

**THE CLOVEN SOUL:
THE ART OF THE NARRATIVE OF M.Y. BERDICHEWSKI**

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ABSTRACT

Micha Yosef Berdichewski (1865 - 1921) is considered by many to be the most influential Jewish author of his generation. His literary activity encompassed both fiction and non-fiction.

Berdichewski's fictional world has been termed "a spiritual organic unity" (Almagor 1968) inasmuch as his hero tends to reappear in many like-guises across the various stories and there is a great deal of repetition of themes, characters, motifs and even semantic elements throughout his work.

The present work aims to show that the seeming uniformity in Berdichewski's writing is misleading. It postulates that the identity of feature that marks the Berdichewskian text is not productive of sameness, but rather that it promotes greater textual density through the adherence of variability within correlates. It purports that though Berdichewski's apparent stereotyping is due, at least in part, to an abiding concern with some central issues - and thus that his various narratives may be seen as the continuing working out of these concerns - these are never fully resolved but only interacted with from varying, quite disparate, perspectives.

The study attempts to illustrate the variability in Berdichewski's narratives by providing a synchronic and a diachronic view of his literary output. It concentrates on two of his short novels, **Mahanayim** and **Garei Rehov**, which were written at an interval of over twenty years.

The synchronic analysis of **Mahanayim** seeks to elucidate intra-textual

movements by examining some of the networks of association and dissonance both within and between the corresponding larger and smaller elements of the story. These include: The parallel sets of relationships; the use of correspondence and antithesis in the formulation of character; the discordances set up by word-repetition in changing contexts and through the fluctuations of extra-textual connotations; the effects of word-motifs across narrative progression and the inversion of repeated imagery. It also explores the mythological allusions by which Berdichewski tries to achieve psychological understanding and shows how their implications often subvert the stated claims of the narrative and impart a uniqueness to features that appear, at first reading, repetitious. The Oedipal myth in its Freudian-sexual interpretation, as well as in its extended Jungian-archetypal reading, is referred to in explication of the involved psychological aspect of **Mahanayim** and as illustration of its textual complexity.

A diachronic dimension is introduced by the comparison of **Mahanayim** and **Garei Rehov**, which looks at the issues of narrative structure, the rôle of the narrator, narrative verisimilitude and narrative integrity. It further explores and compares the use of analogues in the two stories and considers the inter-textual thematic connections.

These analyses reveal that the seeming uniformity in Berdichewski's writing effects a subtly highlighted variance which derives from the close linkages afforded by permutation within identity. It also shows that though there is a perceptible continuity in his work, Berdichewski's development as a writer is evident in the altered narrative form of the later story. The conclusion of this study is that though Berdichewski's fictional world may be

termed "a spiritual organic unity" it is a unity which is dense with a constant wavering and flux.

To my parents

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Micha Yosef Berdichevski (1865 - 1921) is considered by many to be the most influential Jewish author of his generation. He was an extremely prolific writer whose literary enterprise encompassed both fiction and non-fiction.

Berdichevski's fictional world has been termed "a spiritual organic unity"¹ inasmuch as his hero tends to reappear in many like-guises across the various stories and there is a great deal of repetition of themes, characters, motifs and even semantic elements throughout his work.

The present study attempts to expand on Almagor's thesis — which collates and assigns meanings to some of the common elements in Berdichevski's writing — and go beyond it. It aims to show that Berdichevski's stereotyping is, in large measure, illusory.

It contends that although an abiding concern with some primary psychological processes and cultural issues may be seen to run through his work — and thus that his various narratives may be seen as the continuing working out of these concerns — their complexity is such that they are never fully resolved, but only interacted with from varying, quite disparate, perspectives. Furthermore, it asserts that a longitudinal survey of Berdichevski's literary output reveals a marked technical and conceptual development which efficaciously counters any possible charge of homogeneity.

The study concentrates on two of Berdichevski's short novels, Mahanayim and Garei Rehov which were written at an interval of over twenty years. It analyzes Mahanayim, the earlier story, extensively, with the intention of emphasizing the intricacy of its linguistic and psychological weave and showing that what appears as repetition is expansion and not identical recurrence. It also examines Garei Rehov, both as an independent work and in its relationship to Mahanayim in an attempt to show the author's artistic progress over twenty years. It is hoped that these analyses will illustrate the variety and depth in Berdichevski's writing. The decision to limit the study to only two stories — Berdichevski wrote over one hundred and fifty fictional pieces — evolves from the assumption that this type of restriction will afford the concentrated focus needed to portray the prismatic, rather than monochromatic, function of the repetitive elements in Berdichevski's writing.

The detailed analysis of Mahanayim strives, intra-textually, to explicate these effects by often tending to a close textual analysis which concentrates, at times, on microscopic elements and connections. It also analyzes the complex mythological allusions by which Berdichevski tries to achieve psychological understanding and shows how their implications often subvert the stated claims of the narrative, thereby imparting a uniqueness to features that appear, at first reading, repetitious. In addition, it explores Berdichevski's use of correspondence and opposition in his methods of characterization, and especially in his presentation of relationships where analogy and antithesis have an important formative function.

Mahanayim was first published in 1899. Almagor notes that the end of the 1890s "comprised a new phase in Berdichewski's artistic development"² as in this period he began "to consider not only the content and purpose of his narratives, but their form and artistic structure as well."³ I. Bin Gorion sees it as "a revolutionary innovation in the awakening Hebrew literature of its time"⁴ inasmuch as "the authors prior to Berdichewski tended to describe the connection between the two camps as a conflict of conscience, and the severing — as a result of that conflict, and not as humankind's (inevitable) fate."⁵ Dan Miron defines Mahanayim as a turning point in modern Hebrew fiction.⁶ According to Miron, the transition of Hebrew literature, as it moves into the twentieth century, may be perceived in this story which, together with its "twin Orva Parah... laid the foundation stones of modern Hebrew literature".⁷

From the above it may be seen that Mahanayim is of seminal importance, not only to Berdichewski's writing, but to the development of modern Hebrew literature at large. But it was not this consideration alone that led to its choice as the main object of this study. It was also chosen because of its grand psychological proportions and its mytho-psychological component. Mahanayim may, in some sense, be seen as a portrait of consciousness in its quest for self-realization or, more accurately, as the tragedy of consciousness in its unsuccessful reaching for actualization. It was therefore felt that Mahanayim could be taken as a fairly comprehensive exemplification of Berdichewski's more important psychological concerns. It was preferred to its "twin" because, as I. Bin Gorion observes, Orva Parah, despite its first-person narrative, is far more distanced in terms of author/tale relationship.⁸

Mahanayim has, since its first publication in 1899, inspired a great deal of critical examination. It was lauded (Brenner, Gnessin,⁹), slated (Frishman, Klausner¹⁰) and accepted with reservations (Silberbush,¹¹ Papirna¹²) by its earliest critics. The emotional intensity of some of these responses presumably derives from its innovative streak which is explicated in Miron's analysis of Mahanayim. The early, positive reactions were largely content-based and the negative reception revolved on vehement objections to both Berdichewski's content and style. Miron asserts that the truly perspicacious stylistic comments came from the more tempered responses of Silberbush and Papirna.¹³ Contemporary criticism of Mahanayim is, naturally, free of emotional charge and its subject in the main is Berdichewski's style, as well as the story's mythological references. Some of these — Gilboa, Cagan, Miron — will be referred to in the course of the present work.

This analysis considers Mahanayim in a number of ways. As dichotomy is an overriding feature of Berdichewski's perception of the human condition and as it is prominent in Mahanayim, the story's formal and conceptual duality is examined. Formal duality is expressed in dual time modes, dual narrator-voice, parallel and antithesis, ambiguous word-motifs and inversion of imagery and symbolism. Conceptual or thematic duality is evidenced in the title of the story and all its ramifications; in Michael's inner-dichotomies; in the oppositions of purity and impurity, blood and water, old and new, logic and song, etc.

The strong sexual component in Mahanayim is addressed on varying levels:

1. In its direct sexual implication: as the story of a repressed young man's first, unhappy sexual adventure.
2. In its association with taboo both directly — with Oedipal overtones — and as transferred taboo, where it acts as a defense mechanism hiding a more potent prohibition.
3. In its Oedipal connection: as symbolic of an ego striving for autonomy.

The symbolic aspect of the Oedipal tale in Mahanayim has led to the introduction of terminology drawn from Jungian psychology as used by James Hillman and Barbara Greenfield. This dimension has been introduced so as to explain the archetypal structures in the psyche of the protagonist of Mahanayim and their relationship to his ego-development. Archetypal and mythical images are often referred to in other places in the analysis but more as symbols and not in this developmental sense.

The intention in the study of Mahanayim is, as mentioned earlier, to point to the complexity and diversity of the seemingly uniform Berdichevskian text, by way of a detailed examination. The purpose in the later section of this work, which compares Mahanayim to Garei Rehov, is two-fold: It aims to analyze a story which has not previously been

examined¹⁴ as well as to follow the development of Berdichewski's thought and the progression of his narrative-style through a comparison of the two stories.

The analysis in the final chapter has looked at the issues of narrative structure, the rôle of the narrator across the dimensions of involvement and intrusiveness and its effects on the creation of narrative verisimilitude, and the problems in maintaining narrative integrity. It has also examined and compared the use of parallel structures in the two stories and has considered the inter-textual thematic connections. The wider, structural perspective of this analysis was inspired precisely because of the unique aspects in each of the two stories: these would have rendered an attempt at direct, microscopic comparison of Mahanayim and Garei Rehov meaningless as well as contrived. The specifics of each story are far too singular to merit such an endeavour.

It is hoped that this study of a minor portion of Berdichewski's work will contribute, in some measure, to an understanding of the great diversity within its "organic unity". It is felt that if this diversity is evident, even within one and the same story and across as few as two stories, then it must surely pertain within the larger corpus of the Berdichewskian narrative. In many ways it may be seen that the repetition itself, far from creating uniformity and staleness, is productive of intensely highlighted, yet subtle, variation.

CHAPTER I

A P O R T R A I T I N D U A L I S M

Dualism, duality, dichotomy, doubleness and doubling — all forms of twinning — have long been a recognized feature of Berdichewski's writing. Many of the titles of his stories allude in some way to the number two, "מחניים", "גרשיים" — which are dual in number; "הישנים והערים", "מזה ומזה" — statively and actively dichotomous; "זו בצד זו" — coupled in identity; "ממקום למקום", "מדרך אל דרך" — twinned spatially and temporally and — "נתן דן נתן" — (and there are two stories by this name) — where the numerical designation two comprises the title.¹

This analysis will examine Mahanayim, the only short novel² of twinned title, with the aim of elucidating the expressions and permutations of dualism and coupling in a Berdichewskian text. These aspects have already been widely addressed, and especially with reference to this story where the industry has been abundant.³ Although previous studies are acknowledged, the intention is not repetition or polemic explication of earlier criticism, but expansion of this theme.

The duality of the title functions on a number of levels. As the Biblical Mahanayim its meaning is "two camps". As noted by Menuha Gilboa, it is the place where Jacob first meets the angels (Gn 32:4) and in

consequence names it thus.⁴ It is also the place where he later struggles with the angel (Gn 32:22-33). Mahanayim therefore designates a ubiquity of opposition and antithesis.^{5,6} In the present story Mahanayim denotes manifold dualities which are in tension with each other: national duality (German and Polish), religious duality (Jewish and Christian, Lutheran and Catholic), locative duality (Breslau and the shtetl, the upper-new and lower-old parts of Breslau),⁷ duality of person (young and old, male and female), duality of quality (pure and impure) and duality of being — within Michael himself who is trapped in a state of ontological dichotomy, torn as he is between all these opposing forces. Michael's essential condition is fragmentation and cleavage, and, as Miron asserts, it is not the oppositional dyads that are important but rather the effects of the tension created by them and Michael's blindness to it — or at least his unconscious dismissal thereof — that form the axis of the tragedy.⁸

The word Mahanayim also occurs in the Bible in Ct 7:1

שׁוֹבֵי שׁוּבֵי הַשׁוּלְמִית שׁוֹבֵי שׁוּבֵי רִנְחִזָּה-בֶּן־בֶּן־
מֵה-תַחֲזוּ בַשׁוּלְמִית כַּמְחַלֵּת הַמַּחֲזִיבִים

— which is translated: "as at a (the) dance of a double choir (BDB 334) or "As it were a dance of two companies" (Soncino). This biblical reference reflects an important element in the story. As simile for breasts Mahanayim bespeaks the erotic dimension which serves as a central narrative point where many of the above-named dualities intersect.⁹

Mahanayim is the story of a young man's — Michael's — struggle for independent identity. He has left the shtetl of his youth, and with bared head and shorn sidelocks attempts to establish himself in the western city of Breslau. He devotes himself to secular study rejecting the natural sciences in favour of philosophy (p. 30).¹⁰ Michael believes himself to be a universalist, whose creed is Rationalism. He thus spends many an hour immersed in a favourite Messianic fantasy where he sees himself as — "משיח צדק" come to bring the light of reason to the world. His life is insular and painfully lonely, and to assuage its isolation he is at times compelled to go out and walk along the crowded avenues where the rest of society is engaged in a mutuality of pleasure seeking. Their togetherness highlights his lone state. All this changes when he meets his neighbours, the Marcuses, who find in him a welcome companion. He falls in love with their adopted daughter Hedwig and this relationship and its sad culmination, forms the focal point of the narrative and is the cause of Michael's defeated leave-taking of Breslau at its end.

It becomes clear early in the story, that Michael is enmeshed in an enormous web of self-deception. His beliefs about himself and his ideals lead him to grand reductionistic statements which are poignantly set against the pathos of his lonely ascetic existence. Michael's meeting with Hedwig is an inevitable consequence of his self-imposed strictures. He has denied so much in himself that sooner or later something had to give. Hedwig is only the precipitating cause of this change. Mahanayim may be seen as the description of the outworkings of a young man's hopeful journey towards adulthood and understanding. The paths he chooses to

travel along and the end he foresees doom him to eventual failure. It is a story of ignorance and delusion and the havoc they wreak. But it is also a story of self-discovery, for at its conclusion Michael, though tormented, is wiser in knowledge of himself and is thus capable of development. Suffering has released him from stasis. His leaving of Breslau is, in this sense, a positive, though extremely painful, act.

Mahanayim may be read in various ways. It may be seen as the Romantic agony of a young man's first aborted love;¹¹ it may be seen as the unsuccessful rebellion of a young Jew against the world of tradition; it may be read as an account of psychological processes or it may be read symbolically as plastic representation of these processes, i.e. as a progression of archetypal images which are projections of the psyche of its protagonist.¹² But its underlying contention in all these readings is the necessity for unity and wholeness and the resolution of all opposites into a more encompassing whole. Mahanayim does not offer any dicta as to how this may be achieved: it has no simplistic solutions. The message it does present, however, is the need for as comprehensive an awareness as possible. Michael does not achieve integration, but he leaves the tale more aware than he was at its start while still caught in dualistic frenzy.

Duality is expressed formally as well as conceptually in the text. It is formally explicated by the networks of parallels, analogy and antithesis that stretch across the narrative; by the dual voice of the narrator and Michael; by the preponderance of phraseological parallelisms and antithetical parallelisms; by the blend of dual time scales and doubled

spatiality. The same imagery is used in differing places in a dichotomous way and motifs are used in a dual sense with changing meaning at different stages throughout the text. Similarly roots are used antonymically and often in metathesized form with their inversions echoing the semantic opposition.¹³

The setting of Mahanayim is fixed right at the start of the tale, and the location is in keeping with the dualistic indication of the title, which weaves into the opening line. The first sentence presents, at first, as a positive, unambiguous statement of locus:

בכרך הגדול, בירת שלזיה שוררת דממת צהריים
של שבת שלהם

(p. 25)

The big city, the provincial capital, is, it would seem, entirely "theirs". Ownership is expressed by the all-pervasive reign of "their Sabbath". Its silence has settled over the full area of "הכרך הגדול", so absolute is its power. The adjective "גדול", adjoining the Mishnaic "כרך" amplifies the domain of its rule. "כרך" is specifically defined as —
"עיר גדולה, עיר רבת אוכלוסין".¹⁴ Furthermore, its original meaning —
"עיר גדולה, מוקפת חומה",¹⁵ denotes an area of definite circumscription, and contributes to the singular meaning of the first sentence.

The impression of emphasized uniformity is, however, immediately subverted by the pronominal suffix "הם", rendering a dissonance between narrator and locus. It is, as yet, unstated whether the protagonist is one

of "them", if he is in the city at all or if the city is central to the story or functions as mere backdrop. But whatever follows, the opposition of story-teller and place, expressed by the use of "theirs", creates a dualism within these first seemingly positive words.

This opposition is given further support by way of contradiction through association in relation to the word "כרך". The phrase "כרכי הים" is, as defined by Even Shoshan:¹⁶

כינורי בתלמוד לערים גדולות שבמדינות הים התיכון

i.e. it is Mishnaically associated with the large cities of the Mediterranean. The "כרך גדול" in Mahanayim is, however specifically named as the capital of "שלזיה" — i.e. it is Breslau. It is not a large Mediterranean city — which could by implication be a city in Israel — but a big city in Central Europe. This association of the word "כרך" in combination with "שלהם" supports the dichotomy of "us" and "them", and clearly marks the "us" identity of the narrator.

The undermining of initial apparent unity is furthered by the author's choice of place. Geographically Breslau has always been identically situated. So, in its actual location there is no incongruity or variation. However, despite its physical constancy, there pertains an historical element of duality. At the time of the story Breslau is a town in South-East Germany, but it had earlier been a Polish town — Wroslav (which it became once more, at a later stage).¹⁷ This historical component waives

any primary notion of fixity, though its contribution to the theme of duality in the structure of the story is of far greater consequence. Polish rule has left behind it a Catholic minority which serves as foil to the antithesis of Jew and Gentile, Israelite and German, creating a series of multi-layered parallelisms and adding to an ever-mutating flux of tone.¹⁸

And, finally, the use of the specifically Jewish word "שבת" to describe Sunday (when, for instance "יום השבתון" could have been used), serves to highlight both the similarities and the differences between the two camps. "שבת" — because both have a holy day of rest, because both adhere (in some measure, if not wholly) to religious tradition. And yet it is "טלהם", denoting a difference both camps cling to; denoting the religious superstition which alone creates this difference.

The time-structure, especially at the beginning of the story — till chapter 4 — is similarly complex and dual. It fluctuates between a generalized continuous mode — which is divided into past and present where Michael's biography and current life-style are depicted, and a definite mode whereby unique events are delineated.

One of the methods of time-mode indication is the use of verbal forms. Temporal specificity, which in the first part (chapters 1-3) most frequently occurs in the present tense, is signified — as it is commonly in Hebrew — by the repeated use of participles as verbs. The continuous-undefined is similarly specified, but is moderated by temporal qualifiers, e.g.:

זה כשגתיים שוקד הוא על דלתות בית-מדרש המדעים

(p. 26)

or

רק לעתים רחוקות יורד הוא מעלייתו החמישית
שם תחת הגב

(p. 26)

The dichotomous continuous mode alternates between descriptions of Michael's former life — expressed by the adverbs "לפני" and "כבר" — and his present state, punctuated by the word — "עתה".¹⁹ The cyclicity of the opening chapters of the story is best summarized by Michael's perception of Hedwig —

אז היתה כעתה ועתה כאז

(p. 29)

— for, despite its sporadic forays into specificity, the start of the narrative is static and descriptive. The formal dichotomy created by the unequal adherence of these two time-modes may be seen as objective correlative to Michael's situation: his life is overlain with a stasis, yet its repressed burgeoning force presses for expression and its dilations are echoed by these halting narrative attempts at linearity.

In this section a vast scope of narrated time is spanned by a comparatively short narrative. Narrated time stretches from Michael's present to the long-gone past of his childhood and reaches beyond to his

grandfather's time (p. 36). As the tale unravels — from chapter 4 onwards — so does the disparity between narrative and narrated time lessen, till the climax, which is formally indicated by the identity between them in the dialogue between Michael and Lotte (pp. 64-66). After this high point is reached the relationship between narrative and narrated time changes once more in favour of the latter, and the tale is bracketed by the extremely short concluding chapter which in one sentence accounts for what must have been — because of their emotional charge — a lengthy three days and nights, and in three concise paragraphs describes Michael's fatal leave-taking of Breslau and the equally fatal coincidence of Shultza's arrival there. Thus the tension between narrative and narrated time comprises the underlying structure on which the narrative is built. Michael's successful departure from the stasis of his two years in Breslau is heralded by the transformation of the time-scale of the narrative into linearity and is announced in an emphatic manner at the start of chapter 4 by the isolated temporal statement —

לפנות ערב היה הרב

(p. 37)

where the word — "היה" — denotes the specificity of what is to follow and the isolation of the sentence punctuates the movement into sequence.

From chapter 4 till the middle of chapter 10, when Michael goes to visit Stasha, linear and cyclical time serve together though the cyclical mode is contained within narrative progression i.e. linearity, inasmuch as it marks the evolvment of Michael's relationship with Hedwig and the

Marcuses. This relationship is subservient to the sentence quoted above (p. 37) and is thus contained by its linear patronage. Furthermore, the two modes operate almost in unison, creating at times rather peculiar temporal shifts, where cyclical time bursts into an unexpected linearity. The following passage is an example of this:

והדרויג גם היא כמו חולמת לפי דרכה... רחשי לנה אינם
דברים השוכנים באיזו קרן-זווית שבנפשה; נפשה בכלל
אינה מופשטת ומהותה ואופן הרגשתה אינם רק רגש בלבד...
כל האדם שבה בשלימותו מתעלה על-ידי קרבת מיכאל אליה
וכל אשר בה נפעל מבלי דעת עת תראה אותו פנים אל פנים.

על שלוות נפשה הנכאה מעט נוסף איזה דבר המרגיעה
ומנעים לה את חיותה. היא תרגיש איזו שייכות אליו
איזה דבר ירים אותה וילבב רוחה כעלות הבוקר

ובבוקר היא הוגה בו. הוא בא תמיד אחרי הצהריים והיא
יודעת שיבוא ושצריך הוא לבוא.

בעיקר הדבר לא היה מיכאל כאן בשכבר הימים.

(pp. 52-51)

The opening phrase is ambiguous with the uncircumscribed participle capable of denoting both the cyclical and the linear. The use of the imperfect — "תראה" — further on, however, is expressive of cyclicity. This sets the tone of the ensuing clauses and is reinforced by the use of the subsequent verbs in imperfect form. The following paragraph is also cyclical and its cyclicity is indicated by the defined but collective "בוקר" and "אחר הצהריים", strengthened by the semantic content of the adverb "תמיד" and the undefined temporality of the repeated infinitive. Thus by a cumulative process an undefined cyclicity is engendered and the shift to linear time at the beginning of the following paragraph, marked by the word — "היה" — is therefore startling. This technique creates a

jaggedness in the narrative which arises from the ongoing tension between these time modes and perpetuates a duality of perspective.

The dual temporal perspective is echoed by a doubled spatiality. This is especially marked in the opening paragraphs of the tale. The narrative opens with a wide spatial perspective which encompasses Breslau in its entirety. It then moves in to focus on a segment of the city — the frozen canal and its skaters. The canal separates the upper and the lower towns of Breslau and thus serves as the border between two dichotomous settings.²⁰ It is seen, however, not by a perceiver who stands on it, but rather from above, from a bridge where the heads of the skaters are prominent and perspective is distorted and distanced. This device is important in alienating the observer from the skaters, and it creates two spatial loci, a "here" and a "there". This distinction is emphasized by the recurring use of the word "שם" (pp 26-28). And although this distance is ostensibly traversed and overcome after Michael's meeting with the Marcus family, this doubled spatiality pertains throughout the tale where the underlying stratum of "there" is the insistent, albeit implicit, ubiety of Michael's home-town within his psyche. Furthermore, the alien "there" of Breslau is never truly integrated into a "here" for Michael, for the people he forms a relationship with are no more a natural part of it than he is.²¹ And when Michael feels defeated in his attempt at integration within the "there" world he contemplates journey to another "there", to Berlin (p. 56) which, like Breslau and the shtetl is an actual as well as metaphoric locus. Whereas the shtetl is tradition and the past, Breslau the Christian world and the present, the Berlin he anticipates is symbolic of the Haskala, the

Jewish world in blend with the West, his new "שט" (p. 56). The attribution of "thereness" to all these locations is indicative of Michael's dispossession from all worlds in both a physical and a spiritual dislocation of which his standing on the bridge at the start of the tale is but an expression: Michael is the Wandering Jew for whom no one space can provide succour.

The narrative itself is dual in character in that the narrator speaks in two voices. In his first voice he is the onmiscient, uninvolved narrator who tells the story and even intrudes to anticipate its unravelling in an ironic tone (e.g. p. 29). The narrator's second voice is Michael's own. It is the voice of his interior monologues; expressed indirectly as a third person narrative. The blending of these voices lends to the flexibility of the narrative and sounds the uncertainty of its content as a tale of Ignorance striving for Knowledge and, uncertain where to find it, loses itself in a myriad of byways and extremities. The indirect interior-monologues also serve to exemplify Michael's self-alienation and self-deception. It is only in his lone moment of honesty at the close of the tale (p. 67) when he "owns" his own thoughts that his interior monologue becomes direct and unmediated.²²

The thoughts of the other characters in the story are also presented through the medium of the narrator and, it is only his second identity as Michael which undoes the blurring between Maria-Yosefa's contemplations and Michael's on page 56. Maria-Yosefa has been considering Hedwig's future, debating Michael's desirability as her companion as compared to the patronage of some rich man or marriage to Shultza. She concludes —

לא! ... לא תגע בתום הילדה. תיבטא להישר בעינייה.
מיכאל נוצר בעדה. שניהם יהיו מאושרים אבל אם לא
יהיה הדבר ככה? שולצה כבר רמז על זה ושחק על זה לפי
דרכו. הוא אדם למעלה מארבעים שנה ולבו טוב...

and the narrative continues —

ומצבו של מיכאל גם כן ירד... הוא כבר ניסה בעיר
הגדולה הזאת הכול ולא עלתה בידו; מדוע לא ילך אל
העיר הקרובה, בירת אשכנז? שם, בעיר הבירה, המקרים
רבים והאפשרויות שכיחות; אולי יוכל להיבנות שם?...

The first sentence in the second passage is spoken with the voice of the omniscient narrator but, because it is the same voice that spoke Maria-Yosefa's thoughts and, because there is a reciprocity of content between it and the foregoing words, it appears at first as a continuation of the preceding passage. The following words are identical in tone and it is only through the rhetorical questioning of the second clause of the second sentence that the shift in narrative voice is clarified. There are many such transitions between the narrator's two voices throughout the text though the above is the only instance where two characters are almost merged.

A similar reciprocity of thought does however occur in other places in the story, e.g. p. 51 where Michael's dreaming is echoed by Hedwig —

והדוויג גם היא חולמת, לפי דרכה

This feature is a variation of the analogic tone which resounds throughout the narrative.

Mahanayim is built on a system of analogues which both correspond and oppose each other. In correspondence they contribute to the thematic concerns of doubleness and unity in the tale and in opposition they are expressive of its dichotomy and separateness. The following section will mention a number of these analogues as they appear in and across the various characters and relationships in the story. Some will be dealt with more fully than others and some will be developed in later analyses.

A major analogic theme in the story is the motif of the wronged woman who is abused by a Jewish man. These analogues function in conjunction with the central action of the plot which revolves upon Michael and Hedwig's relationship. They are formulated in the shape of either direct parallels with this relationship or as its paler echoes. The relationships which most closely resemble it are those between Marta's daughter and the Jewish student (pp. 42-43) — narrated by Marta who asks Michael to judge the boy's behaviour — and the relationship between Reuven and Lotte (pp. 45-46). It is more dimly echoed by the relationship between Stasha and her old Jewish lover and is counterpointed by Michael's relationship with Lotte.

Michael and Hedwig — Marta's Daughter and the Student

The two girls are both let down by Jewish students. Both girls are Catholic; both are beautiful, introverted and involved with music. The boys are both Jewish and both have come to Breslau to study. Both are aliens who are taken into the bosom of a Catholic family, only to betray its trust by causing sorrow to the daughter of the family. Thus both mothers, Marta and Maria-Yosefa, are also female figures who are betrayed by Jewish males and thereby serve to amplify the motif of this betrayal.

Marta's daughter goes mad when the student leaves her (p. 43). Her brother follows him, challenges him to a duel, where both are injured. The brother goes to a far-off land and never returns. Marta spends all her money trying to procure a cure for her daughter, but to no avail. The daughter dies in an asylum. Marta is a mother who lost all — her children and her money — because of a mixed love in which the Jewish masculine part does not fulfil his promise. She now has to live at the mercy of the poor tailor and his wife whom she serves in exchange for board and lodging. The two females in this story are denuded of all because of love. The analogues therefore function in a complex way — operating not only across stories but within them as well — and reinforce each other. The males in Marta's story — the lover and the brother — behave in similar ways. The student-lover deserts the daughter (thereby initiating the entire tragedy), and the son, in much the same manner, deserts both mother and daughter (thereby perpetuating and adding to the

tragedy), after having unsuccessfully sought to avenge his sister's honour. Thus the motif of male-desertion becomes multi-dimensional and contingent upon issues wider than mere romantic factors.

There is also an antithetical correspondence between Michael and Marta's son. The son leaves his mother under the circumstances mentioned above. His initial leaving is inspired by a love and loyalty to his family name. Michael leaves his father because of rejection. He feels rejected by his father and is rejecting in turn. His leave-taking is not resultant upon familial loyalty but is opposite in cause: he wishes to free himself utterly from his ancestor's shackles. Thus though their actions are, in a sense, identical, they are opposite in essence. Michael and the son merge in not corresponding with their parents: Marta no longer hears from her son and Michael does not write to his father. These counterpointings and the many others like them that weave through the tale add to the resonance of its conceptual latitudes and intensify its structural dilations.

A further echoing association derives from the relationship in which Hedwig stands to Marta: Hedwig is, in a way, surrogate daughter to Marta. Marta's maternal attitude towards Hedwig is expressed in her fussing about her (p. 43). Michael and Hedwig's relationship may be seen as an actual repeat of the earlier relationship as, in some measure, Hedwig is the incarnation of Marta's daughter.

Despite all these similarities, however, there are great disparities between the two stories and these differences should have, according to Z.

Cagan²³ promoted promise of a new and divergent outcome of Hedwig and Michael's love. The disparity lies in Hedwig's biography. Hedwig is, in essence, mere pretender to Marta's daughter's throne. She is only half-Christian, and is Catholic only by conversion. Despite her air of purity, she is illegitimate and Maria-Yosefa is only her adoptive mother. The dichotomy between her and Michael is therefore not binding though the positive promise of its dilution is tragically ironic for it does not fulfil itself and finally this relationship proves as impossible and tragic as its parallel.

Michael and Hedwig — Reuven and Lotte

This is once more the story of a Jewish man disappointing an innocent Christian woman. Reuven, like Michael, is a stranger to Breslau. Like Michael, and the student, he boards in the city. He differs from Michael, however, in his sense of morality. He professes to be irreligious but goes to the Reform Shul on the High Holidays. He does this because he fears incurring God's wrath although he is not sure of His existence. He is not prepared to risk marrying a gentile girl in case there is a God. He sleeps with Lotte, impregnates her and leaves her and goes to America after embezzling a large sum of money.

Michael and Reuven are antithetical in a number of ways. Michael deems himself totally heretic. He has abnegated all religious activity and is not prepared to perform any kind of religious function; not even in

order to survive (pp. 23; 31). At the same time, however, he cannot stomach Reform Judaism (p. 28). But despite the religious longings that remain in him from his childhood years (p. 60) he does not betray his principles and submit to their dictates. It is not fear or agnosticism that evokes a religious consciousness in him but "שירה" (p. 60). Reuven, whose soul is all practicality, goes to shul because of expediency. Reuven works in commerce, Michael studies philosophy, and when he works, works as a book-binder. Reuven leaves Lotte not only because of his religious superstition, but also in answer to his parents' and relatives' pleadings. Despite this, however, he is essentially depraved. Michael is all the more attracted to Hedwig because of his father's potential disapproval: he denies his family but is highly moralistic. The opposition between these two characters, revolving, in the main, upon Michael's striving for integrity to which Reuven's immorality is a foil, performs two functions. On the one hand it denotes authorial approval of Michael, yet, on the other it highlights the tragedy of his failed relationship with Hedwig for, his essential morality is impotent in face of this relationship's impossibility. It also operates in a tragically ironic manner in that it is Michael's sense of scrupulosity that prevents him from continuing the relationship with Hedwig after his sexual encounter with her mother for he could have continued as before and presumably none but him would have been any the wiser.

The two sets of mixed relationships are similarly antithetical, though, again, their antithesis is not productive of a positive outcome. Michael only touches Hedwig's hair, while Reuven has full sexual knowledge of

Lotte. Reuven wilfully betrays Lotte, Michael unknowingly betrays Hedwig. The results are, however, the same. Both Michael and Reuven desert their women. The failed promise of these antitheses serves to intensify the pathos of the central story.

Hedwig is the outcome of an 'impossible' mixed relationship. Thus, by her very being, she attests to the possibility of such mixing. Her existence therefore adds to the note of tragedy overlaying the failed relationships in the tale. It is significant, however, that she finds her solace with an adoptive family and an adopted religion. This is possibly comment that there cannot be true mixing: that there can only be total change.

The relationship between Reuven, Lotte, Hedwig and Michael is a complex one and in need of further elucidation. Both Reuven and Michael sleep with Lotte. Reuven takes advantage of her when she is young and innocent; Michael sidles up to her and lays his hand upon her, but she is the one who initiates their sexual encounter. Presumably Michael is a virgin at the time, just as Lotte was when she first slept with Reuven. Reuven leaves Lotte, denudes her of all that is innocent and trusting in her; abdicates with her love (she is even unable to express love towards Hedwig). He leaves her with child, but also deprives her of that child (because of her inability to love after his betrayal). In a direct way he gives her Hedwig, and indirectly steals her from her. Lotte, in her turn, steals Hedwig from Michael. First she gives her to him (in bringing her into the world and then selling her to the Marcuses) and finally deprives

him of her (by sleeping with him and by being Hedwig's mother). There abides in these relationships a balanced reciprocity with Lotte, as it were, attaining her revenge on Reuven through Michael. But there is no satisfaction or sense of justice in this for finally both Lotte and Michael are robbed by Reuven who is prime cause in this tragedy of errors. The message in this network of relationships is a deterministic one which will be dealt with in a later chapter.

Stasha and Her Old Lover

Stasha is kept by an old Jewish man who comes to see her once a week. It cannot be said that he abuses her, as he leaves no mark on her life save the material comfort he provides her. The sterility of this relationship is cynical comment on the issue of mixed associations: These can only survive, as this one does, in the absence of real feeling.

The analogic technique is used in description of many of the relationships in the story. The following are but some additional examples of its working: Michael is forced to seek a new dwelling when his landlord hurriedly remarries after his wife's death and goes to live with his new wife and her daughters. This is a repetition of his earlier experience where his father remarries and brings his new wife and her children into his home, causing Michael to leave the shtetl. Maria-Yosefa is of high birth, in contrast to her peasant husband: this parallels the social

disparity between Michael's father and his mother. This relationship is a reversal of the latter, however, inasmuch as Maria-Yosefa treats Johann with contempt, whereas Michael's father displays contempt to his wife's memory by his hasty remarriage. Thus this device aids in the creation of a narrative density which subverts the constrictions of immediate time and space by alluding to events and connections beyond the hypothetical present of the text.

CHAPTER 2
THE SEXUAL LANDSCAPE:
PURITY AND IMPURITY

Correspondence and antithesis may be seen to form the basis of a number of relationships in Mahanayim. Some of these and the tension derived from them, as well as Berdichewski's manipulation of linguistic devices and word motifs for thematic emphasis, will be discussed below.

1. CORRESPONDENCE AND ANTITHESIS

Between Stasha and Maria Yosefa

Maria-Yosefa loves to listen to Stasha and to women like her, i.e. mistresses of rich men. She identifies with them in some core of herself. She was her rich uncle's housekeeper/mistress. It is said of her that —

מריה-יוזפה איבדה את ימי בעוריה באחוזה דודה האציל

(p. 44)

She dreams of selling Hedwig to a rich man as his mistress. She certainly intends selling her to Shultza the Red, but what makes her hesitate in this regard is that she thinks she might be able to reap greater material benefit through her. She also fluctuates between her pragmatism and her appreciation of the relationship between Michael and Hedwig. She sees how happy they are together and then fantasizes about Michael attaining riches one day:

אולי אחריתו תשגה

(p. 55)

deciding thereafter —

לא, לא תיגע בתום הילדה

(p. 56)

Her appreciation of Hedwig's happiness with Michael is closely intermingled with material considerations. Her mercenary attitude to romance and her youthful experience binds her to Stasha.

Between Stasha and Michael

This relationship has strong Oedipal overtones.

... ובחזקה התגברה על עצמה שלא לאמור לו:
"בני אהוב אותי..."

(p. 61)

Stasha has lost her son, the only person she ever felt was worth anything.

Her son was a musician — a singer:

נפשה כמעט נקייה ותלוייה בזכרון בנה המשורר, שמת בלא
עיתו... בכלל מין האנשים המה סכלים בעיניה, מלבד בנה
שהיה נפש לא-מצוייה וניחם אותה אחרי גרשה את בעלה.

(p. 48)

Maybe, when poetry/song rises in Michael, or because of its rising within him, he is a source of attraction for Stasha.

It is not just that she wants to destroy the innocence in Michael (and through him in Hedwig); she also desires the innocence, youth and song that are in him which echo her son. She does, however, manage to destroy that innocence in a round about way. The irony is that had her plan actualized his innocence would not have really been destroyed. Michael would have lost his sexual innocence but incest would not really have entered into it except by intent (on both sides through Michael and Stasha). But, because she does not consummate her relationship with Michael, his burgeoning desire leads him, by chance, to Lotte.¹ In his sexual act with Lotte, Michael makes the relationship with Hedwig an impossibility — as, having slept with the mother, any sexual contact with the daughter comprises a prohibition², in Jewish terms at least — and note that it is a Jewish ethic which makes a future relationship with her impossible.

Stasha and Hedwig

Stasha and Hedwig are set against each other in antithetical parallelism. Stasha is also beautiful (p. 48). She too has a noble, aristocratic air about her. It is implied that she has some part in Maria-Yosefa's impure intentions towards Hedwig —

אולי שטאסה היא שהביאה את מריה לידי מחשבות זרות על
אודות הדורג

Stasha is in some way cowed by Hedwig's purity and it is possible that she wants to bring about its downfall. It is in some way threatening to her —

בעצם הדבר גם שטאשה מרגשת איזו הכנעה מפני טוהר
הנוער בהדוויג; הדבר אינו ברור לה בחוש, אבל מרגשת
היא מעין צל הדבר.

(p. 48)

The words chosen to express her feelings are somewhat ambiguous. She feels "צל הדבר". Does this mean that she feels only some inkling of the thing? Or is it that it casts a shadow upon her — i.e. threatens her? Or, is it that she sees that such pure beauty will inevitably cause shadow — i.e. create some kind of downfall in someone else — as it does in Michael — with the implication that such purity and beauty can only be harmful? Or is it that she knows that there is a shadow hanging over it, that it is destined to fall, be defiled, that it cannot survive?³ Or is it that she feels the inevitability of the pain it will cause Hedwig?

In the light of the second possibility one may see her intervention in Michael and Hedwig's relationship not as malicious caprice, though it is so expressed, but as an attempt to save him from its illusion: the illusion of pure beauty which in some measure is created by him. She knows that she too is overpowered by it: she feels —
"הדבר אינו ברור לה בחוש" (p. 48), a feeling that is accompanied by a vague sense of unease — "איזו הכנעה מפני טוהר הנוער שבהדוויג" (p.48) — whose cause she cannot name.

Does the "הדבר" of "צל הדבר" refer to her feeling of unease, a feeling she is not comfortable with as it does not fit her independent, decent, reasonable picture of herself? Is the shadow therefore analogous to the Jungian shadow — that dark part of ourselves we deny and do not wish to own?

The root "כנע" is used in both instances where Stasha's attitude to Hedwig is described:

היא אוהבת את הדורג ונכנעת מעט מירפיה

(p. 60)

This second statement is accompanied by a qualifying explanation —

כלומר, ירפיה החיצוני מרגיש לעומתו יופי פנימי

(p. 60)

with its explanatory nature emphasized by the narrator's explicit intervention with the adverb "כלומר". This adduction follows some statements about Stasha's attitude towards Michael:

רק שטאשה עויבת אותו מעט. היא אינה מאמינה
באנשים. לכאורה הוא באמת צעיר שאינו מצוי; אבל לה
איכפת הדבר מעט שלא ישים לה לב כלל סוף סוף הלא
אשה יפה היא, וירפיה אינו שקול בעיניו כנגד ירפיה של
הדורג

(p. 60)

which belie any altruistic intentions on her part. It is interesting to note that the phrase attached to her cynical musings about him — "צעיר שאינו מצוי" — is identical to the one used in her memory of her departed son: "שהיה נפש לא-מצויה" (p. 48). Her son was her source of comfort after she divorced her husband: he —

... ביחס אותה אחרי גרשה את בעלה.

(p. 48)

When Michael sits in her room and her desire for him rises within her, deflecting her from her original purpose of trying him, we are informed —

מימי גירושיה לא ידעה איש קרוב לה; ועתה יושב לעומתה
איש צעיר שהיא יכולה לחבבו כאם, ועוד יותר מאם

(p. 61)

Thus Michael and Stasha's son are brought into cohesion not only in her expressed statement that "she could love him as a son" but by the identity of phrase used — by her, as part of her inner monologue, or by the narrator in directive explication thereof — in description of the most essential quality of each.

The word "עוינת" is used only twice in this text. Once in describing Marta's attitude towards Stasha —

רק מרתה עוינת את שטאסה

(p. 48)

and later with reference to Stasha's initial feelings towards Michael —

רק שטאסה עוינת אותו מעט

(p. 60)

In both instances it is qualified by the adverb "רק" denoting the uniqueness of the stance. Only Marta is hostile towards Stasha and only Stasha feels some hostility towards Michael. The reasons for Marta's hostility are not given nor is its intensity diluted, as it is in the latter case, by the quantitative adverb "מעט". But the very conciseness of rendition of Marta's unexplored apprehension, set against Stasha's more lengthy, conditioned, self-interested hostility, gives credence to Marta's intuition and suggests that it has at base an objective veracity. The statement of Marta's feelings is located as the header of a three-sentenced paragraph. It is a short, factual expression comprising only five words. The remainder of the paragraph is composed of two comparatively lengthy sentences, one of which describes the fondness Johann shows towards Stasha (especially by not spitting in front of her) and Hedwig's slight fear of her, despite the presents Stasha gives her.⁴ These two sentences are almost identical in length and this similarity contrasts with the opening sentence, attributing it an almost independent and directive status by means of which the measure of the sentiments following it is determined. Thus Johann's conviviality towards Stasha is, by association, suspect and has a sexual overlay reinforced by his addressing Stasha by the term of endearment "חמדתי" — root "חמד" — whose lustful connotations are weighted in this context. In Marta's disapproval is imbedded a recognition of Stasha's sexual power. Marta has good cause to be sensitive to and to suspect that which relates to Eros. Her daughter, typified by her by the word "צניעות" (p. 42), suffered through her contact with it. And Stasha is all Eros. She is the Fatal Woman.⁵ So Hedwig's fear of Stasha is given support and especially through this connection with Marta's daughter. Furthermore, the

bringing together of these elements here acts, in a sense, as motif in an anticipatory manner.⁶ It is Stasha who brings about Hedwig's downfall and causes her to suffer the leaving of her lover as did Marta's daughter.

The second mention of "עוינת" pertains to Stasha's feelings and is explicated at length, across an entire paragraph of similar length to the paragraph cited above. Whereas Marta's feelings are presented as a mere statement of fact, Stasha's feelings are expounded upon and portray their reactive-based source. Stasha is hostile towards Michael because she doesn't believe in men. She concedes that he is apparently an exceptional young man —

לכאורה הוא באמת צעיר שאינר מצוי

(p. 60)

but we learn from the next clause of that same sentence, introduced by the oppositional "אבל" —

אבל לה אכפת הדבר מעט שלא שם לה לב כלל

(p. 60)

She moves from grand statement to petty vanity. Never mind how outstanding he is, she dislikes him for disregarding her femininity: He has disregarded her beauty preferring another's. Although her heart is not stirred by men, she is stung by his ignoring her, and her stung vanity causes her to act in a manner that promotes Hedwig's tragedy. But it is more than plain wounded vanity that stings her. The venom rises in

Stasha, the Fatal Woman, in face of the purity of Hedwig — the good woman, the Pristine Virgin. Purity must be destroyed.

Stasha's hostility towards Michael is mentioned immediately after a reference to Michael's purity —

ובתור אדם טהור מוחזק הוא לכל אנשי בית החייט,
שהוא בא אליו יום-יום

(p. 60)

— which, in its turn, follows on Michael's attempts to return to his earlier purity which he sees as defiled by his erotic thoughts about his landlady —

לבושה היא על הרוב בגדי לבן ובחינה המעט היא מעוררת
בו מעין מחשבות זרות בהביאה לו החמים בבוקר אבל
כרגע יגרש אותן ושנ לטהרותו משכבר הימים

(p. 60)

Thus purity and impurity are brought into juxtaposition by their textual proximity. Impurity, associated with sex, is referred to as, "מחשבות זרות". In the section dealt with earlier (p. 48), after speaking of Stasha, others' attitude towards her and her attitude towards Hedwig — i.e. Impurity vs. Purity — the narrator intercedes with a short as yet enigmatic, but avowedly prophetic, paragraph with which he ends the fifth chapter —

אולי שטאשה היא שהביאה את מריה לידי מחשבות זרות על
אודות הדוויג, אבל המחשבות האלה טרם באו ואז קרה
הדבר שמיכאל בקרה בבית.

(p. 48)

— thereby aligning Michael with these themes and hinting at the part he plays in their development in the story.

Maria-Yosefa's "strange thoughts" comprise the virtual prostitution of Hedwig. The proximity of these intentions, as yet unconceived, to passages where Stasha is the subject matter, as well as the expressed possibility that Stasha was the prime mover in these thoughts amplifies Stasha's battle with Hedwig as the battle of the experienced with the unsullied; the Fatal Woman and the Virgin.

The final sentence of this paragraph appears at first glance to be unconnected with that which precedes it. Each of the three clauses in the paragraph begins with an adverb: the first is the conditional "אוּלַי", the second the oppositional "אֲבֵל" and the third the temporal "וְיֵאָזֵר". The first sentence — which contains the first two clauses — is all presumption, whereas the second sentence — containing only one clause — is statement of the already actualized. The connection between the three clauses resides in the progression of the adverbs: from the possible to the actual — which nullifies it for the while — to the fully actual and real. This progression clearly delineates the rôle Michael is to play in realizing Maria Yosefa's "strange thoughts" about Hedwig, though, as will be seen, these are not related to him except in a roundabout way. Maria-Yosefa's strange thoughts are about Hedwig and rich men; Michael's strange thoughts are about his landlady, who is by extension Stasha and in practice Lotte (at least on the conscious level) and his erotic feelings about Hedwig are sublimated by thoughts about the soul and the glory thereof:

נגיעת ידו שהוא נוגע לפעמים בשערותיה, מקרבת אותה
אליו כנגיעת הלב. בעיניו השערות הן הנפש, על כל פנים
הן הוד-הנפש.

(p. 49)

Even Maria Yosefa's thoughts about Michael and Hedwig's relationship are devoid of these alien thoughts —

הילדים שותים יחד כאח ואחות

(p. 49)

and it is this sanction which frees Michael to touch Hedwig's hair (p. 49). However, it is the combination of Michael's and Stasha's strange thoughts which eventually leads — as the meeting between Michael and Shultza at the close of the tale suggests — to the execution of Maria-Yosefa's strange thoughts about Hedwig. Both Stasha and Michael render Hedwig victim to the unwelcome, unwholesome intentions of her adoptive mother.

The figures of the Fatal Woman and the Virgin, the Good Woman coalesce in some measure. Both Stasha and Hedwig are untouched by men. Both are touched by Michael. Furthermore, their relationship is symbolic of the archetypal battle of mother and daughter. There is a maternal aspect to Stasha's attitude to Hedwig which is evidenced in the gifts she bestows upon her. Stasha presents Hedwig with school books. These offerings cast her in the rôle of mentor, i.e. the wise, experienced woman. She is subdued by the purity of Hedwig's beauty, as Age — and by extension parents — often is in the face of youth's potency. It is,

therefore, significant that Stasha and Lotte — Hedwig's biological mother — become one process in causing Michael's fall; in separating him from Hedwig.

Stasha is somewhat hostile towards Hedwig, fearful of her and jealous of her. Her jealousy is, in part, a sexual jealousy. It is also the jealousy the 'tainted' woman has of the unsullied. A quality she has lost and can never regain. She is therefore powerless in the face of it. And yet she feels its power and its wholeness and needs to challenge it, to destroy it. The school books she gives Hedwig are significant because they are connected with that world that Stasha cannot reach or understand. The irony is that books are not especially close to Hedwig's heart: she cannot understand Michael's attachment to them —

הוא לומד תמיד בספרים, וזאת אינה מבינה כל עיקר היא
מבינה אכילה ושתייה, זמרה, הליכה וטיול, אבל מה זה
קריאה תמידית בספרים?

(p. 52)

Stasha, as the older woman, does indeed vanquish Hedwig — and she does this through Lotte, Hedwig's biological mother. Stasha and Lotte become one process in causing Michael's downfall; in separating him from Hedwig. The story of subverted innocence here is the outcome of the battle of the generations, where the older is victor. And, more specifically, it is the tale of the fight of mother and daughter for supremacy where the mother — Lotte — is victor, albeit unknowingly. As discussed earlier, by sleeping with Michael, Lotte achieves her revenge on Reuven who destroyed her life and denied her love and the power to love (pp. 46-

47) and she, in her turn, has deprived Michael — a young Jew like Reuven was — of his love. And that love is her daughter Hedwig. Thus she has, through her daughter, extracted her revenge — however unconsciously. Reuven left her of his own free will — she forces Michael to leave Hedwig. But, in so avenging herself she has, much like Reuven did to her, left Hedwig — "לאנחות". Lotte's unknowing victory is two-fold: she has, as the older woman, the mother, retained her supremacy over her daughter in the archetypal battle of mother and daughter and she has — though totally unaware of it — taken her revenge on Reuven. Her ignorance of the true nature of her interlude with Michael, however, deprives her of any feeling of closure.⁷ In fact it is doubtful she would have had any contact with him at all if she had understood its full implication. But the lack of conscious intentionality here does not negate the essentials underlying the event: Lotte and Stasha have each been the other's instrument in this mythical battle of the generations.⁸

Stasha, Maria-Yosefa and Lotte merge into one maternal over-figure in their effects on both Hedwig's and Michael's lives. Michael's two older landladies (the cobbler's wife and the widow) blend into this figure by way of their relationship to him. Marta — the remaining older woman in the tale — stands separate to this mother figure: her function in the story is Cassandra-like. She is the first to mention Hedwig —

והדרויג ערד לא באה?

(p. 42)

— and immediately thereafter, on being introduced to Michael, she tells him the tragedy of her daughter and the Jewish student. This tale's ending and Michael's musings upon it, coincides with Hedwig's appearance in the flat. Marta's Cassandra-like rôle is reinforced by her negative feelings about Stasha (see above).

2. SYMBOLS, MOTIFS AND METAPHORS

Song

Just prior to Marta's entrance, the caged song-bird, ironically called — "צפור הדרור", begins to sing.⁹ Music is one of the unifying factors between Hedwig and Marta's daughter. Marta's daughter used to sing in her house-bound isolation —

חמיד ישבה בבית פנימה כבת-מלך ותהגה
ותשיר עד בוא האסון...

(p. 42)

and the first thing we learn about Hedwig once she has become particularized is that she attends music classes —

היא הארורה שולחת אותה בליל קור אל שיעורי הזמרה

(p. 42)

So the voice of the song-bird — the caged 'free bird' — resonates here with the tones of prophecy. It is incarcerated even as Marta's daughter is dead: and the combination of the two does not augur well for Hedwig's future. Add to this Hedwig's frozen fingers —

אצבעותי קפאו מקור ולא יכולתי לנענע את המנים

(p. 43)

and the death of Stasha's son who was a singer (p. 48), and extinction and desolation loom ominously and lay waste all the vibrancy and hope of this first meeting between Michael and his heretofore unknown beloved.

The song-music motif has a prominence in this story and is significant in much of Berdichewski's writing. "שירה" — a Hebrew word which means both poetry and song, is set in opposition to the logical and rational spirit of Michael's fierce intellectualism. It is associated with feeling — emotion — from which he recoils: His stated *raison d'être* is pure uncompromising reason:

הלב, לפי דעתו, אינו עושה כלום

(p. 29)

He determinedly worships reason —

וזו עיקר אצלו מוחו מולך על לבו. אמיתיותו הן
אמיתיות הגיוניות ומחשבותיו נובעות רק ממקורי
המחשבות:

(p. 29)

And yet this stance is not as coldly rational as might be supposed. The above declarations follow directly on his own admission that his heart is still fixated on his heritage —

... לבו עודנו נעוץ בקברת אבותיו

(p. 28)

and the language with which he denounces feeling and by extension song, is decidedly religious —

הוא חושב כי הלב הוא מעשה-שטן, הרגשות הם מעשה-שטן
וגם השירה היא מעשה שטן... השירה בעצמה בוח היה לה
שלא נבראה.

(p. 29)

In condemning these Michael (through the narrator) thrice emphasizes that they are the Devil's work, a conclusion that surely does not derive from the processes of cerebral deduction. And not only does its emotional tenor disprove his "מוחו מולך על ליבו" proclamation, but the religious character reflects retroactively, not only confirming the positive statement of —

... לבו עורבנו בעוץ בקברת אבותיו

(p. 28)

but giving lie to its negative counterpart —

מוחו בתרוקן מנחלת-אבות

(p. 28)

If his thoughts are all mind-based whence does this tainted language derive? Michael, the intellectual, is beset with feelings: his heart has fair prominence. He hates with vehemence —

... את חניכי הרבנים השכיחים בעיר הוא שונא בכל הלב

(p. 28)

— he does even not "hate intensely" but "with full heart". His heart it is that suffers at the injustice of the world —

ליבו יוצא בראותו כי אין משפט וצדק תחת השמים כי
האדם פוגע באדם, עם בעם. לבו יצא בראותו כי גם החי
למינהו סובל על ידי רשעת האוכלים בשר ושותים דם הנפש.

(p. 28)

— not his mind.

And not only is the language of the heart employed in the expression of thought that is pure intellect and naught else, but a religious vocabulary is used to explicate positions which could quite easily have been expounded in terms that are not religiously laden. Michael's convictions are couched in terms of belief:

הוא אינו מאמין שאי-אפשר לעולם בלא רשעים וצדיקים,
עשירים ועניים, אדונים ועבדים, ואינו מאמין שמלחמה
לאדם בעד קיומו נגד קיומם של אחרים:

(p. 28)

Interestingly, though, these beliefs are presented in their negative form — 'he does not believe it impossible that...' or 'he does not believe man must fight for...'. Is it the conscious recoiling from belief and heritage/heart, that prompts the negative adductions, a conscious denial which is constantly undermined by the unconscious, irrepressible swelling of heart?

Furthermore, the road on which these ambitions set him is, in his perception, no less than that of the "צדיק", a word whose religious content is resonant. Even his imaging of a utopian ideal is undeniably Biblical in mould:

וגר זאב עם כבש

(p. 28)

Michael's so-called intellectual zeal has led him along the paths of asceticism and consequently his life is filled with restrictions that are far more dire than those he left behind. He eats no meat, sees no people and

studies when he is free from work. He has swopped one set of books — religious — for another — secular. His life is more narrow than one presumes it would have been at home. It is almost as if he had deliberately reconstructed the constrictions which made him flee his father's house. His fearful renouncing of song may be seen as equivalent to the terror in which the traditional Jews of his birthplace held his hereticism. Michael's description of his attraction to song is couched in the strongest terms of Biblical prophetic admonition:

... לבו הזונה אחרי נטיות אחרות ואלוהים אחרים...

(p. 29)

The absolutism with which Michael follows his Apollonian creed creates for him an unliveable dichotomy which leads to great turmoil and torment. He, whose intellectual feeling tends to equality — and note his Utopian desires:

השתוות גמורה צריכה להיות בין כל בני-האדם
ובין כל העמים.

(p. 28)

כל באי עולם שפה אחת ידברו ברוח אחד ימללו...

(p. 37)

and a resolution of opposites:

בשים תלבשנה שמלת גבר

(p. 37)

— does not permit the spirit of song, the Dionysian impulse, within him —

הוא עמל לגרש את הרוחות הרעות האלה

(p. 29)

and thus intentionally creates a split and unequalness in himself.

And so it is that at the undefined times of "לא יום ולא לילה" this forcibly repressed impulse insists its way into his consciousness —

אבל יש שהצרכים האלה מתגנבים בו שלא ברצונו בצאת
השמש או בין הערביים, בשבתו לבדו, יפעמהו רוח השירה
בעל-כרחו

(p. 29)

When the world is in a state of merging dichotomies cannot hold sway.
Twilight is the time in which he fantasizes about Hedwig —

לפנות ערב היה הדבר, ברחפו במרומי דמיונותיו אלה

(p. 51)

On Sabbath eve — neither "קודש" nor "חול" — before sunset, he is beset
with religious stirrings —

בערב שבת לפנות ערב היה הדבר שעה זו עורבנה
מהולה אצלו מעט בשירת רגשותיו הדתיים

(p. 60)

— it is then that he dreams —

אז הוא... חולם על מושבו

(p. 60)

— that he is filled with longing —

כל פינה חדשה שהוא מבקר אז מחייה אותו במין
עצב מרגיע

(p. 60)

— that a desire for union fills him and appropriately strips him of the
ability to think clearly —

בעיקר הדבר אינו יכול לחשוב אז בנירור באשר
נפשו מתגעגעת אז אחרי איזה קרבה וייחוד

(p. 60)

The Sabbath itself is a religious emblem of union and thus by placing the mention of this day, on the threshold of sunset, together with the poetic inclination of Michael's soul and his unrelenting need for union — all the while stressing the hour by the repeated use of the word "אז" — Berdichewski emphasizes the impossibility of denying any structures within our psychical realities. No deity can be exclusive in provenance. Michael, while fearing and toiling against —

בטיות אחרות ואלוהים אחרים

(p. 29)

is unaware — but not blissfully so — of their inescapability, as the narrator, in one of his directive interventions in the text, informs us —

והוא לא ידע שאותם בני-אלים אחרים נבראים בו בסתר
נפשו, בלי דעתו המה מכים בו שורשים, כדי לשגשג שם
לאחר זמן

(p. 29)

The narrator's tone is somewhat ironic. The root "ידע" is used twice. "ידע" is usually associated with intellectual activity — Michael's most cherished ideal. Yet in both instances it is coupled with a negative word: Michael "did not know" of the secret inception of the other, the alien inside him; "without his knowledge" the awful thing struck roots and blossomed there. The Supreme "דעת" which will make men like unto gods:

כבוד הדעת ועטרת הדעת

(p. 37)

— in an apocalyptic time in which creation Michael will participate by means of —

... אור הדעת שכולו מאיר ושלכולם מאיר

(p. 37)

— which will bring about "מלכות המחשבה" (p. 37) — that is synonymous with no less than "ממלכת הצדק" (p. 37), which in its clear vision will lift the veil from off the ultimate riddle of life (p. 37) — that very "דעת" has failed to light for him the recesses of his very own soul; has failed him

in the primary mission of "know thyself", has been defeated by the other — the "סטרא אחרא" — and even more injuriously, has left him desolate in the absence of the dreaded others:

ובטרם בא אותו הזמן, הרי הוא יושב משמים בסער
מחשבותיו ובעמל דעותיו.

(p. 29)

— with only its laboriousness for company.

Michael's will to knowledge is brought into relational opposition with the life force, which is depicted in bestial overtones:

חפץ-החיים העיוור פותח בו לפעמים את לועו וממלא אותו
במין פחד שאינו יודע שחרו

(p. 29)

and is perceived by Michael as blatantly blind,¹⁰ dark, devoid of light and therefore frightening and potentially consuming.

Swallowing

The metaphor of swallowing recurs a number of times in the text in some kind of sexual connection. Stasha's desire for Michael is expressed in terms of her wishing to swallow his kiss of youth —

אבל עליו רק לשים ידו על צווארה והיא תישען על גב
כסאה ותבלע בשיקת הבוער

(p. 61)

— an image somewhat reminiscent of Kali — Mother Kali — who is portrayed as being of great blackness and with open jaws in front of which she dangles a man in her uplifted hand: her intentions are not in doubt.¹¹ The Kali figure is entirely antithetical to the sterilized Catholic image of the Virgin.

When Michael leaves Stasha's house at the fall of night, the glory of evening, mixed with the redness of sunset, is described as being swallowed by the peace of pure blueness which is full of the stirrings of spring —

והוד הערב המעולף בשארית אודם-הערבניים הולך ונבלע
בשלות החכלת הטהורה, והוא מלא הד המיית האניב

(p. 62)

It would not be excessive to suggest that this description acts as objective correlative — both retrospective and progressive — to Michael's situation. The blush "אודם" of his youth — which represents both desire and innocence — is about to be swallowed by his first sexual encounter: a spring experience full of murmurings. There is in this scenic description both the peace of release — symbolized by the blueness — and the anticipatory motif of night with all its implications of darkness and loss. The evening is full of sexual allusions. In its personification it is described as having a bosom — a lap which provides calm and succour —

סוכני העליות האלה הלכו לשוח ולהרגע בחיק הערב

(p. 62)

Couples disappear into its darkness along the tree-lined avenue —

צללי בחורים ובחולות, זוגות-זוגות, הולכים ונעלמים
בשדרת האילנות הסמוכים לשכבת הדשא

(p. 62)

— whose depths Michael penetrates (!) —

לתוך עומק שדרת האילנות הוא חודר

(p. 62)

— till, full of anticipation, he becomes one with the night and its
passions:

הוא והליל וחמדת הליל כמו חולמים יחד ומחכים יחד...

(p. 62)

And, aided by night, his sexual ambition is realized, not by a tree in the
shape of a woman (p. 62), but by a real woman. On this night he is
devoured, and more fully than he realizes.

Having been devoured, swallowed and spewed out again into the night
which is now somewhat cold, he passes once more along the same vista
across which he made his way towards sexual consummation. The streets
are now empty and frighteningly silent and the only murmuring now is the
quaking of fear in his mind —

ודממת הרחובות הריקים מאדם מביעה איזה געש פחד
שבשמע רק בהמיית מוחר

(p. 66)

The verb "געש" could easily refer to the climax — ejaculation — of the sexual act, and this fact, coupled with its present context — as description of Michael's fear — amplifies the pathos of Michael's situation. The sexual act, which was to be life-giving, has frozen in mid-air with terror: has caused petrification in place of vitalization —

כל אשר בו התאבן

(p. 66)

Erotic night has become the dark night of the soul —

איה הוא עתה? עתה ליל, ליל...

(p. 68)

The colour red reinstates itself as part of a frightening delusion —

הוא מתיירא להגות בשם הבערה, ואותיות שמה מרחפות
לפני עיניו ככתובות באש אדומה על גבי אש שחורה

(p. 66)

— it is no longer the pleasant warmth-giving red of sunset, it is the burning fire of hell set on the cold black fire of an earthly Hades by which he is now swallowed. He is sunk in the primaeval slime — the swallowing, devouring metaphor attains demonic proportions. Its sexual component still pertains but with a strong masochistic element. Michael feels sunk in the deep slime —

נפשו כמו בתחרשה, והוא מרגיש את עצמו כמו נפל עד
הצוואר ביוון המצולה, כאילו דשו את בשרו... בשרו כמו
הושם בצבת

(p. 66)

He feels the earth, like a giant vagina might split open quickly — much like Lotte opened herself to him rather hastily — and is amazed that he has not been sucked in by it.

Thus Michael's extreme stress following his meeting with Lotte may be seen on two levels. In one respect it is the consequence of his shock at discovering Lotte's true identity. But viewed from another perspective, it is the sum of his remorse and shame and terror at the Sexual and Woman. In his self-castigation Michael repeatedly accuses himself of impurity and defilement. He is "נבל, מגואל, טמא" (p. 67).

Defilement

The root "ג א ל" in the sense of defilement, profanity, contamination, pollution, staining, soiling (Alcalay) occurs three times in the text and once ambiguously where it functions on two strata, though its primary meaning would appear to be G^oL in the sense of redemption. In its two earlier mentions it is presented in verbal form, both times in the reflexive "t/n" paradigm. It first appears in the perfect as retrospective description of Michael's experience up till the "present" of the narrative. The first definite fact we are told about Michael is —

כבר למעלה מעשרים

(p. 27)

— to which is added the biographical information that he —

כבר התגאל בקדשים וחולין של החיים לפי דרכו

(p. 27)

The apposition of "התגאל" and "קדשים" is somewhat startling, especially in conjunction with the coupling of sacred and secular which, under its influence, become equally profane. He has contaminated himself by his association with both. The word defiled is brought into jarring relief here, and its meaning is accented by way of semantic opposition with the first of its adjunct objects. Had Berdichewski merely wished to inform us that Michael had already tasted of a wide range of life he could have expressed it directly by use of the neutral word "התנסה" which would have adequately befitted that intention. The use of "התגאל" thus seems specific and deliberate in its highlighting the sense of contamination which pervades Michael's experience of himself. And having, in his estimation, dipped so vilely in the shimmerings of the world, Michael stands, at the outset of the tale, apparently stripped clean and thus presumably blameless:

רעתה הוא בודד, בקי וידינו ריקות

(p. 27)

Michael suffers from a crippling super-ego which dichotomizes him utterly.

When Michael's father writes to tell him of his impending visit to the city in search of a cure for his dimming eye-sight, Michael is fraught with mixed feelings. He contemplates the pleasure of having contact with someone intimate:

הוא משתוקק לשמוע הד המלה: 'אתה'... ובפשו כלה
לבשיקת קרוב

(p. 58)

but immediately recoils as Hedwig intrudes on this fantasy. It is in this context that the root "גאל" recurs — this time in participle form with an adjectival-descriptive component:

ומה יעשה בנורא הדוויג בפני אביו לקרוא אותו לשתות
חמים? ריעות עם בערה הוא דבר לא-מובן לדורו של אביו
כלל, ומה גם גוייה פשוטה. בנו העילוי, שעתיד היה להיות צדיק
וגדול בישראל, מתרועע עם גוייה פשוטה ומתגאל בפת-בגם

(p. 59)

The phrase "לא יתגאל בפתבג המלך" occurs in Daniel 1:8, where Daniel, as a young boy is — together with some other children, all of whom are chosen for their great intellect and power of understanding — taken by order of the king into the palace so as to be taught the culture of the conqueror. The word "פתבג" is prominent in the whole of the first chapter. Daniel's main concern is that he not defile himself with the king's food and wine and he determines not to partake thereof. His refusal frightens the chief eunuch who agrees to obtain pulses and water for Daniel's and three of his friends' nourishment. After a ten-day trial-period it is found that Daniel and his friends are much healthier in appearance than the children who eat the king's food. These four excel in their learning and are superior to the rest. Moreover, Daniel also displays great facility in the comprehension of dreams and visions.

The aligning of Berdichevski's text with the Biblical passage yields some interesting correspondences which are significant in elucidating Michael's unconscious processes. Daniel is a young boy who rebels against the authority of a king. A king represents the ultimate symbol of earthly power. This king, furthermore, is not a friendly king: he is the vanquisher of Daniel's people. He has taken Daniel into his court, i.e. his home, by means of pure might. He holds the power of life and death: he is absolute in domination. His intention is to force his culture and way of life on Daniel. Daniel's rebellion takes place on the most primary level — in his refusal to be nourished by the king's food: an act which resounds in its symbolism. He will not be reviled by it. The outcome of Daniel's intransigence — achieved without the king-father's knowledge — is that he totally outsmarts the authority figure. He grows greater in the king's knowledge than those who walk meekly in his ways and even outstrips the king's ambitions for him. Not only is he wonderful in —
"מדע והשכל בכל ספר וחכמה" (Dn 1:17) but is proficient in an unforeseen field: in the interpretation of dreams and visions. His intellectual and his intuitive-feeling capacities are equally awesome: in him they are brought into cohesion.

Viewed from one aspect the Daniel story is optimistic in its prophecy for the outcome of Michael's battle with his father. Michael's rebellion may be likened to Daniel's insurgence. Like Daniel, he denies himself nourishment, so that his portion too is ascetic in its mode (p. 28). In contrast to Daniel, though, he deliberately eats that which his father despises —

מתגאל בפת-בגס...

(p. 59)

almost revelling in its impurity. And the food he denies himself is meat, food which is quite acceptable to his father. The correspondence with the Daniel narrative — despite the above-mentioned symmetrical contrasts — would seem to support Michael's cause: His father is the king-father and thus infinite in power, but Michael, the soft young boy, the child as it were, is destined, because of his integrity and purity, to defeat him: he shall be mightier yet.

But this one-to-one correlation is not easily sustained. Unlike the king, Michael's father is quite cognisant of his dissidence, even though its finer details and extremes — i.e. the extent of his defilement — may not be known to him. Daniel's abstinence strengthens him physically as well as in spirit, while Michael's merely depletes him ^{11.1} —

מאכלי החלב שהיה אוכל זה ירחים הרבה מבלי געת בבשר
ובמאכלי בשר, התישו את כוחו וימעיטו את דמו, ויהי
עייף ונבוך כל היום. הוא ישן הרבה, אבל השינה אינה
משניעתו ואינה מחלימתו; גם חלומותיו מעטים ותקוותיו
הולכות הלוך ורל.

(p. 30)

And their approach to the father-culture has similarly opposite affects. Daniel, though refusing the king-father's physical nourishment, absorbs his culture and goes beyond it. And not only does his mental ability —

acknowledged by the king-father — develop, but a new acuity — unforeseen by the king — manifests in the development of his intuition/feeling. In Mahanayim too the son-child figure is admired by the father for his intellectual capability. The father, like the king, hopes that this capacity will lead to great cultural competence:

בנו העילוי, שעתיד היה להיות צדיק גדול בישראל

(p. 59)

But Michael openly abandons this culture. The result of this desertion is not the great mental evolution he anticipates — but disillusion —

ולפעמים גם עיביו אתו לראות שאין ידו משגת מה שבפשו
שוקקת... .

(p. 27)

— and self-doubt —

יש שכל העולם יהי לספק גדול אצלו, כל החיים ובני
האדם המה ספקות גמורים, וגם הוא לא יידע את דרכו.

(p. 32)

— which he admits to in moments of clarity.

Michael's divisiveness obstructs all possibility of development. Whereas Daniel's progress is attained by the concert of left and right hemispheres,¹² Michael's intentional dichotomizing severs him from all that is vital and growing. Daniel's mode is expansion, Michael's — contraction.

The important correlate in the two stories is that Daniel achieves his final victory over the king by way of right hemisphere activity. He saves Nebuchadnezzar from psychic torment by explaining his first dream and provides him with moral guidance through the interpretation of the second dream. Thus the son overcomes the father and further, by becoming teacher and comforter, in effect becomes the mightier, the father. It should be remembered that Daniel does this with the help of the good-father — in Divine guise — who rewards him for his constancy. Michael uses his imaging faculty — i.e. his abhorred right-hemisphere — for indulging in wish-fulfilment wherein he achieves malicious dominance over his father. His fantasy is replete with religious terminology and sexual allusions. The scene takes place at some eschatological time. It occurs — "באחרית הימים" (p. 34) and thus is nothing less than redemption; its images are mystical/Kabbalistic and sexual, containing a chariot — "מרכבה" — and a garden — "פרדס":

לו נדמה והנה כבר שנ לבית הוריו באחרית הימים במרכבה
רתומה לסוסים דוהרים ואיזו נערה יפה מלוותהו...
ואחר-כך ייצא את הנערה אל העיר הגדולה הקרובה, שם גן
סופיה... שם יראה לה מפלאות גבנוניו וטדרות גשריו.

(pp. 35-34)

and his great evolution is referred to in terms of illumination reminiscent of the denotation of "זוהר" —

יצאתי לאור האורות

(p. 35)

Michael's wish is not to provide succour or be a source of enlightenment, he wishes to be awe-inspiring in his might. People bow before the glory of his intellect, obsequiously attempt to curry favour with him and, above all, show him great reverence. Thus Michael's dream is the dream of potency dreamt by the weak and powerless. Daniel, who is powerful, achieves glory not because he aims at it but because it is thrust upon him as a consequence of his development. Daniel's struggle with the father is the battle of the ego attempting to establish its identity. Michael's is the war-path of unresolved Oedipal conflict which, in its impotence, attempts to destroy the father and will be satisfied with nothing less than the destruction of the father. Daniel is honoured because of his power of imagination — Michael's strives for the honouring of his intellect.

Michael's fantasy revolves upon the breaking of taboo. His great desire is to flaunt his freedom from its binding tenets by displaying the object of his defilement — the beautiful stranger — together with his glory and riches before his father and the shtetl who are obsequious towards him despite his brazenness —

גם שובאיו שהחרימוהו וגירשוהו מבית-המדרש, מכבדים אותו
עתה כאדון רחוק, וכולם משתוממים על יפי הנערה, שבלי
ספק היא כלתו

(p. 35)

He envisages not only the breaking of taboo but his father's submissiveness to, and thus approbation of, this deed. Daniel's three friends, by contrast, are cast into the fiery furnace for their refusal to break taboo: this

refusal results in a miracle in consequence of which they achieve promotion and honour:

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and
Abed-Nego, in the Province of Babylon

(Daniel 3:30)

The two stories — Berdichewski's and the Biblical — are almost parallel in antithesis and their juxtaposition clearly indicates Michael's ambivalence about his disobedience. The narrator intimates this unease by counterpointing his narrative with the Biblical tale by way of the common but particularistic and unusual phrase: "מתגאל בפה-בגס" — which is imbued with harsh antonymic semantic content in the absence of the negating particle. Brooding over the entire Daniel story is a presence which is absent in the Berdichewskian text. Daniel revolts because he will not break Taboo — he will not betray his heritage by polluting himself with bread that is anathema to his fathers. His loyalty to the past is the source of his betrayal of the father-king. Thus there is in his story an additional archetypal image — an implied component of fatherliness which is benevolent and worthwhile, whose cause Daniel unflinchingly espouses. By his faithfulness to the good-father — who appears in both Divine and ancestral guise — Daniel defeats the bad father-king who knows not of his intransigence. It is a battle wrought in secret, won in silence.

There is no good father figure in Michael's world. In ancestral form the father is a stultifying, binding, moribund thing to be escaped from — as Michael has managed only partially (p. 28) and his Divine form is only to be rebelled against (p. 57), in direct contradiction to Daniel.

Michael who has not known the good-father cannot become one, whereas Daniel who has experienced the good-father partakes, by His grace, of this archetype. Thus Daniel achieves potency = manhood, while Michael remains the powerless and thus the warring, rebellious child whose victories reside only in intent.

Michael, in fact, anxiously recoils from any responsibility towards his father —

אביו יחלה בנאו אליו. הוא יקלל את יומו על אשר
גידל בן מביש כזה, ואולי ירעיש עליו את רבני העיר,
שידברו על ליבו לחזור למוטב.

כבר הוא חושב להעיר את אביו על הקושי שבדבר ולדבר על
לבו, אולי ינסה מקודם את רופאי ארצו; כבר הוא חושב
מחשבות להכי ולהכי כאובד-עצות לגמרי.

(p. 59)

It may be of significance in this context that his father's malady is dimming eyesight consequent upon ageing, with all the symbolism contained therein.¹³ Dimming eyesight means the blurring of vision, with the attendant age factor implying Age's loss of potency. Michael senses this possibility —

ופתאום והנה הוא רואה שכבר אביו בא. שיבה בזרקה
בו מעט ורוחו השליו אין אתו עוד. הוא איבד מוכיח אותו
ואינו אומר לו דבר; אבל הוא רואה את צערו בחובו מבלי
יכולתו להפיגו. אדרבה, גם הוא מרגיש את עצמו רחוק
ממנו, מרגיש שחירות הרוח קורעת לב בנים מעל אבות
בפחד ותקווה גם יחד: שסוף-כל-סוף הרוח מנצח הכול
וגובר על הכול...

(p. 58)

— yet is incapable of exploiting the situation to attain the manhood he desires by becoming guide to his enfeebled father. This manhood for Michael involves total severance not resolution and is — unlike Daniel — a pulling against, not a going beyond. The language with which he expresses his deepest hopes and fears about his struggle, drawn from the vocabulary of battle — "מנצח"; "גובר" — is, in face of his essential timidity — infused with pathos. His expansive statements such as —

הוא יכול לעזוב את הכול בשביל קדושת החירות: הוא
מכיר רק את חירות-הרוח והטתלמות-הרוח.

(p. 58)

— appear full of empty bluster and the spirit of pithy hubris.

But though these absolute statements of Michael's are pretentious they are nonetheless expressive of Michael's set of beliefs which deprive him of the joy and warmth of intimacy he has long been denied.

... בסתר בפשו הוא מרגיש מעין חדווה על ביאת אביו ועל
אשר יראה פנים שייכים לו.

זה איזו שנים אשר הוא בודד גמור באין מכר ומודע וזה
אלפי ימים שלא דיבר עמו בן-אדם, בלשוץ בוכח. הוא
משתוקק לשמוע הד המלה: 'אתה'... ובפשו כלה לבשיקת קרוב.

(p. 58)

Michael sees his battle as the war against feeling and thus it is apposite and desirable for him to be cut-off from his family which no doubt appropriates a large portion of his emotional sediment. Thus utter dispossession is not, as he rationalizes his fear of familial confrontation,

the inevitable result of his constancy in belief, but the constitution of this belief en tout.

Thus it is the antonymic relationship between the successfully resolved substrated Daniel story and Michael's that intimates Michael's perspicacious sense of failure in his quest. The father archteype will be developed further in the discussion about Senex and Puer in Berdichewski's writing.

The root "ג אל" occurs ambiguously in an altogether ambiguous sentence as part of Michael's contemplations on the merits of leaving Breslau for Berlin. He considers the move because of his impoverished state and in the hope of establishing himself in the capital — "אולי יוכל להבנות שם?" (p. 56). Thoughts of Berlin — the cradle of the Haskala — remind him of important Haskala figures who resided there and had been influential in his life: Mendelsohn and S Maimon. Thinking of them he remembers Brandes and Lillenbaum whose message in Hat'ot Ne^Curin he distils as follows:

לא הבנים חטאו, רק האבות, המה ישאו את עונם
ובניהם ייגאלו...

(p. 56)

— where the root "גאל" occurs in the Niphal form in the passive aspect. Its most obvious sense in this context is that of redemption where the sentence reads thus:

"It is not the sons who have sinned, but the fathers, who will be punished for their sins while their sons will be redeemed."

An alternative reading, however, yields a startlingly opposite meaning:

"It is not the sons who have sinned only the fathers
(have), and they will pardon their iniquity and their
sons will be defiled"

(the phrase "לש את עוון" is semantically adaadic, meaning both to be punished for a sin and to pardon an iniquity) — as well as two milder permutations where:

1. The fathers, not the sons, have sinned and will be punished for it yet their sons will (nevertheless) be defiled.
2. The fathers have sinned not the sons, and will pardon them (the sons for not sinning?) who will in consequence be redeemed.

The sentence disconsonantly echoes the famous Biblical admonition which decrees that the sins of the fathers be visited on their sons till the third and fourth generation (Ex 20,5; Ex 34,7; Nu 14,18; Dt 5,9). This judgement is usually pronounced as sentence on those who do not love the Lord — the good-father in Divine guise — and who revile Him and defile themselves by following false idols. And furthermore it resembles the opposite Biblical statement in Dt 24,16 —

לא יומתו אבות על-בנים ובנים לא יומתו על-אבות
איש בחטאו יומתו

which recurs in Nu 27,3; 2 Kings 14,6 and 2Ch 25,4 — where the fate of the fathers and the sons remains separate.

The semantic vicissitudes of Berdichewski's sentence encompass both scriptural ideas and resound in their implications for the father-son theme in the story:

1. The fathers are guilty — not the sons and therefore, as is logical, the fathers will be punished while the sons will be absolved: where there is no connection between the actions of the fathers and sons and thus there is nothing for the sons to fight: all they need do is not repeat the sins of the fathers, i.e. they must sever all connection with them.
2. The fathers — the sinners — will pardon their own iniquity thus leaving the stain of defilement on their sons: meaning that the fathers are not even cognisant of their own sin and because of this have ignored it (i.e. pardoned themselves) and not changed their ways in consequence of which the sons are left with its burden and are indelibly stained by it.
3. The fathers are the sinners who will suffer for their sins but their suffering will still not release their sons from the effects of their sin: the sons are tainted no matter what. Thus the sin carries its own unavoidable punishment which reverberates through the following generations — as in the first Biblical injunction.

4. The fathers, who have sinned, have the power to pardon their sons, release them from the effects of their deeds, thereby enabling their redemption. (This holds if "המה" is taken to refer to the fathers and the third person pronominal suffix of "עיונים" to the sons.) Here the sons have not sinned because the fathers have forgiven them.

Thus the semantic permutations of this sentence highlight the father/son tension variously and are indicative of the complexity of Michael's feelings. He perceives the father as misguided and sinning and doomed to the resultant suffering, from which his son, in breaking with him, is exonerated; he sees the father's obstinacy in persevering in his sin as defiling of the son; he conceives that despite the father's suffering, his sins have sentenced the son to impurity — and finally, that the father, despite his sins, has the power to absolve the son either by forgiving him or by suffering in his stead. The implications of these are as follows: (1) There is no relationship or responsibility on either side. (2) and (3) The father is responsible for the son's suffering: this suffering is the unconditional outcome of the father's bad deeds: nothing can stay the sentence — the father cannot act in any way to change this immutable law and thus his responsibility lies in not sinning in the first place — the onus is on him to change his ways and failing to do so renders him guilty. (4) The fathers have the power to carry the son's guilt and absolve them.

The final use of the root "גא" occurs, as mentioned earlier, at the end of the tale after Michael's fatal interlude with Lotte, where its form is the participle Pual and its function is purely adjectival-descriptive. The

passage in which it occurs is prominent as it comprises the only instance in the text where Michael's inner monologue is presented in unmediated form. The uniqueness of this feature foregrounds the passage, emphasizing its importance as conceptual climax of the story. Michael's sense of defilement which always hovered at the peripheries of his consciousness — which he intromits only as: (1) retrospective description of activity — "כבר התגאל בקדשים וחולין של החיים לפי דרכו" (p. 27); (2) in anticipation of his father's attitude to his way of life — "ומתגאל בפת-בגם" (p. 59) and (3) possibly as an element in the relationship between fathers and sons, where the sons — and by extension himself — are purely a passive factor in their defilement "...ובניהם יגאלו..." (p. 56) — becomes full-blown here and can no longer be denied — he is totally identified with it, as this singular use of the first person interior monologue suggests:

את שפתיו הוא נושך בחמתו על עצמו, הוא מרים את ידו
ומכה בראשו, פותח את פיו, ומקלל את עצמו לאמור:
בן-אדם מבזה! בליעל! אני מכיר אותך ואת קדושתך.
אתה חפץ להיטיב את רוח בני העולם, אתה מיכאל, אני
אומר לך, נבל אתה אחרי תשובתך ורצונך להיטיב. בזוי
הוא אותו רצון שרע מקיים ונאה דורש. הנבי מבזה אותך
וממאס אותך, אותך...

מיכאל, מוסיף הוא לאמור לעצמו, קח רצועה ויסר בה את
בשרך. הנח עצמך על הארץ למען ידושו בך העוברים
ושבים. הנח את עצמך לפני ספסל בית-הכנסת, למען
ידרסו עליך הבאים להתפלל, היכנע ונחל בעצמך לבית-
הכנסת... בן-אדם, לך ושוב אל אלוהים... מה לך הכא
ומה לך התם?

(p. 67)

Michael's decision to live is masochistic. One death will not suffice and the object he decides to torture himself with — by means of which to 'die a thousand deaths' — is his mourning —

כל ימיו יתאבל על סומאתו ועל האבידה אשר אנד...

(p. 67)

— it is his purity he mourns. The unnamed loss is the loss of purity — both his own and the purity that Hedwig, and their relationship, symbolized for him. The word "מגואל" is reinforced by its semantic neighbourhood which is replete with repetitions of the analogous — "טמא", "נבזה", "נבל" and "ארור".

And thus the progression of Michael's sense of defilement is complete: vile, impure and irreversibly tainted is all that he, in effect, is. The underlying feeling of self-hate which has haunted Michael throughout, is overtly expressed here and all his lofty exhortations now ring empty and despised to him. The entire structure of his defense mechanism is eroded and all that confronts him is extreme wretchedness. This collapse, accompanied by intense feelings of depersonalization, is palpable to him and described in terms of breaking apart —

את ראשו הרכין עד הארץ, כאילו רצה לפרק את מפרקתו

(p. 66)

and further —

כמדומה לו שהוא צועק ואינו שומע את קולו. ומוחו
הולט בחזקה וצערו מפרק אבריו.

(p. 66)

or

הוא ממשש רגליו בידו כדי לנסות אם עוד לא נפלרו ונשברו
ממנו, וגם בידו האחת את השנית.

(p. 67)

The language of coming apart is appropriate as Michael's splitness becomes excessive at this stage. He is most split precisely at the moment of union. All that is of the body is impure and unclean, while the mind is still capable of heights —

ומתבייש הוא מעצמו בושת-מרדות... הוא לא יטביע את
עצמו בנהר ולא יתלה את עצמו על האילן הוא יחיה
ויחשוב, יחשוב אחרי כן כמו קודם לכן... רוחו עוד
יוסף לחשוב ולהגות רמות על הימים; והכול בגוף טמא...
הוא הטמא יחשוב על דבר טהרת האדם, הוא... הוא...

(p. 67)

So that not only is his dichotomized state the cause of his distress, but even the punishment Michael envisages is constant awareness of the split: split between body and mind, pure and impure.

The root "גאל" in both above-mentioned senses has strong associations with blood, and this association is significant in the present text. The compound noun "גו אל דם" literally refers to a redeemer of blood, an avenger and thus a nullifier, cleanser, purifier, of murder. It occurs in many places in the Bible (Nu 35,19:24:25:27; Dt 19,12:6; Jos 20,5:9:3; 2S 14,11). The phrase "נגואלו בדם", however, is adaadic in meaning denoting, in its opposite sense, a staining or defilement by blood i.e. murder. It is also Biblical and is found in Jes 52,3 and Thr 4,14.

Blood

Blood is an important motif in Mahanayim, both explicitly and by association. Michael's abstinence from meat (p. 28) — i.e. blood foods — is said to "have weakened his blood" (p. 30).¹⁴ His disgust at the Reform movement — which he perceives as the feeble compromise of those who pretend to be free — is expressed in relationship to Shehita and the eating of meat —

רפאים שבל יחיו חיים ומאמינים בקדיש, רבנים מגולחין-
זקן משגיחים על השחיטה, ואוכלי נבלות וטריפות רצים
להזכרת בשמות

(p. 31)

Unlike the first, Michael does not partake in the act of Shehita — not even indirectly by eating ritually slaughtered animals, and in contrast to the latter he does not defile himself with unclean and repugnant carcasses. Thus he is a true redeemer of blood — "גואל דם" (though not in the sense of avenger). Although Michael's stated reason for his abstinence is based on his new-found ideology —

לבו יוצא בראותו כי אין משפט וצדק תחת השמים, כי האדם
פוגע באדם, עם בעם. לכו יצא בראותו כי גם החי למינהו
סובל על-ידי רשעת האוכלים בשר ושותים דם הנפש.

(p. 28)

— it is not unlikely that its base is rooted in the taboos of heritage he so fervently wishes to break. By not eating meat Michael preserves the taboo of not drinking blood, and even his abhorrence of meat-eating is

described in terms drawn directly from the Jewish religion, and especially from Leviticus and Deuteronomy where the Jew is exhorted not to imbibe blood —

רק חזק לבלתי אכל הדם כי הדם הוא הנפש ולא
תאכל הנפש עם הבשר

(Dt 12:23)

The tenet "הדם הוא הנפש" is central to Judaism and its echo in Michael's thoughts suggests his inability to break this ultimate taboo as the more comprehensive reason for his abstinence. In this light his self denial becomes yet another instance of self-deception where an unsuccessful attempt at attaining freedom is disguised in such a way as to appear a mark of that desired liberation.¹⁵

Michael's criticisms of the modern and Reformed Jews, cited above, likewise revolve upon the Judaic doctrine of blood and the soul. His censure arises as the result of his painful disillusionment when one of his chief history teachers asks him repeatedly to read Mishnayot in memory of a woman who left no sons. Whereas Silberbush¹⁶ sees Michael's reaction to this request as extreme and merely resultant upon and evidence of his hunger-crazed state (due to his abstinence from meat), it seems quite evident that his great distress has a more abiding and deeper cause and is inextricably bound with the primary meaning that the imbibing of blood has for him. He cannot comprehend how eaters of unclean — i.e. bloodied meat — can believe in the immortality of the soul: Blood equals soul and thus the freedom expressed by its eaters would have seemed to indicate

the freedom from this dictum and, by extension, a freedom from Judaism i.e. religion. This adduction is supported by the identity of a pair of words in this passage and a phrase in Leviticus. Some verses from Leviticus chapter 17 will be cited in this regard so as to show the intertwinedness of the two texts:

כי-נפש הבשר בדם הוא ואני נתתיו לכם על-המזבח לכפר
על-נפשותיכם כי הדם הוא בנפש וכפר: על-כן אמרתי לבני
ישראל כל-נפש מכם לא-תאכל דם והגר הגר בתוכם לא-
יאכל דם:

ואיש איש מבני ישראל ומן-הגגר הגר בתוכם אשר יצוד ציד
חיה או-עוף אשר יאכל ושפך את-דמו וכסהו בעפר:
כי נפש כל-בשר דמו בנפשו הוא ואמר לבני ישראל דם כל-
בשר לא תאכלו כי נפש כל-בשר דמו הוא כל-אכליו יכרתו
וכל נפש אשר תאכל נבלה וטרפה באזרח ובגר וכבס את
בגדיו ורחץ במים וטמא עד ערב וטהר:
ואם לא יכבס ובשרו לא ירחץ ונשא עונו:

(Lev 17, 11-16)

The combination of "נבלה וטרפה" is by no means an unusual one. It occurs in many places in the Bible (Lev 7,24; 22,8; Ez 44,31; 4,14 to name but a few). But the above Leviticus passage contains not only this phrase, but combines many of the thematic strands of Mahanayim: There is reference to the relationship between blood and the soul. There is mention of the "גר" — the alien — a motif which is prominent in Berdichewski's story, often denoted in the text by the word "זר" = "גר" = stranger and more specifically, the motif of the alien living within a community which is foreign to him: Michael, Marta's daughter's lover, Reuven, Maria-Yosefa, Stasha and even Hedwig all form part of this motif. The qualities of — "טמא" and "טהור" are central to Mahanayim. The act of laundering connects with Lotte's occupation as well as the service she provides Reuven.¹⁷ Purification by water is alluded to in Hedwig's conversion to

Catholicism (i.e her Baptism)¹⁸ though the priest is not optimistic about the efficacy of its purificatory power because of the far-reaching odour of Hedwig's foreign blood (p. 47), and obliquely by references to water throughout the story.¹⁹ The overriding subject of the Biblical passage is consumption — what may or may not be taken — the permitted and the forbidden. Eating is a prominent concern in Mahanayim as has already been elucidated. It must be noted, however, in light of the above discussion, that the extent of Michael's defilement by food — referred to earlier in the sections dealing with the Daniel story — is not as extreme as he intimates: he has not partaken of the truly forbidden; he has, in fact, obviated the entire conflict by not eating meat at all.

Eating involves swallowing and, as indicated earlier, the act of swallowing has distinct sexual implications in the story. As sexuality is the most obvious confirmation of Eros²⁰ it is fitting that spewing forth, vomiting out — the opposite of swallowing — is the act whereby is caused the only death that takes place during the course of the tale. The wife of the cobbler, Michael's landlord, dies of a sudden emesis of blood:

אחרי שנועיים מתה האישה על-ידי הקאת דם פתאומית

(p. 34)

Swallowing is mentioned in relation to the will to live (p. 29) and in connection with the sexual act (pp. 61 and 62) where the woman has the upper hand (Stasha and Lotte); vomiting — expulsion — its opposite, is associated with Thanatos and occurs when the woman is downtrodden and oppressed: the cobbler maltreats his sickly wife abominably:

אבל אינר יכול לשאט את גירופי הסנדלר, שהוא מגדף את
אשתו החולנית. 'אטתי לא תאריך ימים'. לוחש הסנדלר
באוזנו בלכת אטו להביא דבר מה.

(p. 34)

This opposition well portrays Michael's ambivalence about sexuality and woman resultant upon the early death of his mother and his father's hasty remarriage. When a woman is powerful she fills him with fear of the loss of identity that merging implies; but when she is suffering she is not powerful and thus not threatening and he is free to pity her and can thus fearlessly engage in erotic longing²¹ as may be seen from the passage immediately following the reference to the shoemaker's abuse of his wife —

והאישה החולנית הזאת, בעלת ביתו, יפה היתה לפניס.
היא מיטיבה לכת עמו ונותנת לו חמים לרוב, והוא מביט
תמיד על ידיה הלבנות.

(p. 34)

— where the proximity of the two passages would seem to allude to this connection. The association between fear of life and fear of Woman — the Erotic — is obvious and not in need of explication.

The relationship between sex and food also weaves throughout the tale in more innocent guise than in the above-mentioned metaphor. Michael's drinking of hot liquids always occurs in company with a woman who is usually the provider of the drink²² (pp. 34; 39; 52; 59; 64). Thus, by way of the female presence, by the woman acting as provider and nourisher, by the hot nature of the food and because of its liquid state,

this type of encounter is attributed a component of sexuality that cannot be ignored; but, as it functions in a transposed manner, it may be freely indulged in without the threat of the terrifying aspects of the real thing. Interestingly, and maybe significantly, the act of drinking entails swallowing: but here there is an alteration in both actor and degree. In the swallowing referred to by the root "בלע" the actors are the life-force, Stasha and the earth itself, while the acted upon is Michael. Here the former acted-upon, passive component, becomes the actor, the doer. The earlier act of swallowing is expressed directly by means of the root "בלע" denoting the entire action as the act of swallowing: here swallowing is merely an implied feature, merely an element in a wider act — the act of drinking with its accompanying aspect of being nourished. The kitchen acts as an extension of the motif of nourishment = Eros: it is in the kitchen that Michael feels desire for the cobbler's wife, it is his meeting place with Hedwig; it is the place where Michael experiences his sexual encounter with Lotte.

The concept of the unity of blood and soul plays an important rôle in the portrayal of Hedwig and in the perceptions of her by the other characters in the story. Hedwig is of mixed blood and, as mentioned earlier, the priest is extremely aware of this 'impurity' in face of which he even doubts the power of Holy Baptism. Hedwig's unusual beauty, the narrator informs us, derives from the presence of two different bloods within her and especially because, as we learn, the two have not intermingled, but the one has remained wrapped within the other, yet lies there in potentia —

כל דם האב הנוזל בה לא התערב עם אהרן שמצד אמה,
רק מעולף בו, כמו שמור בקרבה...

(p. 53)

In a sense Hedwig is the natural embodiment of Michael's artificially created condition. Michael is caught between two poles, in a condition of duality which manifests in the present relationship between him and his surroundings. He is a stranger — a Jew — in a strange land — a Christian city. This duality also manifested in the past, in his strangeness in his own land — as an heretical Jew within the apparently homogeneous Shtetl community of observant Jews — and is most acutely evident in his intentionally dichotomized psyche wherein the dyads of logic and intuition; senex and puer; pure and impure are in constant battle. Hedwig is, by her very being, the dualistic phenomenon Michael misguidedly strives to create of himself. Hedwig, like Michael, is incomplete — she lacks passion. But unlike Michael this is a condition thrust upon her by force of her nature —

לה חסרה הנטייה הטבעית להתלהב באהבה. מטבעה אינה
צריכה לזאת.

(p. 53)

— whereas Michael needs battle to stay his passions. Like Hedwig, Michael cannot escape his blood i.e. his soul.

The significance the phrase — "הדם הוא הנפש" — holds for Michael is illustrated by his defiant restructuring of it. The only physical contact he

has with Hedwig is the touching of her hair, an act he feels draws him closer to her:

נגיעת ידו, שהוא בוגע לפעמים בשערותיה, מקרבת אותה
אליו כנגיעת הלב.

(p. 49)

because —

בעיניו השערות הן הבפש. על כל פנים הן הוד-הבפש...

(p. 49)

The substitution of hair, often an erotic motif in Berdichewski's writing,²³ for blood, and the placing of the revised phrase within a sexual context reveals Michael's assumptions about the direction his iconoclasm should take. Michael chooses a phrase which is most meaningful to him and deliberately misconstrues it by the insertion of this erotic element. Implicit in the reconstruction is his belief that sexual encounter will effectively break his, however unconscious, obedience to taboo. The Sabbath he has desecrated, he will not engage in any religious activity, not even for his own sustenance — e.g. his refusal to read the Mishnayot, he will not even teach Hebrew for a living as it is too redolent of that which he has left behind — but the one thing he has indirectly adhered to, albeit unconsciously, is the ban on consuming blood: this is inviolable taboo. In view of the impossibility of overcoming it he has metaphorically transferred the taboo from the realm of food to the domain of Eros, which has strong connections with blood and devouring and not only in the present context.

Morally unable to sustain the grandiosity of the transferred declaration, Michael tempers it by qualifying its absolute nature, changing it from proclamation of a relationship between equals — hair is soul — noun equals noun, to that of subject — hair (noun) — and a descriptive predicate formed by the construct relationship of "הוד" to "נפש". The heresy of the first phrase is too extreme. But despite this qualification the erotic remains surrogate taboo in Michael's prehension.

Feelings of shame are bound up with taboo. The word "בושת" appears a number of times in connection with beauty and the erotic. On page 43 when Hedwig first appears before Michael in the kitchen, her appearance is described thus:

הדלת נפתחה, ובערה צעירה נראתה על הסף בכל בושת ירפיה

(p. 43)

Lotte's first succumbing to Reuven is reported to have occurred when he hugs her to him and strokes her hair, whereupon her breast rises and —

נפשה מלאה בושת-אהבים

(p. 46)

Stasha's lust for Michael is aroused as she notes —

יריו הרכות ובושת חנר

(p. 61)

and in Michael's turmoil, following Lotte's revelation, he —

ומתבייש הוא מעצמו בושת-מרדות

(p. 67)

The word "בושת" is explained in Alcalay²⁴ as:

shame (also title given to a deity), disgrace,
indemnity (for putting to shame) shameful thing,
pudenda

Even-Shoshan²⁵ omits the meaning of pudenda except in the construct "בית בושת", but "מבושים", derived from the same root, always denotes genitalia. All these meanings are apposite exposition of taboo and the emotions aroused by it. The reference to idols, given by Even-Shoshan as follows:

שם גנאי לאלילים, ביחוד לאליל בעל: "המה באר
בעל-פעור וינזרו לבשת" (הושע ט': י')

is forcefully indicative of prohibition and the genital association is especially pertinent to the current guise of Michael's taboo.

Thus "בושת" is used to portray Hedwig's and Michael's comeliness, Lotte's innocent desire for Reuven and finally Michael's intense shame at the end of the tale. Whereas in the first three instances it is semantically contrasted with its "someich", with the disparity accenting the phraseologic combination, in its final appearance there is concord between the two elements of the construct expressive of the extent to which an

always sensed shame now becomes an integral part of Michael's experience. The association of "בשת" with pudenda is most applicable in this context, for the shameful thing that Michael has experienced has revolved upon that part of the anatomy. Furthermore, the combination of "בשת" and "מרדות" works on two levels here: "מרדות" means:²⁶

1. רדיה, מוסר עונש יסורים...
2. יסורים וחרטה על מעשה רע שנעשה, מוסר כליות, תוכחה עצמית: "טובה מרדות אחת בלבו של אדם יותר מכמה מלקויות" (ברכות ז')

but also occurs in I Sam 20,30 the following form — "בן נעות המרדות" which has come to mean:²⁷

- בנה של אשה חסרת מוסר; כינוי גידוף וחירוף מעין
הדיבור "בן סורר ומורה"

The Septugaint reading of these words differs slightly. They read it as:²⁸

בן נערות המרדות (=זונות)

The maternal dimension in both readings adds, over and above the chastisement sense of the word, an interesting reverberation to the present text where Michael has just slept with Hedwig's mother. And the appositeness of the phrase, in its meaning of "rebellious (disobedient) child"²⁹, as description of Michael, is unquestionable. Thus in this phrase shame (and all its connotations arising from the word "בושת") and rebelliousness with its concomitant punishment, chastisement etc., come

into close alignment as Michael's worst fears about his insurgence are realized when surrogate taboo — the erotic — is transformed into the actual taboo of incest — a blood crime in potentia.

As has been already hinted at, all the liquid motifs in the text relate, in some way, to the central concern of taboo. The sexual implications of the imbibing of heated drinks, fears of being swallowed-gulped and its opposite — emesis, relate to the substitute — though no less binding — taboo of Eros, as well as to the concomitant Thanatos (death is the punishment for breaking taboo). The blood motif refers to the actual taboo — the taboo of drinking blood, and the attendant taboo of mixing blood (as in marriage) contains both actual and surrogate taboos, while emitted blood hints at the penalty for ignoring taboo. Another liquid motif — water — appears in many guises through the text, and is also associated with taboo.

Water

Blood and water are traditionally linked as symbolic signifiers of two opposite actions. Blood is suggestive of mortal sin (and not only in the present context) — the spilling of blood, to have blood on your hands etc., all denote murder or destruction. And water, throughout the ages, has been symbolic of purification. These two are brought into cohesion in the Catholic priest's lack of confidence in the power of water — Baptism — in erasing the pollution of foreign blood as has already been discussed.

Water images recur across the narrative where water appears in its solid — as ice — and semi-liquid — as snow — states. Water as ice and snow performs an important literal function at the outset of the tale where ice-skating is described extensively and is expressive of the distinction between Michael — the lone studios outsider — and the local society whose urban sophistications and physical confidence are expressed by its adeptness at skating and whose togetherness indicates the easily come-by social skills Michael lacks.

The opening paragraphs of the story consist of an extended portrayal of a city engaged in the winter recreations of walking in the snow and skating on the frozen canal waters — "בכרך הגדול...מקדם קדמתה" (pp. 25-26), with the physical agility and communality of the skaters emphasized. The dichotomous strands of the opening sentence are extended into full description of "their" activities set against the portrayal of their observer — the protagonist, the "תלמיד עברי", whose contrasting life-style is antithetically juxtaposed with theirs by way of telescopic action. The point of observation zooms in from wide-angled view of the skaters, to focus on their lone unobserved-observer by way of some more focused shots of a single girl skater who is, unlike the protagonist, noticed by the others — "ושם בירכתיים...שם הוא שוכן" (pp. 26-27).

The section, in the first of these passages, describing the skaters, is composed of a large number of echoing word and phrase sets which emphasize the actors' reciprocity and their physical joy. Some of these are phraseological chains which expand one another quantitatively, e.g.:

יחידים המה מחליקים, גם זוגות זוגות, שלושה בשורה
אחת, גם ארבעה וחמישה

Others are complementarily opposite dyadic units such as — "נער ונערה" — which are qualitatively extended by resounding phrases that indicate a greater comprehensiveness of "them", e.g.:

נער ונערה יחליקו, נערה ונערה, תלמידים ותלמידות,
צעירים וצעירות

(p. 25)

— with the double repetition of the adjacent collective-numeral "כולם" expanding the communal unity into all-inclusiveness; or antonymic word-pairs which illustrate the variety of joyous physical activity, e.g.:

רצים רצוא ושוב...
מהם רצים במישור מהם מעקימים וסובבים במעגלה...
הידים משולבות והרגלים מחליקות

(p. 25)

A similar device is used, but to opposite effect, in the descriptions of Michael, where repetitious word combinations, akin to those mentioned above, emphasize his loneliness and non-physicality. Michael's lone state is described by the phrase —

ועודגו בודד במועדו

(p. 26)

and reiterated and extended by the parallel following phrase —

מבלי מכיר ומודע בארץ הבכריה הזאת

(p. 26)

His cerebral life style is portrayed —

יומם ולילה הוא הוגה במדעים

(p. 26)

and then re-portrayed and expanded upon —

חושב וקורא בספרים לדעת מדעי החיים

(p. 26)

And his longing for companionship is also twice-expressed —

אבל הלב הזה מחגעגע על איזה צל אדם ונפש אדם

(p. 26)

The formal commonality of these two anthetical passages serves to accentuate their semantic opposition, thereby rendering a dimension of pathos all the more searing to Michael's condition. Finally Michael and the other inhabitants of the city are brought into cohesion as he is described wandering alone amongst them. This description too is structured on parallel echoing forms, e.g.:

בין כל המטיילים אין איש יודע אותו, בין כל המחליקים
והמחליקות אין מודע לו

(p. 26)

— and cements the backdrop against which Michael's sad story unfolds. The insertion of the figure of the lone girl skater, between the generalized

description of the disporters and the specific description of Michael, performs the function of mediation between the many and the one and effectively contextualizes Hedwig — whose identity becomes clear later — who is caught between both worlds. Hedwig does skate and in this expresses the "them" side of her nature, yet she is always alone — a fact which is expressive of her otherness, her alienation. She is noticeable when she is on the edges — on the outer rim "בִּירְכֵימִים" (p. 26), but not when she is mixed among the crowd. This hints at the source of her hidden power which is the unlike side of her nature.³⁰

The structure of the opening paragraphs embodies the conceptual kernel of the story, presenting (not in the customary — thesis, antithesis, synthesis — progression) first antithesis — the inhabitants of Breslau — "them", then synthesis — Hedwig, and finally thesis — Michael. This presentation does not bode well for the outcome of Michael's attempt at becoming one of them: Hedwig's aloneness hints at the impossibility of ever bridging the gap and suggests that Michael's lot will be an infinity of standing on the bridge — never crossing it, never truly getting "there"; that he is destined — despite all strivings to the contrary — to be a stranger — "נִכְרִי"; "זֵר"; "מוֹזֵר" (p. 26). "They" are forever his antithesis — never his synthesis. All he can do is emulate them; they do not even form part of his process. He may learn their language and wisdom but will always remain other: alone — an eternal watcher — and not a doer, a skater.

Just as Hedwig is seen skating in there in the distance — "שם" (p. 26), so Michael dwells in a place that is forever "there" —

שם הוא שוכן ושם הוא לומד

(p. 27)

— not here: there is a continuing sense of distance between him and his adopted environs. Thus the kinship between Michael and the, as yet unknown, Hedwig is established at this initial phase of the story and left to silently hover over the ensuing passages until their meeting in the Marcus household.

The water imagery may also be seen to function on additional strata. Throughout the text it appears in a state of stasis and semi-stasis. In the canal — where it should be flowing and vital — it is frozen: where it should be a contained freedom, it is stultified: "מי התעלה...קפואים" (p. 25), and in the normally stagnant area of the pool it is similarly afflicted — it is solid and unmoving. While this feature operates, as illustrated above, on a literal level as stage-set on which the frolics of the Breslau youth are performed, it serves an atmospheric rôle as well, imparting, as it inevitably does, a sense of frozenness to the whole scene till the pictures of the skaters develop into a series of friezes, into static images of frozen idealized figurines so that despite the dynamic descriptions, the "ניצח שברגע" (pp. 25-26) presides as the overriding feature of the passage and is expressed by these stark flashes and overtakes the fluxing, vibrant "אחווה שבנוער" (p. 25). This functions directly, creating an awareness of the ontological stasis of the skaters who — though they apparently

move even on that which is frozen, are, in fact, as static and frozen as the ice they skate on. Their idealized lives have never known conflict and they have never progressed beyond their fathers' tables:

כולם הם בנים ובנות היושבים על שולחן אבותיהם, ובת-
קולם שלווה מקדם קדמתה.

(p. 26)

— in contrast to the dispossessed Michael who woodenly stands on the bridge over the frozen water. Paradoxically his life has a dynamism despite its unvital scholastic existence, invented by him both as form of defence mechanism to protect himself from an abounding emotional life, and because of his genuine scholarly aspirations, as well as in imitation of his ascetic home milieu.³¹ This dynamism revolves upon the very conflicts which create the outer stasis of his existence, which is so extreme that he has no sense at all of his own vitality —

... החיים עצמם בוגעים אל בפשר רק למרחוק. המחשבות
וההגיונות המופשטים בולעים כל התוכן, התשוקה לחיות
אשר בו. כנזיר יושב הוא בעיר ההומיה ובחיים
ההומים, בלי עולם ובלי צרכי עולם

(p. 26)

The murmuring — "המיה" — of life has become for him the boring humming of books and contemplation:

ועתה משועמם הוא מהמיית כל אותם הספרים והמחשבות
המתרוצצות בו.

(p. 27)

Though the dynamic factors of Michael's life might not be pleasant they are nonetheless powerful. He has fought great battles both within himself — "לבו סוער ונפשו שוקקת" (p. 27) and with others: with the history teacher (p. 31), in his present setting, and with his father, in his previous home (p. 57).

The water motif may, however, be perceived on another level entirely where it performs in a totally contradictory manner to the one delineated above. Viewed symbolically water is a metaphor for the psyche and is also of sexual significance. In this reading it is indicative of Michael's stasis in both these areas. Whereas the 'others' dance around on the water — "בשירה של תנועת אברים" (p. 25) — despite its stasis, Michael dares not even stand on it.

The sexual aspect of water-ice in the present context receives support from the fact that Michael first comes across Hedwig — who, is likened here to "מעין תינוקת גדולה" (p. 26), i.e. is devoid of sexuality — in this setting. As Michael's sexual relationship with Hedwig is a thing never realized — it is a stasis, a cold, frozen, dead thing, culled in embryo — it may be deduced retrospectively that this first sighting of her serves as a symbolic anticipatory image. The second sighting occurs under the same conditions and Hedwig's stasis is remarked upon:

אז היתה כעתה ועתה כאז

(p. 29)

as is the sense of distance that Michael feels lies between him and her, which is twice adduced:

... ועתה הוא רואה אותה למרחוק...
למרחוק הוא רואה אותה

(p. 29)

Flowing water — i.e. unencumbered sexuality — occurs in the text only in the realm of fantasy. Both Michael and Hedwig dream of rivers: Michael in his idyllic fantasy of rural life with Hedwig, where sexual and mystical images serve in concert:

היושב בסתר מתגלה בו בכל אשר סביב לו. שורשי
האילנות יגידו לו חביון-אלוה, בנחלים ויערות ישמע הד
השכינה, והדוויג היא הד ספירת הטבע.

(p. 51)

The Divine is in everything, is everything. The roots of trees — trees and forests being particular erotic symbols in Berdichewski's writing³² — are expressive of "חביון אלוה", i.e. of God's creative power, His latent force. "חביון" however in the sense of secret place may also be construed to refer to the pudenda³³ and thus has some sexual associations and especially in conjunction with tree roots where it is said to be expressed. The echo of the Divine Presence is heard in the forests and rivers. The Divine Presence — "שכינה" — is feminine: its presence, expressed in the forests³⁴ and rivers — which are flowing waters and thus seminal metaphors— would seem to indicate the sexual act, the union of male and female. This thesis is given credence by the next phrase which reflects

that Hedwig is the echo of the sphere of nature. This phrase is attached to the previous one by the conjunctive "and" which suggests its explicatory relationship to the former. In the rivers and forests — things of nature — the sound of the Divine Presence is heard: i.e. the Divine Presence is in nature, is nature, and Hedwig is nature's echo i.e. she is nature which, in its turn, is naught but the Divine Presence. The identity between Hedwig and the Divine Presence is further intimated by the repeated use of "הד" in description of each of them: not only are they each "echoes of" something else, but they also echo each other.

The rivers in Hedwig's dreams also have a sexual content, though at first reading they seem to be suggestive of a desire for purification reminiscent of Baptism. Her longing for water, expressed as part of a pastoral idyll much like Michael's, is presented at the conclusion of a passage which deals with her beauty, explains her strange magic and speaks of her lack of passion:

באותה שעה יופיה מתגלה בכל עצם תומו והיא פועלת על
רואיה כשושנה. אמנם המאור שביופי יחסר לה, יחסר לה
כליון הנפש לנפשות אחרות וכל אותם הגעגועים של צער בשעה
שלבנו לא ידע שליו ויבקש לו בתיבות. היא אינה
מקשבת לדפיקות לבה כאל דבר אשר מחוצה לה... איננה
חושבת על דבר תומה... כל דם האב הנוזל בנה לא
התערב עם אותו שמצד אמה, רק מעולף בו, כמו שמור הוא
בקרבה... והדבר הזה משווה עליה מין הד בפשי זר, איזה
קסם נראה ובלתי-נראה.

(p. 53)

This follows on a section dealing with Hedwig's thoughts about Michael, about his 'otherness' — "השכנות אומרות עליו שהוא עברי" (p. 52) — which

leads to her contemplations about religion, different religions and religious art. She then ponders Michael's embarrassed reactions to her questions about religion, and expresses the desire to aid him financially, which serves as the platform on which she discusses her love for him with her mother. This discussion elicits a description of her beauty, which, though lacking in passion, is said to be contingent upon the twined — never fully resolved — nature of her being. Hedwig's dualistic aspect is productive of a yearning in her which belies the preceding denial of her emotional life:

בבית אומניה ובמהלכה לא תתערב היטב את בני עמה;
ובראותה איש עברי בפשה מתפעלת מעט מבלי דעת. גם
בבית-הכנסת היתה פעם אחת על-פי מקרה, כאשר עזב משורר
אחד גדול את הבימה ויהי לחזן; ואותו מחזה עשה עליה רושם
בלתי בשכח.

יש אשר לא תדע בעצמה מה היא רוצה. היא חולמת מעט,
היא משתוקקת מעט לאיזה דבר שלא תדעהו.

(p. 53)

Hedwig's needs are explicated in a collage of intermingled and transposed desires:

לבגדים יפים אינה צריכה הרבה, אבל למים וגנים היא
משתוקקת הרבה. לו היתה יכולה כי אז דחצה תמיד את
בשרה בבחלים על יד גנים; בפשה שואפת לשמוע את סיפורי
אמה על אודות גני דודה האציל ובחלת שדותיו הרבים...
מה טוב היה לה אב כזה! שם היתה צריכה לחיות
לשחוק את הכלבים

(p. 54)

— intermixed with her religious confusion:

הכלבים הולכים ערומים כמו הסוסים. הסוסים נוצרו
למשוך את העגלות, אבל רע הוא לרתום את הכלבים
לקרון. היא אינה יכולה לראות עובי בעלי-החיים הללו וצמאם.
היא הולכת אל הכוהן ומרברת עמו, אבל אינה יכולה לדבר
עמו דבר. תמיד פניו עצובים ותמיד הוא אומר לה
שתתודה על עוובה, והיא אינה יודעת מה זה עוון.

(p. 54)

— and her relationship with Michael:

ומיכאל אינו בא אל הכוהן כלל. כשהוא רואה אותה פניו
מאירות. הוא טוב לה מאוד, פעם אחד הלכו שניהם יחדיו
ברחוב, וינעם לה מאוד כאשר אמר לה: 'הדוויג', ואחרי-כן
לא דיבר דבר.

(p. 54)

Seen within the above context Hedwig's great longing for water may, on one level, be taken for her unconscious wish to purge herself of the subtly insistent foreign blood that lies wrapped within her: it ruffles her and she seeks affirmation of her undisturbing Christian self by listening to stories about Maria-Yosefa's uncle's estates, where she fantasizes herself in a perpetual state of self-purification as she ceaselessly "washes her flesh" in the rivers by the gardens. Her subsequent musings about the priest and the question of sin would seem to reinforce the link between this wish and Baptism— in the sense of purification— in unconscious echo of the priest's misgivings about her "דם זר" cited earlier. Thus her desire for a father in the mould of Maria-Yosefa's uncle would be indicative of her need for a pure untarnished Catholic identity, while her pleasure at Michael's mere articulation of her name testifies to an ontological insecurity which is capable of being assuaged by mere nominal definition. It is also possible,

however, that the nature of the defining source is of significance in her attainment of pleasure: Michael is that other side of her, that blood wrapped within her blood, that all the oceans of the world cannot purge and which draws and arouses her.

This interpretation of Hedwig's fantasy needs take cognisance of Freud's definition of water as a birth symbol. In a lecture called "Symbolism of Dreams" Freud says:

Birth is almost invariably represented by something which has a connection with water.³⁵

and further:

Birth is regularly expressed in dreams by some connection with water: one falls into the water or one comes out of the water — one gives birth or one is born. We must not forget that this symbol is able to appeal in two ways to evolutionary truth. Not only are all terrestrial mammals, including man's ancestors, descended from aquatic creatures (this is the more remote of the two facts), but every individual mammal, every human being, spent the first phase of its existence in water — namely as an embryo in the amniotic fluid in its mother's uterus, and came out of the water when it was born. I do not say the dreamer knows this; on the other hand, I maintain that he need not know it. There is something else that the dreamer probably knows from having been told it in his childhood; and I even maintain of that too that his knowledge of it contributed nothing to the construction of the symbol. He was told in his nursery that the stork brings the babies. But where does it fetch them from? From the pond, or from the stream — once again, then, from the water. One of my patients after he had been given this information — he was a little Count at the time — disappeared for a whole afternoon. He was found at last lying by the edge of the castle pool, with his little face bending over the surface of the water eagerly peering down to try and see the babies at the bottom.

In myths about the birth of heroes — to which Otto Rank (1909) has devoted a comparative study, the oldest being that of King Sargon of Agade (about 2800 B.C.) — a predominant part is played by exposure in the water and rescue from the water. Rank has perceived that these are representations of birth, analogous to those that are usual in dreams. If one rescues someone from the water in a dream, one is making oneself into his mother, or simply into a mother. In myths a person who rescues a baby from the water is admitting that she is the baby's true mother. There is a well-known comic anecdote according to which an intelligent Jewish boy was asked who the mother of Moses was. He replied without hesitation: 'The Princess.' 'No,' he was told, 'she only took him out of the water.' 'That's what she says,' he replied, and so proved that he had found the correct interpretation of the myth. (Freud used this 'correct interpretation of the myth' as the basis of his last completed work, Moses and Monotheism (1939a).)³⁶

Freud's thesis is borne out by the many creation myths in which water plays a primary part.

Thus immersion in water bespeaks Hedwig's struggle for singular identity, where, as Baptism, it alludes to purification and a resultant nascence, coming into being. As Hedwig is altogether uncertain as to her parentage —

כמו איזה דבר תלוי לה מאחוריה בכל מקום שהיא
יושבת והולכת, ומה היא יודעת? גם את מוצאה איבנה
יודעת, וחושבת את הוריה לדודים ממש.

כשאמה כועסת עליה היא אומרת כי מצאה אותה... והיא
איבנה מאמיבה בדבר וחושבת זאת לשחוק. האם היא דודתה,
האב הוא דודה - בכלל הדבר איבו מובן לה.

(pp. 48-47)

these longings are quite understandable as is her unconscious attributing the rôle of progenitor to an anonymous, primaeval element such as water. Her unknown origins (to her) align her in some measure with Shultza's daughters who are — "מן האוויר" (p. 54) and this correspondence yields some interesting connections both with Hedwig's imaginings and with her implied future as wife to Shultza.

The rivers of Hedwig's longings are located in gardens, gardens she would like to own, as her desire for a father who owns them would seem to suggest. Shultza, who is much her senior— of an age to be her father, and himself a father to two daughters who are also of mysterious birth— owns a forest. He is thereby akin to her vision of her uncle as father and thus her potential marriage to him acquires the nature of realized wish-fulfilment, whereby she attains both father — i.e. identity — and garden — i.e. estate, place in the world.

The garden component in Hedwig's picturing may be construed in its associations with the Garden of Eden — symbolic of pristine existence. This holds especially in view of the earlier likening of Hedwig's effect on others to that of a rose or lily — a simile which has obvious Biblical associations (Cant. 2:1).

Freud says with regard to flowers:

Blossoms and flowers indicate women's genitals, or, in particular, virginity.³⁷

— and if lily is taken as the interpretation of "ישושנה", the virginal implications of the simile are self-evident. This virginal aspect deepens the Catholic component of the fantasy.

Hedwig's reflections on dogs and horses, in this reading, may be interpreted, in accordance with Almagor's conclusions, as expression of an attraction to the non-Jewish world³⁸. Almagor notes that as dogs and horses were not usually part of the domestic menagerie of a Jewish home (whereas goats, cats and ducks were), an attraction to these usually signifies an inclination to a free, non-Jewish environment. He sees the present reference to them as a type of anticipatory motif hinting at Hedwig's eventual marriage to the non-Jewish Shultza,³⁹ and her repugnance at the reining in of dogs as symbolic of her bucking against the restrictions a Jewish world would place upon her.

An alternative, altogether different reading of the passage is, however, possible and it yields quite another perspective, where water and the constant river bathings signify the opposite of a purificatory rite — a getting rid of, separating from, need — and may be seen as expressive of the need to merge, unite. This reading utterly subverts the stated claims of the narrative.

As mentioned earlier, Hedwig is by no means as passionless as the narrator's comments would seem to imply. The first hints of this are present in her unconscious interest which is excited, albeit slightly —

"נפשה מתפעלת מעט מבלי דעת" (p. 53), by the sight of Jewish men, and in her generalized and vague 'slight' longings and dreams:

היא חולמת מעט, היא משתוקקת מעט לאיזה דבר אשר לא תרעהו

(p. 53)

— and this, in spite of an apparently natural inability to be enthused by love, of which the narrator hastens to inform us (p. 53). His information is given immediate lie by the ensuing portrayal of Hedwig's needs. Here her 'slight' longing is transformed into great longing —

למים רגבים היא משתוקקת הרבה

(p. 54)

— and her wish to bathe in rivers is no pallid fancy but an intense desire: she would do so "always" — "תמיד" (p. 54). Given the seminal connotations of water and especially of flowing water such as is found in rivers, her wish to be perpetually immersed in it, merged with it, would seem to be explicit statement of a great, though forcefully repressed, sexual urge.⁴⁰

In "The Golden Bough" Frazer devotes a section to the associations of water-spirits with fertility. He says:

In the Semitic East, for example, where the rainfall is precarious or confined to certain seasons, the face of the earth is bare and withered for most of the year, except where it is kept fresh by irrigation or by the percolation of underground water. Here, accordingly, the local gods or Baalim had their seats originally in spots of natural fertility, by fountains and the banks of rivers, in groves and tangled thickets and green glades of mountain hollows and deep watercourses. As lords of the springs and subterranean waters they were supposed to be the sources of all the gifts of the land, the corn, the wine and the oil, the wool and the flax, the vines and the fig trees.

Where water-spirits are thus conceived as the authors of fertility in general, it is natural that they should be held to extend the sphere of their operations to men and animals; in other words, that the power of bestowing offspring on barren women and cattle should be ascribed to them. This ascription comes out clearly in a custom observed by Syrian women at the present day. Some of the channels of the Orontes are used for irrigation, but at a certain season of the year the streams are turned off and the dry bed of the channels is cleared of mud and any other matter that might clog the flow of the water. The first night that the water is turned on again, it is said to have the power of procreation. Accordingly barren women take their places in the channel, waiting for the embrace of the water-spirit in the rush of the stream.... To this day Syrian women resort to hot springs in order to obtain children from the saint or jinnee of the waters.⁴¹

and further:

In Greek mythology similar ideas of the procreative power of water meet us in the stories of the loves of rivers for women and in the legends which traced the descent of heroes and heroines from river-gods.... This belief in the amorous character of rivers comes out plainly in a custom which was observed at Troy down to classical times. Maidens about to marry were wont to bathe in the Scamander, saying as they did so, "Scamander, take my virginity."⁴²

But the connection between water and semen, in their fertilizing as well as liquid aspects, is easily established even in the absence of these ritualistic assumptions of impregnation, and thus in Hedwig's immersion fantasy there is an a clear dimension of sexuality. This feature is supported by a variant reading of the same elements of the fantasy dealt with earlier.

The gardens visualized by Hedwig are symbolically synonymous with forests which, as already mentioned, are erotic motifs in Berdichewski's writing⁴³ and Freud calls them "common symbols of the female genitals".⁴⁴ Thus the juxtaposition of rivers and gardens — male and female genitals — may be seen as the unconscious, and therefore metaphorically transposed, expressions of sexual desire.

The uncle Hedwig would have as father was naught but an old profligate, who in his heyday had an army of mistresses. Hedwig imagines him as the owner of a many-fielded, and by extension multi-forested, estate. By way of the erotic associations of forests, their owners are imbued with a strong, unbridled sexuality. Almagor analyses their context in Mahanayim thus:

היער ובעל היער: יריבו של גיבור "מחזים" במאבק על לבה של הדרויג הוא שולצה האדמוני, "בעל היער הסמור". שולצה הוא גבר ארצי ובעל-יצרים, אב לשתי בנות "מן האוריל", וחסר כל המעצורים והתסביכים המעכבים בעד מיכאל מלחיות חיים של ממש. והדרויג גם היא במשכת אל היערות והגנים שבבית 'דודה' האציל, אשר חי חיות אישות עם אמה - מאמצתה.^{44:1}

Thus the similarity between Shultza and the uncle is alluded to by their parallel ownership of like-property, while the character of their estates suggests the sexual nature of their commonality. Shultza's daughters are evidence of his promiscuity, they are the literal expression of his promiscuous kinship to the fabled uncle who bedded Maria-Yosefa.

Shultza and the uncle are, however, also unlike in some important respects: The uncle is an aristocrat — "אציל" (p. 44), while Shultza is a crude villager —

כפרי אדמוני בעל קול עב

(p. 54)

The uncle is married and has had his many mistresses, by cause of which his wife — to whom he is legally bound — has left him. Shultza is unmarried and his daughters are illegitimate: there is no legal clause which binds him to them, and yet he cares for them of his own free will. The uncle is childless and when his impoverished young niece — a daughter figure — comes to his home to care for him he abuses her sexually. Shultza wants Hedwig, who is young enough to be his daughter, but his intentions are honourable: he wishes to legally bind himself to her. These contrasts favour Shultza and suggest an honesty in his rudeness which is lacking in his aristocratic counterpart. The uncle has become impoverished, lost his estate — "נתדלדל...מנכסיו" (p. 44) — i.e. he has lost his potency, whereas Shultza is rich (p. 54), and thus potent and virile. Thus Shultza, as a means of realization of Hedwig's wish-fulfilment, is an altogether more promising prospect than the desired uncle.

Hedwig's setting of her uncle — an explicit father figure — within her sexual fantasy is, despite, or because of, all his sexual associations, remarkable and would seem to be suggestive of an Electra complex. This is particularly credible in view of her stated preference for her adoptive father over Maria-Yosefa, her adoptive mother (p. 47), and because of Maria-Yosefa's earlier concubinage. By actually articulating, in the midst of an avowed sexual day-dream, her desire for the paternity of this concupiscent masculine figure, Hedwig unknowingly gives voice to her unresolved Electra conflict. In her fantasy she wins the father and vanquishes the mother.

The dogs and horses in this reading may be seen as clear erotic symbols,⁴⁵ redolent with animalistic connotations of passionate and free-ranging sexuality. Thus Hedwig imagines playing with dogs, considers their nakedness and recoils from their subjugation to the powers of civilization, exemplified by the image of reining them to a carriage. The reference to the priest and confession, which follows immediately on her thoughts on the evils of bridling animals — i.e. repressing the instincts — evolves directly from these contemplations by a process of unconscious associations, and is mixed with denial. The big Catholic sin is the sin of the flesh, the sin of desire, and it is deemed equally sinful when committed in "word, thought or deed". The unconscious significance in the proximity of these thoughts, is its suggestion of Hedwig's identification of the church and its actions with the evils of unnaturally restraining animals, upon which her negative judgement of the priest, who would forever have her confess her sins is consequent. From another angle, however, Hedwig's

thoughts about the priest and confession placed as they are, in juxtaposition with her carnal sin, may be perceived as the product of guilt and her disclaiming any understanding of sin would thus be naught but denial.

In the present reading Michael serves as antithesis to the priest and thus the church. Where the priest is always of sad demeanor and constantly urges Hedwig's confession, Michael's aspect is light and he sometimes just utters her name and says nothing more, yet makes her feel good. In his antithetical rôle to the church Michael is, for Hedwig, an expression of freedom, of the good, of the instinctual and it is possibly this that pleases her in him. Their walking together wordlessly is expressive of the vital and unfettered part of them rather than their civilized linguistic side; a pure, unreflected upon enjoyment.

Wine is the complementary opposite motif to hot liquids in Mahanayim. It is "חמין" turned sour with age and disillusion. Where the drinking of hot liquids is a sign of waxing, nascent sexuality, the drinking of wine denotes its waning, or withered, state. Johann the tailor is usually in a state of inebriation (pp. 40, 47 & c.). His wife Maria-Yosefa is frigid —

היא לא נתנה את לבנה הקר ובכלל לא אהבה את מין הגברים

(p. 44)

— has married him merely for convenience —

גם הוא היה רחוק מלבה, אבל מה לה ולזאת? התם הזה
ישרת אותה כל ימיו וכל עמלו יהיה לפיה.

(p. 44)

She even refuses to have children as she fears the debilitating effects of child-birth —

עצלה היתה ללדת, באשר פחדה מכל חולשת הגוף

(p. 45)

In turn Johann's drinking — which is contingent upon Maria-Yosefa's sexual unyielding — causes the impoverishment of the Marcus family which spurs Maria-Yosefa to thoughts of Hedwig's potential concubinage value. Thus wine is both the result and the cause of sexual debauchery.

Lotte, who has been disappointed in love, and whose sexual encounters have been reduced, in the main, to periodic rapes by her protector, also drinks. Wine is first mentioned in relation to Lotte as a simile in the description of her first experience of physical love with Reuven —

חיבוק נפש בנפש ושכרון כמו מיין

(p. 46)

— where it operates as progressive motif, anticipating the perversion of love's first blush. It also enters their relationship in a literal way.

היא למדה מעט את השתיה בימים שהיטיב ראובן את לבה ביין

(p. 46)

— where Reuven's initiation of Lotte's wine drinking is proof of the dishonesty of his intentions even before his rejection of her. The cobbler, Lotte's lover, who is incapable of sexual consummation except through violence, is drunk for the most part —

והוא שותה שיכור על הרוב

(p. 46)

Milk, by contrast, signifies sexual innocence or freshness and is possibly associated with suckling at the breast. When Michael first encounters Maria-Yosefa she gives him hot milk to drink and while he sips it he notes in the lamplight the remnants of her beauty (pp. 33-34). The disparity in their ages and the resultant Oedipal overtones in this observation would seem to support this assumption.

At the climax of the tale a number of the liquid motifs are brought together and combine to make a tragic whole. After his sexual encounter with Lotte, where, presumably semen — i.e. sexual liquid no longer in symbolic guise, but realized in its plain form — flowed, Michael drinks a hot drink prepared by her and discovers the blood connection between her and Hedwig. In his subsequent torment he weeps and his weeping is described thus:

... עיניו נגרו מים

(p. 66)

— literally: his eyes poured forth water. The fertilizing, life-giving liquid has turned to mournful waste matter. Burgeoning Eros has, by dint of blood taboo, become bleak Thanatos. At this stage Michael contemplates suicide by drowning:

... או ישליך את עצמו לתוך המים. בן-מרות הוא בטמא
את האל-מרות".

(p. 66)

In this image the thanatoid and purificatory aspects of water coalesce in ritualistic form. He has defiled the eternal and it may only be redeemed by the ultimate lustration rite of death by water.

"Hevyon"

Michael's sexual progression is marked in the text by the word "חביון" and the different connections in which it appears. Its first appearance, as part of his reverie, has already been mentioned. In this context it is "חביון" — explicitly referring to the latent power of the Divinity. It was suggested there that its implicit content is of a sexual nature. Where it serves as a vaginal reference because of its denotation of that which is hidden and its association with the feminine through Hedwig. Another sexual interpretation is, however, possible. As "חביון" has a meaning of latency, potentiality, it may, as part of a root-tree image — of definite phallic symbolism — connote Michael's dammed up sexuality, which at this stage is very much only 'in potentia' and thus occurs only as a referred image.

As Michael's lust for Stasha intensifies in the dimming light of her living room, when sexual consummation has become a definite possibility, we read that —

רגשי החמדה נשארים בחביונם, כיראים לגשת יחדיו

(p. 61)⁴⁶

The connection between "חביון" and "חמדה" has now become explicit, but lust has remained 'in potentia', fearing realization.

When Michael sees Lotte remove her kerchief, as they first enter her bedroom, his lust reaches stormy proportions and can no longer be denied. His conscious acknowledgement of it is expressed by an understanding of the relationship between the sexual stimulus she provides and the latency of his impassioned soul —

חן דבריה, שהיא מדברת בלחש, מלבב בחביון נפשו הסוערת

(p. 63)

And this is where the hidden spurt of him finally enters into the light of the actualized, as is suggested by the following metaphor:

הבר הקטן דולק בלחש על התנור ומאיר את מעמקי החדר

(p. 63)

Thus the vicissitudes of the word "חביון"— as it moves through the narrative, changing from referred image in mystical garb to locative

predicate, which signifies the hidden and indefinite part of Michael's soul and finally to part of a genitive construct, where it is defined and located, — trace the development of Michael's unhappy sexual career in its movement from latency to actualization.

Trees as Inverted Imagery

Almagor has discussed at length the significance of trees and forests in Berdichewski's writing as aesthetic symbols and therefore marks of the rebellion against the traditional pious world of learning which viewed nature as the handiwork of Satan.⁴⁷ He has also, as mentioned above, spoken of their erotic connotations and of their metaphoric function in acting as vehicle to females. This motif therefore is not in need of further expansion though it should be noted that, after the denouement this erotic symbolism undergoes a complete change and becomes laden with thanatoid associations. The tree-lined avenues, which earlier provided a source of eroticism,⁴⁸ become places full of darkness. Michael now lies in the shadows of the trees (p. 60) — in a night is made darker by them. The tree that he earlier would have hugged, is now a potential gibbet —

ולא יתלה אה עצמו על האילן

(p. 67)

The inversion is made more pertinent by Michael's meeting with Shultza — the master of the forest who has come to claim Hedwig — at the end of the tale:

... עיני הירוצא מביטות על הבא

(p. 68)

— after he has walked through "רחוב הגניט" which is now desolate symbol of his sexual devastation. The sexual indication of the twice repeated root "בו א" seems of particular significance in these lines. Shultza, whose sexuality is on the ascendent, is described as — "הבא" (p. 68); Michael, whose sexual promise has all but withered, is — "היוצא" — he who fails, is empty and expires:⁴⁹ the withdrawer. The disparity in their ages makes this opposition all the more poignant: the older man stands for brimming Eros, the youth is wasted Thanatos.

CHAPTER 3

S E N E X A N D P U E R

An important aspect of Berdichewski's writing is his use of mythological allusions. The mythical dimension in Mahanayim has already been mentioned in a number of contexts in this work and especially in connection with the Daniel motif, but it is in need of further explication.¹ The following sections will therefore expand upon the mythological elements in Mahanayim and will focus specifically on its relationship to the Oedipal myth² by which many of the central thematic strands of the story are brought into alignment and become more comprehensible — and especially in their psychological-archetypal reference.

THE OEDIPAL MYTH

The old has been victorious, the young is vanquished — that is the note struck at the end of Mahanayim. The tone is unsuccessful, unresolved Oedipal struggle, as a defeated Michael leaves Breslau forever. His forlorn leave-taking is tolled by the railway bell which also announces the arrival of the train bearing Shultza. Here the root "בוא" occurs in its particular sexual form as "ביאה", alluding to Shultza's future relationship with Hedwig, and stands in opposition to the gerund by which Michael is predicated to the bell.

הנה הפעמון מודיע ביאת המסע ומכריז על לכתו מזה במהרה

Thus Shultza — the older man — approaches, while Michael — the youth — recedes: the Father has beaten the Son. The bell-ringing amplifies the drama of their coincidence at the station, punctuating it with the moment of a great event such as may be announced by the ringing of church bells. Shultza serves here as metaphor for the Father-king who, in a failed Oedipal battle, cannot be usurped but, instead, holds all the prizes of the kingdom including the son and his sexual potency. Michael, the departer, knows he lost himself in the battle —

... ארתו מקום שאינד שתי אבידות - את עצמו וארתה

(p. 68)

The identity he tried in vain to achieve in his fight with the father has eluded him. His defeat has left him denuded of all: himself and the power with which to ever become that self — his sexuality — referred to in the present context as Hedwig. The Father has robbed him of all.

The Oedipal myth is a central theme in Mahanayim to which all the motifs, mentioned earlier, are connected. It has been referred to in a number of places in this work, but is in need of further exposition as its centrality and permutations comprise the core of the narrative. The myth operates both in a narrow and in an expanded sense in the text: in its narrow sense it serves as substrate of Michael's struggle with his father, while its wider context accounts for many of the relationships in the tale, as well as for Michael's inner conflicts. Alongside the Oedipal elements in the story and corresponding to them are glimmerings of its sister — Electra — complex exemplified, as already stated, in Hedwig's feelings.

In expansion of the Oedipal theme in the tale, two Jungian definitions of the archetype, as used by the psychologist James Hillman, may be employed. These are Senex and Puer which, according to Hillman, must function cohesively if integration is to be achieved. Senex means (in Latin) an old man — the word senate is derived from it. As Jungian archetype its usage is the Wise Old Man. Puer means a boy (a child): in Jungian terms its image is the Rake, the Trickster. Hillman uses these terms to define two, often warring, inclinations or world views, first of which relates to the world of Saturn — the old, rigid world, while the second is expressive of "the youthful spirit archetype".³ According to Hillman we are always caught in one of these modes —

....we are always in one or other archetypal style of rhetoric. You can't open your mouth without an archetypal perspective speaking through you. Rhetoric doesn't mean just the art or system of persuasive argument; by rhetoric I mean that all speech is rhetorical in that every archetype has its own mode of rhetoric, its way of persuading you.⁴

But for any development to take place it is necessary that we be aware of the bivalence of these structures:

Enlightening conflicts means.... remembering that the two, senex and puer, have to appear together. You can't have the one without the other somewhere near.⁵

The perspectives of Senex and Puer constantly inform each other and if the one is denied it will force itself through insistently and envelop its counterpart, instating itself, as sole ruler (for a while), thereby perpetuating a lack of balance where the cycle repeats itself endlessly. The preponderance of either mode is an unhealthy state: the dominance of senex means over-rigidity; an excess of Puer — ephemeral irrelevance:

...if you don't have an eternal, archetypal sense in the midst of the Now, then you don't have any sense of where you are going, what structure you are in and your animal sense is off. Instinct. Jung said that instinct and images are the same thing. When you lose that sense of essential images, then instinct is off... and your whole structure is disorientated. You become immoral. I mean irrelevant, without any instinct, sort of anesthetized.⁶

A whole must comprise both perspectives:

Old and new, or what we've been calling essential and Now, can be seen in terms of background and foreground in Gestalt psychology. Whatever you focus on becomes a foreground, that is, really seen, if there is a background. Take any event that's obsessing us, some item of Now.... it's just utterly immediately up-close and literal. But the moment we bring in the Renaissance or Egypt or Greek myth, the moment we introduce a phrase from Shakespeare or Keats, we see it as a foreground phenomenon. It's tied into a background, it can resonate. It's still up-close and blown up, but it has suddenly become revitalized; because it has background it is only foreground. The Now becomes only now and not the whole gestalt.... History is one way of making a gestalt: historical references, figures from the past release the foreground event from being stuck in only what it says it is.⁷

The dictum of Senex is 'past is perfect', of Puer — Relevance only in the new:

...senex — the perspective of Saturn, the old established wisdoms: the past deepens, makes more valid, becomes proof. You know this is a classical, Latin way of proving something: "Truth stands the test of time." But if one is at the opposite pole of this senex mode of course, if one is in the archetype of the child, if a puer, youthful myth is dominating,... then you throw out every reference to the past as out of the question. History and time would ruin your perspective completely. The puer never learns with time and repetition: he resists development and is always unique. No precedents, no past — that's how it feels to him. A culture in that archetype.... cannot help but be radically against the past, against what has already become and therefore is not unique⁸

Michael's conscious attitude is very much in the rhetoric of Puer. He wishes to be free of the past, to live purely in the new. He fears and would utterly discard the world of the fathers — "נחלת אבות" — imagining this the key to a glorious future. He fits Hillman's analysis of our present-day culture, where:

....nothing.... is more hated, more repressed than the old. There is a desperate fear of the senex, as if he were Old George the Third — senex turned Ogre. But the senex is also the old wise man, the old whale, the old ape.⁹

His apocalyptic visions and messianic complex¹⁰ are very much in the Puer mould — the "Messianic (is) the rhetoric of puer"¹¹, which focuses only on the now and the future — and are productive of the flimsiness and insecurity of his existence, which cannot hold as 'the loss of himself' at the close of the narrative shows. Hillman says of this approach:

And if you stick only with the new and the future, you only have the bluebird or the mosquito: no whale, no ape.¹²

Thus all the grand posturings of Michael's eschatological fancies are empty in the apparent absence of essence, of past. His now and future are not foregrounded because they are distorted for lack of the background he has so vehemently rejected. The repeated use of the temporal adverbs — "עתה"; "זה" (pp. 26; 27 & c.) and of the phrase "אחרית הימים" (pp. 32; 34) — in the narrative belongs to the style of rhetoric of the Puer. These are contrasted with the recurring adverb "לפני" (p. 27) which refers to the repressed past.

Michael's splitness may be seen to revolve upon his Puer rhetoric. The tragic irony of his abhorrence of the past is that his striving to be rid of it constitutes a denial of Senex and thus an attempt at one-dimensionality which is counterproductive and actually shapes him in the cast of Senex: his wish is Puer, but his will is Senex. This expresses itself in his rigidity, his denouncement of song and his asceticism. Senex has asserted itself in the form of misdirection where Michael misconceives it and sees it as Puer. This desire for Puer has created in him a stagnant and all powerful Senex. On the ineluctable intertwining of Senex and Puer and the dangers of disregarding it, Hillman adduces:

The main task for me is to keep in touch with the senex in all its different facets. The senex slips in unawares.... It's very easy to become unconscious of the senex¹³

and —

...the puer breaks through when one fantasizes on the old. The archetype of the old and new can't really be separated. It seems better to me to focus carefully, painfully on the old and let the puer break in spontaneously.... rather than to focus on the new so literally that the senex absorbs it and makes it concrete and sullen in the same old dried-out pattern¹⁴

As mentioned earlier — Michael's life-style is more constricted in his so-called Puer environment than it would have been under the auspices of the Senex of the shtetl.

Michael might purport to reject his stultifying monotheistic religion, but his entire existence is a monotheistic striving for the supremacy of intellect. And monotheism belongs to the domain of Senex: Hillman —

That's why I struggle so with monotheism: I see Saturn in it, his dangerous "singleness of vision"... That senex intolerance and blindness....¹⁵

The split caused by concentrating on one side of the archetype, as well as the method of its healing, is apposite description of Michael's journey:

We live in a terrible split. Maybe the Renaissance did, too, but they had maxims for healing the split, like gloria duplex, keeping the consciousness on both sides. The danger lies in splitting the duplex into only senex or only puer. Exclusive. One turned against the other.... Simplifications are already part of the rhetoric of one or another side of the split. Gloria duplex means complicated answers.... when we complicate in the right way we begin to force imagination to work. Simplification stops the imagination.... But it isn't we who make those complications — it's the psyche, the anima. That's what the anima does — messes things up, blurs the edges.... So the beginning of a puer-senex reunion means letting the anima get at both sides¹⁶

Michael started off by rejecting Senex, thereby simplifying his psychological processes in an attempt to deny a side of himself. This wish for simplification is explicitly stated in his dismissal of song i.e. imagination which he associates, as adduced earlier, with the Senex world — the world of his fathers. Thus Michael wilfully simplifies — "stops the imagination". Contact with the anima — and Hedwig is, in some respects, representative of his anima — causes a blurring, as does the 'blurred' time of twilight¹⁷ which stirs his imagination into movement and revitalizes him, "letting the dried-out senex feel soul again"¹⁸ — "בנגיוע בו לחשי החייט" (p. 51), till a reunion takes place in the form of gloria duplex —

שארית הקור חדלה בו ביום כולה והחוס התגבר, שני
עולמות שובים בוגעים זה בצד זה, זה הולך וזה בא... וגם
ברחשי-בפשו שני עולמות דבשקי אהודי. על גדות המחשבה
בולדו אצלו ביצני השירה ומאוחו הרגע הריהו גם משורר.

... עד עתה לכאורה היה הכל בו במחשבה ובהגיון; ועתה
הוא שומע על קרקעית המחשבות מעין המית רגשות. הוא
יחשוב מפני שהוא מרגיש והוא יחשוב וירגיש.

(p. 51)

But Michael's gloria duplex is not long-lasting. He admits the anima
in only to taint her with his Puer intentions —

ובניגודיו הפנימיים, שהוא מתנגד עתה לחברה ויסורי
המוסר שלה, עלה על לבו הרעיון להתקשר בבת אל בכר,
שבולדה לא בקידושין, לשעשוע-רוח.

אדרבה, יפסיק את כל החבלים בפעם אחת ויהי בן-חורין
גמור. יעזוב את הדור האחרון, שעודבו שייך לו ויהיה
לאדם חדש, בן דור ראשון...

ועמה ילך לארץ רחוקה. להוריו ולרעיו יחדל לכתוב,
יחדל לקרוא עברית ולדעת את הנעשה בתפוצות ישראל
ויחיה עמה בעדן החיים החפשים מבלי בחלת-אבות
ויסורי-אבות.

(p. 50)

not permitting her "to get at both sides". Thus Michael is soon cast back
into a constricted-Senex mode whose Appolonian thrust manifests in an
unintentional celibacy —

מיכאל זה כבר נזיר הוא מן אותם החיים בלי כוונה יתירה.

(p. 59)

— expressed in the antiseptic constriction of his living quarters, foregrounded against the rampant sexuality of nature and the forest —

החדר היה צר וזקי, והשמים הרחבים עם המישור הרחב
נשקפו על פניו. גם עצים שפלי-קומה של יער פרוע נראו
למרחוק. שמה יבואו לפנות ערב כמה מבני דלת העם להתנות
אהבים או להיות עם הטבע

(p. 59)

The "high-flying, fire-eating puer"¹⁹ is once again exiled through its will to dominance. The anima has not been allowed free-range and as a result, Michael must lose her as he does.

Michael's subsequent passage towards sexual realization may be seen against this background. Senex intrudes upon his sexual life in concrete form in the shape of women who are much his senior: the landlady, Stasha and finally Lotte, and his union with them with its disastrous results, bespeaks the pitfalls of one-sidedness: because he has denied it, Senex has achieved dominance in his psyche and with withering effects. Just prior to his decision to visit Stasha, at the onset of the Sabbath the narrator informs us of Michael's conscious struggle to affirm puer:

לו היה מודה לעצמו כי אז ראה שאז עוד עולים בחובר
שרידי כליון נפש עברי. ושכמעט חומד הוא לכסות את
הסולחן במפה לבנה; אבל הוא אינו מודה בזאת ועמל הוא
להתגבר על נפשו, בלכתו לטייל ברחובות חדשים ומגרשים חדשים.

(p. 60)

The adjacent wish for union may be seen here as the anima need "to get at both sides" —

בעיקר הדבר אינו יכול לחשוב אז בבירור, באשר בפשו
מתגעגעת אז אחרי איזה קרבה או ייחוד.

(p. 60)

The consequence of the anima's being deprived of true union may be seen in the cataclysmic outcome of Michael's distorted foray into the fields of sexuality onto which he has misguidedly transposed this anima need for reunion.

Jungian psychology of the Archetype provides a psychological reading of the tale whereby Michael's adventures may be perceived symbolically as exposition of the development of his consciousness in its journey towards independence and thus adulthood. Barbara Greenfield in a paper titled "The Archteypal Masculine" says —

It is shown through an examination of myths and literature that the traditional masculine is associated with the functions of the ego, with different stages of ego development being represented by different mythological figures.²⁰

According to Greenfield the various male figures in literature and myth are "conscious expression"²¹ of the different stages of ego development. These expressions of the masculine comprise the Boy, Don Juan and the Trickster who portray the early stages of ego development, and the Hero, the Father and the Old Man who represent its later stages. Michael is a conglomerate of the early stages of the ego as it struggles for autonomy. Like the figures in Greek mythology he is the Boy —

a young, beautiful man who is also a sort of consort of the mother and does not have the strength to achieve a break with her.²²

Because of the early loss of his mother (pp. 35-36) Michael has not managed to break with her. Her death is the one childhood memory he acknowledges

רק את מות אמו הוא זוכר

(p. 35)

and it thus comprises his only conscious attachment to the past. Her protracted illness —

שתי שנים לפני מותה שמרה את מיטתה

(p. 36)

his father's helplessness in the face of it —

ואביו רק התפלל

(p. 36)

as well as his hasty remarriage (p. 36), have retarded the progress of Michael's ego development. These have caused Michael to turn away from the father who is —

...also the first person the child loves on a purely mental/spiritual basis²³

and —

A boy develops a strong ego by breaking away from the mother and identifying with the father²⁴

Michael's father is for him a blend of Trickster and Father.²⁵ Greenfield says of these images:

The trickster represents the infancy of consciousness, mobility, the penis and the transformation of nature; the father figure encompasses the rôles of creator, lawgiver, impregnator, and master. Whereas the father is the law-giver, and stands for order or even for repression, the trickster is the law-breaker who represents the expression of instinctual desires²⁶

In his repressive, progenitive and authoritarian (pp. 57-59 & c.) aspects, the father is — to Michael — Father archetype, whereas he is Trickster because of the 'expression of (his) instinctual desires', indicated by the speed with which he remarries:²⁷

...the trickster's self-control is relatively underdeveloped, especially with regard to his sexuality²⁸

The blindness, defective-sight motif in the story is linked with the Father-Trickster archetype. Michael's father temporarily loses his eyesight (pp. 57-59); Shultza has one glass eye (p. 54) and one of the punishments Michael envisages inflicting on himself is self-blinding (p. 66), much in the manner of Oedipus.

The trickster, in relation to the father who gives the Law, is the son who breaks it (and, in Oedipal style, often suffers mutilation for it).²⁹

The law broken in Mahanayim is the law of sexual restraint, and the two fathers who have broken it and are thus Tricksters who have sinned against themselves as Fathers, suffer mutilation. The son as trickster, however, only imagines such an eventuality which he would actively bring about.

Michael's thought of blinding himself explicitly points to the Oedipal components of the tale. Oedipus blinds himself when he discovers the truth: that Laius whom he killed is his father and Jocasta whom he wed is his mother.³⁰ Michael contemplates blinding himself after he has discovered that Lotte whom he bedded is Hedwig's mother. In both instances that is a lack of awareness as to the maternal identity of the woman, but the underlying fact is that both consorted with women much their senior and this very act is evidence of an unconscious desire to actually join with the mother and the unconscious nature of their desire is metaphorically expressed in their ignorance of the identity of their sexual partners. The uncovering of this identity is dramatization of the moment of revelation where previously unconscious content becomes conscious. A sexual desire for the mother contains a concomitant wish for the death of the father.

Thus Michael is, in effect, denied a singularly

....authoritarian father (who) balances out the lawlessness of the trickster.³¹

by a father who is only part father and thus himself not fully developed and remains —

the trickster.... who overthrows the authority of the father in the name of freedom and transformation.³²

Michael's growth is impeded thereby and he is left with a distorted Super-Ego, the result of an unresolved Oedipal conflict. Consequently he is still an ego struggling for differentiation, for "emergence out of the uroboros".³³

Robert Graves in "The Greek Myths" notes —

Oedipus's remorseful self-blinding has been interpreted by psychologists to mean castration; but though the blindness of Achilles's tutor Phoenix was said by Greek grammarians to be a euphemism for impotence, primitive myth is always downright, and the castration of Uranus and Attis continued to be recorded unblushingly in Classical text books.³⁴

The castration/impotence significance of blinding is interesting in the present context where sightlessness (or its possibility) unites this masculine trio of sexual miscreants.³⁵

A somewhat divergent correlation with the Oedipal myth occurs in Michael's identification, in the penultimate scenario, with Reuven, Lotte's lover, who is Hedwig's father. Earlier, in describing Reuven, Lotte has called him "רק עברי ארור" (p. 65). Now, as Michael curses himself, he says of himself —

מי הוא? עברי ארור! כך אמרה אמה... אמה...

(p. 67)

This identification casts him in the rôle of father to Hedwig and adds an Electra twist to the complex Oedipal allusions: unlike Oedipus who —

Despoiled his birth-bed; begetting where he was
begot³⁶

Michael despoils his marriage-bed becoming 'begetter' of that with which he would beget.³⁷

Hedwig's Electra complex has been dealt with previously, but Greenfield's analysis of the masculine archetype and its significance for women, is pertinent to this motif in the light it throws on Hedwig's attraction to Michael. Greenfield holds that —

the association with a trickster, i.e., a male figure who is less strong and thus less overpowering than a father while being sexually alluring, is the crucial factor permitting the woman to break out of her dependency on a protector and establish her own independence.... The trickster is thus useful in that his sexual appeal lures the woman away from the dominance of the father and puts her in a position where she is forced to be autonomous (and rely on her own strengths, or develop strengths if she did not have them....) The trickster.... serves as a transitional figure for the woman rather than a life partner.³⁸

For Hedwig, Michael is the archetypal masculine in its early phases — more boy even than trickster — in contradistinction to the father-figures in her life who are — like all the father-figures (excluding the priest) in the story — the uneasy union of Trickster and Father. He is softer and less threatening than her adoptive father:

כשהוא הוא לוגם את החמים איבר עושה את הדבר כאביה... ידיו
רכות מאוד

(p. 52)

— and thus she is free to experience sexual attraction to him. This attraction, however, is not necessarily an indication of her desire for independence. She would have him in the cast of the Boy rather than the Trickster; the Boy symbolizes only the dawning of consciousness, not its assertion. She wants him as her brother³⁹ —

מה תאמר לו? לבערות אחרות יש אחים. לו היה מיכאל
אחיה, כי אז היתה משתעשעת עמו תמיד... אחות יכולה
לבטק אחיה...

(p. 52)

— and thus sanitizes her sexual desire and sublimates her will to autonomy. Hedwig is not ready for her animus i.e. she is not yet prepared to establish herself as an independent ego.

Greenfield says of the girl's development:

She does not, however, have to identify with the father, and thus the ego strengths that he represents and helps to develop may never be internalized. The girl may become familiar with and accepting of all that the father represents, and yet never incorporate it fully into her own psyche because it is always seen as something that is, like the law, imposed from without. Intelligence and will of the masculine sort may even be feared or rejected as something foreign and inappropriate.⁴⁰

Hedwig's thoughts, in the passage cited above, which will now be quoted more fully, betray a substratum that concords with Greenfield's description:

בעיקר הדבר לא היה מיכאל כאן בשכנר הימים. אמה
אומרת שהוא בא מארץ זרה... והיא אינה יכולה לצייר לה
את הדבר. הלא גם לו יש הורים והוא איננו יושב עתה אצל
הוריו. הוא לומר תמיד בספרים, וזאת אינה מבינה כל
עיקר. היא מבינה אכילה ושתייה, זמרה, הליכה וטיול,
אבל מה זה קריאה תמידית בספרים? כל הספרים מאלוהים
המה כתובים, והאלוהים יושב בשמים ובנו הוא המשיח.
הכוהנים בבתי-התפילות מלומדים הם בכול אבל מיכאל
אינו כוהן, הוא מדבר בהם סרה, ובכל זאת הוא אדם
בעל לב טוב. לה יבעם מאוד לראותו, תמיד מבקשת
היא לראותו וגם לדבר עמו. לדבר הרבה אינה יכולה...
מה תאמר לו? לבערות אחרות יש אחים. לו היה מיכאל
אחיה, כי אז היתה משתעשעת עמו תמיד... אחות יכולה
לבטק את אחיה... מיכאל אינו אחיה, אבל הוא אדם טוב

ונחמד. כשהוא בוגע בידה מרגשת היא שלבר טרב אליה
מאד. רק חמים היא בותנת לו בכוסו; בעים לה מאוד
למלא את הצלוחית שלו מים. כשהוא לוגם את החמים איבר
עושה את הדבר כאביה... ידיו רכות מאוד. אמה אומרת כי
הוא חי בדוחק ותמיד הוא לומד בספרים. הוא יודע הרבה מאוד
ואיברו בא אל בית-התפילה כלל. לפני חצי שנה לא היה בא אל
ביתם. איפה היה אז?

(p. 32)

The archetypal masculine appears in this reverie as 'masculine' intelligence in Michael's book-reading; in God as the spermatic word;⁴¹ the Clergy's learning and will; Michael's iconoclasm and in the image of God as law-giver. Both these aspects — intelligence and will — are foreign to her, external, and she would quell them by overlaying Michael with the Boy archetypal-image. Hedwig has not incorporated the masculine because she is impounded by an Electra complex, possibly stemming from her obscured parentage. Thus Michael and Hedwig are both, because of an absence of the maternal and paternal figures at crucial stages in their development, frozen and stunted in their growth, though Michael — who knew his mother — has progressed somewhat further than Hedwig whose father — and thus her chance at independent identity — disappeared before her birth. Michael actualizes his Oedipal desire by consorting with Lotte and having done so, leaves her and moves on; Hedwig's Electra desires will be consummated through her marriage to Shultza which will bind her to him forever. Thus in Michael's case there is hope. Viewed from this perspective Michael's departure from Breslau has positive implications. Like the picaresque Trickster he moves on, possibly to the next stage of ego-development, while Hedwig is destined to remain frozen at the stage of unactualized ego.

At this point the Theban legend intrudes once more, this time with a message of hope. After his tragic realization and subsequent self-mutilation, Oedipus is exiled and wanders for many years, suffering at the hands of the Furies.⁴² But he eventually becomes the Wise-Old-Man and is rewarded by a blessed death —

a passing more wonderful than that of any other
man⁴³

and a glorious hereafter:

So Oedipus passed from mortal sight, and while his soul was received into the blessed abodes, his earthly remains, in the secret keeping of King Theseus, hallowed for all time the Attic soil in which they rested.⁴⁴

An alignment of Michael's story with the King's suggests that his leave-taking of Breslau may portend for him a glorious future of self-realization as full and potent masculine archetype, who has endured the guilt of his Oedipal desires, passed beyond it, and, separated from the mother, the uroboric consciousness, suffers some while in exile and alienation till he passes into full adulthood and finally becomes the Wise Old Man whose "generativity.... is effected indirectly (as is Oedipus' whose "remains.... hallowed for all time the Attic soil") through influencing other men, rather than through direct interaction with the world".⁴⁵

In the Sophoclean version of the myth, Oedipus, when asked what "evil power" brought about his fate, answers —

Apollo, friends, Apollo
Has laid this agony upon me;
Not by his hand; I did it⁴⁶

Apollo was the originator of the oracle, and Oedipus, while accepting responsibility for his crimes and self-mutilation, ascribes him primary causality in his suffering. This ascription evokes echoes of Michael's story: his torments derive in great measure from an insistence on the exclusive glory of the Apollonian urge.⁴⁷

Nietzsche is said to have had a profound influence on Berdichevski, and though this subject has been amply dealt with⁴⁸ and is thus not within the scope of this work, his view of Dionysis and Apollo is interesting in the perspective it adds to the present discussion:

Dionysis, Nietzsche says, represents intoxication, Spring, ecstasy, self-forgetfulness. He is titanic, barbaric, the excess: Apollo the mean. The satyr is a 'sublime and divine' figure, 'the archetype of man, the embodiment of his highest and most intense emotions'. Greek tragedy derives from the Dionysian chorus, which ever anew discharges itself in an Apollonian world of images': the Chorus is the womb which gave birth to dialogue. Dionysis represents the shattering of individuality, the fusion with primal being. Furthermore the Chorus is, like a loyal servant, close to Dionysis, 'sharing his suffering'. Dionysis never ceased to be the tragic hero.... all the celebrated heroes of the Greek stage — Prometheus, Oedipus etc. — are mere masks of this original hero, Dionysis!⁴⁹

and further —

...the Apollinian (sic) represents what is for him the pernicious principle of individuation, that which 'tears man from his orgiastic self-annihilation and blinds him to the universality of the Dionysian process.'^{49.1}

In Nietzschean terms individuation — which is contingent on an Apollonian spirit — is a negative process, standing in contradistinction to union, which

is perceived as an exclusively Dionysian outgrowth. Thus within these parameters Michael's story would be defined as the tragedy of a spirit whose misguided striving for individuation has led him to lean too heavily on Apollo, or rather, in the mould of Oedipus, a Dionysian spirit upon whom Apollo has laid his hand. This notion precludes the notion of unity as a union of Apollo and Dionysis and is in opposition to the Jungian notion of synthesis where 'primal being' unites with individuation to form an all-encompassing consciousness. The function of the chorus, described by Nietzsche, is in the present story performed by Michael's more honest deflected interior monologues and presented indirectly through the narrator.

The scholarship surrounding Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus has entertained many debates about the question of Oedipus' guilt or lack of it.⁵⁰ In Sophocles' rendering of the Theban myth the oracle is given before Oedipus' birth with no apparent prior cause, and thus the question arises whether Oedipus may be deemed guilty of crimes he, in effect, had no choice but to execute. Furthermore, he had no knowledge of Laius' and Jocaste's identities and thus should surely be exonerated from any guilt. The question of guilt must also be addressed in Mahanayim where Michael's final damning act is perpetrated, like Oedipus', as the result of incomplete knowledge. The answers offered by classical criticism to the Oedipal poser may, because of this similarity, be of relevance in the present context. One of these solutions offered already by Aristotle,⁵¹ is hamartia, a term explained until recently as meaning "tragic flaw", whereby the hero has one tragic flaw which colours his actions and causes his downfall. Hubris has been suggested as Oedipus' particular form of hamartia.⁵² Modern scholarship however has revised this view of Hamartia:

A growing number of classical scholars have rejected the attempt to take hamartia as meaning 'tragic flaw' and then to allocate 'faults' and 'blame' in Greek tragedy.... D.W. Lucas in Appendix IV to his edition... points out that the most influential exposition of the 'tragic flaw' theory was S.H. Butcher's book on the Poetics but quickly disposes of the misinterpretation: 'The essence of hamartia is ignorance combined with the absence of wicked intent. Mere lack of knowledge is agnoia; hamartia is lack of knowledge which is needed if the right decisions are to be taken'.... Lucas also points out... that 'since there is no reference to harmartia as a moral quality being part of ethos'.... then this is further proof that the traditional interpretation is wrong.⁵³

Aristotle cites Oedipus and Thyestes as two examples of harmartia:

Vickers explicates the similarities between them:

Both committed appalling crimes against blood relations, but did so in ignorance of their identity: 'Had they acted knowingly they would have been inhuman monsters.' Yet, although Oedipus' intentions were innocent, he has committed incest and patricide.... for the Greeks the action was decisive, irrevocable, whatever the intentions. 'He did not come with criminal intentions, but.... what he has done, not his intentions is all that is taken into account.'⁵⁴

If modern hamartia theory is taken to account for Michael's fall then he is left quite "innocent in intention", though undoubtedly "guilty in act".⁵⁵ The nature of his guilty act — his sexual encounter with Lotte — and its relationship to his character, fits this modern perspective of hamartia: It is hamartita: an action contrary to his nature, stemming from lack of will rather than wilfulness and revolving upon non-recognition. It is not the outcome of an essential tragic flaw, a wilful and personality-based action (Kakos) which would have rendered him guilty. Like Oedipus, his tragedy is not inherent in the crime itself, but in discovery of its full

significance. The discovery, in both these cases, evolves from the protagonist's own persistent inquiry, is contingent upon his will (Mahanayim pp. 64-66):

Oedipus' action is not only the action of a free agent, it is also the cause of the events of the play. The hero is not only free but fully responsible for the events which constitute the plot... that is to say the process by which Oedipus' identity is revealed.⁵⁶

In Mahanayim too, the final revelation, resultant upon Michael's action and will, serves as the climax upon which the entire tale pivots. Just as a blinded Oedipus sees more clearly than he ever did sighted, so Michael, on the threshold of the shattering revelation which well-nigh prompts him to self-blinding, feels spiritually blinded — "וועיני נפשו כהות" (p. 64).

The underlying Oedipal theme of Mahanayim accounts for many of the levels on which the story operates and serves to mythologize the modern-day tale of a young man's struggle for identity and independence, imbuing it with a timelessness and grandeur that expand way beyond the narrow confines of Michael's Breslavian existence. As has been shown the legend interacts in manifold ways with Michael's story to express the many aspects of his struggle and it has implications for Hedwig's situation as well. Its connections with Mahanayim have by no means been exhausted by the foregoing analysis and it shall be further alluded to, albeit obliquely, in the following section.

TO BE A SON

Despite Michael's attempts to break away from his father, and his father's world, he still longs, in some part of himself, to be a son. He is, it must be remembered, still a young man — in his early twenties (p. 27), and is thus presumably still in need of parental affection, particularly as this need has never been fully satiated. Michael's unsatisfied filial longings are discernable at various places throughout the text.

Right at the start of the story, in the description of the skaters, the narrator, presumably speaking with Michael's voice,⁵⁷ notes their happiness:

ובין כולם מרחפת כל האווירה שבנוער ומעין הנצח שברגע

(pp. 25-26)

and explains it as follows —

כולם הם בנים ובנות היושבים על שולחן אבותיהם ובת
קולם שלווה מקדם קדמתה

(p. 26)

This perception sets their family circumstances in opposition to his own, as the function of the skaters is to provide a contrast to Michael and his life-style.⁵⁸ This contrast is sharpened by the collective "כולם". The introduction of the lone figure of Hedwig at this stage serves to align her with Michael and separate her from those who bask in familial security.

Michael's longings for this state are somewhat assuaged by Maria-Yosefa's and Johann's attitude towards him. Maria-Yosefa and Johann, who substitute for Hedwig's parents and provide her, in some measure, with a family situation, also present Michael with a setting where he can play son. It is ironic that Maria-Yosefa, who recoils from child-birth, should twice fulfil this maternal function. Her casually thrown remark — "הבנים שוחקים" (p. 49) — when she sees Michael and Hedwig together, fills Michael with great delight and a sense of belonging.

... והדבר הזה משמח את רוחו של מיכאל מאוד מאז לכתו
בגולה שכח כי "בן" הוא...

(p. 49)

The word "גולה" in the present context, as a defined and thus specific entity, testifies to the extent of the pain that Michael's alienation from his family has caused him. That separation, however, did not begin with his self-imposed exile, but rather, its antecedents may be traced to the time of his mother's death and immediately following it, when his father's behaviour — first, his not doing anything but pray while his mother was sick, and then his doing too much, in his hurried second marriage — aroused in him a resentment contingent upon feelings of rejection and abandonment —

כשמתה אמו באו תיכף אל ביתם אם חדשה ובנים חדשים.
אביו דיבר אתה בלשון בוכה כמו שדיבר את אמו, וכל
שיבוי לא היה בבית... אבל אצלו השתנה המצב אחרי מות
אמו, ומאז לא יכול לדבר את אביו לשלום.

(p. 36)

His position as son was usurped by the new sons and their mother and his exile, in effect, begins at this point where he becomes 'other', not quite part of the family any longer.

The Marcuses' approbation of Michael, indicated by their paternal attitude towards him, enables him to physically reach out to Hedwig in a show of affection:

הילדים שותים יחד כאח ואחות'. והיא מרשה לו לגעת
בידו במקלעת שערוחיה לרגע

(p. 49)

It is interesting that it is this fraternal designation that gives Michael the courage to make a sexual approach to Hedwig, as her sexual musings about him are set in precisely the same mould (p. 52).⁵⁹ Furthermore, this perception of him as a son echoes Marta's statement about the Jewish student who let her daughter down —

ויגר כבן זר אתנו ויאהב את הנערה

(p. 42)

and participates in the anticipatory motif which suggests an identity between Michael and that long-gone student.

The theme of lost childhood and absent parents is a recurring motif in Mahanayim. Michael and Hedwig are brother and sister inasmuch as they suffer a common fate in having been deprived of their real parents. Lotte has never known her parents —

‘אנכי לא הכרתי כלל את אבותי, בולדתי יתומה’

(p. 64)

and the mother of Shultza's daughters has never been seen. Maria-Yosefa, Michael, Hedwig, Lotte and Stasha's son are all the victims of spoilt childhoods and youth. Maria-Yosefa passed her early years as mistress to her rich uncle — her youth corrupted by premature sexual knowledge. Lotte was thrown out of her relatives' home at the age of fourteen for refusing to marry their hunch-backed son: her teenage years similarly spoilt because of potential sexual exploitation. Hedwig's childhood is spoilt by Lotte's beatings which come about because she reminds her of Reuven and her relationship with him and his desertion i.e. his sexual exploitation of her. Michael's childhood is also spoilt because of his father's all too-eager sexuality which couldn't bide its time;⁶⁰ but his childhood, unlike Hedwig's, is never redeemed and his youth is tainted in consequence. Stasha's son dies at an early age, the cause of his death is unspecified though an aura of sexuality surrounds his mother. In all these instances (except Stasha's son) the young have suffered because of adult sexual corruption and they, the corrupted, become in their turn, corrupters. Maria-Yosefa intends to barter Hedwig's sexual allurements; Lotte sexually engages Michael and adds to the intensity of his loneliness. An early emotional distortion causes its victims to initiate that distortion in others, thereby perpetuating an endless cycle of corruption.

In his analysis of Klonimus and Naomi Shaked analyzes this type of causality in Berdichewski's writing which revolves upon the repeated incarnations of a deed, or urge, or characteristic. He sees these causal connections as firm and binding in their effects —

יש כאן יחס הדוק של סיבה ותוצאה, כשכל דור משמש סיבה
לנא אחריו ומהווה בדיעבד מסובב של הדורות הקודמים...
אך הקשרים הסיבתיים אינם מתגלים רק במורשה הביולוגית
אלא גם בגלגולים רוחניים מוזרים⁶¹

In Mahanayim too these chains of causation manifest through biological inheritance as well as in the "strange spiritual incarnations" discussed above. When Michael contemplates his father's betrayal he is immediately reminded that such a course of action has its precedents in his family on both sides —

ופתאום זוכר הוא, שגם אבי-אביו נשא אשה אחרי אשתו
שמתה, שגם אבי-אמו עשה כך ושגם לאמו חרה הדבר
כך...⁶²

(p. 36)

— and that like him, his mother suffered because of it. This generational determinism possibly adds to Michael's feelings of helplessness for, soon after he remembers it, he finds refuge in one of his messianic fantasies:⁶²

בתור משיח צדק היה צריך הוא לבוא לעולם, חשב אז
לפרקים. אז היה מקהיל קהילות ברבים והיה מחזיר את
כל בני העולם למוטב

(p. 36)

— though these are to no avail, for finally, Michael betrays Hedwig, much as his father betrayed his mother. Furthermore in so doing he indirectly betrays Lotte, much as Reuven did. It is therefore a great irony that Lotte is made to tell Michael, after engaging him in the act which has rendered him the betrayer Reuven was, that:

מעולם לא ראתה איש כמותו

(p. 64)

Michael has not escaped, has not broken the chain, though the determinism he too is prey to, absolves him of guilt. It also, however, adds to the pathos of his situation in its implications for the inescapability of a fate that is fixed by the past. Senex therefore stands here in awesome rigidity as sole monarch against which the fiery Puer might rage and battle but cannot overcome. Past-Old is lord and its dictates are firmly rooted in each succeeding generation, which vainly tries, in its Puer-New way, to overthrow them. Thus Michael repeats Reuven's and the unnamed student's deeds, and Hedwig's fate is the fate her mother and Marta's daughter suffered. Maria-Yosefa is Marta's incarnation as mother of the wronged maiden, and Hedwig is Lotte's double in a common ignorance of their parentage. The Cobbler, Michael's landlord, is the after-image of Michael's father: he too remarries in haste after his wife's demise, and his wife is akin to Michael's mother in the insult they suffer post-humously by cause of their husbands' unfaithfulness. Hedwig is destined to become a revived young Maria-Yosefa, her marriage to Shultza echoing her mother's early concubinage, and Michael is the resuscitated, sexually disguised, son of Stasha.

So finally all the Senex figures — the older generation in the story — are blameless, caught as they are, just like the representatives of Puer, in the iron grip of Old Saturn, the ineluctable past-continuous. The pessimistic message is that in such a determined world the fate of all dreams of freedom is, and can only be, burial.

Thus there is pathos in Michael's belief at the beginning that he dreams new dreams, capable of realization —

הוא חולם חלומות חדשים על קברות חלומותיו אשר מלפנים

(p. 27)

He started his quest with an awareness of his attachment to his forefathers' graves —

לבו עודנו נעוץ בקברת אבותיו

(p. 28)

which he hoped to break by extreme sacrifice —

את הכל הקריב בעד חירותו הדתית

(p. 31)

and new alliance —

קרבת החי אל החי

(p. 33)

איזו קרבה, שייכות בפש

(p. 49)

— only to come full circle to learn, defeated, that he has not escaped,
that Senex has buried him and his Puer dreams alive —

הנה הוא עומד על המעלות העליונות של חצר התחנה
ומביט מסם בתוגה חריטית על העיר שחצבה לו קבר בחייו.

(p. 68)

— and he is all lost in its maze.⁶³

CHAPTER 4

"S H E M A" — "W H A T I F . . ."

N. Rotenschtreich notes that one of the ingredients of the "inner tension" in Berdichewski's thinking is his insistence on the primacy of doubt in comprehensive understanding: A positive stand is productive of constriction, whereas doubt admits many possibilities. Rotenschtreich quotes Berdichewski:

כל ידיעה ודאית היא רק בת מגע אחת עם הנשוא, אבל לא
תחדור לעומק כל הנשוא. אם תאמרו לפתוח המבוראות
הסגורים, קחו בידכם את מפתח השמא. שאלו, היו
שואלים ולא רק משיבים.¹

The importance of a consciously held attitude of shema comes across quite clearly in the conceptual latitudes of Mahanayim. Michael's tragedy is, in large measure, the result of his deliberate disregard of "the shema key". His dogmatism has blunted his prehensive penetration. Berdichewski's ideal is deep insight, which takes account of all the "what ifs?" and "maybes". It is Janus faced, like the gloria duplex of the Renaissance.

Shema is not only the key to the thought in Berdichewski's writing: His language too is the language of "shema" — "perhaps", and supports the multi-faceted perspective of its content. Berdichewski's exploitation of word-motifs in mutating semantic connotation which derives from their extra-textual associations and their changing intra-textual contexts, is linguistic expression of an ever-shifting focus. These have been previously dealt with in this work, but there are a number of other textual features which deserve mention as they too perform this function.

Aphek and Tobin², in an article dealing with the intranslatability of the Hebrew text, speak of Agnon's use of word systems, a concept defined by them as follows:

a macro-textual stylistic phenomenon composed of a matrix of words with a common denominator which may be conceptual, phonological, etymological, folk-etymological, associative, and/or semantic which serves as a junction where the plane of the plot and ideas converge with the linguistic plane.³

An example of such a word system may be seen in the use of the consonants KBR and KRB mentioned earlier. KBR in the meaning of 'grave, tomb, sepulchre, tombstone, gravestone: (also) womb, uterus (L)'⁴ and its metathesized form KRB, which denotes both nearness and sacrifice⁵, form a matrix on which the linguistic and conceptual field of Mahanayim cross.

Michael's dreams are set upon the graves (KBR) of his old dreams. His heart is fixed on the graves (KBR) of his ancestors i.e. the masculine part of his past. But it is also bound by his Oedipal attachment — to the feminine in his past — and this is also contained in the root KBR in its indication of womb. In order to free himself Michael lives a life of sacrifice (KRB) and attempts to form new attachments (KRB). The plot teaches us, however, that these are to no avail, as its sequence gives way to cyclicity when we learn that all its action has merely carved a new grave (KBR) for Michael. He has escaped neither his fore-fathers nor his mother and remains buried in the womb: dead, because he has not managed to achieve independent identity.

A similar system operates around the root YD^C . The thematic significance of the frequently occurring YD^C , in the sense of knowledge, has already been analyzed.⁶ However, the root also appears in metathesized form as $Y^C D$ in the sense of 'assemblage' or 'appointed place':⁷

זה כשנתיים שוקד הוא על דלתות בית-מדרש-המדעים,
ועודנו בודד במועדו מבלי מכיר ומודע בארץ הנכריה
הזאת. עני הוא וחי לפי דרכה של תורה... יומם ולילה
הוא הוגה במדעים, חושב וקורא בספרים לדעת מדעי החיים.

(p. 26)

Michael's aspiration to knowledge (YD^C) has isolated him from society ($Y^C D$). The inconsistency of the present phrase "בודד במועדו" with its traditional plural form "בודד במועדיו" lends this statement an ambiguity. If this deviation was intentional then it suggests that Michael is victim to his isolation — that his quest for knowledge has left him isolated in his time. If, however, it is contingent upon linguistic error and pertains in its conventional sense, then this isolation is one of Michael's own choosing, as its reading would then be:

one who prefers to be alone; liking one's own
company; aloof, a hermit⁸

Michael's desire for knowledge "דעת" (YD^C) has led him to loneliness "בודד במועדו" ($Y^C D$). This loneliness is somewhat assuaged by his finding companionship in the Marcus household "מודע" (YD^C). Finally, however, uninvited knowledge deprives him of this comfort and causes him to leave it for an unknown destination "יעד" ($Y^C D$) —

הוא אינו יודע אנה פניו מועדות

(p. 68)

while YD^C, in the sense of 'to announce', heralds this severance —

הנה הפעמון מודיע

(p. 68)

This word system, like the one above, is expressive of Michael's stasis: true knowledge compels him to the isolation which, in his state of merely wished-for knowledge, he willingly chose. But the root YD^C also operates in a positive way inasmuch as it announces his movement out of this stasis, and because it also forms, as discussed earlier, an axis of thematic progression: true knowledge, though searing, holds promise of future progress.

As may be seen from the above, Apehek and Tobin's definition of word-systems is applicable to a Berdichewskian text where, "connected to each other.... they create a 'tight word system' containing the essence of a story."⁹

Berdichewski's writing is replete with word and phrase repetition and these, as shown throughout this analysis, add to the richness and density of the text, instead of detracting from it. They do so either by way of changing intra-textual contexts and the addition of inter-textual and historical associations, or through a resonance created by cumulation. Prominent among these is the repetitious use of adverbs in close proximity to one another. These act as directive-atmospheric elements which emphasize the connections between the clauses they introduce. A few examples of this usage and its function are cited below:

"שמא" (p. 27) — mentioned by Rotenschtreich, and here magnifying the doubt which could have saved Michael had he but heeded it.

"איך"; "אינו"; "לא"; (pp. 26; 28; 35) — in emphasis of Michael's negative existence.

"רק" (p. 29) — expressive of Michael's intentional dichotomizing of himself and the spiritual poverty this creates in him.

"למרחוק" (p. 29) — descriptive of the distance between Michael and Hedwig at this stage — a distance which is only seemingly overcome in the course of the tale.

"מה" (p. 30) — marking Michael's state of utter confusion.

The open-ended quality of Berdichewski's language is reinforced by his frequent use of three dots as punctuation signs and by the prevalent question-mode of the interior monologues.

Some of the names of the characters in the story are significant in their connotations and serve to create additional associations in the relationship with which they stand to one another. Marta, Maria-Yosefa and Johann all have names which are of religious significance. Maria-Yosefa's name is a blend of Mary and Joseph, the couple in whose house Christianity had its beginnings. Maria-Yosefa acts in a manner appropriate to her name in that she perpetuates Hedwig's Christian side by having her converted to Catholicism. Johann is, of course, the name John — one of the apostles. He too participates in providing Hedwig a Christian upbringing. Martha and Mary are sisters in the gospel story. When Jesus visits their house Martha is the one who sees to all the domestic needs

while Mary sits and listens to him. This is echoed in Mahanayim, where Marta is servant to Maria-Yosefa. Furthermore, this Biblical association supports the notion of Marta and Maria-Yosefa coalescing as maternal figure to Hedwig. Just as the gospel sisters serve Jesus in different ways — one by seeing to his needs and the other by listening to him — so do these two serve Hedwig: Marta provides for her physical well-being and Maria-Yosefa for her spiritual nourishment.

As Micha Yosef Berdichewski bestows the protagonist with his own name — Michael — he imbues the text of Mahanayim with an authenticity beyond the realm of the purely fictional. This, coupled with an identity of biographical detail between them, has led critics to call this an autobiographical story¹⁰ though, as has been shown in the present work, it is more than that.¹¹ Mahanayim is not a simple tale of the events undergone by a young Jewish student during his short stay in Breslau. It is a story whose mythical dimensions and mytho-psychological explication render it a portrayal of consciousness itself struggling for resolution: Not in one man, in one place and at one time, but the journey that all men repeat endlessly — everywhere and at all times.

CHAPTER 5

T H E S T R E E T T H A T W A S

Urzion Bartana classifies Berdichewski's stories in the following three thematic categories: autobiographical, natura-realistic or chronico-realistic and mythical.¹ Bartana adds however that this division is somewhat simplistic as many of the stories contain two or even three of these thematic intentions. He notes that Mahanayim is not only autobiographical, but is also the story in which Berdichewski's mythical weltanschauung crystallized.² The strong mythical elements in Mahanayim, which were analyzed extensively in the earlier chapters, undoubtedly preclude its straightforward designation as autobiographical-confessional short story.³

Bartana defines Garei Rehov, which was published more than twenty years after the first appearance of Mahanayim, as a chronicle, but adds that it is also a mythical work.⁴ Almagor speaks of its autobiographical component in its partial description of the process which led to Berdichewski's first divorce.⁵ Therefore, despite the time lapse in the writing of these two stories, and despite the differences between them which will be discussed presently, they overlap, in some respects, in terms of genre. The similarities between the two stories are, however, not typical alone, but inhere in a certain constancy, albeit permuted in its external aspect and altered in perspective, of conceptual concern. This analysis will examine Garei Rehov as an independent work and will also compare the two stories.

Garei Rehov, written in the same year as Berdichewski's only novel Miriam, displays some structural characteristics that were realized more fully in the novel, which was his final work, its third section completed only two days before the end of his life.⁶ It is, in its chroniclistic aspect, the novel in embryo. Both works appear unstructured inasmuch as they seem to consist of many digressions with a merely arbitrary central tale. It is as though the dictate of plot development were adhered to in concession to convention and for that reason alone. The binding factor and cohesive reference point in both these narratives is the figure of the narrator who at times enters them in a self-conscious first person mode. Closer scrutiny, however, reveals something quite different. Miriam, the heroine of the novel, presides over it and influences many of its developments though mostly in an unintentional and indirect way. And the sub-tales which appear entirely unconnected with her serve as expansive factors which spatially dilate the immediate constrictions of the narrative weave.

We shall never know whether the central story in Miriam would have been developed further had the novel been completed. It is my intuition that it might have been, given that the narrative becomes more focused on Miriam towards the close of the third section which ends with her first independently initiated action, as she goes to offer her services to Dr Koch.⁷ Its incompleteness notwithstanding, however, the novel holds as a whole, with Miriam and the hints at her story, the allusions to her presence and even her total absence, obliquely forming a narrative unity whose path the narrator, in all his guises, is able to navigate. Graphically,

the active presence of Miriam in the novel may be construed as an oblique-angled triangle, with its weight falling on the far side of the structure, almost, but not quite, forcing it downwards. The novel, as it stands, ends on this weighted apex.

While the identity of the heroine of Miriam is emphasized in the title as well as by references to her throughout the text, this is not the case in Garei Rehov. The central inner tale in this story is much more hidden. The narrator teases the readers with its first glimmerings quite early on in the text, which he hurries to stamp out by means of digression upon digression, till its renaissance, in the penultimate fifth chapter. So skilful has the narrative manipulation been, however, that the reader is initially deceived into not comprehending the centrality of this chapter and ascribes it digressive status equal to the preceding sub-tales. Its importance is evident only in retrospect by way of the following chapter whose action it initiates. The action of the tale is realized in the sixth and final chapter which retrogressively structures the plot impetus of the narrative. The heroine in Garei Rehov makes her entrance briefly in the third paragraph of the story and does not reappear till the sixth chapter, where her presence is passive, as she does not initiate action nor even is she seen acting in any way. Rather, the action of the plot — such as it is — revolves around her, is the result of the desires of others enacted upon her. And yet, despite her virtual absence for most of the narrative, and even though she is never a positive actor, the unnamed heroine of Garei Rehov functions as its active principle. Her two appearances provide the axes on which the narrative structure is pegged. The second of these is

of much greater magnitude and, as in Miriam, it peaks at the end of the tale at which the climax is located. Graphically, Garei Rehov may be construed, in terms of central plot, as a bi-peaked trapeze-shaped structure with a somewhat sagging top line which struggles upwards towards the second, higher peak on which it ends.

In both Miriam and Garei Rehov the narrative is introduced by a narrator who speaks in the first-person and informs of his relationship to the narrative and of his intentions. A brief analysis of these opening passages will show their commonality as well as the distinctions between them:

Miriam:

לפני שנים רבות רשמתי לי עלי גליון כל פרטי המאורע הזה, מאורע כולל בקרבנו רומן גמור לכל תאיו וחדריו. את הכל ראיתי בחזון והצנתי לגלגלי המקרים ולארג המעשים ההם. אולם פגעי הזמן היו בעוכרי ונמנעתי עד עתה להוציא הגות שירי אל הפועל. והנה באתי בימים; עבר היום שניתן לבן-אדם ולתפקידו, וצללי ערב באים מרחוק – עוד שעל אחד אל הליל הארוך, שבו נלוך כולנו עד תום כל חי. הנני כותב עתה רק לאור הנר והעת דחוקה, על כן אקצר.

(ע"מ רע"א)

Garei Rehov:

לא על עיר מולדתי אספר עתה, כי על עיר שם עמדה ערש אהבתי הראשונה וגרתי בה בימי עלומי כשנתיים ימים. יותר מדור שלם כבר עבר, מלחמות רבות היו בארץ, גויים וממלכות נשבתו; ואני רב ראיתי שנט-אלוה וגם חסד-אלוה. תוקף כוחו של היחיד עולה על זה של הרבים; אם חתחתים לפנינו על כל מדרך כף-רגל, הן שדמות הזיכרון פתוחות למרחב, שם נטייל בעלות השמש ובנוא השמש. גם על המיטה לא נרד ממנה בחייס, שניבי בוער עוד יאירו משהו את-האופל. איני מאמין בתחיית המתים, אבל מאמין אני בתחיית ינר עבר וחלף או גם מת במוחו של אדם. המשורר כל יכול.

(p. 193)

In the extract from Miriam, the narrator stands distanced as chronicler of its events, real or imaginary. He maintains this position throughout the novel and only touches the narrative circumference twice: Once when he speaks of his association with Hunirad (ע"מ רצ"א) and again when he mentions his friendship with Yeruham whose story forms part of the narrative (ע"מ רצ"ג). These connections he makes are, however, merely peripheral, as this narrator is not involved in the action of the tale except as its teller.

The self-conscious "making art" statement of the first paragraph is perpetuated across the text by narrator-interjections which inform on his aims and selection processes and direct reader responses. A few examples of this widespread technique are cited below:

למזל רוב בתיבות, ואל ידרוש ממני הקורא לנהלר לאט לאט
בכל הדרך, אשר בו הלך וכבש לו הנער יסוד באמן בחיים.
לתכלית זו עלי יהיה לכתוב דומן בהוך רומן.

(ע"מ רע"א)

סיפורה של דבורה⁶ לה מי יכתוב? אבל הנה הקדמתי את
המאורח

(ע"מ רע"ג)

לא אאריך

(ע"מ רע"ד)

הנה במשל אדבר, ואת הנמשל עוד נלמד לדעת
מהדפים הנאים

(ע"מ רע"ה)

Thus the narrator's active relationship with the tale is merely in its telling: He noted down all its details, which he had witnessed, either in actuality or as a vision, many years past. Unfavourable circumstances have prevented his overlaying his art on it up till now. But the time has come to actualize it, as he has grown old and the long night awaits him. He writes in the dimming light of his life; time is tight and he will therefore shorten the narrative. He makes his presence felt by his narrative action which he describes at various stages. These intrusions give shape to the constantly deflecting story and subtend as well as highlight Miriam's binding narrative function.⁸

The introductory passage to Garei Rehov reveals, right from the start, the narrator's direct connection with the events of the story. This connection is emphasized by the combination of the initial negative clause with the two subsequent positive statements. Each of these clauses expresses the narrator's ownership of his association with the narrative, by way of first-person pronominal suffixes, and the order in which they appear — negative followed by positive — as well as the nature of the leading particles — "not... but" — creates a verisimilitude which is later supported by the adverb "already" and then overridden, to some extent, by the final sentence of the paragraph. The closing words — "המשורר כל יכול" — stand as a complete sentence. This sentence is distinct in the paragraph because of its concise character — the other sentences all comprise two or more fairly lengthy clauses — and its impersonal, general subject — all the other sentences have a first-person reference. Although the poet's omnipotence purportedly refers to the narrator's "I believe", it also speaks

of narrative-licence.⁹ This conceptual ambiguity, where contradictory narrative statement and narrative intention are superimposed, is reinforced by the distinctiveness of the concluding sentence. The narrative irony which derives from this end flourish foreshadows the more complex shifts in claims of reality and fiction in the opening paragraph of Miriam.

The story of Garei Rehov consists of a main story — which is not fully a story in the sense of beginning, middle and end, progressing in linear development, but rather a horizontal, spatial expansion with a linearity which is only expressed at the points of its two axes — and an adjacent tale — the narrator's experiences — which accompanies it. The narrator's tale does not develop sequentially. It comprises a series of experiential descriptions and comments and its only temporal marks lie in its association with the external story. In these meetings the narrator's tale illumines the sequence of the outer tale and, in turn, is illumined by it. Samuel ben Natan's misfortune is shown to have occurred before Rabbi Aharon's demise because the book that came into the narrator's hands, which caused Rabbi Aharon to denounce him, came to him as the consequence of this misfortune. Thus the narrator's interactions with the "central" narrative imbue its spatial expanse with sequence, and this sequence goes some way to indicate the temporal unravelling of the narrator's downfall. Furthermore, the information he provides in the first paragraph — that he spent approximately two years in the place where the story occurs — provides a time-frame, of a sort, for both his story and its counterpart. Thus the narrator is important in providing an order, a type of super-structure, in a story whose linearity is obscured by an abundance of spatial movement.

The narrator also has a thematic function in Garei Rehov. The nature of the book he acquires, which causes so much consternation, supports the earlier hints of Samuel ben Natan's slight "hereticism" (p. 198). By bringing the book to the synagogue and innocently showing it to Rabbi Aharon, the narrator provides the forum on which Rabbi Aharon's fanaticism and narrow-mindedness may be actively expressed in the present of the tale. This scenario operates on both tales. Its importance to the central tale is in the light it casts on Rabbi Aharon's character, which intensifies the incongruence of his daughter's later match, made in his absence after his death. It also serves as pivot of the narrator's story, causing his divorce and precipitating his departure from the town (p. 202). The climax in the narrator's story comes early on in the text, within the only linear portion of this inner story.

The rôle of the narrator as cohesive factor extends beyond the effects of his adjacent story. Like the narrator in Miriam his style of narrative is self-conscious: he declares himself its teller right at the outset and the chart of his movement through the physical environs of the town is comment on the structure of the tale he narrates:

אני עובר דרך הרחוב שלפנים מרחוב ואני יוצא מתחום לתחום.

(p. 193)

He indeed walks through the story passing by way of "the street inside the street and moving from realm to realm". Because the heroine of Garei Rehov is more implicit than evident, and because of the many horizontal

narrative shifts, the binding aspect of the narrator is stronger in this story than in the novel.

The narrator's interjections — describing his choice of narrative selection — so prevalent in Miriam, also appear in Garei Rehov, though to a lesser degree. An example of this is the following parenthesized comment:

חייט אחד שעלה לגדולה ונחעשר - לא אלך בו
רכיל לספר סיבת עושרו - קנה הנחלה העזובה ויתיישב
בה. 10

(p. 200)

and his phrase — "אבל אני מקדים בזה את המאוחר" (p. 207) anticipates the phrase, quoted above, from Miriam.

A further technique, not found in the novel, inheres in his presentation of alternative stories to one and the same happening. An extended example of this are the two versions he provides of Nataniel's brother's misfortune (p. 204). He first presents a detailed account of this tragic tale and then follows this immediately — within the same paragraph — with an alternative, equally detailed, version, which he introduces with the words — "נוסח אחר". This is a mythological formulation: in his Aggada stories, in MiMekor Yisrael, Berdichewski heads the alternative versions with the words "נוסח ראשון" and "נוסח שני", etc. In recounting the shames of Nataniel's wife's uncle the narrator also uses these words, except that here he does not detail the alternative:

11
מי יגלה את הצעיף? גם פה בוסח אחר...

(p. 204)

By using this device the narrator acts upon the text in two ways:

1. He imbues it with a mythological dimension, suggesting, as it were, that as these are just mythical stories, embodying archetypal structures, other representations — i.e. images — are possible. He thus consigns these tales to the realm of the purely mythical and denudes them of any factual authenticity, while preserving their essential, more primary, truth in his implication that they refer to some "basic truths" of the human psyche.
2. He undermines the verisimilitude he has imparted upon the text by way of most of the opening paragraph and through the association of his story with the central narrative. This duality echoes the vicissitudes of the first paragraph with its alternative claims of true representation and of narrative omnipotence.

The narrative in Mahanayim is, as mentioned earlier, a third-person narrative where the figure of the narrator blends with the protagonist in the transposed interior-monologues. This phenomenon occurs in Garei Rehov as well and two examples of it will now be cited. Rabbi Aharon's thoughts are presented in this form, introduced by the repetition of the rhetorical "הללא". The dual, narrative voice creates an ironic effect — as it does in certain of the inner monologues in Mahanayim — as the opinions expressed are obviously contrary to the narrator's view-point, though his voice joins Rabbi Aharon's in their proclamation. The ironic ring of these

sentences also revolves on the word "הל א" and the illusory intimacy of suggested confidence it creates between the reader and narrator. If the voice in these thoughts is taken to be the narrator's voice, as it may be at first reading, it sounds as if he were imparting some axiom of unquestionable veracity to both him and the reader, where their shared agreement is suggestive of a commonality of thought which later, as the subtleties of narrative-voice become apparent, turns out to be mere deception. By this process the reader is drawn into a circle of irony and if unwary, becomes its victim. While if he does not fall into its trap, he becomes partner to the narrator in sophisticated enjoyment of its deceptive twists. The same system operates in the presentation of Samuel ben Natan's thoughts, though here the voice speaks in the second person singular, which device acts to the same effect as — "הל א" — in the former. These effects of the second-person form are supported here by the exclamatory "הרי" and "כי".

The complexity of the narrative irony is intensified by the genuine, unironic narrator-comments in the inner-tale. These refer, retrospectively, to his spiritual condition during his marriage and, with a sad cynical wisdom of hindsight, reflect back to his time there and imbue his "then" beliefs — previously held with so much seriousness and ardour, and the cause of so much sorrow — with the same doubtful character as the denegated beliefs of Rabbi Aharon and the others:

ובאותה שעה ישבתי גם אני בחדרי. לא בוודד הייתי
– מזורה יותר גדולה מזרו של הרב האירה את ארבע אמותי.
לפני פתוח ספר "התועה בדרכי החיים", ונפשי הומיה
לקראת אל אחר... יש אשר נלעתי כל אומר מאשר לפני,
הקשנתי לכל הגה. ראיתי לוחות ניתצים ולוחות אחרים
נפסלים ועליהם חרותות אמרות חדשות גם חדשות ולא ידעתי
כי ימים יבואו ואראה ואבין כי גם אלוהי, אשר השלכתי יהני
עליהם, רימוני – ויום אחד יבוא ואעמוד ערום בלי חסות,
בלי תקווה ובלי אור ואהיה אני אך אני אותו היתום בלי
אב ובלי אם.

(pp. 198 - 197)

While the notion of "orphan" refers to the protagonist of Smoleskin's HaTo^ce b'Darkei haHayim it is also an echo of the concluding words of the preceding paragraph, which describe the summation of Rabbi Aharon's excessive spiritual self-flagellation, which climaxes with his recitation of Kaddish Yatom. This connection reinforces, over and above the narrative statement of "also" — "גם" (p. 198) — the ironic identity between Rabbi Aharon's beliefs and the narrator's: both are equally futile and questionable, and both are productive of pain.

The narrative technique of Garei Rehov is thus much more complex than the one used in its predecessor, Mahanayim. In the earlier story there are but the hints of the sophistication with which Berdichewski was to later constitute his narrator and his narrative. These are evident in the double-faced narrator in Mahanayim and in the confusion this gives rise to in terms of voice. They were dealt with in the analysis of that story. In Mahanayim narrator and protagonist coalesce though the narrative is in the third-person mode; in Garei Rehov the narrator is given a character which is quite separate to that of the protagonist's in the central story. Here, however, the narrator becomes protagonist of his own adjacent story and

thus, despite the first-person presentation, is further removed from the essential narrative. The deflected inner monologues in the present story therefore are effective in creating a greater irony than they do in Mahanayim where, despite the distance created by the pronoun form, identity is often blurred. The artistic self-consciousness of Garei Rehov is unusual in Mahanayim where the narrative is mostly presented unmediated by such comments as are found in the former, e.g.: (p. 207) — "אבל אני מקדים בזה את המאורח". The narrative irony in Mahanayim derives from the network of Michael's self-deception that it highlights; narrative irony in Garei Rehov is contingent upon a multi-layered manipulation of narrator-voice and a resultant systematic reader-deception.¹²

The binding function of the narrator in Garei Rehov is not necessary to Mahanayim where, despite its measure of temporal cyclicity — and especially in the opening chapters — there is clear linear progression which is not contingent upon a cohesive narrative perspective. Spatial expansion is a merely implied element in Mahanayim, and is expressed as a concept by the devices of analogy, parallel and antithesis. In Garei Rehov spatial expansion is the most prominent feature of the narrative weave where temporal development is rare. It is interesting therefore that in this horizontal story an apparent linearity is imposed by a spatial object — the street in the title — which is usually linear in nature. This street, however, is not linear: it is one of the two streets that surround the centre of the town and is thus cyclical in shape. The linear street is the street behind it where the narrator — by whose story the linearity of the central tale is punctuated — dwells. This spatial arrangement, where line

touches circle, is plastic representation of the narrative structure of Garei Rehov. It therefore provides further comment, within the narrative, on the narrator's decisions about its form.

The devices of analogy and parallel which are so prominent in Mahanayim occur more subtly in Garei Rehov. In Mahanayim these are clear identities and oppositions which deepen the thematic implications and a certain blurring takes place between the corresponding elements (e.g. Reuven and Michael at the end of the tale). The correspondences in Garei Rehov are not as closely allied as in the earlier story. Here they function more as a set of variations on a theme which lie adjacent to one another in the horizontal latitudes of the narrative. The inhabitants of the four main houses in the central tale are all religious, are all learned and are all Hassidim. They are all constant in their belief. They differ, however, in the form of their devotion and they belong to different Hassidic sects.¹³ Each of these characters highlights another aspect of Hassidic religious life — none of them satisfactory — but, unlike the correspondences in Mahanayim, their similarities and disparateness do not act directly on the central story, but reinforce and interact with it in less obvious ways. The following are some examples of the way these work in the text:

The question of Yahasnut is of central concern to the protagonists of Garei Rehov.¹⁴ Nataniel ben Menahem and his immediate family do not do well on this score because of a series of sins perpetrated by the more distant members of their family. Because of the family stain, which great

religious devotion can do naught to remove, Nataniel's four fully grown children are denied marriage partners. As a result of this Nataniel does not attain grandsons who would perpetuate the family line.

Rabbi Aharon's family does not have a history of disgraceful conduct and the overriding factor in Rabbi Aharon's devotion is his horror of sin which is actually obsessive in character. Its extremity may be seen in his repeated recitation of the confessional, alphabetically ordered prayers that are usually read on the Days of Awe as he lies on the threshold of death (pp. 211-212). And yet, despite his hard achieved purity, Rabbi Aharon's family does not escape defilement; and, despite his myriad offspring, like Nataniel ben Menahem, he does not attain a suitable bearer of his line:

נכד אחד, בן בנו הבכור, נטה מני דרך

(p. 196)

and —

... נחת גמורה לא מצא הרב בהם. לא לבד שלא היה בין
בניו מי שדאוי למלא מקומו, כי אם אחד מהם היה גם
שוטה גמור, שוטה העיר.

(p. 195)

The irony of the phrase "שוטה העיר" in description of the Rabbi's son is noteworthy. It resonates in its antithetical echo of the epithet attributed to his wife who is "הרבנית דמתא" (p. 194).

So seemingly Rabbi Aharon's misfortune and fall from Yahsanut arrives from nowhere, is a cruelty wrought by capricious and arbitrary fate. Even his last, posthumous chance at redemption of his line, through the suitable marriage of the daughter of his old age, is thwarted by the mercenary machinations of one of his in-laws. But a closer glance at the characterization of Rabbi Aharon reveals that he is by no means free of guilt. His outer aspect is all piety and humility — he sits where the poor do in the synagogue — but inwardly he is arrogant, as may be seen in his attitude towards his children and their offspring. This arrogance is expressed in the following deflected inner monologue:

ביום קדוש ומקודש עלי, העובר את קובר ובפדט נבפשו
אך למלכו של עולם, לשבת בראש השולחן מוקף בפשות
פשוטות. הוא, היחיד, קבייבם של אלה. לולא היו אלה
בניו, יוצאי חלציו, כי אז הן לא היה שח עמהם.

(p. 196)

— where the tongue-in-cheek tone which overlays it derives from the earlier description of Rabbi Aharon's humble behaviour.

In the light of these aligned elements in Nataniel's and Rabbi Aharon's stories, the eventual joining of these two families, through marriage, becomes understandable and Rabbi Aharon no longer seems the mere victim of impersonal fate. The kinship between the two families — embedded in these correspondences between them — provides fair reason for the unification of their bloodlines. Thus the ground for the eventual development of the tale is laid by means of these — albeit more distanced than in Mahanayim — analogies and the Rabbanit's rationalization¹⁵ —

שמא דווקא זה הוא זיווג מן השמים

(p. 214)

— is not far off the mark, except in its attribution of Divine intervention as cause of the outcome. Aharon's "מגילת היחש" (p. 214) is not as Yihadic as he — and she — would like to believe.

Another example of the manipulation of parallels in this story, which is more distant in its effects on the main story, also resides in an association between members of Aharon's and Nataniel's families. Nataniel's daughters' fall from grace through their sexual revelry with Dotan (p. 209) foreshadows Aharon's wife's agreement to the proposed match between the two families. One of the factors which aids her decision is her suspicion of a lustfulness in her daughter —

היא יראה להודות לעצמה: לא פעם התבוננה, שבשעה
שעובר אלמוני הבחור ברחוב מול ביתה, הוא שוהה בלכתו
ונושא עיניו אל הפתח, שלעתים עומדת לפניו בתה, והיא
גם מבטת אחריו. — עיני נשים מכירות באלה!

(p. 214)

Thus the parallel element of lust acts as oblique precipitatory factor in the outcome of the central tale and also reinforces the commonality of these two seemingly different families.

The alignment of these two sets of daughters is thematically relevant in yet another way: it contributes to the concern with the inferior lot of

women which is explicitly stated at the end of the tale, and comes possibly from the narrator — in a singularly unironic statement — or from Aharon's wife in her deliberations about the suitability of the impending match:

בימי קדם היו אומרים: בקרא לבערה ונשאל את פיה.
עתה אין זה מנהג בישראל.

(p. 214)

Even the treatment of women was better in earlier days.

Just as Nataniel's daughters suffer as the result of their sole sexual indiscretion — in a way that their partner Dotan, who is an habitual sexual profligate (p. 208) does not — and just as they are forced to undergo an abortion (p. 209), so is Rabbi Aharon's daughter pushed willy nilly into a marriage without being consulted as to her feelings in the matter. Berdichewski's concern with the downtrodden state of women runs throughout his work. It is an obvious theme in Mahanayim, where Maria-Yosefa gives expression to it in her musings —

סוף-סוף יד הבערות תמיד על התחטובה

(p. 55)

and is most effectively summed-up by the narrator in Miriam who says:

רע חלק הנשים בארץ, גורלן בשמים מי ידע?

(ע"מ רפ"ו)

Dotan's part in these corresponding stories functions in two ways:

1. It adds an analogic connection between not only Aharon's and Nataniel's families, but between them and Yekutiel as well. This connection is productive in contributing another dimension to the question of defilement, sin and loss of *Yahsanut*. Whereas in both Aharon's and Nataniel's case this loss may be seen to have discernable generational causes, in Yekutiel's story there is no apparent cause for his son's defilement and Yekutiel's subsequent loss of a good name. Like the two former fathers, Yekutiel is not blessed with the spiritual heir he would desire, though here the fault is not his and does not lie in the misdeeds of his family. His son is rotten — plain and simple. Though parental indulgence may be seen to participate in Dotan's persistence in his misguided ways (pp. 208-209), it is not presented as their initial cause. This association with Yekutiel shows that in addition to the effects of generational determinism as cause of further sin and defilement, there is in operation another factor of unfathomable causality. Thus the causal chain is shown to be relevant and explicable only in some cases, but it by no means accounts for all misfortunes. Yekutiel's story, therefore, adds to the complexity of the relationship between sin and punishment and does not permit the application of easy dicta in its explanation.
2. Dotan serves as red-herring in the plot, inasmuch as the extended description of him and his activities builds up reader anticipations that he may be Aharon's daughter's intended. These are, of course, never realized, and after his interlude with Nataniel's daughters Dotan disappears from the narrative, never to return.

Another source of parallelism in Garei Rehov evolves from the houses and their metaphoric function in the story, as well as from the comparison between the different houses.¹⁶ Four actual houses are described in the story, though a fifth is alluded to and a sixth, most central house,¹⁷ remains implied and is never given shape or referred to descriptively. The four described houses belong to Rabbi Aharon, Samuel ben Natan, Nataniel ben Menahem and Yekutiel ben Yeruham. The houses both concord with and are disconsonant to the descriptions of their owners. These likenesses and oppositions are important in either supporting or giving the lie to the narrative statements about their owners.

Rabbi Aharon's house has a wide, red-tiled roof which weighs heavily on its walls and windows and pushes them downwards. The weight of the roof is so heavy that the house has become dwarfish and has a wide and fat body in which its windows — i.e. its eyes — are located (p. 194). A fire always burns in this house. The shape of Rabbi Aharon's house both echoes and opposes his physical description and avowed spiritual stance. Like the house Rabbi Aharon is short — "כמעט גמד", but unlike the house he is thin — "איש דק בשר" (p. 194). By aligning the descriptions of house and owner the following becomes apparent: The dwarfishness of both Aharon and his house is true indication of his spiritual stature and whereas his leanness is symbol of his ascetic presumption, the girth of the house, as well as its perpetual warmth are evidence of quite another trait: They are indicative of Aharon's large physical appetite, which is also evidenced in the large number of children he has brought forth (p. 195). The house's top-heaviness is comment on Rabbi Aharon's inflated opinion of himself and

his weightiness as head of the family who bears down too heavily on his offspring (which is probably part-cause of their ordinariness). The placing of the windows — the eyes — in the wide stomach, reinforces the suggestion of Rabbi Aharon's excessive appetites. Thus this personification of the house serves as true comment on Rabbi Aharon's character and it goes some way in subverting — in an ironic manner — its description in the narrative, which declares him —

שפל-נרך ועגורותן ניכר

(p. 194)

The second house, which belongs to Samuel ben Natan, is characterized by its outstanding whiteness and cleanliness. Its rooms are square. It is narrower than Rabbi Aharon's house and the only rounded shape in it is its arched entrance (p. 198). The sterile, antiseptic aspect of Samuel's house is echo of his childless state. The roundness of its arch is reminiscent of the roundness of his beard and belly. This roundedness reflects on Samuel in both a positive and a negative way. On the negative side it relates to his mercenary avarice (p. 199) and its positive aspect lies in its anticipation of the roundness of character he displays in his detachment after his house is robbed: he turns his misfortune into an asset and sells what little he has left and goes to live in Israel (p. 200).

The regal aspect of Nataniel's house — its baked bricks and red bannisters — and its designation as a mansion (p. 202), contrasts poignantly with his undesirable social condition. Similarly, the largesse displayed in its expensive construction is in opposition to his miserliness and lack of

charity (p. 202) which are expressed in the house's perpetually closed shutters (p. 203).

The fourth modest house belongs to Yekutiel. This is the only house which has authorial approval. It is modest, but well-kept. Its roof is made of straw, but that straw is smoothed from time to time and its walls are whitewashed when necessary (p. 207). This house is balanced as is its owner who is called upon to arbitrate many, often complicated and sophisticated, disputes. It is an honest house which belongs to a man who has never swindled anyone, and who lives according to his means (p. 207). It is noteworthy that this man, who is indeed unpretentious, is not chosen after Rabbi Aharon's death as the town's spiritual leader because the towns-folk recoil from appointing one of their own to rule over them (p. 213). This is ironic in view of Rabbi Aharon's essential arrogance which was well veiled by his excessive humility — which was in itself an arrogance. They were quite content to receive the rulership of this arrogant man who was one of them, but are not prepared to elevate the truly modest Yekutiel to this position.

From the above it may be seen that the houses are an important vehicle in elucidating the true character of their owners, in comparing these owners to one another and in their signification of authorial approval and its opposite. In all these functions they also contribute to the layers of irony in the story. They are not, however, of immediate consequence to the plot development.

Thus the system of analogues that operates in Mahanayim is also found in Garei Rehov. Its mode of function in the later story is, as shown in the examples cited, more complex and less obvious than in Mahanayim. This complexity testifies to the development of Berdichevski's narrative skills, where he does not change the devices he uses, but rather develops them with an ever increasing refinement.

In Mahanayim, with its easily discernable integrity of plot, the analogues work as a series of reciprocal echoes and dissonances which blend with the central motive and strengthen it. Their operation is vertical in its deepening action. In Garei Rehov, where the motive is woven onto an ever-widening spread of narrative, the analogues form part of the cohesive structure and contribute to the integrity of the text. Their horizontal, fractured — as compared to the analogues in Mahanayim — character, effects the introduction of variant elements to the more encompassing over-figures created by the correspondences they imbed.

The thematic kinship between the characters in Garei Rehov, which is supported by the analogic connections between them, compounds the independent characters in the story into a whole, larger synthetic figure of emblematic dimension: It is emblem of the nation itself. This whole, in its turn, confers an emblematic status on the individual characters. Rabbi Aharon, Samuel, Nataniel, Yekutiel, the Cohen, the In-Law, Dotan and even the narrator, are all emblematic of the nation, and represent the various facets and permutations of its spirit. Thus the childlessness which, one way or another, overlays the four main characters — either in literal form

as in the case of Samuel, or in a spiritual way, as happens with Aron and Yekutiel, or, as in Nataniel's family, in a deferred sense where the existence of his offspring is no guarantee of the continuation of his line — is symbolic of the barrenness of the nation. And the virtual impossibility of finding marriage partners for Nataniel's sons, who are appropriately named Israel and Moshe, comprises a recognition of the difficulties inherent in the continuation of the nation. Israel, the first-born, whose very name embodies the nation-collective, dies in his youth, and, contrary to the natural order, his father is left to recite Kaddish for him (p. 209). The daughters have the seed of the forthcoming generation removed from them by artificial means, presumably on their father's orders. It is only the impure intentions of Aharon's in-law that give this line any hope of continuity, when, as the result of his machinations, Moshe — whose name is the embodiment of the spirit of the nation — is wed to Aharon's daughter. Therefore the survival of the nation is shown to be thwarted by familial defilement — this is the reason Nataniel's children are not married at the conventional age; by Divine intercession — Israel's death, he is "snatched from the world" (p. 209) and by the present intentional acts of the nation itself — the abortions. Only the contrivances of corrupted self-interest make possible its survival.

Not only do the approximately contemporary circumstances of the individual and the nation concur, but the history, long-past, of the nation reverberates across the centuries and actively inheres within its individual members at the present, causing the continuing repetition of its events both in the macrocosmic — collective — and microcosmic — individual —

aspects of the nation. This is implied, in Garei Rehov, by the exploitation of name, where the names of the town's personalities parallel names of Biblical figures akin to them in function, e.g. Yisrael and Moshe whose appellations embody their present — albeit distorted and almost unrealized — generative function in the nation. The following is a further instance where this device is used:

The use of the name Dotan is emphasized by the narrator, who says, at its introduction, that it is "שם לא מצוי" (p. 208). By naming this rebellious, iconoclastic character Dotan and, by explicitly remarking on the rarity of this name, Berdichewski aligns him with the earlier Biblical Dotan who attempted to usurp Divine rulership (Nu Ch. 16). This alignment adds to the synchronic unity of the nation a diachronic dimension which bespeaks its corruption and barrenness in the past as well as in the present. The unity is not perceived as a positive force, as it is a negative unity, more uniformity than a unification of diverse elements. This distorted sameness, which overrides all differences, is a symptom of the monolithic striving, so disparaged by Berdichewski, which is an historical, as well as a contemporary, national Jewish aspiration. Its negativity is perceptible in the national sterility: its vital force is sapped and its continuity is a forced, halting, artificial thing.

The correspondence, produced by the pairing of the present Dotan and his Biblical name-sake, represents yet another, important, Berdichewskian notion, where the repetitious actions of history give recurring rise to the defeat of those who dare to defy convention. Halkin says:

...Berdichewski's sympathies go out to all skeptics, heretics and rebels in Jewish history who were, like himself, denied the freedom of questioning the collective values of Israel and the law of Israel.¹⁸

Both Dotans are rebels. The earlier Dotan stands in defiance of Divine authority and, together with his entire family, is punished by Divine decree. He is swallowed by the earth for his rebelliousness. The present Dotan successfully usurps parental authority (pp.208-209), but is granted no continuity, as his seed is destroyed by decree of an earthly father — Nataniel. Thus these rebels, whom Berdichewski admires, cannot withstand the effects of history which grant individualism no refuge. Furthermore, the degenerated form of the later rebellion bespeaks a generational degeneration, where these rebels lose stature because of the debilitating force of the monolithic illusion to which the nation clings. The juxtaposition of these two characters seems therefore, in this sense, to speak of the diminishing effects of history.

Dotan also shares in Absalom's identity when Yekutiel likens his relationship with his son to David and Absalom's relationship (p. 208). Here again, the scale of the present son's rebellion is much smaller than in the previous case. In this comparison too, history is shown to have diminished, as opposed to strengthened, the nation.

Berdichewski achieves similar effects when he likens the sexual behaviour of Nataniel's daughters to the perverted acts of Lot's daughters (p. 209). In doing so he aggrandizes the present adventure, infusing it with

mythical proportions: what these girls do has been done previously, is potential in the collective psyche, and the magnitude of its awfulness is such that it was worthy of Biblical inclusion. So in one aspect the comparison expands the present.

In another sense, however, the present is made all the more pithy by the comparison, as it is so much reduced in scale. Lot's daughters knowingly engaged in the grand crime of incest and deliberately deceived their father in order to perpetrate it. Nataniel's daughters are, like Lot's, ripe young girls —

ענביים בשולוח ביער לא עבר בו איש

(p. 209)

— but their misdeed is just that — transgression, and nothing more. Their sexual partner is not a relative, they do not get him drunk in order to gain his sexual participation. He is, rather, a willing partner and the initiator of the action —

ובחדרו בנסף הלילה אל הבית הזה לא מצא את הפתח בעול.

(p. 209)

Both sets of girls fall pregnant as a result of their sexual engagement. Lot's daughters, however, give birth to two great, if despised, nations (Gn 19:37-38), while Nataniel's daughters' pregnancies end, pathetically, in aborted birth. Even the glory of ancient sin has dwindled across the generations. Thus, despite the cyclical nature of history, a trend may be observed, where cycle is more downward spiral than actual circle.

The examples that were cited are drawn from a history so long past — and recorded as part of a sacred tradition — that their mention places a meaning on the present text which ramifies beyond its domain and reaches to the historical antecedents of the nation, bringing them to bear upon Eastern Europe. And the repetitive aspect of these historical events serves to mythologize the inhabitants of the present tale, but conversely, also historicizes the myth created by Berdichevski.

Just as the characters in Garei Rehov form an amalgam that becomes an emblem for the nation, so is the metaphoric function of the houses in the story emblematic. This is especially true of those structures which are not dwelling places, at least not where the living reside. The house-analogies in Garei Rehov pertain not only across the actual houses in the story, but are echoed by the presence, real or implied, of other houses.

The first of these is Beit HaMidrash, the communal house of learning and prayer. This is the place in which the narrator's fateful encounter with Rabbi Aharon takes place. No physical description of Beit MaMidrash is provided, but the narrator's disapproval of it is expressed by the sarcastic tone with which he treats its frequenters and their deeds:

יום קיץ היה. בבואי לבית המדרש כבר עברה שעת התפילה
בציבור. אנשים בודדים עוד עומדים איש-איש בפינתו או
באמצע הבית, מתפללים ושחים, זעיר-שם זעיר-שם גם
יושנים ולומדים בספרים. שני עניים עוברי-אורח
יושנים לפני התגור וכורכים מטליותיהם על רגליהם; נער
אחד, שחוטמו לא מנוקה, לועס רקיק בחמדה, והסחי בוזל
על מעטה המאפה. רוח חופש שורר בבית האלוהים. הלא
כבר הקריבו בני-ישראל בכל מושבותם את קרבן-התמיד
באמירת פיהם, ושוכן-מעלה וכל משרתיו הן נפנים
מענייני קודש לענייני חול. כל יצור דורש טרפו ולחם
חוקו, אך רבי ארון עבד ה' לא נפנה עוד.

The focus of the inhabitants of Beit HaMidrash is not sacred, but secular. The initial statement, that some of them are praying, is belied by the later pronouncement — couched in grandiose epithet — that only Rabbi Aharon is still concentrated on sacred matters. The event that leads to the narrator's proclamation of the freedom in Beit HaMidrash, is the rather vile action of the young boy who fondly chews the discharge of his dirty nose. The sarcastic narrative explanation of this revolting liberty is introduced by the — always ironic in this story — exclamatory "הלוא". Its derogatory tone derives from the juxtaposition of the youth's activity with a justification that rests on a comparison of the action of the dwellers of Heaven and earth: just as the Heavenly beings have turned to secular matters, so do all creatures seek their means of livelihood. The use of the word "prey" in description of foodstuff imbues the earth dwellers with a rather predatory nature.

The apposition in Beit HaMidrash of religion and "פירנסה" echoes the "עירוב תחומין" that runs throughout the story. Three of the four learned men of the town are moneyed. Rabbi Aharon is so rich that he serves his community free (p. 194); Samuel does not only wander in the "Upper Pardes", but is also a moneylender, and only lends to safe, well-off customers (p. 199); Nataniel, who is a staunch Bratslaver, is very wealthy and extremely miserly, and his young brother, who is also R. Nahman's disciple, makes his money from selling liquor (p. 203). Nataniel's other brother — according to the first version of the events that led to his suicide — steals money from his master (p. 204). R. Shabtai Cohen played with gold coins while he wrote "Siftei Cohen", his profound explanation of

the "Shulhan ^cAruch" (p. 207). Monetary considerations also play a part in depriving the town of spiritual leadership. After Rabbi Aharon's death the town is hard-put to find a new rabbi as there is no communal fund set aside for this purpose (p. 213) — it is amazing that this occurs in a town that contains a whole row of houses belonging to the rich. The sanctity of Rabbi Aharon's daughter's marriage is desecrated by its financial impetus: the in-law who inspired it is spurred by mercenary considerations (p. 213), and the mother's consent is influenced by the great inheritance that awaits her future son-in-law (p. 214). Thus the mixing of religion and money in Beit HaMidrash is not an isolated incident but is emblem of the spirit of the nation at large. The narrator, by way of ironic denial, points to this situation. When speaking — or rather not speaking, but merely mentioning — of the squabbles about Rabbi Aharon's inheritance, he says:

פטרובי-נא מלתאר לכם גם את עניין הירושה והסכסוך
הנהוג בין החולקים בנחלה. לא אערב דברי-חול בקודש.

(p. 212)

The other form of "non-house" house, in the story, is the cemetery where the Bratslaver is buried. I. Bin-Gorion notes that the death motif in this late story is a strong autobiographical element.^{19,20} The narrator expresses a strong awareness of death in the opening paragraph. He does this in a philosophical statement about memory and its transcendence of time, and inverts the conventional "I believe"²¹ both conceptually, saying:

איני מאמין בתחיית-המתים, אבל מאמין אני בתחיית דבר
עבר וחלף או גם מת במוחו של אדם

(p. 193)

and linguistically, substituting "איבני מאמין... אבל מאמין אני" for —
"אני מאמין." Nataniel and his sons visit the Bratslaver's grave each Elul²²
and the description of the cemetery, as well as the construction — "אוהל"
— wherein R. Nahman dwells, merits a long descriptive passage (p. 206).

R. Nahman of Bratslav and his cult receive more mention in the tale than the other Hassidic sects. This is interesting in light of the narrator's assertions about the resurrection of the dead, for that sect still holds R. Nahman as their Zaddik and does not recognise his death (p. 206).²³ One may interpret this as a sign that beneath the narrative denial of resurrection there were a wishful component that is expressed in this intermingling of the worlds of the dead and the living, despite narrator comments such as —

אין זה ייחרר שבלב ראין כאן תשלומי נפש

(p. 206)

If, however, an alternative view is taken, and this house of the dead is taken as an emblematic feature in the story, one may see these visits of the living to the cemetery, in hope of finding comfort and advice — this also occurs at the end of the tale when Aharon's wife goes to the cemetery to beg her husband's council in the matter of their daughter's marriage (p. 215) and Nataniel's wife spends Elul at the grave of her ancestors (p. 207) — as symptomatic of a morbid national psyche, where obsession with things past and reliance on the dead are evidence of a learned, deeply ingrained helplessness which prevents its members from confronting life in the present. The criticism of these customs is evident in the following:

1. The inertia of the living causes them to neglect the Uman cemetery where the grass is left to grow as high as a man's knees (p. 206). Furthermore, this grass — from the world of the living — grows all around the tomb-stones, which are incapable of change, presumably almost obscuring them.
2. When Nataniel and his wife are busy visiting the dead, their living daughters are harmed (p. 209).
3. Rabbi Aharon's wife, of course, receives no advice from her dead husband, not even in a projective manner. Had she visited the cemetery with this truly in mind, she would not have consented to the marriage, as she would have realized that he would not, under any circumstances, have sanctioned it. Her visit is just lip-service to the dead, whom the living somehow revere and fear — note her words of farewell — "שלום לכן, נשמות הטהורים" — and she exploits it to make her feel better about doing something she knows is not seemly.

The narrator's description of the cemetery, at the end of her visit, is his cynical comment on the national thanatoid obsession: ^{23.1}

דוממים-דוממים עומדים ציוני הקברים, רובם מעשה עץ
ומועטם מעשה אבן. עולם שקט למתים ועולם מלא-מעקשים
לחיים

(p. 215)

The word — "אוהל" — which describes the Bratslaver's tomb, recurs in a number of other contexts in the narrative. Alcalay gives its meaning as —

tent, shelter, habitation, tabernacle²⁴

Its use in Garei Rehov, in a sense other than tent, overlays the houses with an archaic tone, although the word is never used in direct description of houses. It is used as abstract-collective for the protective precincts of the Torah — "מאוהלה של תורה" (p. 208), as metaphoric ubiquity for Dotan's misdeeds — "מאוהל החטא" (p. 209) and as general denotation of the nation's places of habitation — "ויירננו העם באוהליהם" (p. 215). The instances of this word, which is associated with dwelling places, in senses which refer to objects other than houses, highlight the emblematic function of houses in the story, in their implication that habitation is more than the physical occupation of actual, concrete structures.

Despite the many years that passed between the two stories, there are thematic, as well as structural, similarities between Mahanayim and Garei Rehov. Michael's duality of perspective is echoed in the dualism of Rabbi Aharon's religious attitude, in his excessive fear of sin and Satan:

מעורבים בכול ביצוצות דקדושה עם אבק סטרא-אחרא.

(p. 197)

Michael's perception of his new so-called freedom as "אור האורות" (p. 35) is echoed by a light metaphor in Garei Rehov:

מבורה יותר גדולה מברו של הרב האירה את ארבע אמותי

(p. 197)

Michael's enormous super-ego resonates in Rabbi Aharon's, and Michael's disgrace in his home shtetl for his heresy as regards a holy book (pp. 57-58) is repeated in the narrator's fall from grace in Garei Rehov (p. 197). Generational determinism, a cause of inescapable guilt in Mahanayim, is a repeated theme in Garei Rehov though here another factor is added: Dotan, Yekutiel's son transgresses, not as the result of familial sin, but because of blind fate that makes him spiritual heir to a more ancient sin. The past is equally ineluctable in both stories.

The Oedipal theme in Mahanayim reappears as a somewhat convoluted allusion in Garei Rehov. Michael's sexual repression with its Oedipal distortion corresponds to Nataniel's daughters' repression and the unsuitable manner in which they break it, by way of the Lot metaphor. The failure of Michael's rebellion is repeated in the narrator's eventual disillusionment — spoken of retrospectively — with his new way (p. 198). Just as Michael is left utterly denuded at the end of Mahanayim, so does the narrator in Garei Rehov experience utter loss. While illness and death only hover around Mahanayim, they become full-blown pictures in Garei Rehov, where Rabbi Aharon's death is described in a detail which I. Bin-Gorion calls shocking.²⁵ The song motif, so fervently denied by Michael in Mahanayim, is owned by the narrator of Garei Rehov who calls himself a poet. He talks of God as "אל אהב זמירות" (p. 193) and of David by his epithet — "נעים זמירות" (p. 208).

The strong individual psychological aspect of Mahanayim is not emphasized in Garei Rehov. The mythological references in the present

story act more as comment on the national psyche and the effects of history, than archetypal images, as they do in Mahanayim. Garei Rehov is more a story about the state of the nation — wherein the psychology of the individual is bound — than its portrayal through the explications of an individual consciousness. The singular psychological elements in the tale consist of a number of perspicacious observations of the psychological workings of the various characters, e.g. Rabbi Aharon's compulsive nature (pp. 196-197) and his wife's rationalization of her acceptance of her daughter's unsuitable match (p. 214).

There are suggestions of taboo in Garei Rehov. Nataniel's daughters engage in a forbidden act, and the snake, which is a powerful ancient image, with associations of enmity and taboo (e.g. Genesis), is referred to three times. Two of these references illustrate Rabbi Aharon's fanaticism. The first comes as part of his inner diatribe about sin —

בכשלת במשהו של חטא, והרי צרעת הבחש דבקה בך.

(p. 195)

and the second as description of his action as he takes the dreaded book in hand and jumps —

כמו איש בשכר בחש

(p. 201)

— for him this book is utter taboo. When the narrator speaks of death and its all-powerfulness, he uses the snake as illustration of its primacy:

המורה לא נברא אף בימי הנחש, הוא אינו קדמון...

(p. 211)

— it is more ancient than this great enemy who is symbol of the violation of taboo. Thus Berdichewski does not exploit this present symbol of taboo except in a distanced way, as portrayal of the folly of his enemy, whose finicky fanaticism perceives taboo in pithy things, or in mere comparative function, used to indicate the ancientness of man's ultimate, larger enemy. The notion of taboo is, therefore, present in Garei Rehov. It is, however, others' perception of taboo that finally causes the narrator to leave town

מן היום ההוא והלאה החלו לבדוק אחרי במלוגי
בטבע עיניים. הופך שלום הבית. גורשתי מלהסתפח בנחלה
זו מצאתי ושפרה עלי. - ואני הולך, הולך ותועה בעולם
הרחב והצר עד היום...

(p. 202)

— just as the shattering effects of the violation of real taboo chased Michael away from Breslau. And, like Michael, he too loses his love as a result. The difference in the comprehension of taboo in the two stories is important, even though its effects are the same in both. Taboo enters Garei Rehov to a much lesser degree and in far more distanced form than in Mahanayim and here it is not the narrator's problem and is thus not a cause of inner torment to him as it is in Mahanayim. The issue of taboo is therefore treated with a fair amount of detached irony in Garei Rehov that is not found in the earlier story.

It may be seen from the above that there is a perceptible continuity in Berdichewski's work. There is a commonality of technique and thematic concerns in Mahanayim and Garei Rehov. And yet, this commonality does not make for an identity. The two stories are very different structures. The first is a focused narrative with a limited time scope, concentrated characterization of the protagonist — despite the lack of descriptive detail Berdichewski's critics railed about²⁶ — and a limited number of characters. The later story spans a wider arena of characters and tales and is not constricted by temporal restrictions, but rather bends time to the ever-shifting extensions of its spatial narrative. Its form and conception are more complex and detached than in the earlier story: there is a greater distance between the author and his material which, instead of lessening its impact, increases his artistry. Berdichewski's formal control in Garei Rehov, whose difficult narrative shape could have easily been lost, is superb. The tension he creates by unravelling and withdrawing the various narrative impetuses binds this narrative — whose mode, at times, seems perpetual expansion that may be best be described in the narrator's words as —

גל סונב גל

(p. 194)

— with a subtle but inviolable valency.

C O N C L U S I O N

The assumption of this study is that the seeming uniformity in Berdichewski's writing is misleading. It posited the thesis that the identity of feature that marks the Berdichewskian text is not productive of sameness but rather that it is effective in promoting greater textual density through the complex variability created by the adherence of opposition within correlates. Its venture, therefore, has stood in contradistinction to Almagor's description and classification of similarities in Berdichewski's fiction.¹

It has sought to illustrate the manner in which this counter-pointed nuance is achieved, by unravelling some of the networks of association and dissonance both within and between the corresponding larger and smaller elements of Mahanayim. These have included: the reverberating echoes in the sets of relationships in the story; the function of negative and positive reciprocity across characters, in the formulation of character; the discordances set up by word-repetition in changing contexts and through the fluctuations of extra-textual connotations; the gradations of meaning produced by the changed contextual location of recurring word-motifs across narrative progression and the inversion of the meaning of repeated imagery — e.g. as it occurs at the end of the story where the identical night vista of the tree-lined avenue acts first as a positive and then a negative correlate to Michael's inner state — as well as the emphatic effects of cumulative adverbial forms and the semantic and conceptual implications of sound repetition both in identical and metathesized order.

The synchronic analysis has considered Mahanayim as a tale of duality and fracture and has perceived the above-mentioned features as subservient to the demands of this thematic core, where fragmentation and split are portrayed by the textual 'wobblings' effected by the tension of antithesis within identity and by symmetrical opposition. The tragedy of Michael and Hedwig's relationship for example, is heightened by its correspondences to the similar relationships in the story which emphasize its distinction from them, which in turn amplifies the pathos of its identically failed outcome.

Berdichewski's concern with dichotomy is apparent in the psychological composition of Michael, the hero of Mahanayim. Silberbush asserts that Berdichewski's "way is to tell half a thing and leave the reader room for (his own) assumptions",² that he only "tells by way of a hint or as an aside".³ The present study of Mahanayim has confirmed this inasmuch as it has found that Michael's psychological processes are hinted at by way of mythological allusions and by the Protean textual features mentioned above.

The Oedipal myth appears to have served as an important sub-structure in Mahanayim, illustrating the dichotomies of Age and Youth, Knowledge and Ignorance and the battle of Old and New within Michael's psyche. It has been aided in this function by the Daniel story which is alluded to by way of phraseological association. There are further mythological connections which support this theme — the story of Yehoshua bin Nun⁴ and the Jacob narrative⁵ — but these have been amply dealt with in other analyses and were therefore not referred to here. The

Oedipal myth in its Freudian-sexual interpretations as well as in its extended Jungian-archetypal reading, provides sufficient illustration of the textual complexity and permutations.

The diachronic dimension introduced by the comparison of Mahanayim and Garei Rehov reveals that despite a commonality of thematic concern and formal features in the two stories, the development of Berdichewski's narrative style and his greater sophistication in conceptual approach have rendered these stories perceptibly different in both content and form. Whereas the narrative mode of Mahanayim is temporal in progression, Garei Rehov may be said to have a spatially expanding narrative. While the narrator in Mahanayim blends at times with its protagonist, yet stands separate to the tale, the narrator of Garei Rehov is the self-conscious story-teller whose adjacent story intrudes on the narrative to provide it the linearity of a temporal marking.

Berdichewski's use of analogues differs in the two stories. In the early story these are closely woven and echoing in their effects; in the later story their allegiance is more extended and conducive of greater variance and emblematic implications. The conceptual connections between the two stories are evident in shared themes such as guilt, sin and punishment; youth, age and orphanhood.

The overriding factor in Berdichewski's work is the essential constancy of his concern. This is what makes for the apparent uniformity of his writing. But, as has been shown throughout this study, it is not a

sameness that is expressed within and across his narratives, but rather diverse ways of dealing with the same major issue.

Berdichewski's battle is the struggle of the soul striving for answers which, in an ever-revolving kaleidoscope of phenomena, inevitably evade it. In his work man permutes in endless incarnations; different, yet the same in his many guises: Torn and always reaching — for solace, for a peace which can never come. He is always separated and engorged by desires which are never brinked or requited. He is tossed about in a wilderness of separateness, loss and alienation. Union eludes — forever; betimes seemingly offering itself, only to prove ephemeral and illusory. Duality ensnares in myriad contortions from which there is no release, only apparent respite. Man in constant bondage and woman, his faint echo, bonded deeper in obscurity, doomed to enslaving opacity from which she cannot escape. Berdichewski's voice is the voice of man trammelled in perpetual dichotomy and separation: trapped in an unbending and ceaseless agony.

NOTES

1. Almagor Dan **Aspects of the Narrative of Micha Yosef Berdichewsky (Bin-Gorion)** University of California, Los Angeles Ph.D. 1968. p.22.
2. Ibid p.5.
3. ibid p.6.
4. Bin Gorion, E in his introduction to **Micha Josef Bin Gorion - Short Novels** Bialik Institute, Jerusalem, 1971. p.11.
5. ibid
6. Miron, Dan **HaMifne baSipporet haIvrit haHadasha al-pi Mahanayim in Hagut veSipporet biYetzirat Berdichewski** ed. Cagan Z, Haifa University, 1981.
7. ibid
8. op cit Bin Gorion p.13.
9. op cit Miron pp.27-28.

10. *ibid* pp.29-30.
11. Govrin, Nurit ed. **Micha Josef Berdychewski (Bin Gorion):
A Selection of Critical Essays on his Literary
Prose** Am Oved, Tel Aviv, 1973, p.17.
12. *ibid* p.22.
13. *op cit* Miron pp.28-29.
14. This information was provided me by Avner Holtzman in a correspondence dated 15.8.86. I quote: "**Garei Rehov** ... has only been dealt with to some small extent".

CHAPTER I : A PORTRAIT IN DUALISM

1. This list is by no means exhaustive.
2. This definition of **Mahanayim** as a short novel derives from E. Bin Gorion's classification when he included it among the five short novels in the book he edited and introduced. See introduction, note 4. Fichman was the first to define it thus, but Cagan disputes its exactitude. *op cit* Cagan p.68 section 83.
3. *Op cit* Miron p.41 and others.
4. This is set against the background of his conflict with Esau: For an

exposition of this theme see:

Cagan, Zippora **MeAgadda leSipporet Modernit biYetzirat**
Berdichewski HaKibbutz HaMeuchad,
 Tel Aviv 1983. pp.59-63.

5. Gilboa, Menuha **Perakim Nivharim baSippur haIvri beReishit**
haMeia haEsrin Yehidot 1-2-3 Everyman's
 University, Ramat Aviv, 1979. 2, 4. p. 26.
6. The significance of blindness – which is associated with the Jacob story
 – will be dealt with at a later stage, in another connection.
7. Note Miron's analysis in this regard, op cit Miron p.41.
8. *ibid.*
9. See Cagan's explication of this theme where in accordance with Hartom's
 explanation of the word **Mahanayim** in this verse she develops the theme
 of dancing and sexual profligacy. Op cit Cagan p.63.
10. Miron notes that this transfer of interest is in keeping with Michael's
 inclination at this stage toward the general/abstract and his turning
 away from the particular and concrete. Op cit Miron p.44.
11. *ibid* p.28 : Miron cites this as Brenner's reaction.
12. See Miron op cit for an account of its variant readings.

13. The analysis of this last-named feature is indebted to an article by Aphek and Tobin **The Means is the Message** Meta XXVIII 1 pp.57-69.
14. Even Shoshan **Milon Hadash** 10th ed. Kiryat HaSefer, Jerusalem 1962.
15. *ibid.*
16. *ibid.*
17. *Op cit* Bin Gorion p.25, explanatory note.
18. By extension : Poland and Israel - two kingdoms that were destroyed; the two minorities in German Breslau are composed of their remnants. Possibly another parallel stratum is the story.
19. See Gilboa *op cit* 2.2.2 p.5.
20. *Op cit* Miron p.41.
21. *Op cit* Cagan p.57.
22. This is dealt with at a later stage in this work.
23. *ibid* p.67.

CHAPTER II - THE SEXUAL LANDSCAPE : PURITY AND IMPURITY

1. The question whether this was chance or unconscious design is discussed in Chapter III of this work.
2. Cagan, op cit p.63 notes that this is considered an abomination according to Lev 18:17 and Lev 18:24-25.
3. See Shaked's article on **Klonimos and Naomi** in **Al Arba'Ca Sippurim** The Jewish Agency, Jerusalem 1963 in this regard.
4. The final sentence of the paragraph is the one which deals with Stasha's feelings towards Hedwig and was referred to earlier.
5. Praz, Mario **The Romantic Agony** trans. Davidson, Angus
2nd ed. Oxford University Press, London
1970. pp.199-200, section C.
6. Based on Goethe's definition in **Über epische und dramatische Dichtung** Sämtliche Werke. Stuttgart, 1902-7 36 S 149-152 as cited by Shaked op cit p.108. Also see Almagor op cit p.181.
7. In the sense in which this term is used in Gestalt psychology.
8. For a development of this theme see Chapter III - **Senex and Puer** - in the present work.

9. Its singing begins just after Maria-Yosefa, who has been scolding and bickering with her husband, leaves the room. This is possibly a note of humour in the story.
10. See Miron on the relationship between this perception and Berdichewski's discipleship of Shopenhauer and Nietzsche op cit Miron p.46.
11. This image of Kali may be seen to serve as a metaphor, created no doubt by men, of the undesirable part of the feminine. For Neumann's exposition of this theme see Appendix (ii) p.210a.
- 11.1 Silberbush suggests that this physical depletion is the cause of Michael's strange behaviour throughout the tale. See
 Silberbush, D.I. **Dr. Berdichewski as a Story-Teller** in op
 cit Govrin, pp.55-57.
12. These terms are used metaphorically.
13. See Miron op cit 42 who notes the irony in the gulf between Michael's perception of himself as an "opener of eyes and a prophet of light" and his recoiling from the possibility of his father's dimming eyes seeing his defilement.
14. See note 11.1 to this this chapter.
15. The Hassidic extension of this doctrine is interesting in this context in view of Berdichewski's Hassidic background. They believe that sometimes the souls of evil people are reincarnated in the bodies of animals

as "gilgulim", and therefore, by eating animals a person could be performing a great Mitzva in freeing these souls from a bestial existence. Furthermore, this eating results in the eater taking on the suffering of the eaten, thereby redeeming them from their sins.

16. Op cit. Silberbush p.56.
17. On the motif of sexual relations between men and serving girls in Berdichewski's writings, see Almagor, op cit, pp.150, 216-219.
18. Baptism is misinterpreted, by S. Bartonov, in explanatory notes to Berdichewski short novels, as Confirmation. Op cit Bin Gorion, E. p.47. Catholic conversion entails first Baptism and then confirmation, regardless of the age of the convert.
19. These are dealt with in the following section.
20. In this story.
21. See Almagor on the erotic significance of "white hands" in Berdichewski's writing. Op cit Almagor pp. 292, 421. And on their connections with Eros and death: ibid p.103.
22. A similar transposition of sex and food may be seen in **Givat HaHol** - S.Y. Agnon, except that there it is Hemdat who is the provider of hot food and Yael, the consumer.
23. Op cit Almagor pp.289-290.

24. Alcalay R **The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary**
Massada, Ramat Gan 1981, p.301.
25. Op cit Even Shoshan. p.157.
26. ibid, pp.906-907.
27. ibid.
28. Mandelkern, Solomon **Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraice
atque Chaldaicae** Veit et Comp, Lipsiae
MDCCCXCVI. p.702.
29. Op cit Alcalay p.1493.
30. By extension (somewhat exaggerated!): There is possibly a connection
between this use of " ירכתיים " here and its occurrence in Jeremiah
31:7. Hedwig is an 'alien-Jewish' girl gathered from the ends of the earth.
31. As was discussed earlier.
32. Op cit Almagor pp.360-365 and esp. p.363.
33. The word "Hevyon" will be discussed at a later stage.
34. For the relationship between fantasies and eros in Berdichewski's writing
see Almagor op cit p.170.

45. Almagor names them as such though not in connection with **Mahanayim**.
Op cit Almagor pp.368-373.
46. I assume this phrase " לגשת יחדיו " is a version of " התנגשו יחדיו " (Jes. 45:20) which means "draw near". The root of " נגש " occurs in Ex 19:15 with the meaning of sexual intercourse - " אל-תגשו אל-אשה ". This meaning would appear to have significance in the present context.
47. Op cit Almagor pp.355-356 and also p.105.
48. Op cit Almagor p.360.
49. Op cit Almcalay p.946.

CHAPTER III - SENEX AND PUER

1. For additional expositions of the mythological dimension in **Mahanayim** see Cagan op cit and Gilboa op cit.
2. Miron op cit also stresses this connection, through his slant differs somewhat. It must be noted that his work came into my possession after I finished my analysis of **Mahanayim**. I have, however, attempted to point to the similarities between his explication and mine. The same applies to the works of Gilboa and Cagan op cit.

3. Hillman, James **Inter Views** Harper & Row, New York
with Pozzo, Laura 1983, p.59.
4. *ibid* p.119.
5. *ibid* p.123.
6. *ibid* p.116.
7. *ibid* p.117.
8. *ibid* pp.117-118.
9. *ibid* p.119.
10. The term "messianic complex" - is used in the psychological sense and
is not directly connected with the concept of the actual Messiah.
11. Op cit Hillman p.122.
12. *ibid* p.119.
13. *ibid* p.121.
14. *ibid* p.132.
15. *ibid* p.121.

16. ibid pp.120-121.
17. This was dealt with earlier in the present analysis.
18. Op cit Hillman p.121.
19. ibid.
20. Greenfield, Barbara **The Archetypal Masculine : Its Manifestation in Myth and Its Significance for Women in Journal of Analytical Psychology 1983, 28. pp.33-50; 49.**
21. ibid p.35.
22. ibid p.38.
23. ibid p.44.
24. ibid p.24.
25. Interestingly, Greenfield sees the God of the Old Testament as a combination of Trickster and Father. I quote : "A similar unification of the father and the trickster may also be glimpsed in the God of the Old Testament, who is generally a father but behaves as a trickster in his treatment of Job and his destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah". ibid p.43.

26. *ibid* p.36.
27. The Jewish injunction that a man must not remain alone which makes it incumbent upon a widower to remarry as soon as possible is not of significance in the present context. What is important here is Michael's perception of his father's second marriage: he sees it as a betrayal and his father is connected for him with 'instinctual desires'. See Almagor, *op cit* p.153, section C in this regard.
28. *Op cit* Greenfield p.41.
29. *ibid*
30. This reading of the Oedipal myth is based on Sophocles' version of the legend. See:
Sophocles **The Theban Plays** trans. Walting, E.F.
Penguin Books, Middlesex 1976.
31. *Op cit* Greenfield, p.47.
32. *ibid* p.36.
33. *ibid* p.37.
34. Graves, Robert **The Greek Myths** V.2. Penguin Books,
Middlesex 1955 p.124.

35. a) Miron op cit discusses the blindness motif in **Mahanayim**.
- b) Cagan op cit p.65 mentions the legend of Matia ben Heresh in this connection and it seems to me a very productive relationship, especially if blindness is associated with castration. I have therefore included this legend in the appendix. She also refers, in passing, to the classical aspect of self-blinding.
36. Op cit Sophocles p.67 - **King Oedipus** .
37. See Cagan's reference to Ct 8:1 in this regard. She relates Hedwig's desire to have Michael as her brother to this verse which reads:
- Oh that though wert my brother,
That suckled the breasts of my mother!
When I should find thee without,
I would kiss thee;
Yea, and none would despise me.
- This connection extends the incestuous implications of the story. Op cit Cagan p.63.
38. Op cit Greenfield p.40
39. See note 37 above.
40. Op cit Greenfield p.46.

41. *ibid* p.35. Greenfield gives this term in a quotation from Jung.
42. *Op cit* Graves p.14 : "Furies were personifications of conscience, but conscience in a very limited sense : aroused only by the breach of a maternal taboo".
43. *Op cit* Sophocles p.121 - **Oedipus at Colonus** .
44. *ibid* p.125.
45. *Op cit* Greenfield p.48.
46. *Op cit* Sophocles p.62 - **King Oedipus** .
47. See Chapter 2.2.1.
48. See Gorfin, Rivka in **Orlogin** V.5, 1952, pp.211-223. Giora, Moshe in **Moznayim** V.26, 1968, pp.384-388 et al. For a comprehensive list of analyses of Neitzsche's influence on Berdichewski see:
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Almagor, Dan and
Fishman, Samuel | Nahalat M.Y.B. Tel Aviv University of
haKibbutz haMeuchad, 1982. p.126. |
|-------------------------------------|---|
49. Vickers, Brian **Towards Greek Tragedy.** Longman, London,
1973. pp.34-35.
- 49.1 *ibid* p.35.

50. Knox, Whitman, Waldock, Letters, Ehrenberg, Kirkwood, section C. *ibid* p.497.
51. *ibid* p.498.
52. *ibid* p.547, section 6.
53. *ibid* p.44 section 1.
54. *ibid* p.498.
55. *ibid*
56. Knox, Bernard **Oedipus at Thebes. Sophocles' Tragic Hero and his Time** 2nd ed. Yale University Press 1966, p.12.
57. The dual voice of the narrator has been referred to earlier and will be expanded upon in Chapter 5. Also see Almagor, *op cit*, p.67 on the deflected inner monologues in Berdichewski's narratives and Gilboa *op cit* 2.2.2 p.7.
58. This has already been discussed in this work.
59. See note 37 above. Gilboa *op cit* 2.3.2 p.20 the sexual dimension in Hedwig's feelings.

empirical knowing.

Also see Cagan on the axis of CCC YD^c/Y^cD. Op cit Cagan pp.55-56.

7. Brown, F., Driver, S.R. **Hebrew Lexicon of the Old Testament**
and Briggs, C.A. Claredon Press, Oxford 1979, p.418.
8. Op cit Alcalay p.1236.
9. Op cit Aphek and Tobin p.58.
10. Bartana, Urzion **Telushim veHaluzim: Hitgabshut haMegama
haNeo-Romantit baSipporet Halvrit Dvir**
Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1984, p.91.
11. ibid p.92 "Mahanayim is an autobiographical story, but it is also the story
in which Berdichewski's mythical world view crystallised".

CHAPTER 5 - THE STREET THAT WAS

1. Op cit Bartana p.91.
2. ibid p.92 (See note 11 to previous chapter).
3. Op cit Bin Gorion E p.91.
4. Op cit Bartana p.92.

5. Almagor, op cit Govrin, p.233.
6. i) Bin Gorion E, op cit Govrin p.246.
 ii) Katzenelzon-Shazar R, ibid p.150 notes that the novel, as it stands, is incomplete.
7. Berdichewski, M.Y. **Kitvei M.Y. Berdichewski : Sippurim** Dvir, Tel Aviv 1965, p.317.
8. The manipulation of versimilitude in the introductory passage is complex, but as **Miriam** is not the primary concern of this work, it shall not be addressed here.
9. Note Bin Gorion, E who says this unconventional "I believe" is strong expression of Berdichewski's credo. Op cit Bin Gorion p.21.
10. Werses, Samuel **Batei Berdichewski.** Mehkarei Yerushalayim beSifrut Ivrit : leZecher Yosef Even V.5. 1984, p.65.
 Werses speaks of Berdichewski's negative attitude to houses passing hands, and owners who did not labour in the creation of their homes.
11. The word "הַיְעָרָה" in this version contributes to the mythical atmosphere by way of its mystical/mysterious associations.
12. For an exposition of this aspect in Berdichewski's writing, see:

20. Kesheth, Jeshurun **M.J. Berditchewski (Bin-Gorion): His Life and Work** Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1958.

On pp.130, 135 Kesheth notes that Berdichevski lived near a cemetery and attained his livelihood by copying the inscriptions from the tombstones in the old Jewish Cemetery in Breslau for the archives of the Jewish Community.

21. See Note 9 above.

22. Elul is the customary time for visiting graves.

23. R. Nahman's disciples are called the "Toite Hassidim".

- 23.1 Bin Gorion notes that death in this story is - "If it is permissible to say so, a Jew in his essence and form". Op cit Bin Gorion p.21.

24. Op cit Alcalay p.32.

25. *ibid*

26. eg. Klausner op cit Govrin p.20.

CONCLUSION

1. Op cit Almagor p.424.

2. Op cit Govrin p.54.
3. ibid
4. Op cit Gilboa 3.1.3 pp.12-13. The whole of unit 3.1 in Gilboa's analysis is devoted to the mythical allusions in **Mahanayim**. These include the story of Yehuda and Tamar, the tale of the Messiah's partner as well as the Oedipal legend.
5. Op cit Cagan pp.59-63.

APPENDIX

i) The story of Matia be Heresh:

מעשה בר' מתיא בן-חרש, שהיה עשיר וירא-שמים ויושב כל ימיו בבית-המדרש ועוסק בתורה כר' מאיר רבו, והיה זיו פניו מבהיק כזוהר החמה וקלסתר פניו דומה למלאכי-השרת. ואמרו עליו, שמימיו לא נשא עיניו לאישה בעולם. פעם אחת עבר השטן ונתקנא בו, אמר: אפשר צדיק בלא חטא בעולם? מיד עלה למרום, ועמד לפני הקב"ה ואמר: רבונו-של-עולם, מתיא בן-חרש מהו לפניך? אמר לו: צדיק גמור הוא. אמר: תן-לי רשות ואנסנו. אמר לו: אין אתה יכול לו. אף-על-פי-כן! ... נתן לו רשות.

מיד הלך ומצאו יושב ועוסק בתורה, בדמה לו כאשה יפה, שלא היתה כדמותה בעולם מימות נעמה אחות תובל-קין שטעו* בה מלאכי השרת. עמד לפניו. כון שראה אותו, הפך פניו לאחוריו; חזר השטן והלך כנגד פניו. החזיר פניו לצד אחר והשטן כנגד פניו. כון שראה, שמתהפכת לכל הצדדים, אמר בלבו: מתירא אני, שמא יתגבר עלי יצר-הרע ויחטיאני. מה עשה אותו צדיק? קרא לאחד מתלמידיו שהיה משמשו, אמר לו: בני, לך והבא לי אש ומסמרים. כון שהביאם לו העביר המסמרים באש ונעצם בעיניו. כון שראה השטן כך, בזדעזע ובפל לאחוריו, והלך מעליו. באותה שעה קרא הקב"ה לרפאל שר של רפואות, אמר לו: לך ורפא עיניו של מתיא בן-חרש. בא רפאל ועמד לפניו. אמר לו מתיא: מי אתה? אמר לו: אני הוא רפאל המלאך, ששלחני הקב"ה לרפאות את-עיניך. אמר לו: הניחני. מה-שהיה היה. חזר רפאל לפני הקב"ה, אמר לפניו: רבונו-של-עולם, כך וכך אמר לי מתיא בן-חרש. אמר לו הקב"ה: לך ואמר לו: מהיום ואילך אל תירא, אני ערב לך בדבר שלא ישלט בך יצר-הרע כל-ימי חיך. כון ששמע מתיא בן-חרש מפי המלאך קבל רפואתו ונתרפא.

"ספר האגדה" - ביאליק ורבניצקי ע"מ תכ"ג-תכ"ד

* שזנו אחריה, כמו שנאמר "ויראו בני אלוהים את בנות האדם כי טובות הנה" וגו' (בראשית ו:ב) - (שם)
ודוק: "... לבו הזונה אחרי בטיות אחרות ואלוהים אחרים..." -
"מחנים" - מ"ב (ע"מ 29).

ii)

In his book **The Origins and History of Consciousness** Erich Neumann has elucidated the following connections, which are pertinent to the adductions of this study:

On Blood

a) "Blood ... plays a decisive rôle in the feminine taboos ... in the background there is dim knowledge of the blood affinity of the Great Mother" (p.57).

On Trees

b) "The phallic tree fetish as a symbol of the youthful lover, is known to us from many myths"(70).

c) On separation from parents and fear of "emancipation from the power of uroboros": The struggle against this fear, against the danger of being swallowed up again in the initial chaos" (p.124). This would seem to be directly connected with the Kali image.

d) Also related to the Kali image, to the fear of being swallowed and devoured: "The youth's fear of the devouring Great Mother and the infant's beautiful surrender to the uroboric Good Mother are both elementary forms of the male's experience of the female; but they must not be the only ones if a real man-woman relationship is to develop" (p.199).

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Errata:

1. Please note that the Hebrew Aleph has at times jumped a space and thus that words may be separated by an unnecessary space. This was an unavoidable technical problem and I would ask your patience in this matter.