Ch. I trans.

As it is fixed in my memory, now

As I remember it, I had ~~had~~ already glimpsed her three times before we spoke .... at the time I ~~was~~ then still attending a German ~~the~~ university in ~~at~~ a ~~certain~~ German city.

1 As a Jewish student who had ~~merely~~ recently quit the beit midrash for the university, ~~for some time~~ a long time I remained an abashed ingenuous ~~ass~~ (~~bayyeshan~~) ~~untoured~~ untutored in social manners, and immersed only in books and their shadows.

1. ~~While the the kind of~~ The books had changed, but I their reader had ~~to~~ not. ~~The~~ My thoughts ~~had taken~~ took a different shape, but the habit of abstract thinking and dreaming had not altered ~~changed~~ a whit.

Yet soon after I really began to change.

Sitting alone in my room in ~~the~~ a corner of the bustling city, I learned then to experience and to feel. I keep going over and over in my mind all the emotions feelings that were stirred in me then for the first time .... Stirrings of love were among them, but only in theory. I had not yet found a real embodiment for these feelings in an intimacy with a woman to whom I could reveal myself, a woman whom I could love and who would love me in return.

2 [I my stunted] maturity I lack a natural prompting which would tell me: this is the woman made for me.... The fact is that all the attractive women who came across my path seemed equal to ~~t~~ me, and I could have fallen in love with any one of them if I only knew in advance that they would return my affections.

This is a duality held over from my Jewish education in my father's house.... Inwardly ~~Inside~~, I am proud and assertive; Outwardly ~~outside~~, I am timid [bayyeshan] and meek.

3 When I look in the mirroir, I see an attractive man with whom on the whole I am quite satisfied. ~~with~~ Nevertheless, when it comes to approaching a woman, I don't have a shred of faith in myself.

Day in and day out I see ~~a~~ friends ~~of mine~~ who cannot hold a candle to me being successful in love; even the simple folk ~~from~~ of the people ~~manner~~ find love. But that a woman ~~would be able~~ should to love me too, me, Elimelekh the son of Yonah -- this was something I thought next to impossible.

* note re proper names

I was already over twenty-years-old, and it had not yet happened. Several times I ~~wanted to~~ was ready and willing, but nothing came of it. ~~Everywhere and always, each time~~ Everytime whenever I met an attractive woman I would already be primed brimming with thoughts of love, and even before I got close enough to speak with her, I would already be asking myself: ~~in my heart~~ Is she the one ~~who~~ who will love me?

It ~~should~~ will happen effortlessly. Lovely in looks and manners, with beautiful eyes and hands and hair, she will naturally appeal to me. Why should she not be the one I've dreamt of loving all this time?

Talking for hours, opening my heart to her, walking in the woods at sunset or sitting by ourselves indoors as the sun rises -- this is all it would take to sow the seeds of love between us. For the love to be firmly planted I would just have to take her hand in mine or caress her hair.... Then I could love her with all my heart ~~st~~ and share with her all my dreams. When I would go away for a short time, I would pour out my thoughts in letters, and on my return there would be tears of joy in my eyes when she came to greet me and I kissed her ....

The idea of the kiss in general was the zenith of all my fantasies and ambitions. To kiss a woman I love and fondle her tender hand was the great desire of my inner world (חלה נפשי halakh nafshi).

The touching meeting of two souls through an intimacy of flesh

and spirit constitutes the ~~exaltation~~ ennoblement of man and his exalted ~~senti~~ awareness that he is note alone [lerado] ....

Being constantly alone [boded] was a great affliction to me. I ~~used~~ used to sit in my little room full of longings and dreams of love, while there ~~on the~~ outside were women without number. Why shouldn't one of them love me? Why shouldn't one of them become get close to me? Why won't they (come to know) discover/find out what is inside of ~~my~~ me, my thoughts, my musings? Why won't they ~~re~~ intuit that I am capable of loving all of them, if only they would take the first step? Why don't they choose me? Why aren't they alive to my aspirations instead of pursuing those whose ~~souls~~ spirits are not so rich as mine by half? Why can't they sense the flame of passion that burns in my ~~chest breast~~ soul? Why cannot at least one of them acknowledge that I am the man of spirit who can enrich and embrace them forever? Why do they pass me by, seeing nothing in me? Why?

On Sunday mornings when my secret yearnings forced me ~~to leave~~ from my room and my books into the throng, and ~~as~~ stunned, I made my solitary way among the crowds of men and women promenading through the gay boulevards, most of them couples arm-in-arm and exuding a sense of togetherness -- it was then that I conceived a great envy for all those complacent souls.... Alone and disoriented I go on like a mourner among revellers; a melancholy I've never known permeates me.

Sometimes I peer into the faces of the women who pass by, and I am stupefied that no one of them has the pity to love me or at least draw close to me, for I know that I am no less worthy than the one they will choose.

with Devil
ed. !!

The innumerable books I read ~~to~~ about women and the secrets of their ways do me no the moment I meet them face-to-face. The romances and love poetry I read to sublimate my desires

only serve to fan the ~~ex~~ smouldering embers into a ~~great fire~~ trans-& blaze... My incomprehension refuses to go away: Why don't I get to truly live like the characters in the books? Why can't my life be like their at least once? After all, isn't my capacity for love even greater than theirs?... I understand the exaltation of love better than all of them. To any woman willing to love me I can sing a new Song of Songs: a song of love magnified and heightened, a song of spirit and yearning.

I recalled that in my father's world inside the Pale that lover comes only after solemnizing a marriage under the four poles of a canopy.... I also recalled that from what my friends tell me that it is possible to purchase love for money as one would any other commodity. Yet both of these way were equally distant from me, and equally incomprehensible.... Intimacy with a woman with an exalted soul is the only thing I understand and seek, a perfect soul whom I could love with all my heart and with whom I could share all my dreams and ambitions...

There are hundreds of women in this big city. On every avenue there are houses whose masters have daughters. Some of them must want love, and some of them must be as lonely as I am. Some must have it in their power to love me and to understand my struggles and my inner world. And for some how easy it would be to find me in my room and, like a sister from birth, claim a share in all that is mine. ~~For~~ To such a one I would give away all the wealth of my spirit. I would keep her like the apple of my eye and venerate like a goddess. She would always know that our love ~~transcend~~ was superior to the love of ordinary people because it would be rooted in a transcendent spirit. Together we would dream the future of man and nations and seek paths for the coming generations....

But the coming generations have not come, nor has the girl in the dream. Alone I sit in my room and fantasize alone....

I am indeed alone, and my dreams are mostly about myself as an individual who is seeking a role in life. All I wanted at the time was to alleviate the "sacred" burden imposed on me by my parents and to regain the vigor of the "human" side of myself. By contrast, my friends were immersed in the affairs of the community and preoccupied with the plight of the commonweal at the expense of their individuality.

For them, the community takes precedence over the individual, while for me, the individual comes first. They do their thinking together and try out their thoughts on each other. I think on my own and have no need for the collective group.

They spend their nights at meetings deliberating about the fortunes of the people. I sit alone in my room day and night reading books.

Even today I still can't decide whether it was a gift from God or a divine calamity. For once my friends tried to coax me into attending a student gathering about some communal issue or another, and I gave in. The real inducement, in fact, was the knowledge that among those attending would be a certain female student. Since in those days the university was still closed to women, the prospect of getting to meet one was no small matter.

So I went.

Mahanayyim M vs Urvah Panah UP : pace Mirsky: preparation for the fall rather than the fall itself - blindness absolute + therefore no exploration of intra subjectivity, transactions bet. the components of the self - truly, in Mirsky's words, a turning point, a fiction which partakes of the conventions of the older genres and of the new - U.P. more firmly lodged in the new - fully psychological fiction - similarly, eros not explored - decreasing importance of the outside world - no novelistic account here - no other minds ~ Lilienblum

Feierberg's generalized desire for fulfillment, power, restoration

* Desire + its objects (Kristeva?): knowledge / other / powers
changing targets — will + Schopen + Nietzsche

Eros + power > the link?

Lilienblum's withdrawal from both 1) domestic entanglement, and 2) romantic ~~soul~~ soulmate - the need to kill the libido, the yearning for release into ~~to~~ sublimation

Major cognate areas: 1. first-person, confessional narrative
2. psychology of shame + erotic failure

Schopenhauer, His Philosophical Achievement, ed. Michael Fox, Barnes + Noble, New Jersey 1980 - "Presenting S." by Thomas Mann: "Sex is to Sch the focal point of the will; in its physical objectivation [sic] the opposite pole of the brain, which represented knowledge."
p.16

N The erotic problem presented at the outset as the issue of his life - the index of changed identity - the real break with the innocence + nonparticipation of the Yeshivah student -

The search for a solution and the confusion of motives:

1. conscious completion of his personal transformation, the remedying of a lingering defficiency - linked to ideal image of modern man as a participant in a high romantic bond - idea of fulfillment, literally completion of fulness - self-realization

what is this norm?

fall-back position - willing to admit

2. Need, drivenness unchosen + unwished for

no simple account of student years + its anguish

a. loneliness; responsive, reflective other who will confirm his fulness, talent, future - narcissistic need

b. sexual - libidinal, the most basic + chaotic + repressed

First-person narrative + norms of judgment - why do we take the narrator's announcement of his quest as both ironic and comical? Because ~~his~~ the implied interchangeability of the object jars any genuine romantic conception

4 How funny is his conception of how it will happen, of how simple + easy it is to fall in love + to purchase love - one, two, three steps... The kiss as the threshold -

* His choice of aloneness - romantic isolation - allegiance to the unresolveable situation of the self -

↳ aloofness another aspect of the pose, which involves a confusing of society I (real, concrete relations with real others in day-to-day life) and society II (overarching schemes, ideologies, communal affair) - the conflation of the two is a defense against the exposure of the self to the outside, against challenges to its sovereignty + self-organization

role of humor as B's defense + strategy + also ~~for~~ as relief for the reader's shame reaction

The big uncertainty is the N's consciousness – To this day I still don't know whether meeting her was a מתנת אלהים or a אסון מן השמים – grace or catastrophe? – Where does he end up in the end & is it a stable point – conjecture: he ends up, as in the beginning, impotent & incapable, but without even the romantic illusions or any desire // Sentimental Education

ב

1 The first sighting – the look – the archtypal construction of blond-blueness – the retrojection of love – her absence of shame, discomfort

* The degree to which she is a construction of the narrator [מחזניים] or possessed of her own reality – does her reality matter? Yuter's assumption that she is nonerotic – she seems to look for it elsewhere – her life in many ways [from what we can pick up] is lived more authentically, if more selfishly, than his – she proceeds rather directly to acquire what she want, though unsuccessfully – how the portrait of her is pieced together from his reactions
1. needs, 2. sociability, 3. conventionality
Role of the reader to filter through his obsession to her reality
Her situation: without parents or means, strange city, desire for education –

Episode of free talk in her presence with friend, forgetting she's there – his ביטחון is dispelled –

* Bend // Brenner: Pathology or Existence? There are plenty of portraits of other youths who seem to get along in this world pretty well – they make out in their professions & take a role in public affairs – (p. & here) – so it is certainly clear that the way of alienation is not the only path allowed by the situation – The question: Is the disability of these heroes the result of their ~~def~~ deficient temperament or the path of authentic experience – Answer: perhaps not, but

certainly no more, or perhaps much less, an evasion than the others – The percipitous oscicalation – prevarication –
Episodic narrative string –

* one the need or two: knowledge + ~~to~~ eros?

3 Days of knowledge – universal curiosity – great need satisfied by library – less philosophy than world history [* מתנייס] – growth, ferment [illegible] immersion in the multiplicity of the world + its ideas + doctrines + values – is lost in it – loses himself

3 Thinks the thought of the world + pays no attention to the significance of his own life – forgetful of his own arrangements – Romantic longings enter when he is exhausted from world dreams: [illegible] * [illegible]

3* The efacement of ~~the~~ personal history: forgetting the whole journey until now, the whole haskalah epic of tradition, bet midrash, rebellion, separation – illusion of the leap into the present – the illusion of being born again into the bosom of the world – into contemplation of the world – *forgetting the boundaries and separations – erasure of the structures of personal origins – innocence, purity

3 The Olympean reverie: the divine height of judgment of the world – [[illegible] imagery]

T

2 * Switzerland as new Eden – Life in the Garden: with move from Germany, the reverie is extended to the world of nature – contemplation of the harmony of place: city + nature, people + its god, people + place, antiquity and present – unity + tranquility new childhood – zoological garden – nature domesticated: bears as pets –

Berne as Jerusalem Rebuilt – great reversal: seeing the glory of Jerusalem in the medieval, solid city of Berne – beauty – * at first he ~~understands~~ looks at the city + laments to imagine

*The fictive critique of the Nietzschean stance

Jerusalem - but after a time he forgets about Jerusalem + feels only the delight of this "exile"

Love as the incompleteness: here there are women in class; he is with them all the time - no need to go to meetings - the problems are ones of knowledge + technique - he has to learn how - How do you tell if they like you? Love as abstract problem + as need but not as (experienced as) actual attraction to a ~~cont~~ concrete person - He + them: they, in their liberal spiritedness, react against his mystique of the individual and his genius + prerogatives - Their problem is his greatness -

3

3 The inner richness of the individual - spiritual depths - meglomania *reverie of power - exaltation of self - literal flight of the spirit to Olympian heights - spatialized as standing ~~over~~ on the bridge over the river - *// exact parallel to Nahmon on the craggy ledge - power through the idea - personal power, personal apotheosis - *progress from history + history of thought to metaphysical speculations on the nature of man + thought; grounds + possibilities - to theory, his own philosophy -

* narcissism as personality mode in the void

Theory + power: a philosophy that swallows, consumes all others -

Love as the great defficiency - lack as the puncture-point of reverie - The desired transaction: someone to know him, to receive his aura + in return he will "enrich the poetry of her beauty"

ואעשיר אותה בעושר נשמתי

The loneliness begins to press -

ה

The accelerated absorption of her into his life + the rapid narration [not episode but summary] - presented as if it were happening in a dream. the miraculous fulfillment of his wish - *the deus ex machina quality of her arrival: a telegram from the blue! - as if it is a ~~test~~ test à la Job

Foreshadowings: her financial parasitism; "she believes me or makes as if she believes me"

The dispelling of loneliness; the sudden ~~antitode~~ antidote to the disease -

]

Career awareness; she is part of the world; concerned with practical future -

1 Stirrings about her beauty

1 The breakthrough of expectation - realization of unmet needs - he wants - she owes me something - demand + dependence

* Dialectical play between feelings + consciousness - feeling → realization → denial → failure of defense -

*// reverie + Feirberg: psychological or mythic content

1 } Then + now: I thought then that commitment was born out of shared values + prolonged exposure - *rationalist code: love through shared sentiments + temperaments - *funny silogism as example: If male X, whose value is less than mine, is beloved by Y, then how much more so will I be beloved by her!

1 [illegible]: acknowledgement in retrospect of non-rational forces at work

1 Defenses: I'm afraid of complicating my life; she is pretty only sometimes -

admitted only in retrospect

1 Lust: I used to want her at times - proximity + desire but no expression -

* Formalizing the retroactive digression - "Here let me stop to describe the state of things then..." "Let us return to the story proper..."

* Explaining, defending, justifying: how could I then have reacted differently given how benighted I was, how little I knew -

[* The Pure Self vs. The Duplicitous Self: the tortuous, deceptive, blind, impotent, perverse, obsessive behavior which became him in reality in contrast to the master of light, purity and innocence and reason and great-souledness he perceived himself]

Π Exacerbating the sexual/brother-sister contradiction – defenses in the
1 face of growing desire & growing negative definition on her part [she is nonerotic in her behavior only to him; she has a boyfriend & uses ~~his~~ the Narrator as a confidant]
Consoling his sister/bride for her rejection by another
mediated desire as trigger
Mimetic desire, triangulation & the emergence of desire –
1 The breast – *off-handed introduction of factual material about her
Anticipatory attack – make it her fault – take himself out
1 *How we are supplied undesired, compromising facts by the narrator: her affair, her borrowing money, her criticism of him, – necessary to story, compromising to him > brought in as part of his self-defense
no-show at lecture

U Redoubled aloneness: the void opened up by her loss (self-imposed) – loneliness of a different, deeper sort –
Oscillations between acceptance of need and willful resistance to control
↳ need or power – * the a priori limitation [γνῶθι] as an afront because it flouts his will – * great fear of [being perceived as] weak, servile, malleable – the Untermensch –
The turning inside out: internal power becomes outer impotence

27½
27
55

Individual & Community as theme: now he is driven to goats & dogs for companionship! Appeals by friends involved in national revival – reconstruction but his resistance remains –
*need to confess
1 The solution is in the individual & the love of another individual

3 *Blame of the collective & its history rather than acceptance of responsibility or using the community as a solace –
~~the~~ *self-justifications & bad-faith rationalizations given in terms of the rhetoric of the early 70s re [illegible]

1 Reverie of the Romantic Soul: the return to the abandoned stations of love - the world speaks to him - living the pathetic fallacy - the world mourns - movement from this feeling of desolation to a theory of the world: all the world separated from its originary union + yearning to be reunited - Plato, etc - the woman as the heaven-sent messenger/link between the world + our soul - *reveries of bad faith + defense, their literary representations, as B's achievement + a continuation of Feierberg -

התפלספות = rationalizing

1 * From reverie to nightmare: evasion opens him to less rational imaginings: 1) dismembered body, golem with neither arms, legs, eyes, mouth...; 2) carried above rooftops, but the trees are growing with their roots in the air - visions of dismemberment - reduction (reduced to body only with all sensor lopped off) and (lit) deracination, upheaval of cognitive worlds -

כאיל עולם הפוך: ~~[illegible]~~ עלוניים למטה ושרשיהם למעלה.

Recognition of baseline need - won't admit love - but desperate impulsion to relieve terror of being alone with himself -

7

reunion + birthday (25) - at peace with the spirit of place reverie of harmony + moment - illusion of togetherness on all sides -

* Reverie + then deflation - she pairs herself with someone else - she may indeed be intimate with Uriel - she cares about what others think + is aware of it -

ראל

4 The false drowning + the question of the others - the communal possession by/of others - double hurt: her loss + her betrayal with Uriel - *The role of the community/society in providing the bathetic perspective - by them he is easily tagged as a love-sick calf admirer, all the more ridiculous for his arrogance and aloofness.

I. 4 * Return to the narrative present - digression reflecting on the events of that time, esp. the comic/tragic humiliations of the false drowning - Continuity is the shame: to recall it is to be flushed again with shame - However, instead of a responsible analysis of his own problems at the time, he sails off into an excursus about how the book-centeredness of Jewish civ. have made its people unfit for life - This is the old rhetoric, the voice of the polemicist [yet a tired, dispirited no] which does not ring true - The rhetoric is clearly defense against too close an identification with who he was then ** Distance bet. then + now, time of action + time of writing should be, we expect to be great + fraught with wisdom + tragic knowledge, but it turns out to be the emperor's new clothes - little difference - loss of innocence but not gain in learning or responsibility or emergence from isolation -

* Authorial perspective vs Narrator's perspective (I + II) -
The author's words -- at least minimally re what is to be ironized and what not -- stand (are inserted - infiltrated) as the real set of values which diverge from the world of the narrator, yielding the locus of difference, where we might have expected it in the past + present structure of the first-person narration -

1 Erotic possession: the change of her clothes, the cling of her garment to the body - ~~her~~ the rustle of her breasts - the alien god in his breast - mention but not knowledge of the this dimension

Writing/Speaking/Thinking: The recourse to writing as an avoidance of presence + as a clinging to the book, the written word - * rhetoric + reality: the rhetoric sound ridiculous, the old stuff of clichéd sentimental fiction - The joke here

immortality (השארת הנפש) only in her!

2 1 is that it is true for him in the dimonic-humiliating literalness of the ~~world~~ words: he is dependent ~~of~~ on her for his life, light, youth - The reality comes home to him after the sentiments have become script & their literalness realized - ואז הנני ידע כי ביד״ה עתותי וחיי - the realization of ~~[illegible]~~ just how much not in control he is - acceptance

2 Mourning & feeling of otherness in presence of gentiles - they could not have gone through this - doctrine of radical difference because of the convenantal experience at Sinai turned around into radical inferiority dwarfed by the stern health of the great surrounding peaks -

λ

1 Why can she not love him? Her rejection is left unexplained, just given - Is she incapable or is it simply him? Reason unimportant: the heart cannot be coerced - idea of authenticity of feeling: ~~[illegible]~~ love & attraction cannot be based on will & obligation

1 * Sympathy vs Eros: and perhaps one ~~[illegible]~~ can not only not count on soul-mating but that the two can be inimical, work against each other -

Two or three paths: Can friendship mediate bet. sexual love and alienation? He: ~~No~~; She: ~~Yes~~ - at least his pose

1 * What is possible bet. two people in the void? How friendship perhaps the one possible consolation, the mode likely in its modesty, gets put beyond reach -

2 1 * Salvation through the other (erotic or nonerotic) - אין אני יכול להושיע לך Expecting the deliverance once possible from religion -

1 Fantasies of death & violence: * begin with the rhetoric of suicide (the death of the soul, putting one's eyes out) but contain within them the stronger kernels of violence against her: question set up - which way will it go?

3 TV Flight in the open: whole life passes before him - flash through his early biography - parade of specters - the false resolution of absorption into the common - too easy assimilation of the troubled life into the All - * series of bad faith resolutions - analogue to ideal biog. earlier - involuntary return of the full personal past

1 TV * Misogynist Diatribes: the philosophical rationalizing of his experience - now the withdrawal for reflection + the reflective posturing - hatred of the irritant - very grandiose, very theatrical - return to the post-Edenic curse - reliving the curse - * Completing the Garden myth: he has fallen, been driven out + now, the curse that was the province of God to pronounce, he takes for himself

4 TV Shame: Exposing the posturing, the big gap bet. his pose + the reality of his needs, which are "shameful," in the sense of destined to be acted out despite the shame they entail - ** Whence the need to reveal? Narrative compulsion to see it through to the end - To justify the cruelty + violence of the ending? To explain the death of the heart?

«? not sign»

* The need to reveal as in excess of any motive within the action - The only explanation in the end ties into the elusive identity of the narratee: the need has not ended, the desire knows no resting place - the energy for confession + the open-endedness of the narrative is the sign that the need is not spent - desperate seeking out of communication even if it means the exposure of shame! The need for connection does not abate.

1 4 Repetition + neurotic need: structures of repetition - back and forth - the mounting psychic costs that are building up in each of these returns: they seem unchanging but

The fury is building -
The derashah at their parting - Comity: I delivered a sermon comparing myself to Moses about to pass on

ח Looking for a way out: speaches, the text of the letters, the retrospective devaluations of the relationship in order to humiliate her, her desolation

1 ח Cruelty + hurt
World-weariness + world-wisdom - reflections on a sentimental education -
1 Monastic fantasy (sanction for withdrawal) - God as a woman; black nun
Her final appeal, her downfall + reduction + his proud removal
Irony of his achieved freedom: total illusion - stripped of everything rather than freedom
* עורבא פרח -
title
neurotic repetition as a plot form - how to get away from the romance-novelistic model to one appropriate to the generation
compulsion-repetition downward spiral

II THEMES

1. sexuality; brother/sister, ideas about friendships + sentiment
   obsession - unconscious
4 shame
2 religious structures
5 autobiographical form + ending + learning
   narrative compulsion
   reverie/deflation → defense action
3 the space of the self - narcissism
   status of the other
   desire, knowledge, power, sexuality
6 self-critique re B's polemical writings - reprise to B's career
   forms of the imagination: from reverie → nightmare

THEMES

① Sexuality, obsession, resistance to the unconscious, ideas about relationship, brother-sister

② Religious structures: sexuality as new meaning; Berne + Jerusalem

③ Narcisicism: will to power in world of knowledge, rela. to other forms of desire, clinical type, status of the other

④ Shame: grandiosity + reality - obsession before the other - need to confess - cultural situation

⑤ Autobiographical form: narrative materials (reverie, defense, nightmare, neurotic repetition) - shame as motive - the question of ending

⑥ Self-critique through fiction + relation to the career

Chapter III

To the 1899 volume of Reuven Brainen's Berlin Hebrew annual Mimizrah umima'arav Micah Yosef Berdichevsky contributed two articles stunning in their divergence. In Zikunah uvahurut [Age and Youth] B argues that the received structure of Jewish culture had become so oppressive a force in the lives of Jews that it must be entirely demolished. destroyed. Between the Jew of the future and the tradition there be a necessary radical discontinuity. "He will be required to forget much and to start over again the beginning as if nothing had been accomplished before him." p. 112 The articles, whose subtitle is "Transvaluation of Values", carries an epigraph attributed to Nietzsche: "To build a sanctuary you must tear down a sanctuary." At a remove of barely some fifty pages in the same volume there B's other article "Nishmat Hasidim" [The Soul of Hasidism]. It begins with a paean to the pure light which shone suffused through his childhood when he was raised in the lap of Hasidism. B makes the case for Hasidism's being not a sect but the last great spiritual creation of the Jewish people as whole. Hasidism transcended time and place, inside and outside by connecting all things to common cosmic source, and in so doing transformed the individual's inner life and his experience of nature from obstacles to opportunities in the approach to God. B concludes his essay on the Hasidim with the cry: "Master of the Universe! Let my lot be with them!" ② p. 64

This is B at his most radical and at his most nostalgic, and while these are fewer contradictions than appear at first are less severe flush, this striking simultaneity remains a good emblem of B's situation at the turn of the century. He was, on the one hand, the rebel of modern Hebrew literature. He jettisoned previous generations' The comfortable Deism and tender aestheticism of his precursors; he radicalized the Haskalah yearning for new life by redefining the very idea of life along the vitalistic lines of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and their critique of the values of European nationalism; he

advocated the right the individual spirit against the authority of the traditions.(3) Yet at the same time, Berdichevsky, like Feierberg, displayed no triumphalist glee over the demise of the old. It was a demise, after all, not of their making. B was burdened by a melancholy awareness of the lost poetry of the world of faith, and although his version of Hasidism was in part a projection backwards reading back of his own "transvalued" values, he had none of the instinctive revulsion toward Hasidism evinced by the Haskalah.(4) Despite his defense of the individual, moreover, he longed for a solution to the spiritual crisis of the people as a whole, and he viewed such a solution as possible only within the terms of Jewish cultural integrity, not through assimilation. He remained, largely and principally, a Hebrew writer.

By 1899, Berdichevsky had written himself into a corner. However alluring Hasidism may have been in its eclipse, it could never serve as much more than an occasion for nostalgia. When it came to the kind of cultural critique -- this was what he wrote often, B's argument had already been pushed to the edge. The revolution Berdichevsky called for was total, the break with the past absolute. By the time of his "Ziknah uvaḥarut" enjoy Berdichevsky's stance had become so radical that there was nothing left to negotiate. As for the future, Berdichevsky's vision was vague. As eloquent as was his negation of the tradition and contemporary Jewish society, his statement about the new order usually faded into fuzzy generalities about freedom and renewal. His thinking was not practical and specific enough to qualify him suited to [undertake] a vocation as a literary prophet working utopianist. [on the Victorian model of a Carlyle or a Morris]

social critic quasi-philosophical

Similarly constrained was the development of Berdichevsky's Hebrew style. The polemical enoys are highly successful in combining two rhetorical modes: such boldly suasive measures as simplifying, dichotomizing, and ridiculing, together with a more finely grained texture, which is eliptical, ejaculatory and epigramatic extremely compressed. This is highly charged writing; it was a taut bow which could be strung no tighter. In short, unless Berdichevsky could break through to a new

stage in his writing, he faced ~~the~~ a future of (hysteria, silence, or) mere reiteration.

Berdichevsky did find a way out, and soon afterwards. His new undertaking involved a substantial shift in the genres of his writing and in their temporal remove from the present. After 1900 the supercharged cultural criticism Berdichevsky had been writing separated into two distinct kinds of discourse: fictive prose narrative and documentary prose. By documentary I mean a variety of functions all of which involve efforts to gather and present materials from the ancient past and to put forward scientific, scholarly proposals about Jewish history. This took three forms: ~~There were principally three~~ (1) Revisionist articles which made a positive case for ~~such~~ dissenting figures of the classical Jewish ~~who~~ past ~~or~~ (Shammai against Hillel, the Zealots against the Pharisees, Bar Kochba against the Rabbis) who had been given short shrift by traditional historiography. (5) (2) Biblical studies, attended by a full-scale philological apparatus, which ~~argue~~ put forward an alternative to the official account of the origins of the Jewish people in the form of the thesis that in addition to ~~(after Sinai)~~ there took place ~~and~~ a separate and radically different covenant with Joshua on Mt. Gerizim, whose account was later suppressed. (6) (3) The collecting, retelling, and anthologizing of legends and folktales of the Jewish people, which tend to stress mythic survivals and the popular religious imagination as opposed to the dispositions of normative theology. (6) Although these writings of Berdichevsky's are also polemical -- or a least broadly marked by a discernable Tendenz -- the literary means are very different: systematic rather than eliptical, expository rather than rhetorical, evidential rather than apodictic. The persona of the writer in the post-1900 works is less that of the rebel everyman than the dissenting scholar-ethnologist.

Parallel to these "scientific" writings, Berdichevsky produced a outpouring of sketches, stories, novellas, and a novel, all of which are set in the traditional Jewish society of Eastern

Europe in the premodern period. (1) In representing this world Berdichevsky rejected the approaches then current in Hebrew literature: the parodic social satire of Abramowitch, the naturalism of the Mahalakh Hadash school, the sentimentalism from many quarters. (8) What concerned Berdichevsky was neither the assessment of social reality nor its transcription into fiction but rather its utility as a ~~social~~ symbolic foil. Berdichevsky's fiction dismantles dissolves this world and reinvents it as a field bristling with just those forces that had preoccupied him in the earlier polemical essays. The ecstasy and violence at the heart of the sacred, the will to power, the dominance of strong individuals and the sacrifice of the weak, ~~the~~ cosmic malevolence and the human milieu, resentiment and revenge -- these are the conflicting vitalistic forces whose suppression and absence ~~Berdichevsky~~ in contemporary Jewish life Berdichevsky had decried, and it is these which he projected backwards onto the screen of Jewish life in recent generations.

Time is a key factor in the later Berdichevsky. His response to the crisis of the late Nineties was to back away from the brink to which he had brought himself; he ~~withdrew into~~ transferred the scene of his writing to the past, away from the apocalyptic immediacy of his radical critique of contemporary Jewish ~~soc~~ values. The historical writing is concerned with the ancient days of the people at various removes of antiquity: the founding events of Israel's ~~earliest~~ origins in the preliterate age, ~~of which have left only~~ and their traces ~~in retrospect~~ in the earliest written documents, and at a later ~~remove, in late Antiquity~~ on the sectarian turbulence at the emergence of the classical period, which was covered over by the ~~later~~ eventual triumph of the Rabbis.

The fictional ~~the~~ Berdichevsky's ~~fiction~~ is set at a time much closer to the present, yet, crucially, not in the present. The Jewish towns of the Pale in which the stories take place exist in a hazy historical suspension sometime in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. This is not the world of Abramowitch and Sholom

Aleichem, which, while traditional, is already infected at its margins by the deeply compromised by accelerating Haskalah and social and political transformation. Berdichevsky's Eastern Europe more closely resembles -- and influenced -- Agnon's asserted epic world, in which social mores and historical change are far less important than the pulse of mythic forces. Whether ancient or recent, the removal to the past in Berdichevsky's writing is not a retreat but a redeployment. For what Berdichevsky found there was the same drama of contending values which had preoccupied him from the beginning. The aesthetic strategies shifted substantially; the vision remained the same. Nor were there new forms -- at least in the fiction -- superficially used. Berdichevsky's interest as a writer rests in part on his success in entering the new forms and working within their conventions, and making his "message," conceived prior to his accession to fictive discourse, seem entirely immanent to it.

This interpretation of Berdichevsky's career as generated by a dilemma and its solution is summary and schematic. In the year-to-year development of his writing there are few dramatic turning points, and the distinctions among generic categories are not always neat. Berdichevsky was the kind of writer who, developed when he undertook new directions, moved the old forms to the margins and continued to produce in them for some time. Nothing happened all at once. For example in the switch from contemporary criticism to fiction at a temporal remove, there is a rather large exception to be cited. In 1900, along with several other works, Berdichevsky published as separate booklets two novella-length short stories, Mahanayyim and Ḥorvā parah. The stories are set in the 1890s in the university towns of Prussia, Germany, and Switzerland, and concern formerly-religious East European Jewish youths who have come to the West to pursue secular studies. The themes are the crisis and inadequacy triggered by the first encounters with the forces of sexuality. Compared with the major thrust of Berdichevsky's fiction, everything about these stories is

exceptional: their contemporary setting, their location (venue) in the West, their psychological realism. The stories, moreover, are transparently autobiographical. The Hebrew-reading public knew that Berdichevsky had made the same journey from the East and that his Wanderjahren had covered the same terrain. [(2) Essential to Berdichevsky's resolution of the dilemma as a writer was the flexible distance from his material achieved by assuming the stance of the role of the chronicler of an epic world.] [(1) The polemical essays had been grounded in a difficult and anxious poetics of authenticity; they assumed an identity between Berdichevsky and the persona of the texts, the voice of the rebel speaking in his own voice on behalf of his generation.] The stories of 1900 therefore represent a peculiar moment situated between the regimen of two very different sets of conventions; for a brief interval the private world of the self is placed under the speculum of fictional investigation before the permanent impersonality of the epic world of the past sets in.

[This exceptional moment, which forms the subject of this chapter, is much more than a transition. These stories constitute both a turning point in the history of Hebrew fiction and an important source for our investigation of how the secularization of consciousness and experience is represented in literature. Even within the more local context of Berdichevsky's career] An understanding of this moment helps to undo the dominance of the major phases between which it is located by basing, rather than directing, the denials and displacements upon which these larger blocks are based.

The erotic problem in Hebrew literature is an outgrowth of the transformation of sex and ~~the~~ the family in Jewish society in the nineteenth century. This is a social history which, unfortunately, has not yet been written, and in its absence we can point only to the largest social patterns. ~~Of~~ For the moment, ~~the~~ Father Emancipation as a term for the modernization of political and social institutions and Enlightenment as a term for the modernization of mental attitudes and literary opinions. Whereas in France and Germany these two processes often proceeded at the same pace, ~~in Eastern Eur~~ among the Jewish intelligentsia of Eastern Europe Enlightenment often far outstripped Emancipation. This is to state a commonplace, to be sure, but one worth underscoring when it comes to the issue of the relations between the sexes. The consciousness of the Hebrew reader in Russia and Poland and Galicia was infused with substantially new ideas about the nature of men and women and, the possible relations between them, while the (social) realities of courtship, marriage, and family remained largely traditional. What were these The new ideas derived from a redefined conception ~~the redefinition~~ of the self as the locus for the twin functions of reasoning and feeling. As quintessentially human faculties, ideas and sentiments are the possession of women as well as men (although feminine nature may be endowed with a greater capacity for sympathy and a better eye for rational activity). Since men and women are made from the same stuff, as it were, their relations at their most refined take ~~the~~ the form of a communion between like beings. Men and women are drawn to one another not by social duty, religious obligation, or even sexual need alone but by spiritual affinities and ~~bidd~~ invisible bonds of sympathy. Marriage represents the union of body and spirit, serving man's higher faculties as well as his lower ones. A man's wife is his spiritual helpmeet with whom he shares a life of sentiments in the living present.

Now, whatever can be said in praise of the Jewish family in Eastern Europe during this period, in all its variegated complexity, ~~This is not that~~ it must be admitted that this is not that. ~~The sort of attitudes~~ The new notions I have

presented ~~is~~ are a digest of mid-century attitudes, from the period of what is called the Romantic Haskalah. The radical tension between these attitudes and the untransformed social institutions of courtship and marriage is evident in the works of Guenzberg and Lillienblum, whose autobiographical narratives belong to a more realist strain in Haskalah literature. Guenzberg's Aviezer (18—) is a critique of the practice of early arranged marriage, which forces ~~early~~ mid-adolescents to enact their sexuality and which removes ~~the~~ boys from ~~his~~ their parents' homes at a young age. The premature demand for sexual performance divorced from a life of shared sentiments runs the risk, it is charged, of precipitating a developmental calamity ~~that is both~~ at once social (impotence) and cognitive (apostasy).

Lilienblum's Hat'ot ne'urim (187 & 189) presents a contrast between two kinds of relationships: the traditional arranged early marriage, which dehumanizes the spirit by reducing conjugal love to a series of housekeeping and childcare arrangements, and a relationship based on an affinity of spirit between the ~~young~~ maskili rebel and a young woman of similar sympathies. In the end Lilienblum never in fact abandons his wife and children, nor does he violate the chaste idealization of his rapport with Miss M. Nevertheless, Lilienblum's resistance to both ~~relationships~~ possibilities is profound. ~~Both remain~~ It is the very experience of relationships in itself general that is put in question. For the fragile self, wounded by the tradition and the struggle against it, any deep entanglement with the other of any sort compromises the aspiration toward ~~self-realization and contribut~~ either remaking the self ~~and~~ or contributing to the renewal of the people.

The tension becomes even sharper when the boundary is crossed between autobiography-writing and novel-writing. While at the level of discourse this distinction may now seem to us less than crucial, ~~the decision~~ in the late nineteenth century the decision to write long fiction involved ~~a~~ confronting ~~with~~ the received conventions of the genre. The very idea of the novel as an enterprise ~~for~~ was

perceived by these writers to coincide with it the specific subject matter implied by the European term for the form: roman. The relations between the sexes had to figure in the construction of a novel, if not as a central axis, then at least as a component. How assiduously this requirement was taken -- and how impossible its fulfillment -- can be seen in the works of such Haskalah novelists as Mapu and Abramowitsh. "romance" is always present in structure of novel, yet it is a component which is often comically detachable from the main thematic business of the novel, not only most palpably unmimetic of social reality. From the perspective of the generation of Berdichevsky and Brenner, the allegiance of these to these generic conventions on the part of Haskalah literature perpetrated a lie. In the social and educational system of East European Jewry the romance of novel simply did not exist; it was a conspicuous vacuity. In Lilienblum's allegiance to his truth, the truth of Haskalah autobiography rather than (the truth of) Haskalah novels, Lilienblum was indeed the precursor of the innovative psychological realism in the fiction of the new generation.

note to Novick re Sholom-Aleichem

Berdichevsky's fiction represents a new stage in the erotic problem. Feierberg never got beyond left his town deep in the Ukraine; Lilienblum got only as far as Odena.[1] It was Berd. who succeeded in (actually moving his life to the West[2] (in breaking out of the orbit of Eastern European Jewish society and) With its mixed company of Jews and gentiles, men and women, student life in the university towns of Germany and Switzerland (where women were formally allowed to matriculate) was hardly conducted without conventions and restraints. Yet compared with the way life was lived in the Jewish towns of the Pale, this society of young people separated from their families was truly a liberated environment - at least as regards external constraints. The ideological climate changed as well. Berdichevsky's polemical writings had called for the reawakening of the vital energies of the young Hebrew. Although sexual and domestic arrangements were not specifically addressed, (This is true also as well, or was the case with

all social and political institutions, as distinguished religious and cultural ones), the momentum of B's critique carried a strong implication in this area as well. Break the stranglehold of tradition! Restore the life of the senses! Release the instinctual powers of the individual! -- The force of these slogans could not easily be restricted to only certain sectors of the lived life. There was, then, a philosophical urgency to student society in the university towns. If nothing changed in the romantic lives of these new Jews, it could not be for want of either opportunity or sanction.

Things, in fact, did not go well. The confrontation with eros on the part of the yeshiva students-turned-university students in Berdi's fiction turns out to be a pitiful and painful failure. Although they distinguish themselves in their seminars and master advanced philosophical thinking, there heroes break down badly in their relations with women. This is the dilemma explored in Mahanayyim and 'Uvda parah. These texts are significant in the history of modern Hebrew literature for what they tell us about the dynamics of Berdichevsky's career, the narrative models that influenced Brenner and Gnessin, and the first representation in Hebrew literature of certain psychic and emotional forces. But there is a broader framework as well. Changed attitudes toward sexuality -- the very weight it displaces in culture -- are an essential component of modernity. To understand the role of sexuality in the emergence of the modern Jewish mind, especially the force of its invasion of the world recently vacated by religious values, history and philosophy do not offer much aid. It is with Hebrew literature, particularly these stories of Berdichevsky's, that one must begin.

The two stories were published as separate booklets within months of each other in 1899. The erotic problem is central to U.P., the last published second, and it is on that work that this essay will concentrate. Since the two stories are very closely linked, a brief look at the earlier one, Mahanayyim will help in understanding how the

erotic theme moved to the center in passing from one to the other.
Mahanayyim tells the story (in the third person) of Michael, an ex-yeshivah student who has made a complete break with his religious past and, now studies advanced subjects at the University of Breslau. Absorbed in his studies yet terribly lonely, Michael gradually falls in love with Hetwig, the young adopted daughter of his gentile neighbors. Once aroused, his erotic feeling, of which he remains entirely unaware, cannot be stilled, and in a paroxysm of need Michael sleeps with a poor laundress. The woman turns out to be Hetwig's natural mother, who had been reduced to her pitiable state by being seduced and abandoned by a corrupt Jewish businessman. Appalled at his transgression, Michael breaks down and seeks, Oedipus-like, to put out his eyes before moving far away. Dan Miron, in his seminal work on the story, argues that Mahanayyim turns ironically on the theme of blindness. The hero's determined pursuit of haskalah (literally, enlightenment), as detailed in his progression from the natural sciences to philosophy, is so entangled in the delusions of rationalism that he remains totally blind to the existence of non-rational life forces, to which, in the form of error, he falls victim. Against critics who have read the story Mahanayyim as a story about the discovery of sexuality, Miron acutely observes that the theme is in fact the failure of that discovery; sexuality functions as a metonymy for all those dimensions of life ignored by the Enlightenment worldview. Michael's is the story of the emasculation of a male, who is undone by forces he never succeeds in bringing to consciousness. His self-consciousness is in fact quite restricted. His experience remains the chief focus, but because of the mode of third-person omniscience we see Michael from the outside; moreover, we see not only him but the feelings and histories of other characters as well.

(rather than being itself the focus,)

There are a wealth of comparisons to be made with U.P., most of which will be intelligible later on in the discussion. Three points of contrast are immediately useful. The erotic prob-

lem, rather than the hero's intellectual delusions, is the point of departure in UP, which begins with the deliberate search for female companionships. Written in the form of an autobiographical confession, UP is constituted entirely by the narrator's mind, with all its obsessive self-consciousness and repetitions. It is a narcissistic narrative in which the experience of others remains little differentiated reality. Finally, Mahamayyim is a guilt story, whereas UP is a shame story. In the former unsanctioned sexual impulses are tragically released, while in the latter the failure to enact these impulses and the experience of their insufficiency become sources of pathetic humiliation. Where one ends with a gesture of self-castigation, the other with a wish for the death of the other. (More on these matters later on.) Finally, there is no crucial diff. in how the self experiences the psychological scene.

- space - // A chapter //

I begin with a brief commentary on Chapters One. (U.P., which runs fifty-four pages in the Toshiyah edition [Warsaw 1895], is divided into nineteen chapters.) Like Mahamayyim, UP is a story of dis-integration: the involuntary dismantling of a pose. Because Chapter One lays out the components of the pose later to be dismantled, an extensive reading of the chapter is a good way in to the story as a whole. // U.P. begins:

Ex 1

— The first sentence is ostensibly a false start. The proper exposition begins with the narrator's introducing himself and setting the stage for the story about to be narrated. Preceding the exposition, this irrelevant piece of information about an unidentified woman has the effect of an unintended utterance, a fragment

note re later editions

Note to p. 12

* The analysis of Chapter One is based on the the text of the first edition (Warsaw, 1829). The text in the collected fictions of the Dover Edition (fourth printing, 1965) represents the revisions B made later in his life for the [illegible]
On the revision, the events and their ordering are substantially the same. The principal change is a slight condensation which eliminates some of obsessive repetitions of the first edition. The result is a cleaner movement of the narrative line but one which, to my mind, impairs the representation of the rationalizing twists of consciousness. The revision also does not provide the narrator's age and underplays his sense of superiority to his fellows and the roots of this feeling in a traditional upbringing.

of repressed material ungovernably reasserting itself. Although ~~the subject of~~ the sentence ~~elliptically~~ (generally) hints at some erotic entanglement, the specific segment of the relationships ~~alluded to~~ "fixed" (shamur) in his memory is its prehistory: a moment of unilateral possession in which the speaker has the woman in his sights (not once but three times, a detail which seems to be savored), (without her knowledge.) ~~This subject plus the~~ By its (grammatical) markings ~~of tense and person make~~ the text is immediately recognizable as a narrative which is both retrospective and autobiographical (i.e., ~~a narrative~~ one in which the first-person speaker is also the subject).* As readers of such a narrative we expect to be told in the course of the story how the narrator came to be who he is now (at the time of the writing) from who he was then (at the time of the earliest events in the story); we expect, then, the record of some change, whether violent or evolutionary, incomplete or total. However, another pos. is exacted by the way in which the first sentence involuntarily preempts the ~~first ser~~ exposition with ~~a fixed image~~ an obsessive memory of an early event enacts another possibility: repetition rather than change, or breakdown rather than development.

① connecting these two (or more) selves,

② ③ ④

The introduction, when it comes, ~~is~~ presents a picture already very familiar to readers of the literature of the seventies and eighties: the ex-yeshiva student who breaks with his past and makes his way to the university yet remains unchanged in his mentality. Mired in the abstraction of books and ideas, he has merely exchanged one beit midrash for another. INSERT This is a topos taken directly from Lilienblum, and the narrator uses it to identify his difference: that is the way I started out, like all the rest, but then I ~~—~~ truly underwent changes. The adumbration of these changes (the discovery and pursuit of love) ~~about which we will be told shortly~~ would seem to anticipate the narrating telling of a new chapter ~~in the~~ -- a higher chapter -- in the sentimental education of the Jewish hero.

* As opposed to one in which the subject of first person narrative is primarily the lives of others (e.g. Conrad's Lord Jim). Don't Cohen & Chatman speaker & aspect identical here > more on consequences later

However, we already know that this controlled beginning has been usurped by an earlier beginning, one in which anticipates a very different kind of story. (Note the term bayyeshan, literally, one easily shamed)*

§2

The discovery of the life of feelings separates the narrator from the previous heroes of Haskalah literature and puts him beyond their crabbed positivism. True, he had yet to connect his feelings to a specific object, but the breakthrough had still been made. How compromised this claim is in fact is revealed by the way in which he rationalizes his difficulties. They turn, he explains, on the difference between the potential and the actual: he loves but the world has not afforded an opportunity for the love to be realized. This pseudo-Aristotelian logic not only shows him to far less removed from the mental world of the Haskalah than he would have us imagine; it also calls attention to the very vastness of the gap between the potential and the actual, which quickly becomes a comic space. ② Any girl will do ① (for falling in love with) the narrator pathetically admits, as long as he can be guaranteed in advance that he will be accepted.

§3

By invoking the contribution of his early education and family to his present situation, the narrator introduces the question of responsibility, which is central to any confessional narrative. How much responsibility for his failures must the narrator accept himself? How much can be assigned elsewhere? He has just finished taking credit for making major steps of discovering love, while blaming the world for frustrating his achievement. Now he points a finger at his upbringing. The dialectic between blame and

* This is not to say that UP is a confessional narrative in the strict sense defined by Terrence Doody as one in which requires the presence of a confessor or an audience representing the community into

stipulation, between rationalization and admission, shifts back and forth throughout UP, ~~and~~ creating forming the text's knotty rhetoric. As ~~an~~ a first-person autobiographical narrative, there can be no external sources of authority to umpire the narrator's statements. The reader ~~to~~ is equipped/provided has only the internal ironic markers of tone and topos to go by. Here, for example, the time frame ~~gives~~ provides such an indication. The ridiculous blaming of others for one's failures at love (even while trumpeting the capacity for love) makes sense as self-mockery. The narrator's willingness to draw a picture of himself as a bumpkin caught in the ~~the~~ toils squirmings of bad faith ~~implies~~ depends upon the later arrival of a ~~slater~~ more developed reef ~~of~~ the safety of from which he now speaks. ~~the time remains unspecified) which~~ in the meantime ~~has overcome. [= the one telling the story now at a later time, whose interval is still unknown →]~~

Apart from its use as self-justification, ~~aside,~~ the inside/outside dichotomy introduces an important thematic opposition. In the Hebrew literature of the time "inside/outside" would automatically ~~to~~ be taken as ~~a reference~~ relating to the conflict between Jewish values and secular European values, between what lay inside the "camp" or the "house" and what lay beyond; and it is these two realms and their conflicting perceptions of self ~~in each of them~~ which the narrators adduce here. As the story progresses, however, the frame of reference changes. In Berdichevsky's psychological ~~fiction~~ technique ~~in UP~~ the opposition between inside and outside ceases to be cultural and instead refers, comes to phenomenologically and existentially, to the experience of self and world. U.P is in part about the sudden, vertiginous opening up of ~~an~~ vast inner space and about ~~what~~ the implications of this new development ~~means~~ for the transactions between the individual and the others that surround him. [The national, the cultural, the religious undergo a psychological reduction.] In the face of which the confessing speaker wishes to be readmitted. Nonetheless, there is a kinship, and the illuminating differences will be discussed later on. (Confession and Community in the Novel (Louisiana State U.P: Baton Rouge, 1980) pp. 4-5

cont'd previous page

ever more hurtful sense of insufficiency in the world, the narrator will increasingly inflate the value of his self. What begins here as self-esteem based on past history will be replaced first by a grandiosity fabricated as a compensatory defense and eventually by the resentiment of the insulted and humiliated.

§4

Abruptly the narrative turns into a reverie; the tense changes to the present and a little tableau unfolds. The reverie does not serve as the major structuring device in Berdichevsky as it does in Feierberg, but its presence here should not be surprising. The reverie is one of the only forms of narrative "action" possible when desire has no outlet in the world and must remain internal to the self. Although the reverie here is a simple fantasy, it performs the same narrative function: the ballooning of desire in a moment of imagined fulfillment, followed by a deflated fall into undefended reality. As a glimpse into the narrator's vision of fulfillment and redemption, the content of the reverie can tell us a number of things about his unspoken attitudes. The face of the woman, to begin with, is a blank. The other is interchangeable, possessing no characteristics or substance of her own. She is literally a invention and projection of desire. She is also passive and receptive. The activation of love waits entirely upon his initiative, and the steps to be taken are very few: a touch of the hand, a caress of the hair. It is as if there were simply a switch to be thrown; he has to screw up his courage merely to do that and the rest will be taken care of. The metaphor of sowing seeds which then grow on their own is conspicuous, given its employment in an erotic context, for its asexuality; the metaphor underscores the reassuring passivity of a process, which once put into motion, needs no attention.

At the center of the imagined experience of love lies self-revelation. The "opening" [hitgalut] of his heart will plant the reader of love, which will then guarantee him a setting in which he can "share with her all his dreams." The woman is at times merely a conceived of as receptacle for the narrator's desperate need for self-disclosure, and at times she is a privileged recipient of his overflowing spiritual wealth. In both cases the woman is a solution to the narrator's condition: he suffers under an enormous burden of interiority, which can be relieved only through finding a redemptive outlet. (The narrator wants to conceive of this interiority as a richness of spirit, while the ironic perspective of the narrative puts it in the light of a desperate emptiness.) It is this chance for disburdening which seems central to the encounter, despite the rapturous description of The Kiss. The erotic component of the reverie is altogether remarkable for its low threshold of sexuality. The kiss on the lips and the fondling of the hand are not metonymical pointers to darker genital mysteries nor do they represent a self-imposed restraint against writing of such things openly. Rather, the kiss represents an adolescent level of sexuality in which sexual feelings are contained as in the form of chaste playful arousal (one allowed) while the surge of conversational drivers, contained with its potential for destruction, is contained. Finally there is the rhetoric in which these sentiments are couched. The narrator's declaration that the 'meeting of two souls through an intimacy of flesh and spirits constitutes the ennoblement [hitromemut] man, etc. sounds like it is taken directly from an Enlightenment chapbook. In this formulation the flesh is sanctioned by virtue of its conjunction with the spirit. The narrator's desire is not only saved from the suspicion of carnality but transformed into [literally, elevated] into a positive duty toward the furtherance of civilization.

§5

The (collapse of the reverie) because the narrator finds himself

overextended semantically. The reverie had risen to its height with the pronouncement that the proper union with a woman ~~elevated~~ exalts man to an "awareness that he is not alone [levado] ..." The gap between "alone" as part of a slogan and "alone" as a description of his painful reality (the emphases are in the text) is enough to make the reverie crash of its own weight. The inside/outside opposition returns to underscore the narrator's entrenchment ~~of the~~ and to indicate how great a pressure of deprivation it will ~~have to~~ take to dilodge him. The paragraph consists of an anaphoric reiteration of rhetorical questions with very little development. This loss of control suggests nothing so much as a childish tantrum. The repeated demand that women ~~should~~ acknowledge his worth and bestow their love upon him becomes brings the theme of blaming others to comic~~ally~~ absurdity ~~in view of the fact that~~ since he won't even show himself outside, ~~and they must~~ he expects the women to go in to get him out! The question of the responsibility of others for his suffering is not a small point. As the demands pile up, a note of nastiness can be discerned -- and not just as regards these withholding women but as regards the men who, though inferior to him, are chosen in his place. Experiencing loneliness and humiliation as an insult rather than as an existential condition sets the stage for aggression against those responsible. This possibility is actualized at the end of the novella.

§ 6

This is the nadir in the depression that follows reverie's collapse. Yet the depression only lasts a brief time, for by the end of the passage the engine of fantasy is already again being revo~~ing~~ed up ("I can sing a new Song of Songs"). This return of reverie (and its subsequent deflation) means that we are ~~not~~ encountering not a one-time structure but a recurrent pattern, whose rise and fall determines the syntactic rhythm of the novella. That this is the low point in the cycle is

evinced by the narrator's finally being driven from his room. The disparity between inside and outside becomes too great; its internal pressure of need can no longer be borne. He is forced out. What he sees on the outside only redoubles his depression. The scene in the streets is the classic spectacle of a middle-European city at play on a Sunday, in which the whole world seems happily and contentedly coupled. Between the narrator and this world stretches a curtain of unreality, through which he can peer with only a stunned sense of disbelief. The many terms for cognitive disorientation used here refer to a crisis of a peculiar kind: The narrator has long viewed the world as divided, indeed, between himself and others, the basis of the division lying in his spiritual and intellectual superiority, and thus his deservingness of reward. Now, the division remains, but the reward has gone to the wrong side. The narrator is forced to make the difficult admission of his envy for those whom he despises (in his grandiosity). His discomfiture, however, remains at the level of a painful contradiction rather than as a spur to a revision of his values. His conviction that spiritual-intellectual aptitude and achievement constitute virtue, and virtue deserves love, remains fundamentally unchanged.

Like many other heroes in modern literature, the narrator looks to the literature of romance both as a source of "how-to" information and as an escape from the experience of unfulfillment. The theme has a special resonance in nineteenth-century Hebrew literature because of the Haskalah critique, especially in Abramowitsch, of the medieval scholastic habit of looking for truth about the world in books rather than in empirical observation — not to mention Berdichevsky's own diatribes on the subject of the tradition's preference for bookishness over vitality. Here, at any rate, the resort to books fails, producing the opposite of instruction and sublimation. Contact Coming up against the wall of reality, the narrator again begins to

ascend into the space of reverie.

§7

The narrator makes much of his principled rejection the arranged marriage common in the shtetl and the prostitution available in the city. The lumping together of the two institutions as perversions of love which are equally abased displays an extraordinarily cavalier attitude toward traditional Jewish society. In ~~the~~ his high-minded disassociation from his benighted past, the narrator wished to present himself as a man who is wholly his own creation, a man ~~and who is~~ liberated from the least traces of nostalgia, sentimentality, or misplaced loyalty. He will choose his own kind of love, and it will be based on an affinity of ideas and feelings rather on parental wishes or a cash nexus.

The irony, of course, is that his greatest wish, as expressed in the next paragraph, is to be chosen rather than to choose. As the energies ~~[illegible]~~ of fantasy are stirred, ~~heat up,~~ the essential passivity of his desire becomes transparent. Ostensibly, the vision of relationships he presents is one of bestowal and donation; he will unlock the treasury of his spirit and share its abundance with the favored lady partner. ~~to~~ The language of the passage, however, suggests a transaction that works in the opposite direction. What he most longs for, and the prerequisite for everything else, is for her to take the initiative in redeeming him. The natural claims of a sister on a brother and the veneration of a worshipper for his goddess are two modalities of relationship ~~as~~ used here as ~~rhetorical florishes~~ hyperboles for the narrator's generosity of spirit. In other ~~forms~~ as ~~[illegible]~~ exploitation and obsessive dependence, both of these rhetorical gestures will become literally and dimonically realized. later on in the story. But for the moment, as the reverie reaches its zenith, these untoward possibilities are lost ~~the~~ in the rapture transport of a love both lofty and forward-looking.

§8

The collapse of the reverie from its own grandiloquence is implicit again triggered by a gap between slogan and reality, contained this time in the cliché "the generations to come." And again, at the end of a new down-cycle of rationalizations, the narrator will be sufficiently impelled by his needs to leave his room and venture outside. This second, involuntary self-violation of the threshold, places the opposition between inside and outside into a more specific framework: the difference now is between participation in the public space of the Jewish people and the private domain of the self. The passage suggests something of the milieu of Jewish student life at German universities at the end of the century. Though they are happily emancipated from the world of their fathers, many students retain a strong identification with the people and remain active players in the drama of the Jewish question. As part of an enlightened vanguard, they view themselves as responsible to the people, and in a spirit of high seriousness debate various Zionist and socialist proposals and form emergency committees on behalf of distressed Jewish communities. From all this activity the narrator holds himself aloof, applying himself day and night only to the acquisition of knowledge and to his own enlightenment. His nonparticipation, he claims, is not temperamental nor misanthropic; it is a principled stand rooted in a Nietzschean affirmation of the superiority of the gifted individual spirit against the mass of men. The narrator regards himself as one of the chosen, or at least aspires to be one, by committing himself to a program which requires effacing the particularity of his personal history and recovering those parts of him that participate in the human-universal. His isolation, then, is nobly conceived. The repeating sentence completes contrasting "they" and "I" further ascribe credit to the narrator by recalling through inversion,

of course) the meditation recited upon concluding a talmudic tractate, in which merit fidelity of those who remain inside the study house to learn is contrasted to the worthiness of those who rush about in the world only for the sake of no fit.

The conclusion of the chapter returns us to the chapter's first sentence (its "false start"): not the longing for The Woman and Love in the abstract but the pull of a specific woman, the one glimpsed from afar. The narrator puts down his books, leaves his room, and attends the meeting, thereby crossing the threshold he has inverted with such importance. It is this act that constitutes the enabling condition of the plot; it makes the relationship with the woman possible, and thus the story. The narrator as well acknowledges this as a moment of high destiny. Yet the act is presented as being from the beginning, deeply compromised. It is by force of a reduction by his friends (haverai hisituni) and the pressure of his own needs that he crosses a line which, according to his convictions, should not be violated.

To summarize: In the first chapter the narrator presents himself as a young man of twenty who has completely separated from his traditional upbringing and devoted himself to university studies, and who is now ready to complete his emancipation by seeking a mate. The florid ideas he has about love are drawn from the sentimental literature of an earlier age; he imagines a relationship, barely sexual, based on a high-minded sharing of ideals and feelings. The loftiness of these motives is undercut by the narrator's revealing, despite himself, a deep and desperate sense of loneliness. He is prevented from fulfilling his needs by an extreme shiness and a radical lack of self-confidence in social relations, which he attributes to the unworldliness of his education and early training, and from which the wisdom of no books can save him. That others of his companions, who he holds to be hardly his equals intellectually, are easily successful

in love poses a bitter contradiction; ~~and~~ it ~~was~~ forces him into the humiliating position of envying those he regards as inferior to him, especially in their preoccupation with public causes as contrasted to his dedication to self-cultivation through enlightenment. The impasse caused by the intersection of pride and passivity is finally overcome by prospect of meeting a woman he has seen from the distance.

space // Sexuality //

The narrator eventually becomes romantically entangled w woman he hoped to meet at the student gathering. Elimelekh, then, gets his chance. U.P ~~becomes~~ is the story of what happens to the internal set of attitudes and needs posited in the first chapter once a connection is made to a woman in the real world. The outcome is the breakdown and transformation of the narrator's innerworld. This is uncharted territ for Hebrew literature, and Berdichevsky's successful and sustained repre tation ~~of this~~ in a narrative framework of this psychological materi has the effect of a breakthrough. Rather than continuing with the met of commentary or ~~full~~ analyzing the story as it develops linearly, I wish to discuss separately a number of themes that recur throughout the text (1) the experience of, and resistance to, sexuality as a form of non-rationali that poses a threat to identity; (2) in the throes of sexual obsession, th function of the other ① in replacing ~~as a~~ a total source ③ of meaning. ~~in a world empti~~ ~~of~~ traditional ② religious structures; (3) narsicism as a condition of the self in the world after faith: grandiosity and the will to power in bo the pursuit of knowledge and ~~human~~ social relations; (4) shame as a cultural condition which is ~~as~~ the necessary outcome of the encounter between grandiosity and the insufficiency of the self before the powers of sexual need; (5) the narrative materials (reverie, nightmare, neurotic repetition, and others) used in the representation of self-consciousness and such question of autobiographical form as the motives for the narration and whether (something at the conclusion) ~~so~~ is "learned"; (6) the function of the ~~narrative~~ fictional truth in U.P. as self-critique of Berdichevsky's polemical ideological stance until 1899.

For the sake of clarity regarding the events refered to the discussi here is a precis of ~~plot~~ the remainder of the plot: After some indeter minute contacts with Rachel, E. leaves Breslau ~~for~~ to continue his studies at the University of Berne.* Though struck by the physical beauty of Switzerland and encouraged by the presence of women in his classes,

* re names

his loneliness persists. Suddenly he receives a letter from Rachel announcing her plans to come to Berne to study and requesting his aid in getting settled. When she arrives they quickly fall in with one another; he arranges food and lodging, loans her money, and gives her private lessons. Although they spend all their time together, their relationship remains "pure," and they act toward one another as brother and sister. This contentedness, however, does not last. Unawares, he becomes gradually drawn to her sexually, and she rejects a small overture, he is crestfallen. His hurt takes the form of a righteous accusation against her for foreclosing the possibility of love. The academic year has ended, and the students, including Rachel, go off to the mountains for the summer holiday. Remaining behind in the city, E endures waves of rage and jealousy, and redoubled loneliness, while all the time resisting admitting what has happened to him. He revisits the places they frequented together, and feels all of external nature suffused with his grief. Unable to go on, he finally gives in and goes off to the mountain village to join her.

This is the first of several capitulations. Each time E is compelled to return to her, and although for a while he makes do with their old companionability, he cannot abide the situation and confronts her with an ultimatum. Each time he is turned down he feels more desperately lost; his fate, his being, is in her hands. Eventually there is a turnabout. Rachel declares that she has changed and that she may now be able to look on him in a new way. E. cuts her off with a speech about how she has irrevocably ruined everything and now it is too late. He begins to treat her with callous cynicism; two months pass and he drops her totally. and misogynist diatribes She suffers terribly. One day she faints in class in his presence and he affects disinterest. Seriously ill, she calls to him from her bed; after refusing several times, he finally comes to her

nonsexual sometime during the next school year

but he feels nothing. His heart is dead. His studies completed, E. makes plans to depart for Germany. The past year-and-a-half have been like a bad dream -- a waste of time.

First, the issue of sexuality. After all the extravagant reveries of love, what happens when Rachel becomes part of Elimelekh's life is that his sexual feelings switch off: "My thoughts and dreams about love disappeared the moment she became part of my life; in my naiveté I considered our intimacy was of the purest sort and would remain so for ever" (p. 18). The possibility of actual sexual experience (even in the broadest sense) is so disturbing to Elimelekh that he deeroticizes Rachel and shifts the relationship into a model governed by ideas about friendship and brother-sister sympathy, a model, which, incidently, allows him, in the role of mentor, to retain his position of strength. This unconscious tactic does not work for long. With the relationship safely categorized, E. is left undefended before the manifold subtle effects of daily contact with a sympathetic woman. Despite himself, he becomes deeply drawn to her physical presence. At least from the vantage point of retrospective narration, he admits

(homed)

> There were times I simply wanted hers. When we used to sit reading together, our souls enmeshed, I knew that all I had to do would be to take her in my arms and kiss her and then perhaps everything would be different.... But my hands would not perform the commission of my heart, so I would sit there reading, reading and wanting, wanting and reading.... (p. 21)

This indeterminate swing between intellection and desire, with the implication of their functional interchangeability, is a nice emblem of the narrator's situation at this early point in the story.

E. never succeeds in getting his hands to do the bidding of his heart. But not this alone: it is only in the hindsight of retrospective narration that he is even able to admit accept the reality of his physical

desire. Properly speaking, then, ~~this~~ is not a story about the discovery or expression of sexuality ~~feeling~~; the sexuality is indeed there, but no discovery or expression ever takes place; it is ~~denied~~ repressed. This act of repression is the spring of the narrative; ~~and~~ the events of the story become intelligible insomuch as they are read as unconscious efforts at ~~and consequences~~ ~~strategies of~~ denial. (The non release of instinctual feeling, ~~mentioned~~ it was noted earlier, distinguishes UP from its twin text Mahamayyam. Sexual need, experienced as absence and insufficiency rather than as power, is linked to the structure of narsicisstic shame, which, I shall argue, ~~is~~ stands at the center of novella.) These attempts are of two sorts: cognitive defenses, which offer ideological explanation for the withdrawal from sexuality, and displaced behavior, in which the narrator, in violation of his Olympian self-conception, undertakes increasingly nonrationalizing forms of action. [Even the several times E. belatedly tries ~~to stu~~ to drift the terms of the relationship, the approach is made through ridiculously florid and hackneyed lectures and letters, which never come around to saying what is really wanted.]

Chief among the defenses is the fantasy of E + Rachel as brother and sister. It is easy to see what is ~~about this~~ pleasing to him: about this concept it simply adopts the consoling components of the great reverie of love, while keeping the more deeply troubling forces of sexuality at bay. As a brother, E. enjoys the tender exchange of solicitude; ~~what~~ and as the older sibling, he retains his role as bestower of wisdom and spiritual instruction. The anxiety of choosing and risking are bypassed, as well. As brother and sister, in the terms of the fantasy, E. and Rachel, have always already been bonded to each other. The problem, of course, is that this is not what their relationship is in fact, and there are no incest taboos to prevent the inevitably from happening at least on E's part, all the more so because the fantasy allows him, believing he is un-

"The more she pushed me away, the closer I drew to her as a loyal brother" (p. 22).

susceptible, to be caught unawares.

The brother-sister fantasy has special poignancy if we ~~[illegible]~~ take it not as an avoidance but as a ~~[illegible]~~ the fulfillment of a longing. Like many of his generation, and like Berdichevsky himself, the narrator has cut his ties to his family by rejecting their way of life and moving to the West. For this love and all it implies, he betrays no sign of need or nostalgia; to the contrary, his family connection is effaced (another contrast with Mahanayyim) and he presents himself as a man self-conceived, whose partimony is the history of reason. If life in the void must be lived bereft of blood ties, then ~~at least~~ let it be cheered by the solidarity of fellow rebels, the companionship of comrades working toward the new future, or at least the comfort of fellow orphaned spirits. Yet for E. this path is barred. Echoing Berdichevsky's own ~~declarative~~ pronouncements from earlier years, the narrator has declared his belief in the sovereignty of the individual and, except in that once crucial instance, he has rejected the appeals of his friends to join in organizational gatherings, whose function is ~~as much to supply a sense of community as to much~~ as much social as ~~to~~ anything else. Community, as a mediating term between family and its discontents and the self in its alonemen, is thus rendered unavailible. Since E. has made the individual -- and individuated -- self the only reality, redemption by another individual self can be the only solution: the lover, or ~~failing that~~ alternatively, even preferably, the other-as-sister.

The other significant defense might be called the Rovnie of the Romatic Soul. Left alone in town after his first rejection by Rachel, E. wanders about griefstricken. Against his will, he is drawn back to the places which had been scenes of their relationships, places which now ~~seem~~ present a gravelike aspect in her absence. The trees and the hills seem to mourn her loss, not just he, and with this experience comes the insight that "just as the nature around us affects us, so we affect it, such that there is a reciprocal sympathy of action between the

inanimate and the animate" (p. 27). In his reverie about the anima mundi begins to spiral upwards, he transmutes his homely grief into a neoplatonic religious ecstasy. His longing for his lost beloved are in fact, he reasons, "the yearnings of every individual soul to reunite with the All, from which it was separated at birth" (p. 27). The woman and our yearning for her must therefore be understood "as a symbol of our interwovenness into eternal being" (p. 28). The reverie soon collapses into some rather grizzly nightmare (of which more in a moment), and the narrator retrospectively acknowledges the sophistry of this escape (kakkah hayyiti mitpalsef). What remains notable is the romantic tenor of the escape. Elimelekh, the man of reason, is forced by disorienting strength of his grief to reach out to a ~~diff~~ new world-view to make sense of his experience.

The romantic reverie turns foul at one point, and plunges into nightmare. Elimelekh dreams that he is a "dismembered golem, with ~~limbs~~ no hands or feet, ~~no~~ eyes or mouth." (p. 28). Or another time he dreams that "he is walking ~~above the~~ among the tree tops above the roofs of the houses, but the trees are upside down, with their roots ~~up~~ in the air and their branches down below" (p. 28). It takes little analytic acumen to recognize these dreams as expressive of the fear, indeed the reality, of impotence and distraction, an unconscious registering of the psychic punishment E. is undergoing. The availability of these dreams to interpretation, their utter transparency, is in fact just the point. The narrator records the dreams and the tenor they instill, and it is clear that it is this fear that breaks the back of his resolve and makes him seek out Rachel in the mountains. Yet the meaning of the dreams, as obvious as they are, are entirely unintelligible to him; he is oblivious to these truth-telling messages from his unconscious and takes them as signs of incipient madness.

M.B. See other dream sequences, p. 40.

Throughout U.P. the unconscious never becomes conscious; this is not a story about insight. The closest one gets to unconscious

materials is there ~~is~~ an uninterpreted nightmare. Like sexuality, which is embedded in it, the unconscious becomes terrorizing only by the evasions of it, the reveries of bad faith and the increasingly desperate forms of behavior.

Erotic obsession is one of the important forms of irrationality explored in the novella. Although Rachel rejects him, not once but several times, E. comes back to her, and each time at greater cost to his meager stock of self-esteem. He returns in part, the story implies, because she rejects him. He cannot help it, but also derives a perverse nourishment from his helpless situation. In this analysis of the seemingly contradictory structures of of obsession and compulsion, Berdichevsky breaks new fictional ground. An example is the perception of the other in obsession. From the scraps of "reliable" information ~~about~~ we can gather concerning Rachel's character, a rather predatory ~~unattractive~~ portrait emerges. She seems essentially to live off of Eli medlish, taking money from him well after rebuffing his approaches. She benefits greatly from his academic tuition, and uses him extensively as a source of emotional support. Exploiting the pretense of the brother-sister relationship, she even comes crying to E. when her affairs with other men flounder. Despite all this in the phenomenology of E's experience of her, she is the apotheosis of radiance, a source of perfection and life. (There is, of course, a grain of psychological truth in this: because he cannot confront sexuality but needs relief from his loneliness, he in a sense lives off of his obsession with her, as she in fact lives off of him.) In obsession, the other is transformed and transfigured with no reference to reality. The achievement of A.B. is in making the enormity of the distortion poignant and believable. This is accomplished by the skillful use of first-person narrative in such a way that we have virtually no channels of knowledge other than the way in which objects present themselves

immanently to the consciousness of the narrator.

Being powerfully governed by the other is part of the ordeal. E. is so preoccupied with Rachel's sexual presence that the flux of his emotional life becomes regulated by her every physical gesture. "My feelings changed as she changed dresses" (p. 54), he admits, and then proceeds to describe the various degrees of arousal occasioned by her white outfits as opposed to her black outfits, not to mention her dressing gown, or the effect of the rustle of her breast (against beneath the front or) her tunic. In the love note in which E. finally declares himself, he writes: "You are the light of my world. You possess the power to restore the crown of my youth. Your love has the capacity to sustain whatever is in me, to make of me what I need to become" (p. 55). There are the banal currency of literary love -- especially epistolary love -- everywhere and always. Here, however, the clichés are put to ironic use insofar as they represent a literal truth: E. has put her in a position of complete sway over his life. She is in fact his only light, his only hope. hyperboles contrary to rhetorical intent

The last stage in the narrator's encounter with sexuality is sadism. So long as the other remains enthroned at the center of the universe, the self can explain the failure to receive love as a sign of his own unworthiness and take out his deprivation on himself. But when the illusion falters under too great a weight of reality, the other may be deposed, and what was once dependence becomes aggression, payment for humiliations endured. When this happens to Ehimelekh the rebellions begins on the border. He dreams a homicide-suicide; he wounds himself and her, but "she refuses to die, and he [must] violently strangle her until her arms fall limp to her sides" (p. 40). Next come misogynist diatribes. In an attempt to get distance from his situation by identifying the irritant and assigning blame to it, E. undertakes a series of philosophical expositions turns into

in which Woman is presented as God's curse upon the emancipation of man (pp. 14-15). This high-minded disquisition soon degenerates into pathetic invective, a mean-spirited parody of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden and God's curse upon women, with E. ~~taking~~ appropriating God's role as the curse-giver. All this is still taken place in E.'s imagination. When the tables turn and she decides she wants him, he is in a position fully to make her suffer. And he does very skillfully, affecting apathy when she faints in class and withholding his presence from her sickbed. This is not stylized sadism à la Havelock Ellis, but a psychological sadism, all the more plausible believable for its ordinary occurence than its clinical perversion. (He makes it much worse for her than she did for him, for at least he had her companionship and esteem if not affection.)

Ch3.5 space

~~The fate of religious experience in U.P. is linked to sexuality~~

The turmoil of sexuality in U.P. is linked to the fate of religious experience in a way which is crucial but not immediately apparent. On the face of things, religion would appear to be absent altogether. In contrast to Feinberg and Lilienblum, E. presents himself (for whom the calamity of apostasy and the drama of rebellion remain in the past. Family seems to exist for E. No letters (are sent to or received from) brothers or sisters left back in the East; there is not even an appearance put in by the figurely the author father, whose threatened visit was a comic vertex in Nakamayyim. So total is E's liberation that ~~there is no trace of the ethos of negation~~ his stance hardly betrays a trace of unlike the many characters in the literature of ~~so common in the literature of the time~~, contemporary Hebrew fiction whose characteristic identity is defined by what they reject, E. has ostensibly left all that behind him and securely installed himself within the new. The "new" in his case is rather vague. It is not the Zionism of his Hashalah precursors, nor the ideologies (Zionism, socialism) of his comrades. Rather than these sets of ~~system~~ systematic beliefs which are in many ways homologous to traditional religion, E seems

committed to general humanistic ideals of knowledge and progress. Rua in the Goethean sense of Geist, is spiritual medium he believes himself to be living in and nourished by, and to which one day he will make a contribution.

Most of all he views himself as reborn, or at least a candidate for rebirth. At the age of twenty-five, he has lost some of his best years to early oppression and struggle, and now after effecting a complete separation from his parts he is ready to be remade. For this Switzerland is the right setting. The lushness and exhorbitance of the country's physical beauty move the narrator to compare it to the Garden of Eden (p. 11). The comparison does not rest on nature alone. The opening of Swiss universities to women means that this is a paradise in which the two sexes, each released from the debilities of its origins, can freely mingle. (Later on the sinister possibilities of the Garden, temptation and fall, will also not be left unexploited.) The quaint, medieval beauty of the city of Berne leads the narrator to invoke another myth of restoration. Berne, with its antique perfection intact, suggests what Jerusalem would have been like had it not been destroyed. At first he is saddened by the tragic discrepancy between the fates of the two cities, "but soon afterwards, my thoughts abandoned the Judaean Hills in order to dwell here in this land of joy and youthfulness" (p. 13). This "here and now" is a time imagined as if prior to the Fall and the Destruction.

This fabricated innocence turns out to be something quite different. The violent stirrings of sexual need -- unacknowledged, unmet, unfulfilled -- blow away E.'s new identity like a house of cards. What is left is the abyss of the self. This is the space that was once densely packed with the thick stuff of tradition: not just belief, but family, texts, sacred time, as transmuted by individual experience into the substance of personal history. Through an act of will, E. has successfully managed to extirpate these contents. Yet, whereas

he believes he has thereby restored a primal innocence, ~~the~~ ~~readers~~ we see the cavernous interior of an abyss new vacated. The spatial metaphor is indeed helpful here: E. conceives of his life ~~as~~ two-dimensionally as a slate whiped clean, which is now freshly and unimpededly available to new impressions. Irony furnishes the reader with a third dimension which exposes the depth beneath the surface and thus the tenuousness of E.'s constructions.

Depths do not remain vacant for long. What happens in UP underscores a larger statement made the literature of the generation ~~of~~ as a whole: when its plausability collapses, religion does not simply pass away but creates a titanic vacuum in its absence. Living in this void is painful and anguished. Few can endure it ~~must~~ many seek secular substitutes ~~what that~~ which, like religion, function to supply the needs of meaning and community. However, to ignore the existence of the void and to act as if it doesn't exist -- which is what E does -- means to relinquish any control ~~of~~ over what "fills" the void. In E's case, the void is invaded and taken over by erotic feeling. While he is indulging in lofty reveries ~~in which is imagined~~ of love as an emanation of spiritual abundance, ~~his wealth of spirit,~~ erotic need floods the unacknowledged interior space of his being. E's situation, I wish to assert, ~~must~~ needs to be described in religious terms. There is a dimension of what Rachel is to him that is not adequately described by sexual dependence or possession. Immediately after delivering to Rachel the letter professing his love ("You are the light of my world"... etc.), E. is literally convulsed by the realization that "in her hands lie my life and my future; ~~everything~~ all I have is in her hands, everything is in her hands" (p. 36; emphasis in the text). Rachel has in fact become the source of all meaning in his life, the "ground of ultimate being." The violence of his reaction ~~is a~~ comes from the sudden awareness of the loss of his autonomy and the fact

of his ontological absorption into the field of her being.

The depth and quality of this shift are registered in a passage describing E's thoughts as he travels by boat to receive Rachel's reply to his letter.

> Like a mourner I sat in a corner and felt as if something separated me from all the other passengers. They are strangers to me and I see their faces for the first time. But one thing I know for certain: what happened to me did not happen to them. My soul is different, my spirit is different, my people is different.
>
> A slight smile passed over my lips as I realized that I was probably the only one here whose ancestors had stood at Mt. Sinai. I thought, too, that Mt. Sinai is lower than all the mountains that border the river we are now traveling (m.)... A great sadness stills my thoughts as I suddenly remember Rachel there on the mountain top and that in an hour I shall know my fate (*ahavit dovari*) (p.57).

E perceives his anxious spiritual desperation as his lot not by virtue of his being a man among men who has loved and lost, but because he is a Jew. Being chosen to suffer the terrors of impotence and unreality is the meaning of the election of Israel, whose revelation was given at a mountain whose awesomeness is dwarfed by the real mountains at hand. The drift of these meditations is toward the stigmatizing and belittling of (the meaning of) Jewish history, over which E. exercises his sardonic judgment. But suddenly this hauteur is collapsed by thought of Rachel, who has replaced God and the Jewish people as the inescapable ground of the meaning of his life. When he

admits a moment later that "the immortality of my soul I see in her" (p.58, in phasis in text), he is admitting the functional continuity between the old dispensation and the new. The difference is that the newer one is not ~~much~~ kinder. In the void created by the withdrawal of traditional religion, religion of a sort rushes back in. ~~Where~~ The series that runs ~~on~~ Enchantment, disenchantment, reenchantment is not a spiral upwards. Where God once ruled becomes a demonic space.

||space||

ch 3.6 ||Narcissism||

Not all psychological narratives invite clinical ~~discuss~~ investigation. The danger of reductionism is ~~great~~ substantial and the ultimate yield in insight ~~is~~ often slight. Criticism ~~is~~ usually on firmer ground when it makes intuitive use of the psychological models that have become part of the general discourse of culture than when it reaches self-consciously "out of its system" to apply clinical ~~terms~~ concepts. In the case of U.P., however, ~~I believe~~ there is reason to act contrary to this wisdom: There is no readily available term in our critical discourse about character to naturalize the multiplicity of mental states ~~assigns~~ assigned to ~~to~~ E. in the narrative. My intention is therefore to introduce such a term in the hope that its explanatory power will be proved ~~in its giving~~ by providing a ~~unified way of~~ coherent way to approach understanding of the figure of the narrator.

note to check in agreement

This is the concept of narcissism as a personality disorder developed by in the last twenty years by ~~by~~ Heinz Kohut and Otto Kernberg. In the small child narcissism is a normal stage of development. The child is possessed of a "grandiose sense of self" in which it views itself and its needs as being located at the center of the world. Other people ~~are~~ do not exist for the child as truly differentiated identities ("objects"), but rather, they are experienced narcissistically as extensions of the ~~self~~ ("self-objects"), and the kind of control the child expects to have over these self-objects "is closer to the control a grown-up expects to have over his own ~~mind~~ body and ~~body~~ mind than [...] the control ~~he~~ which he expects to have over others" (p. 26). In normal development ~~these taken~~ the child gradually recognizes the imperfections and limitations of the self, with a resulting diminution of the domain and power of grandiose fantasy. Exhibitionism and grandiosity are ~~gradually~~ eventually tamed and integrated into the adult personality, while providing the libidinal fuel for self-esteem, the achievement of ambitions, and the enjoyment of activity. Others become recognized as separate beings with separate needs with whom pleasure and nourishment can be exchanged on a reciprocal basis.

Narcissism becomes a disorder when, because of trauma, the adult carries the childhood stage into later life. The trauma is usually the premature removal of the primary providers of the child's nurturance; the child ~~suddenly~~ suffers the sudden termination of the blissful state in which ~~his~~ its needs are met by the world. In reaction to the disturbance, the grandiose self is retained in its archaic form and strives for fulfillment of archaic aims. "The child attempts to save the originally all embracing narcissism by concentrating perfection and power upon the self [...]

and by turning away disdainfully from an outside to which all imperfections have been assigned" (p. 106). The adult becomes marked by the exhibitionism and grandiosity that were appropriate to the child. Others retain the status of self-object rather than becoming loved and admired for their own attributes. The psyche moves to save a segment of the "global narcissistic perfection" that once existed and assigns it to the self-object, which is invested with powers. The grandiose self attempts to maintain continuous union with the self-object and to extort control over it. The object of narcissistic love feels oppressed and enslaved by these expectations and demands.

The concept of clinical narcissism was not put forth merely as a theoretical revision of psychoanalytic ~~theory~~ doctrine but as a way of accounting for historical and social change. The nature of family life in Viennese society in the high bourgeois era, it is argued, had a great deal to do with Freud's conception of the organization of the psyche. Freud placed the issue of impulse regulation at the center of the drama ~~of~~ played out between a repressive social order and instinctually-motivated individual. -- together with guilt and castration anxiety -- The theorists of narcissism assert that the transformation of society in the twentieth century, with all the attendant changes in the nature of the family, ~~have~~ created a type of personality whose characteristic disorder is narcissistic and which turns on questions of shame and fear of "object loss." Now, without assessing the validity of these claims, I wish to use the concept of narcissism to make sense of E.'s character. I do so on the assumption that in the narrative E's character performs a representative function in relation to his cultural generation. ~~I mean~~ By "representative" ~~I mean~~ not in the sense of a "type" that

stands for a group or class but rather in the Lukacsian sense of a hero who contains within him the contradictions of a historical moment. It would be a mistake, then, to diaghose E's erotic obsessions and delusions of grandeur as a private complaint, the symptoms of an idiosyncratic weakness. Instead, the story presents E's narcissism as a symbolic wound inflicted by larger social and historical forces.

Take, for example, the question of origins. For the etiology of clinical narcissism Kohut points to the traumatic early withdrawal of love from the small child, who must then compensate for this sudden deprivation. This is the case as well with E., although we find out only, as it were, despite himself. E. presents himself as a man who is entirely self-made and whose childhood history is of no account, being merely the common record of imposed folly. The personal past erupts into the narrative only at one point E is left so vulnerable by the shattering news of Rahel rejection of his written profession of love that his poise is momentarily breached (p. 42). In the misery of his long night on the mountain, his mind is invaded by an unbidden train of childhood memories. Chief among them is the recollection of the early death of a loving mother and her immediate replacement by a cold step-mother. (The salience of this datum is underscored by its correspondence to the biography of Berdichevsky and to the history of Michael in Makhanayim.) The massive sense of loss in the present involuntarily connects itself to the critical deprivation of childhood.

Now, to the degree to which the figure of E. is representative, the loss of the mother is not just the loss of the mother. It is a metonymy for the situation of this generation. This was the loss, to put it in a simplified shorthand, of the world of tradition.

The ~~long-stable~~ complex of beliefs, values, texts, and family relations which had long provided a rich and nurturing medium for the development of the self ~~had~~ was suddenly and traumatically ~~been~~ withdrawn, and in its place had come a "colder mother." Although the idea of the maternal function of the tradition is interesting, the real usefulness of this correspondence between the individual figure and the generation lies less in the past than in the present. The disorders of maturity, that is to say, how early loss is compensated for in later life — this is the subject of U. P. E's narcissism is not trivially pathological; ~~it represents the price paid by an entire generation~~. it is a mode of existence in the void.

Significant are the particular vehicles for E's grandiosity. ~~component of E's narcissism~~ E sits alone in his room (not in attendance at lectures) and systematically consumes the resources of the university library with the ~~passion~~ intensity of the autodidact who has come late to learning. His thirst is total and universal; he wants to know everything. As he watches the spectacle of the march of Western thought, he forgets himself, his background, his nation, and dissolves ~~himself~~ merges into the cavalcade of universal history, onto which he has ~~transferred~~ his affective life and in which his spirit now ~~participates~~ directly participates. ("I forgot all the components and boundaries of ~~my~~ our life; I forgot myself and my ways and went in search of the thoughts and deeds of ~~the world~~ humankind" (p. 10).) ~~Hardly~~ Yet, what first presents itself as self-effacement soon becomes a pathway to power. E's studies follow a certain progression: he begins with the history of civilization, and then moves to ~~a~~ the philosophical contemplation of history and human nature, and finally arrives at metaphysics and the

critique of thinking. E has "transcended" the "components and boundaries" of individuals and nations by moving from particulars to universals, from the content of thought to an examination of the very ground and possibility of thought. This rapid ascent into the rarefied reaches of theory is not so much intellectual progress as the achievement of a stance of judgement:

> Like an angelic procession, all of mankind passes before me, and I acquit them or condemn them according to their belief. All are judged. Nothing escapes my scrutiny. (P. 10)

The Hebrew reader will not fail to appreciate the ironic allusion to the Unetaneh tokef prayer in the High Holiday liturgy in which God is pictured as passing all creation under the scepter of judgment and designating who shall live and who shall die.

E. gives his grandiosity an ideological cover taken from the quasi-Nietzschean ideas of the time. To his fellow students he makes the case for the priority of beauty and poetry over the alleviation of human misery and for the spiritually endowed individual over the mass of men (p. 14). The flimsiness of these rationalizations, however, is quickly exposed. It is not Nietzscheanism which is dismissed but the bad faith of E's misuse of it. E's swagger turns out to be generated not by a genuine endowment of will and mind but by a driven sense of loneliness and deprivation, which is only worsened by his aloof manner. E must therefore be counted as one of the weak and insulted of the earth whose motives are rooted in resentiment and who can only dream of being an Übermensch. Dreams and reveries, in fact, can be the only medium for E's exalted thoughts about himself, and it

is the direction and destination of these thoughts which give him away.

> On my way home from the university I used to walk along the bridge that separated the quarters of the town [...] Then my soul would soar to the heavens and I would experience a sense of ~~spiritual abundance~~ fullness of spirit, a spirit that could prevail over all ... My place is the whole world [...] ~~I could have~~ Had I lived in any generation I ~~could~~ would have had something to contribute. [...] I see conjured before me a new idea, a new theory of man, a philosophy that ~~will~~ consumes [habola'at] all other views and explain to humankind the meaning of things. (Pp 14-15)

note: see page x

Berdichevsky's Elimelekh on the bridge bears a close resemblance to Feierberg's Nahman on the craggy ledge, brandishing his imaginary sword in an attempt to bring the Messiah. Both ~~explore~~ the technique of panager ~~describe~~ the reveries ~~whose function~~ to move the narrative along a sequence of moments of consciousness toward crisis, and in both the hero exercises imaginary powers as an escape from a disappointing reality. Yet, whereas Nahman aspires to hasten redemption for the Jewish people (though, to be sure, he delights in the prospect of this being accomplished through his actions), E's aims are more self-regarding. The vague universalism of his ideas is displaced by their imperial ambitions. The ends they accomplish are far less important that they will "prevail ~~of all~~ over" and "consumes" all other ideas.

Nowhere is E's narcissism more conspicuous than ~~to~~ in his relationships to Rachel. Even before she enters ~~his life~~ the scene, he has constructed an elaborate fantasy of the woman he seeks. Even though the fantasy ostensibly envisions an exchange in which he

enriches her spirit in ~~return~~ return for her relieving his loneliness, the woman is in fact only a mechanism for confirming and fulfilling Elimelekh's own. When Rachel materializes, E. ~~attempts~~ moves to absorb her into the fantasy in utter obliviousness to her own nature ~~and desires~~. But his attempts to exert extensive control over her founder on her contrary desires, and E. ends up instead, as the one controlled, a pathetic figure caught in the toils of obsessive love. In the constricted consciousness of the narrator, Rachel is and always was a narcissistic extension of the self.

Shame

The following incident takes place soon after Elimelekh's ~~has given~~ given in to his need to be with Rachel and joined her and the other students in the mountains. The group has gone boating, but E has stayed behind alone because he is afraid of the water and because he cannot bear to see Rachel in the company of Uriel, a young man she has been spending time with. Midnight comes and E impatiently awaits their return. Finally one of the group arrives, bearfoot and sodden, to announce that the boat capsized and all were saved except for Rachel and Uriel. E collapses with palpitations from the news, only to be told a few minutes later that the report of the drowning is false and that the whole incident was a hoax. The next morning Rachel condemns the prank but is more upset at discovering the true extent of E dependence

on her.

The false drowning has the force of (inducing a deep sense of shame by) suddenly revealing E's weakness both to himself and to others and not just to Rachel but to the whole community. The experience of shame intensifies as E, having failed to obtain Rachel's love, cannot manage to break with her and ~~keeps coming back~~ continues to return to her after each threatened ultimatum. After treating his friends to an elaborate diatribe ~~about~~ on the evils of womankind, ~~E~~ E openly capitulates. He shows up at the trainstation to meet Rachel ~~when~~ the minute she returns from the mountains, helps her find an apartment, and returns to ~~acting~~ playing the role of her loyal friend. This cycle continues until the shame becomes too great to bear and E turns his pain outward in the form of sadistic rage against Rachel. Shame suffuses the second half of the novella. Like narcissism to which it is closely linked, shame is not a simple pathology but ~~an~~ a modal existential state. ~~with large consequences~~ It is an unavoidable condition of life in the void.

The English "shame" and the Hebrew "bushah" both contain two different senses which are differentiated in other languages: discretion-shame (French, "pudeur"), as in "having a sense of shame," ~~which~~ designates the innate reluctance to violate moral boundaries and interdictions, and disgrace-shame (French, "honte"), as in "being shamed," is the feeling of unworthiness and exposure that comes after the ~~fact~~ act, after the violation. For Nietzsche the usurpation of the first meaning by the second is a critical feature of modernity. Shame as discretion belongs to the era of religion. A sense of shame and modesty was the proper stance before the mystery of the universe and the great forces of the cosmos. Indecency consists of the attempt to uncover everything. Truth, it says in the Gay Science, is a woman before whom one exercises a sense of shame." ~~In the~~

note

~~modern age. The rationality of science perpetrates just such an indecency.~~ future É's assaults on the world of theoretical knowledge clearly number him among the new men of science and rationality who inhabit a supposedly disenchanted universe. É's efforts are successful in an ironic sense: His uncovering of the mysteries of the world inevitably leads to revealing the irrationality of the private self. Public and private spheres are exchanged, and the workings of É's inner life lay exposed. (The bubble of narcissistic grandiosity bursts.)

Central to shame-as-disgrace is the experience of forced revelation, ~~of self~~. Something disturbing about the self is suddenly uncovered and made visible. In the case of the false drowning what is exposed is an absence rather than a presence at the core of É's being. Until his discomfiture, he experienced his feelings for Rachel ~~at~~ first as a sympathetic overflow of fraternal solidarity, and then as a grand passion in which his soul fused with the life of the universe. In both of these defensive reveries, É conceives of his plight as ~~due to~~ the result of an excess of spirit; he simply ~~had~~ too much. The drowning incident reveals to him the involuntary nature of his situation; he is embroiled in compulsion rather than donation. From then on, as the frequency of his capitulations increases, the "meaning" of the relationship is progressively emptied out to reveal an absence of substance rather than a presence: ~~co~~dependence, obsession, compulsion which can be transfigured by no redeeming content.

Sartre recognizes not only the revelatory nature of shame but also the role of the other in precipitating the revelation: Shame occurs when one becomes conscious of being observed by others in a moment of weakness: "It is a shameful apprehension

of something, and this something is me. I am ashamed of what I am. Shame therefore realizes an intimate relation of myself to myself. Through shame I have discovered an aspect of my being. [...] I recognize that I am as the Other sees me."

[pp. 221-222] E's being made the occasion for a good laugh over the false drowning or his embarrassment ~~of~~ over ~~return~~ going back to Rachel after his mysogonist discourses -- these experiences may not, then simply involve suffering the slings and arrows of ridicule. The gaze of the Others has a critical role. The identity of the Others in this narrative is, E's peers, his fellow Jewish students who are self-imposed exiles like himself. It is this student community -- really only an ~~[illegible]~~ emancipated version of the kehilah of the shtetl -- from which E holds himself aloof as a gifted individual spirit. But that which he has rejected returns to possess him. This same community ends up by serving as the reflector of his shame and the ~~cat~~ revelatory catalyst of his impotence.

[significantly, not Rachel, the object of his obsession, whose real existence he is hardly aware of,]

Pudenda, Scham, merushim -- the terms for genitals make the linkage between shame and sexuality unavoidable. The distinction made in psychoanalytic literature between shame and guilt is germane to the theme of U.P. Guilt, in this framework, is understood as the painful internal tension generated when the inhibitive barriers erected by the superego ~~are~~ are touched or transgressed by id impulses, especially in the form of taboo ~~&~~ sexual desires. The retributive punishment for this transgression is the mutilation of the offending organ as the carrier of tabooed impulse and this unconscious threat is ~~bar~~ the basis of the castration anxiety. Shame, on the other hand, is rooted in feelings

~~PFS~~ p15 of inferiority and ~~is~~ the failure ~~to act sexually~~. Shame in psychoanalytic thinking originates in the painful tension between the ego and the ego-ideal (the sum of positive of the psyche's identifications and potentialities) and results from the self's failure to attain goals set by the ego-ideal. In contrast to the convictions of transgression of ~~boundaries that triggers~~ in guilt, shame is produced by a sense of

p. 24 noncommission and shortcoming. The unconscious threat behind shame is not castration but the fear of abandonment, the fear that because of our disappointing unworthiness we shall incur the contempt of others and be cut off and left to die

p. 28 by emotional starvation.

E's great failure is to act sexually and fulfill the high romantic goals he has set for himself. His failure results less from ~~her~~ Rachel's unavailability than from his evasions. He begins by acting toward her as a brother, and when he wishes to shift the terms of the relationship, he can put forward only grandiose rhetoric rather than changed behavior. E's is a double shame: the inability to enact an erotic relationship with Rachel and the inability to sever his tie with her once the futility of his purpose becomes certain. Now it is the second failure, the humiliation of obsessive

p''∪∩∿* attachment, which on the face of things is the most difficult to account for. His motives become clearer if we invoke the psychoanalytic premise concerning the fear that lies beneath shame: the fear of abandonment. E's actions ~~show~~ demonstrate that ~~the~~ he is willing to maintain the relationship no matter on what basis and no matter what the private and public costs. To put it in technical terms: the fear of object loss takes precedence over the release of impulses. It is far more important for E to maintain continuous union with the object in which he

has invested so much ~~narcissistic~~ narcissistic energy than for him to fulfill his romantic ambitions.

This returns us to the vicissitudes of life in the world & and the generation he represents bears ~~in~~ an inescapable psychic wound is clear. The origins of the wound are the subject of ironic perception. E complains that he is the victim of the ~~o~~ppressive religion of the fathers, which functioned aggressively to deny life. The narrative, ~~by~~ however ~~contrast~~, reveals the ~~source~~ genesis of the problem to be just the opposite: The sudden removal of the world of tradition as a source of emotional and cognitive nourishment. The collapsed plausibility of this world induces a state of chronic deprivation, a vacuous need which ~~can~~ no substitute can easily or quickly ~~fulfill~~ fill up. Need precedes fulfillment. An E can never attain ~~to~~ the erotic fulfillment he longs for while he is empty inside, and he can never fill up that void because he can never acknowledge what created it.

//Autobiographical Form//

As an autobiographical narrative, U.P. poses two perplexing questions of genre: What are the motives of the narrator for telling the story? And what is the narrative's retrospective point-of-view, that is, the final "wisdom" which shapes the way the past is presented? The question of the narrator's motives is sharpened by the absence in the text of a narratee, either an explicit or implicit recipient of E's communication. We are left to posit some vague notion of the contemporary Hebrew reader, peers of Berdichevsky's on the radical side of the Hebrew national revival, younger admirers who published his work under the Tushiyah imprint. The vagueness is significant, and it blunts the sense in which U.P. can be considered a confessional narrative, despite all the admissions and self-exposure it delivers. Terrence Doody is right in insisting that "a confession is a deliberate, self-conscious attempt of an individual to explain his nature to an audience who represents the kind of community he needs to exist in and to confirm him. Confession is always an act of community, and the speaker's intention to realize himself in community is the formal purpose that distinguishes confession from other modes of autobiography or self-expression" (pp. 4-5). E. is an isolato whose only identification is with ~~the company~~ an invisible company of enlightened spirits, to ~~which~~ whom little would be gained by confessing his record of weakness and folly. There is no community in which narrator seeks participation and confirmation.

To whom, then, does he speak? One answer is that the narrator speaks to himself in an act of self-exorcism. Despite E's avowed rejection of Rachel -- and because of his sadistic treatment of her -- he clearly continues to be mired in his

terms of the superiority of the great man of spirit. With the publication of Zibuah uvaharut in 1899, with which we opened this chapter, the call for individual rebellion reached its height. Published the following year, U.P. constitutes an indictment of this argument. E's superior endowment turns out to be a hollow compensation, his greatness mere grandiosity. Rooted in neither part nor community, his integrity is swept away by the first promptings of erotic need. Now, it is true that in his essay of 19 On Will [Al haratson] B had already begun to revise his notions about the prerogatives of the individual. But nothing touches the unrelenting anatomy of the doctrine ~~critique~~ embodied in U.P. It is an extraordinary instance of the divergence of two forms of discourse, and an eloquent witness to the critical potentialities of ~~the fictive imagination~~ fiction.

It is a kind of fiction, however, which Berdichevsky stopped writing almost as soon as he began. Mahanayyim and UP ~~were~~ both appeared in 1900, that prodigious and mysterious year during which so many lines of force in Berdichevsky's creative life intersected. After ~~that year~~ words B largely turned to a vastly different kind of fiction (~~as well~~ and discursive writing). The ~~scrutiny~~ fine penetration of the inner psychic space of the individual -- its delusions, its impulses, its threats, its defenses -- was put away. So, too, the commitment to the representation of the present moment in all its compromising authenticity. It was not here that ~~I~~ one could discover the play of the great archaic and mythic forces (the energies of will, sacrifice, and eros), ~~that~~ which Berdichevsky found in the distant part of the ~~people~~ nation and which he hoped would once again inspirit national life. The scrutiny of the contemporary Jew could reveal only ~~the~~ an humiliating absence. ~~of life forces.~~

obsession with her. The narrative is a failed attempt to persuade himself that he is now free from his disability and capable of resuming his life. The digressive rationalizations for his weakness, which continually retard the narrative, are therefore integral to the self-apologetic motive. These modulated repetitions and circularities indeed represent the technical achievement of U.P.: the first representation in Hebrew of the consciousness of bad faith and neurotic compulsion. A second approach to the question of who is addressed by the narrator would evoke the theme of narcissistic shame. Why does the narrator need to expose the humiliating record of his repeated failure to live up to his own values? Beneath shame, it has been argued, lies a fear of losing the loved object, which is so powerful that it overrides the pains of self-exposure. Yet despite E's capitulations and self-abasements, the love is sustained in any case. But if the object is lost, the need for it (and the motive for enduring the ordeal of shame) is not. This is a need which is produced by a bottomless deprivation, and it knows no end or resting place. In this sense the narrative is not reflexive but open-ended. The will toward self-exposure represents a continuing need, after the redoubled loss, to make contact with an object, a desire for connection that does not cannot abate.

Although they do not formally require it, autobiographical narratives stimulate the expectation that some form of retrospective learning or wisdom will be delivered in the course of the telling. Even if the wisdom consists of a painful baring of illusions, it represents a credible gain in awareness. Something of this claim is made in the first half of U.P. when E. makes statements of the following kind: "In my naivete I said to myself that in one leap I had bypassed all the generations of my ancestors

and that my spirit was now completely open for an other world and for other ideas" (p. 10). Or: "I was mistaken then in believing that intimacy between two people ~~was~~ is an invariable outgrowth of ~~friendships~~ companionships sustained over time, and that ~~friendships~~ companionships is a function of one's worth and the value of one's ~~deep~~ deeds" (p. 20). Such statements imply that in the course of the ~~narrated events~~ events described in the story the narrator was disabused of these mistaken convictions and granted a truer view of things. So we might expect, for example, that now he ~~and~~ acknowledges that it is impossible to leap over the past, or that now he understands that the existence of nonrational factors makes the progress from companionship to erotic love not necessarily automatic.

The promise of wisdom, however, is never realized. ~~The~~ Obsession and the shame of dependence overwhelms the narrator and wipe out the possibility of an accession to ~~learning~~ knowledge. Instead the narrator burrows ~~(down)~~ ever more deeply into ~~hole~~ through ~~hand~~ of bad faith. (moves to take back whatever ~~glimmers~~ kernels of insight were implied in his early reflections and). He denies that the narrated events have any meaning whatever. The declaration is made in the closing lines of the novella, which contains the ~~words~~ phrase that serves as the title for the work as a whole, a phrase who enigmatic reference requires a gloss.

And so all the anguish of that year-and-a-half was only a paning shadow, a thing of no account. Only 'urra' parah, only 'urra' parah ... (p. 55)

indent

Urra parah literally means "A raven flies." It is the "punch line" of an anecdote which occurs in the Babylonian Talmud (Bezah 21a; see also Hagigah 124b):

R. Avia the Elder asked R. Huna: Is it permissible to slaughter on a Festival an animal half of which belongs to a heathen and half to an Israelite? — He said to him: It is permitted. The other [R. Avia] said: What difference is there between this [case] and the case of vows and free-will-offerings? — A raven flies [Curra' parah], he [R. Huna] retorted.

When he left his son Rabbah said to him: Was this not R. Avia the Elder whom you, sir, have praised as a great man? — What then was I to do with him? answered he; I am today [in the condition of a lover who said] 'Stay ye me with dainties; refresh me with apples' [Song of Songs, 2.4], and he asked me things which require reasoning. And what is [really] the reason?

"A raven flies," then, is a phrase which in itself has no meaning but which functions to avoid answering a question, to terminate the conversation, and to rebuke the interlocutor into silence. The Aramaic phrase in a Hebrew text, its critical positioning as the title and last words of the novella, its source in a well-known anecdote from the Talmud in which it is found more urge the kind of attention that a casual reference would not require. The array of ironic associations unleashed by the phrase make it a powerful act of closure.

There is an undercutting quality, to begin with, to the resort to a phrase so conspicuously talmudic as the epitome of a story of a young man whose talmudic years have supposedly been put so resolutely behind him. By saying u.p. at the end of the novella, B's narrator is declaring the whole story

"Conclusion"

There is very little left of E by the end of the U.P. story. The grandiose edifice of illusion that he inhabits in the beginning of the story makes E. an fascinating figure, the precise nature of whose folly is significant and interesting. When the edifice collapses, E is bereft. There is no authentic ~~illusionless~~ if painful knowledge, given him in compensation for his ordeal. He ends up both of experience, to compensate him clinging to a new set of illusions, mean-spirited where the first were high-minded, impoverished ~~where the first~~ insted were elaborate. The reasons for his/E's downfall, the flaw in the ~~willed~~ forced construction of his identity, are many, but one causal factor stands out: the willed aloofness from others, the sovereign isolation of the self, the glorification of the ~~isolated~~ solitary spirit. ~~Although~~ To be sure, there is no going home to the world of the fathers (in both the dimensions of personal family history and the religious matrix of faith and belief) -yet at the same time the attempt to efface this world is disastrous. E ~~has constructs~~ builds his new, self-elected identity ~~on~~ a site which he imagines to be wiped cleaned clean of its earlier foundations. The construction cannot stand. Nor does he condescend to form bonds with his ~~fellow~~ peers, fellow orphans in history from who he might draw support and comfort.

This critique of detachment stands in the strongest possible contrast to the views of the individual expounded in B's polemical essays of the previous ten years. Throughout the eighteen-nineties B condemned the tradition for repressing originality and distent and ~~made the~~ advocated the privileged status of the unique individual. Toward the end of the decade his appeal absorbed a Nietzschean strain and put the case in

On Shame and the Search for Identity
Helen B. Merrell Lynd, Harcourt, Brace & Co, NY 1958

Confession & Community in the Novel
Terrence Doody, Louisiana State U. Press: Baton Rouge 1980

4-5 "A confession is a deliberate, self-conscious attempt by an individual to explain his nature to the audience who represents the kind of community he needs to exist in and confirm him. Confession is always an act of community, and the speaker's intention to realize himself in communion is the formal purpose that distinguishes confession from other modes of autobiography or self-expression"

presence of confessor (receiver of the confession)

* confession from God or community original impulse - but in U.P. both ways are barred
- not guilt & forgiveness, but weakness & strength

Use parals