tevye is a continuously reborn hero in the timeless world of folk-tale and legends which belong to the mythos-*43 called romance.

In romance, the hero is larger than life and lives in a world where miracles and magical events occur as a matter of course. The plot is made up of a series of adventures patterned into a quest in which a character begins on a perilous journey, becomes involved in a life and death struggle--which he may not survive--, and in the end is recognized/reborn as the hero of the story. This is the structure in "dos groyse gevins". Tevye begins his quest for a better society for himself and his family, which is to say for a larger income and some social recognition. He has a perilous adventure in the forest with two nekevas (females) whom he suspects for a time might be demons. He prevails over fear and entrenched forces in the society which have kept him poor and in the end is reborn as Reb Tevye with a new position in society as a milkheker (a dairyman) and a larger income. In chapter 3, "a boydem", Tevye, still a comical romantic hero, is able to surmount the catastophic encounter with Menakhem Mendl and rise above his financial losses, because he realizes the errors of his way. That is, he sins, dies, repents, and is reborn at the end when he promises to give up the pursuit of base materialistic concerns. It is entirely correct to say, therefore, that in

the beginning of Tevye der milkheker, Tevye is a comic, romantic hero who entertains us and is admirable.

But that pattern does not persist throughout the book. It changes in chapter 4, "hayntike kinder", when the author discovers his theme: bonim gidalti veroymamti--"I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me." (Isaiah,1:2)-*44. With that posek, Sholem AleyKhem introduces the pattern of conflict between Tevye and his daughters; Tevye becomes grounded in time and history; and runs smack into the Haskala with all it social, religious, economic and political problems. In chapter 4, therefore, the author relinqueshes episodic romantic adventures, such as we find in Menakhem-Mendl, in favor of thematically linked everyday stories. The timeless world of comic romance yields to the ordinary world of everyday ordinary concerns,-- the small domestic comedies and tragedies that most of the author's readers are familiar with, and the plot becomes fixed upon Tevye's difficulties with his daughters and with God.

Life becomes harder and sadder for Tevye, and he often displays personal traits which are neither heroic nor entertaining. Although he seems to recover from his losses after each trial, the degree of recovery gradually diminishes, weighed down by the painful baggage of lost daughters and God's punishment.Increasingly the text takes on a darker tone and after "Khava", negative statements and death images pepper the text. Despite ebullient greetings to Sholem AleyKhem at the opening of chapters, what does Tevye tell us when his stories start? That Sprintse has committed suicide, Beyele has entered a loveless marriage for money, Golde has died alone in the house, and he has seen a pogrom and been driven out of his village.At the end of chapter 8, Tevye is has become a full tragic figure on two grounds: external

circumstances have forced him to become isolated from his society, while inner unresolved conflicts have contributed to his isolation from his children.

In an attempt to rescue Tevye from the tragic position he has placed his character in, the author shifts the mode from the elegaic despair at the close of chapter 8 to comic irony at the beginning of "Lekh Lekho", chapter 9. The turn is significant, for the ironic mythos goes beyond tragedy. Tragedy, however painful, makes sense, because its catasrophy is plausibly related to its situation. But in irony, the situation of the "hero" becomes arbitrary and there is the sense that he or she has been unlucky or chosen by chance and does not deserve what appears to be happening to him.

Although there is more humor in this section, Tevye's situation is really worse. Like God's cure for Tevye, the author's cure is also worse than the illness,-*45 for it requires a pogrom, exile, and victimization. The author tries to keep it light and humorous--this is literature and not life,--and Tevye escapes serious bodily injury, but he is at the end of his life cycle. In terms of the mythic cycle, Tevye's story has also runs its course. It began in romance as a quest, moved into a mixture of comic and tragic elements which slowly hardened into tragedy, and ended finally in irony, which is the mythos associated with failed quests. After irony/winter the cycles must be renewed again with romance/spring. For life to continue, power must now be shifted to the women who have been submerged in the background as long as Tevye and his society dominated the stage. As the family regroups following the pogrom and reunion with Khava, the new social order of the daughters begins to assert itself.Khava comes to the front of the stage, a queen out of the world of romance, and the mythic cycles are ready to begin again.

We find that three of the young women have already successfully risen to the challenge of adaptation and survival. Reading beyond Tevye's biased words we find that the two older daughters have found lives that were satisfying and fulfilling. Until his death, Tsaytl had a loving relationship with her husband Motl,who valued and love her. Tevye may comment ironically:

> ...un redt mit ir, zogt zi, az siz ir, keyn in hore, gut vi di velt, es kon zogt zi, nit zayn beser. (p.121)
>
> (...and talk with her, she says, that things (may no evil eye befall them) , can't be better.)

but we may take her words at face value for her poverty does not bother Tsaytl, who places little value upon appearance and wealth. Her priorities are love, marriage, children, and a life close to traditional roots.She remains as balanced in her widowhood as she was in her married life.

Hodl's letters indicate that she feels alive and purposeful living near her husband in Siberia. While he serves his sentence, she earns money washing laundry. She has time to read books and to visit with Feferl every week. Her life is sustained by her love for her husband and the hope that one day the political situation in Russia will alter. Then, she says, she and Feferl will return to their revolutionary work and

> as es vet zikh do, bay undz iberkokhn. es vet oyfgeyn di zun un es vet vern likhtik, vet men umkern tsurik mit nokh a sakh azelkhe ve er. un demolt veln zikh ersht, zogt zi, nemen tsu der rekhter arbet un iberkern di velt mitn kop arop, mit di fis aroyf. (p.121)

(Things here will blow over/change.. The sun will rise and it will become light, people will being to return home with many like him. And then they will really, she says, take to their real work and turn the world upside down, with it head down , with its feet sticking up.)

Since the author does not explore Khava's life after marriage, we can only speculate about her years with Khvedka: that for a time life was good, and then that it was not; but that when it changed, she was able to leave him and return to her family. If the love relationship failed, it did not destroy her as it does the passive, fragile Shprintze.

As I said earlier, Shprintse and Beyle, the two younger daughters, do not rebell against Tevye as their older sisters do and, instead, accept his values and try to fulfill his dreams.The results are tragic. First Sprintse drowns herself when (perhaps pregnant)-, she is abandoned by her rich, capricious lover-*46; then Beyle enteres a loveless marriage with a newly rich contractor. In that union , surrounded by riches beyond Tevye's frequent wildest dreams, Beyle also "dies". She is transformed from a lively assertive girl into an empty unhappy lifeless symbol of her husband's wealth, and her future is questionable. While she recovers some of her old vitality and identity in America, where she and her husband, now bankrupt, have escaped to, it appears that she remains dedicated to materialism, for she writes that she feels fortunate to be childless and able to earn money.

For the three older girls who leave their father's world of tradition and dependency and move into the world of experience, work, and motherhood, life is neither a punishment nor a period of loss. Instead, they rise into greater consciousness, creativity, and possibility. Implicit in their growth, is the

humanistic conviction that when Eve and Khava bit into the forbidden fruit, they exchanged an eternity of mindless dependent passivity and the illusion of reality for the real thing- life and autonomy.The structure of the novel, with the older daughters in the ascendency at the end, indicates that in this novel at least, Sholem Rabinovitch sides with the enlightened secularists.

*

While Tevye's story with its pattern of decline and gradual isolation from society conforms to low mimetic or domestic tragedy, Khava's story, with its pattern of birth, death, and rebirth conforms to the mythos of comedy. At the end of the book, she and her two older sister are in the process of discovering their requisite happy ending as they prepare for new life via emigration and/or revolution. One distinguishing characteristic of comedy is the change from an old, entrenched society to a new one. The old society is usually controlled by habit, ritual, or law-- as orthodox Judaism was-- and a fully developed obstructing character- usually parental like God or Tevye, is in charge of it The ideals of the new society are seldom formulated, and the young hero and heroine who replace the old obstructive character, are often left undeveloped because it is assumed that their real life and new world will start after the story has ended. Comedy tries to include as many people as possible in its society; therefore, obstructing characters like God and Tevye are usually reconciled to the new world forming at the end,instead of being repudiated and expelled by it.

To understand the structure of the story, it is necessary that the reader look at the novel with a double perspective. On the one hand, Tevye is the central character in his story, which is a tragic story about his relationships with his daughters and with God. When that story ends half way though chapter 9, he has lost everything. But his story, though it dominates

most of the novel since he narrates it, is merely a tragic episode in a larger "divine" comedy which features his daughters as the chief character. In the comedy, Tevye is the blocking character who opposes them. Thus in the end when he is reunited with Khava and has the comfort of his grandchildren, he is not a victorious hero who has finally overcome his difficulties through moral, spiritual, or ironic faith/stamina. He is a tragic figure in his own right, who will be cared for by his daughters. And he is also a reduced and reconciled blocking figure in their comedy who is learning to make peace with the new society forming around him. He abdicates his previous position of autonomy and follows the lead of the daughters, bowing to Tsaytl's urgings to accept Khava and heeding Hodl's earlier suggestion to follow his heart.

**

PART 4. HOW TEVYE GETS AWAY WITH IT. LANGUAGE AS DEFENSE AND DENIAL.

It is difficult to accept that Tevye may not be a comic hero as we thought he was, or very heroic or even sometimes not very nice.First, his position as dramatized narrator helps to make him very sympathetic to the reader who has pleasure in thinking that Tevye, the little Jew, triumphs over his difficulties. Secondly,Tevye's language skills block off much that is unattractive in his character.

He is so convincing and amusing that the reader tends to ignore a host of unattractive character traits. For example:(1) the manner in which he puts everyone else down to make himself look better, especially his wife, Golde; (2) his lack of moral qualms when he distorts quotations in order to win arguments or to pose as an authority; (3) his overriding concern with what others think. When Khava converts, first he feels shame at what others will say, and only secondly a sense of pain in losing her; again with Shprintse,

his first concern is with appearance and the public shame that reflects upon him,and only later does he think of her pain; (4) his overweening narcissism which leads him to love/approve of his daughters conditionally; that is, only when they act in accord with his wishes; (5) his misguided pride: he is prepared to sacrifice Khava rather than follow Golde's suggestion to bow down before the priest and beg to see her; (6) his selective memory; later he insists that he kissed the feet of the priest in order to save Khava; (7) his willingness to "sell" his daughters to rich suitors (8) his ability to project blame and responsibility for his actions onto others: ("Who would think Beyle would sell herself for me to send me to Yisroyl in my old age?") (9) the cruel manner in which he periodically beats his horse,- an innocent scapegoat for his anger at himself and others; (11) the guilt trips and double-messages he sends Tsaytl and Beyle urging them to sacrifice themselves for him. (13) The hypocrasy and snobbery inherent in the message he gives Motl: he says he does not want a shidekh (match) that smells of the butcher shop, but he means, only a poor butcher shop.(14) The sad manner of Golde's death.-*47

We see the same ability of powerful language to screen off unattractive behavior and character traits in the Bible where the sonorous prose/poetry make it difficult to realize that in relation to Adam and Eve, God is a narcissistic parent, self-absorbed, immature and punitive. Or that Eve is a woman moving toward greater indepdence and autonomy. Clearly, the fact that the Bible has been canonized by religion, and Tevy by the Folk, makes it hard to evaluate character.

PART 5. WE LOVE TEVYE ANYWAY:THE POWERS OF YIDDISH DISCOURSE

We are not sure whom to attribute the remarkable prose of the Bible to, but in the case of Tevye, all honors go to Sholem Rabinovitch who has captured the unique qualities of Yiddish discourse. Benjamin Harshav in American Yiddish Poetry, says this about the way Jews talk.

> Yiddish discourse is talkative, associative, unsystematic; uses a wealth of proverbs, generalizations, quotations, anecdotes and exemplary stories; and proceeds by asking questions and answering questions with questions, rising constantly from language to meta-language, raising alternatives to a situation or argument, and undermining the assumption of an assumed opponent. p.14 *48

Yiddish evolved as an independent language in Western Europe sometime around the year 1000. It was shaped by a homogenous, inward society which freely borrowed many words from neighboring countries but firmly resisted cultural assimilation with the outside world. Looking also to its own sources, Yiddish borrowed heavily from Hebrew, the historical language of the Jews. However, during the diaspora, Hebrew became increasingly associated with religious services or scholarship and gradually it came to function primarily as a written language employed by a small elite group of educated men. As a result Yiddish became the language Jews used on an everyday basis at home and in trade. Since Jews were forced to become a tight knit society by external oppressive pressures, their language tended to develop into an intimate, informal and emotionally expressive tongue.

Yiddish discourse - how Jews communicated ideas and feelings - was largely influenced by two sources;(1) by the bet midrash (House of Study) with its holy books such as the Torah and the Talmud and (2) by the market place

and the vernacular of business deals. From the Talmud, Yiddish borrowed the concept of a single, enclosed universal discourse in which all subjects could be brought into symbolic relationship with each other. Since any single subject could be connected symbolically to any other subject, Jews learned to reason along associative lines rather than in the logical or systematical manner we find in Western European patterns of discourse. This meant that everything could be related and nothing was digressive, and it is important to remember this in connection with Tevye, who though he may often seem to wander from the subject at hand, is never really irrelevant, since he is always getting to an associated and/or symbolic thought. From the marketplace, Yiddish borrowed the lively, emotional colloquy and thought processes associated with the exchange of money and negotiating business. The two methods of discourse are clearly contrastedin Tevye's debate with Khava in scene 1. I return to that conversation again, because I have made strong charges about the character of a beloved, almost sancrosanct folk hero and equally strong claims about the power and ability of his Yiddish to amuse and charm the reader into accepting him uncritically. This next section of dialogue is presented to illustrate my argument.It comes from the beginning of scene 1.

The reader will note a contrast in speaking and thinking styles between the speakers. Tevye proceeds via innumerable questions.e replies to questions with questions, and offers questions as answers. He also employs hypothetical assumptions, analagous situations, Jewish frames of reference, and associative patterns of thought --, all of which reflect the influence of the bet din (the Study House). In addition, Tevye's use of sarcasm, ridicule, irony, threats and an demonstrates an emotional attitude determined to win at

any price, even at the cost of the truth This aggressive approach reflects the influence of the market place.

Against the barrage of language from Tevye, Khava employs western standards of expression and thought. She is logical, proceeds systematically, and for the most part, tries to oppose Tevye's subjectivity with reason and objectivity. By western standard of discourse, she elevates the conversation to a higher moral plane. Her poise and idealism are patently clear. Tevye, on the other hand is murky, unfair, clever, and biased. But no one can talk quite the way he does and so magically pull the wool over the readers' eye, even when we are forewarned.The vitality of his language, its expressiveness and khutspe, dazzles the reader and under Tevye's guidance, Yiddish becomes and art form.

.... Tevye: What was Khvedka doing here?

Khava: Nothing.

Tevye: What do you mean nothing?

Khava: We were just talking.

Tevye: What is he to you?

Khava: We've been acquinted for a long time already.

Tevye: Mazel tov to you on your acquaintance. A find fellow, Kvedka.

Khava: Do you know him then? Do you know who he is, then?

Tevye: Who he is, I don't know;I haven't seen his yikhus brif (family tree; but when it comes to understanding, I understand that he must descend from very prominent people. His father had to have been a shepard or a janitor or just some other kind of plain drunkard.

Khava: What his father was, I don't know and don't want to know; all people are equal with me; but that he, himself, is not an

ordinary person-- that I know for certain.

Tevye: So tell me, what kind of person is he? Let's hear.

Khava: If I told you, you wouldn't understand. Khvedka is a second Gorky-49 ..

Tevye: A second Gorky? So who is the first Gorky? Where does he sit this important man? What is is business and what kind of sermon does he preach?

(Tevye's refers to the seat in the location of the seat in the synagogue which was a measure of a man's standing in the community. Trade and knowledge of Torah conferred prestige.)

Khava: Gorky is a famous writer, that is a man who writes books, and a dear, rare, honest person who also descends from plain origins, is not formally educated, merely self-educated. Here this is his picture.

Tevye: So this is he, your saint, Reb Gorky? I could have sworn that I've seen him somewhere either at the train station carrying sacks or in the forest hauling logs.

Khava: Do you consider that a defect, to labor with one's own hands? Don't you work also? And don't we work?

Tevye: Yes,yes, you are right. We have a special verse: Yegis kapekho ki toykhal. If you don't toil/labor, you won't eat.( )
(For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands. Psalm 128:2

And off goes Tevye into another posek. He seeks to buttress his practical idea that people must work if they wish to eat, with an authoritative quoatation from the Bible. In that way he hopes to refute Khava's suggestion that the

kind of work a man does, neither limits nor defines a man,--a romantic, idealistic concept from the world of the Enlightenment which Tevye cannot understand because it not a part of his life experience or within his Jewish frame of reference.

*

PART 6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.

. I proposed at the beginning of this paper to examine events in "Khava" from the perspective of Tevye's daughters and in terms of its mythic structure. When viewed from that dual perspective, the erosion of Tevye's authority, and the decline of his world becomes a tragic/ironic episode in a larger, all encompassing comedy which centers on Tevye's daughters. Movement in the novel is away from the unchanging and non-questioning customs; the "antique" prescribed rites and practices; and the irrational superstitions associated with Tevye and orthodox Judaism; and toward a pluralism of new, enlightened social, political, economic, ethical, and theological thought associated with Tevye's daughters.-*50

In the dialectical impasse dramatized in Tevye der milkheker between centuries of conservative religious influences and new liberal forces which sought to change Judaism, the author, Sholem Rabinovitch, consistently tips the balance in favor of the process of change. This can be seen explicitly in the structural changes he makes to the original edenic myth which culminate in the revokation of Khava/Eve's death/exile. Despite the author's avowed support of Tevye's world, in this novel he overturns the traditonal way of looking at the Edenic myth, and re-writes it from an enlightened humanistic perspective, which consciously or unconsciously, acknowledged that: orthodox imperatives had faded and punishment was no longer required for independent and innovative thinkers. In the text, a recalcitrant, narcissistic, threatened father-figure, learns in the end to accept this.By implication, the Old Jewish Tribal God must also mature and evolve, -- or men and women must learn to think about Him in new ways.

Implicit in the novel is also the text that it is better to rebell against the father and to find one's own way than to accept his values and to live for him. The older daughters who declare their autonomy from Tevye, find a measure of satisfaction in life which eludes the two younger passive, compliant daughters. Moreover, the author depicts the older daughters as admirable and inately dignified young women who, unlike Tevye and God, remain true to their word. Moreover, they have the courage to marry in defiance of the demands of their parents and culture, and the vision to pioneer break-throughs in social, political and religious worlds. While the author is fond of Tevye and amused by him, he is also critical of him and reveals real defects in his makeup. But he depicts the three older daughters with admiration and respect, and they are never made to look foolish by the author or irresponsible.

The original conflict the myth is mediated at the end along humanistic rather than religious lines. This is best seen in three images associated with Tevye that develop in the novel. First Tevye is repeatedly likened to Job, another innocent victim of God who, it will be recalled, when his trials were over, was restored to his former status. Not only were all his possessions restored to him, but he was also rewarded with a second wife, since his first had died. At the end of Tevye's trials, he too is restored to his original state, which is to say, he is without income again, without social position, and is homeless to boot.

In a second comparison with a Bibical figure, Tevye is linked to the patriarch Abraham, both by the previously mentioned re-enactment of the akida, and again, by the search for a Promised Land. In the Bible, when Abraham was told by God to search for a Promised Land, he was also assured by God that He would lead him there by the hand. Tevye is also sent in search of a Promised

Land (by Russian ultimate authorities), but he must go where ever his legs and eyes will take him, for God does not offer him any assistance.

Both Bibical images are made into parodies by the author, and parody, we know, is associated with the degeneration of an ideal. Most often a superior past is compared unfavorably to a tarnished present, and current characters are found to be less heroic than their earlier counterparts. However, it is not Tevye as a latter day Job or Abraham who is found wanting, but God, for He neither rewards Tevye after his trials nor offers him divine assistance in his journey. Implicit in the two images is the thought that heroics, justice, and divine intervention exist only on a mythic level in the Bible, but are of no use in the present. For a relevant, life sustaining image the author turns away from orthodoxy and religion to secular cycle of nature and the oak tree-*51.

In the third image, Tevye likens himself to a once mighty oak which has been shorn of its branches and is reduced to a naked stump which protrudes in a forest. Feeling as useless and as lifeless without his daughters as the tree, Tevye calls for someone with an ax to cut the trunk down. It is a startling death/sexual image which reveals extreme dependency upon his daughters and a merging of identity with them. It helps to explain Tevye's devestation by the loss of each daughter and heightens our understanding of his comments that he can not live without Hodl, or that Khava is his soul.

Unlike the Bibical parodies, the author shapes the image of the tree into a parable. When Tsaytl wishes to bring Khava back into the family, an angry and hostile Tevye asserts that Khava is dead, --a withered branch which broke away from the trunk, he cries. But the author and Tsaytl prove him wrong, for when Khava appears, it is clear that she has survived, is a bit careworn, but in general is remarkably unchanged. Despite Tevye's wishes or

fears, he is confronted with evidence that the young can successfully separate from the old, and that in fact, in order to survive and grow, it is a necessity that the young break free. Long ago, Hodl had tried to tell this to a grieving Tevye before her departure for Siberia, when she said young ducks must swim away from their mother in order to grow. The author's reply to Tevye's thematic complaint first voiced in "hayntike kinder", that he had raised children and that they had rebelled against him, is to demonstrate through the structure of the text, that rebellion is part of the cycle of growth, and it is the daughters in Tevye der milkheker who do not rebell who wither and/or die.While the tree has only a limited period of bloom and growth, the body of tradition associated with it finds new life and expression in the independent branches and fruit which derive from it and give the promise of generic renewal.

In the light of this, I must disagree with the assessment made of Tevye as a mere comic Job or Abraham. Tevye is more than a displaced comic version of the two Bibical figures, for as the author develops the parodies, they shape into serious implicit charges about a failing god in orthodox Judaism who was contributing to the decline of East European Judaism.This is the same problematic Jewish deity that Kafka was soon to extend to a logical, bleak conclusion and make the center of all his fiction.

*

Tevye der milkheker houses a host of dialectical conflicts. There are two Tevyes, a father and a child; two Gods, the ideal one of the verses, and the punitive one found in the myth as well as in Tevye's life; two positions on rebellion/conformity; two attitudes toward life/death, male/female impulses, spiritual and material values. Professor Miron comments that:

Sholem Aleykhem more than any other Jewish author understood

> the essentially dialectical quality of Jewish life in modern times in which there is a struggle to adapt to every new situation while clinging to the old decaying culture, and the inability to live a meaningful life outside its boundaries. (p. 1285)

The large number of oppositions in the novel reflect not only Jewish life, but also the deeply dialectical mind of Sholem Rabinovitch who, like other great mythic writers--Dickens, Dostoyevsky, Kafka-- seems to have distributed his dialectical positions among separate characters inside his novels where he then let them battle it out, permitting first one side to win, sometime another-*51. In Tevye der milkheker, the author's duality can also be seen in the structure of the novel. Like God and Tevye who both say one thing and often do another, the author on the manifest level appears to write in support of traditional belief. Thus it appears that the radical thinkers like Hodl and Khava are sent to Siberia or enter impossible marriages. It also appears that the daughters exist merely as peripheral figures behind a dominant father. Yet on the latent level, the older daughters prevail in the end, and the author is critical of Tevye and his religious society for its preoccupation with false values, hypocracy, superstition, and a willingness to sacrifice children for private needs in the name of faith. In the end of Tevye der milkheker, the author tips the balance in the dialectical impasse and permits the young women to take over the reins from Tevye, and Tsaytl, Hodl, and Khava teach Tevye how to become a more loving and forgiving father. The irony of the situation is not lost on the reader. It was when Khava tried literally to take the reins from Tevye earlier in the book, hoping thus to force him to listen to her, that he decided she was from Satan and rejected her for a second time. In the end, the author corrects Tevye's misguided perception of her.

So in the end, the dialectical conflict laid bare in the myth is mediated through a synthesis which permits something of the old world to inform the vision of the new. The old, failing father listens to and learns from the daughters, and the emancipated daughters do not abandon their father in their journey to the new world. They travel together and Tevye is lovingly permitted to remain close to center stage.

Outline of Chapter 6."Khava"

FRAME: Opening Commentary: Undisclosed time and place AFTER the following events occur. (With Sholem AleyKhem

First Time Period

Scene 1. Shtetl. Outside Tevye's home.(With Khava)

Second Time Period. Sometime later, over a period of less than one day.

Scene 2. Driving into shtetl. (With priest).

Scene 3. Inside Tevye's home. (With Golde).

Scene 4. Next morning. Inside priest's home.(With priest)

Scene 5. Inside Tevye's home.(With family).

Third Time Period.Sometime after shiva. An afternoon.

Scene 6. Boyberik. (With tradespeople)

Scene 7. In woods. (With Chava)

FRAME: Closing Commentary. Same time and location as opening

1. Dan Miron, "Shalom Aleichem", Encylopedia Judaica,The Macmillian Co,Jerusalem, 1977 Volume 14. p. 1281
All further references to Professor Dan Miron are from this article.

2. Howe,I. and Wisse,R.R., editors, The Best of Sholem Aleichem,Washington Square Press,1979. From the Introduction, p. xix, R.H. to I.H.

3. See the Introduction to Hillel Halkin's translation of Tevye the Dairyman and The Railroad Stories by Sholem Aleichem, Schoken Books, N.Y., 1987, pages xviii-xix for an interesting discussion of how many daughters Tevye has.
All references to Hillel Halkin are from this book.

4. The HasKala or Enlightenment was a Jewish social and religious movement that originated in Berlin in the late 18th century and gradually spread to 19th century eastern Europe. It encouraged Jews to acquire modern European culture and secular knowledge and attempted to steer a middle course between unbending Orthodoxy and radiacal assimilation.

5.Hebrew for compliant, traditional, young Jewish maidens.
Professor Miron states that in Sholem AleyKem's first creative period, from 1883-90, the writer was influenced by Abramovitsh-Mendele who held that romantic involvements (in and out of fiction) were not in keeping with traditional Jewish life. Young orthodox Jewish girls were particularly unable to act independently or determine the directions of their lives, for they were constricted by tradition, family, society, and ideals of female modesty. In his early novels, Stempenyu and Yosele Solovey, Sholem AleyKhem retains the ideal bas Yisroel heroine. Love affairs are never consummated, and while the young man may play a dynamic role, the young woman's role is static and restrained. Even though her love may be more intense than that of her young

man, she does not abandon the values of modesty and morality imbued in her. (p. 1279)

6. H.Halkin, "The sorrows of child raising." A rabbinic expression. p.294 Tevye uses this quotation often in the novel, and each time he translates it into Yiddish differently. What is ironic is that "bonim" is the masculine form of the noun and, therefore,inappropriate since Tevye has only daughters. Yet Tevye has raised his daughters in many respects to behave more like boys than girls, and his "slip" indicates the ambivalent feelings he has about their gender.

All English translations of Tevye's Hebrew quotations are from Mr. Halkin's invaluble Glossary and Notes where the full quotation, which Tevye usually abridges, is given in transliterated Hebrew and then translated into English. Sources are also furnished.

7. Halkin,p. 294. "Give thanks to the Lord for He is Good". Psalm 136:1.

8. I made the Yiddish transliterations and translations from the Shmuel Rozshanski edition of Tevye der milkheker, by Sholem Aleykhem, volume 27 in Musterverk fun der yidisher literatur, Literatur-gezelshaft baym yivo in argentina, 1969.All page references to TDM are to this edition.

9. The other is "Hayntike Kinder", "Today's Children", chapter 3.

10. Regarding Sholem AleyKhem as implied author, persona, character see: Sholem AleyKhem:Person, Persona, Presence by Dan Miron,YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, N.Y., 1972.
And also,Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970.

11. Tevye frequently comments on how he presents a false face to the world, to cover his inner feelings. (p.107) He notes that he laughs on the outside but worms eat him inside (p.111).

12. Seven day ritual mourning period for the dead observed by members of the immediate family.

13. Several times in the novel, Tevye refers to their home as Eden . Sitting out all night with Hodl before she leaves for Siberia,Tevye refers to their home as gan eydn.(p. 114)
Again with Shprintse, Tevye compares their home and nature to paradise.(p. 148).

14. The author playfully points this relationship out in two ways: (1) he has Tevye compare himself to God, who is unable to keep secrets from Abraham/Sholem Aleykhem (p. 122); and (2) Khava refers to Tevye with the double name of tate/Foter in scene 7. Tate is an informal Yiddish word for father, equivalent to dad or papa in English, while foter, father, is the more formal word from German used to designate God.

15. In Yiddish, he says: az itlekher darf zukn zayn glaykhn vi in posek shteyt bay undz geshriben: isk Kematnas yodoy.

16. Halkin: "Blessed are thou O Lord, King of the Universe, Who giveth the rooster knowledge to tell the dawn from the night".(Opening of the daily morning prayer). p. 295

17. By demonic element I mean symbols and images associated with a sinister world of pain, torture, nightmare, scapegoats, sacrifices, bondage, and punishment.

18. A sacrificial chicken slaughtered by observant Jews prior to Yom Kippur in atonement for their sins.

19. James Matisoff in Blessings, Curses, Hopes, and Fears, A publication of the Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Phila., 1979, p.58, says that this is the most dire curse a Jew can make.

20. Holy Scriptures, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1955. Volume 1, p. 7.

The non-Jewish translation in Modern Reader's Bible, R.Moulton,ed., Macmillan Co., N.Y. 1959 is more explicit than the Jewish. It reads:

> 'The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil;
> what if he now reaches out his hand and takes fruuit from
> the tree of life also, eats it, and lives forever?'
>
> Gen. 3:22

21. Claude Levi-Strauss, The Structural Study of Myth, p. 510.

22. The entire Bible can be seen as an extended quest myth in which Adam and Eve are cast out of Eden, wander in the maze of history until they will be restored to their original state by the Messiah.

23. Professor Northrop Frye says that in its use of ideas and symbols, poetry seeks the typical and reoccuring. So the natural cycles of the seasons, the day, or periods of life and death become the basis for organizing imagery and plots. These cycles help provide for both the movement and order or the change and regularity that is need in all the arts. This explains the importance in poetic symbolism of mythical figure knows as the dying god, such as Attis and Persephone who represent the cycle of nature.

Frye states that plot formulae are organized around the cycle of seasons. Spring is associated with romance and a plot formula patterned on the quest. Summer and ripeness is associated with comedy and a plot formula which traces the emergene of a new society. Autumn and decay are associated with tragedy,and the exile of a hero from his society. Winter is associated with powerlessnes, decay, and death, and an ironic plot structure which traces the dissolution of society. See The Anatomy of Criticism, Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, 1957.

24. Levi-Strauss says: "...mythical thought always works from the awareness of oppositions toward their progressive mediation...(the) opposite terms with no intermediary always tend to be replaced by two equivalent terms which allow a third one as a mediator; then one of the polar terms and the ediator becomes replaced by a new triad and so on."

25. Tevye is very aware that God restored life to Khava when she was ill as a child. He mentions this on p. 135 after he has declared her dead and ordered the family to sit shiva. Obviously, he is troubled that he does not emulate Him.

26. There is an interesting similarity between Khava's questions to Tevye in scene 1, and the questions which Tevye asks himself earlier in chapter 2. This excerpt is from chapter 3, p.34. I've marked Tevye's positive statements with a plus (+); his negative statements with a minus sign (-); and his circular arguments, or his statements which do not follow logically, with a circle (o).

1. + God is great, charitable, just
2. - so why do some have so much (i.e. rich), and others so little?
3. o Probably it has to be that way, you know this,

4. because if it were meant to be different, it would be different.

5. - on the other hand, so why shouldn't it be different?

6. o The reason is because we are Jews. A Jew must live with faith,hope he must believe there is a God in the world, and that it will be

7. (-) probably

8. + in the future, better.

1. Tevye makes a statement,
2. Immediately challenges it with a negating question
3. Answers his question with a hypothetical qualification
4. and with circular reasoning .
5. Asks another negating question
6. and answers the question with a statement which does not follow from it
7. which he also qualifies
8. and converts to a hypothetical statement.

Tevye's questions to himself are similar to Khava's questions in chapter 6: Why should the world be that way? Why did God create the world that way? Tevye answers his own questions with circular reasoning and arguments which do not follow logically from preceding statements.He tries at first to answer Khava in the same way, but when she does not accept this kind of reasoning, he follows up with his death threat.

27. Halkin: In Hebrew: " The sorrows of child raising."A rabbinic expression. p. 294

Tevye add the proscription that the sorrow must be accepted with love.

28. Halkin, p. 296. Hebrew: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Psalm 103:13

Tevye uses this verse several times and translates it differently each time.

a. To express his feelings for Hodl after Feferl is exiled, and Tevye feels her pain, he says "A foter blaybt a foter". (Rozshanski. 113)

(A father remains a father.)

b. To convince Golde that he understands Khava better than she, he translates it as : "a tate hot lib a kind. far vos shteyt nit "kerhakhey am el bonim?"-- az a mame hot lib ir kind? vayl a mame is nit keyn tate. a tate kon andersh reydn mit a kind.

(A father loves a (male) child. Why doesn't it say " A mother loves a (male) child?" because a mother is not a father. A father can talk differently/better to a (male) child.

29. Halkin, p. 295. Hebrew: "And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodnes and truth." Exodus 35:6

30. Halkin, p 296. Hebrew: "And the chief butler did not remember Joseph. And he forgot him. " Genesis, 40:23

31. See Sholem Aleykhem's short stories "The Enchanted Tailor" and "Eternal Life".

32. Janet Hadda ,Passionate Women, Passive Men, Suicide in Yiddish Literature, State University of New York Press, 1988.All references to Professor Hadda are from this book. For a fuller discussion of Tevye's conflicts see pp. 43-55.

33. Tevye says:

"...un fil, az es tsit mikh epes tsu dem doziken mentshl. vos--veys ikh aleyn nit, nor es tsit." p. 100 ("...I feel as if something draws me to this person. What-- I don't know myself, but I'm attractred/drawn.")

34. In many ways Tevye's double messages about God resemble the two part ironic proverbs and statements Professor Wisse discusses in The Schlemiel As Modern Hero, The University of Chicao Press, Chicago and London, 1971,pp. 47-49. She says Yiddish irony consists of a dialectic between a statement and counterstatement. The affirmative primary statement is often in Hebrew and represents an ideal. It is countered by a skeptical secondary statement in Yiddish which challenges the primary statement, but never does it in. It seems to me that Tevye's negative statements cancel whatever positives he may begin with, suggesting that the ideal is merely an ideal which he pays lips service to, while what is negative is what is real.

According to Michael Stern: Tevye feels that God is guilty of a double standard."...his Hebrew quotation articulates a standard to which he believes God should adhere, while Tevye's Yiddish comment shows how far reality falls short of that ideal." From "Tevye's Art of Quotation," Prooftexts, Vol. 6, Johns Hopkins Press, Jan. 1986 (p. 80)

J. Matisoff in Blessings, suggests that Jews have a dual attitude toward God which is observable in two sets of blessings. They regard God as a good parent who rewards them, and for this there are straight forward blessings of thanks. God is also seen as a bad parent, however, who punishes them. To forestall this, Jews also bless God hoping to placate him and not to provoke him to greater punishments. Not all so called positive statements about God are motivated by positive feelings.

35. Standard Yiddish texts of TDM contain ten chapters:

1. "K'tonti" 2. "dos groyse gevins", 3. "a boydem", 4."hayntike kinder", 5. "hodl" 6. "khava", 7. "shprintse", 8. "tevye fort keyn yisroyl", 9. "lekh-lekho", 10. "vekhalaklakoys".

Hillel Halkin's new translation of TDM omits chapter 1 and combines a small part of chapter 10 with chapter 9, which results in a total of 8 chapters in his translation. He explains his reason for doing so in a note on pages xix-xx of his Introduction.

36. I am using mode as Northrop Frye employs it to refer to the power of action which a chief character in fiction has. Some characters exceed us in power, some are equal to us, and some possess less.

In the mythic mode, the chief character is a god or goddess, superior in all manner to ordinary people.

In the romantic mode, the chief character is superior or semi divinge compared to ordinary people and lives in a world where the normal laws of nature are suspended. Legends, fairy tales, and folk tales belong here.This is the (displaced) world of Menakhem-Mendl of whom Professor Miron says:

> The hero (Menakhem-Mendl)...like a small fertility idol ready for burial is already anticipating his resurrection in the next series. The cycle of stories is endless; the hero does not grow oldr, and time does not seem to move. Everything is caught in a cycle of rise, success, fall, death, and resurrection. Indeed the pattern of Menakhem-Mendl can only be described as "mythological". (p. 1280)

In the high mimetic mode, the central character is superior in degree to other people but lives in the same world as ordinary men and is subject to social criticism. High tragedies and national epics belong here.

In low mimetic mode, the character is one of us and his/her story belongs to realistic fiction which takes the form of domestic comedies or tragedies about ordinary people. This is the world of Tevye from chapter 4-8

In the ironic mode, the chief character is inferior in power or intelligence to us, and the reader has the feeling of looking down upon a person in bondage. Absurd fiction falls here, as does the world of Kafka and much modern literature. Tevye ends up here in the first part of chapter 9.

While one mode may dominate a fiction, any or all of the other four may also be present as counterpoint and lend a sense of complexity and subtlety to the work.

37. Kafka said:"I believe that we should read only those books that bite and sting us. If a book we are reading does not rouse us with a blow to the head, then why read it? Because it will make us happy, you tell me? My God, we would also be happy if we had no books, and the kind of books that make us happy we could, if necessary, write ourselves. What we need are books that affect us like some really grievous misfortune, like the death of one whom we loved more than ourselves, as if we were banished to distant foests, away from everybody, like a suicide; a book must be the ax for the frozen sea within us."
us."

38. R.Wisse, The Schlemiel As Modern Hero, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1971, p. 43

39. The similarities between the writers should surprise no one. Kafka (1883-1924) overlaps in time with Sholem Alekhem (1859-1916).

The last two chapters of TDM are dated 1914 and 1916.Kafka wrote The Judgment in 1912,worked on The Penal Colony in 1914 and The Trial in 1915.
As one reads TDM, it becomes increasingly apparent that Kafka's troubled relationship with God is within the Jewish tradition of questioning and arguing with God, and only one small step away from Tevye's position, which is exactly what Tevye fears.That small step away is, he thinks, is a leap into the abyss.

40. Rozshanski,TDM. p.112

41.I don't think Tevye is jesting at all, but that's another paper.

42.Shmates (Rags)
is a drama about the difficulties an older generation of observant Jews run into adjusting in America when they immigrate from Easter Europe.

43. By mythos I mean a pre-genre, archetypal narrative structure. N.Frye in Anatomy postulates four such mythoi, --comedy, romance, tragedy, and irony, associated with spring, summer, autumn, and winter respectively. See: Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths, pp. 131-223.

44.Halkin, p 290.

45.Rozshanski, p.167

46. In chapter 5, p. 114 Tevye thinks of a neighboring girl who drowned herself when she became pregnant and was abandoned by her lover.

47.Golde dies unattended because when Tevye finally allows himself to realize how ill she is, he rushes off for a doctor, leaving Golde to die alone. When he returns she is dead and laid out on the floor with a candle at her head.

Who could have put the candle there, if not Golde? The real author has again shown how remiss Tevye is. Though he misses her sorely after she is gone, even at her death he avoids dealing with her squarely.

48. Benjamin and Barbara Harshav, American Yiddish Poetry, University of California Press, Berkely, 1986, page 14.

49.Maxim Gorky (1868-1936) was an influential, enlightened Russian writer who grew up in poverty and had little schooling. He was considered a friend of the Jews.

50. In the drama Tevye der milkheker written in 1914, Tevye has only two daughters, Tsaytl and Khava. Most of the action centers on a duplicitous Khava, and her gentile in-laws are given a prominent role. Tevye is heroic and the dialectics in the drama are different from the novel, as they are again in various short stories.

51.The oak tree has been identified with strength and fertility from the earliest times. It was the sacred symbol of Zeus, Jupiter and Thor, and blooming as it did in the spring, after the "defeat of winter", it was worshipped widely as a symbol of fecundity and even condemned as such in the Bible: "But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves."(Exodus 34:13). The tree was identified along with the holly as one of two divine kings who had to be sacrificed in ritual dramas designed to defeat winter and bring back spring.The subject is treated exhaustivly in The Golden Bough by Frazier. Another interesting source on the subject can be found in The Oak King, The Holly King, and the Unicorn, by John Williamson, Harper and Row, N.Y., 1986.