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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LITERARY WORKS OF

YOSEF HAIM BRENNER

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN HEBREW LITERATURE
AND ORDINATION

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Digest: A Critical Analysis of the Literary Works of Y. H. Brenner

Yosef Haim Brenner was a Hebrew novelist who lived from 1881 to 1921. His work is significant because it portrays the breakdown of personality as a result of the disintegration of traditional religious and social patterns in Russian and Palestinian Jewish life. The author concentrates on themes of guilt, sexual masochism and alienation in a world devoid of God. In Chapter I Brenner's place in Hebrew Literature is likened to that of the neo-romantics in early twentieth century European literature because of his concern with the subjective and emotional levels of human existence.

Bahoref was Brenner's first novel and the foundation upon which he built all his later works. The novel's central character is an anti-hero, a Jewish type which closely resembles Dostoyevsky's underground man. In Chapter II it is argued that the anti-hero is a product of the collapse of religious certainty in Jewish life. He rejects Orthodoxy but is unable to embody in his own life the values of Russian literature to which he has turned and is left suspended between two worlds. Other characters in Bahoref represent Zionism and Marxism, alternate ideologies which might fill the void caused by the anti-hero's loss of faith. But these

characters and their ideologies are too shallow for him. The anti-hero is alienated from superhuman and human sources of salvation, and, unable to face the meaninglessness of life, he symbolically chooses death.

Brenner's development as an artist is treated in Chapter III. His early novels were characterized by the first person form and by a tone of ironic realism which served to expose weaknesses of characters other than the anti-hero. In the later novels, the use of third person form and a decrease in ironic realism result in a fuller and more sympathetic treatment of other characters. In Brenner's last work, Shkol V'Kishalon, the anti-hero stands for more than an uprooted Jewish intellectual--he has grown to encompass all men who suffer because of their sensitivity to the problems of life.

Chapters IV and V are devoted to the author's use of structure and symbol. Contrary to the widely held view that Brenner was a careless writer, his use of structural elements (settings, language, and rhythm) show him to be most meticulous in striving for precise effect. In his handling of objects and dream symbols, he often reverses meanings to reinforce the impression that values have been turned upside down in contemporary Jewish life.

After the rejection of all ideologies, Brenner seems able to see value only in uncompromising honesty and the affirmation of life, as indicated in the concluding chapter.

TO NANCY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

The World of Y. H. Brenner

Yosef Haim Brenner was one of a group of Hebrew writers whose careers began in the early years of the twentieth century.[1] While Brenner was quite prolific and produced dramatic works, newspaper articles, and literary criticism, this thesis will concentrate completely upon his novels.[2] Instead of a historical or biographical approach,[3] I intend to treat the material as a collection of works of art, and to emphasize both internal organization and relationships as well as connections with the larger complex of Russian literature. I will not consider these novels as a fictionalized version of the author's life[4]; biographical information will be used only when there is no other way to explain a particular problem or reference The results, I believe, will indicate the real nature of Brenner's contribution to the development of Hebrew literature.

Some biographical and background information is necessary in order to understand his writings, which are representative of a broad cultural trend in modern general and Jewish history. This introductory chapter will deal with the salient facts of Brenner's life and the influences which helped shape his creative activities.[5]

The forty years during which he lived, from 1881 to 1921, were marked by radical changes in the political and intellectual climate of Europe. It is an interesting coincidence that Brenner was born in Russia in the same year Czar Alexander II was assassinated.[6] At the time, the writings of Marx and Engels became the stimulus for the growth of socialist and communist organizations throughout the continent.[7] Although Marxist thought was very important in forming both political and intellectual movements during Brenner's lifetime, the more significant intellectual and cultural advances in western society reflected interest in the individual rather than in the nameless members of the working class. The writers of the period reacted much as had the romantics in the beginning of the nineteenth century against a purely scientific description of the universe and of general human nature. Whereas the romantics had to contend with a mathematical understanding of all phenomena, these neo-romantics did battle with explanations based on positivism and the theory of evolution.[8] H. Stuart Hughes writes:

> The main attack against the intellectual heritage of the past was in fact on a narrower front. It was directed primarily against what the writers of the 1890's chose to call "positivism." By this they did not mean simply the rather quaint doctrines associated with the name of Auguste Comte, who had originally coined the term. Nor did they mean the social philosophy of Herbert Spencer, which was the guise in which positivist thinking was most apparent in their

> own time. They used the word in a looser sense to characterize the whole tendency to discuss human behavior in terms of analogies drawn from natural sciences. In reacting against it, the innovators of the 1890's felt that they were rejecting the most pervasive intellectual tenet of their time.[9]

During this period, the "values of the imagination" again become exalted, and the culture heroes, Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche, were considered "literary heralds of the new era".[10] These two men were the first to deal in great depth with the intricacies of man's conscious and unconscious desires. Neither was a professional psychologist; what they knew of the human mind was gained through their own poetic or artistic insight.[11] It was only one step from their writings to the Symbolist poets of France, with their desire "to make poetry even more a matter of sensations and emotions of the individual",[12] or to the stream-of-consciousness technique of James Joyce. Finally, Sigmund Freud combined the neo-romantic interest in the mind with a devotion to scientific principles. His major works on hysteria, dreams, sex and the unconscious were all published by 1905. More than any other figure, Freud symbolized the interest of a generation of intellectuals at the turn of the century in man's subjective and non-rational capacities.

Hughes sums up the ideas initially stated in the 1890's and running through the next two decades:

1. Most basic, perhaps, and the key to all the others (ideas) was the new interest in the problem of consciousness and the role of the unconscious.

2. Closely related to the problem of consciousness was the question of the meaning of time and duration in psychology, philosophy, literature, and history...Finally it was the dilemma that obsessed the novelists of the first two decades of the new century...the tormenting question of how to recapture the immediacy of past experience in language that in ordinary usage could reproduce no more than the fragmentized reality of an existence that the logical memory had already stored away in neat compartments.

4....the whole basis of political discussion had been radically altered. No longer could one remain content with easy assurances of the rationalistic ideologies inherited from the century and a half preceding- literal, democratic or socialist as the case may be.[13]

What did all this have to do with Yosef Haim Brenner, a Hebrew writer born in a small town in the Ukraine, who had neither a college degree nor surely any acquaintance with the works of Freud, the Symbolists or Joyce? Brenner's life weaves like a thread through the diverse tapestry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and his works are the Hebrew counterpart of western European cultural and artistic endeavors. The parallel between Brenner's intellectural development and interests and those outlined above is most striking, as will be shown.

The author's early education was the traditional Heder curriculum of Bible, commentaries, and Talmud; and he was known in his home town of Novi Mlyni as an excellent student.

From about his tenth year through his middle teens he pursued rabbinic studies at a number of Yeshivot in the major cities of the Pale of Settlement.[14] This was the usual pattern for a young Orthodox Jew whose childhood was completely circumscribed by religious law and life. We know that Brenner was expelled from one Yeshivah in Homel for writing an anti-Hasidic satire, and that soon after he entered the Yeshivah of Potschep where he became fast friends with another Hebrew writer-to-be, Uri Nissan Gnessin.

By the time of his fifteenth or sixteenth birthday, his Orthodoxy was challenged and destroyed through a combination of his own religious skepticism and the impact of intellectual and social upheavals taking place in Russian Jewish life. His contact with the world of secular culture must have first come through the literature of the Haskalah which remained a divisive influence in Orthodox circles until the end of the century. But the greatest influence on his life at this period was the popular Jewish version of Marxist thinking. Brenner identified himself with the Jewish proletariat which was then becoming self-conscious and organized. He left the Yeshivah and went to Bialystok to look for employment requiring physical labor and also for an opportunity to broaden his secular education. He was unsuccessful, and returned to Homel where he remained from 1897 to 1902.

Now, however, Brenner was no longer a Yeshivah student, and he was open to all the influences of this active industrial city. The Zionist movement was being organized, and word of the first Congress in Basel in 1897 made a tremendous impression upon him. For a brief period Brenner served as the librarian of the Zionist organization in Homel, but he was not strongly committed to the ideology of the movement, and soon devoted his energies to the other major party in Russian Jewish life, the Bund. In the same year that Herzl founded political Zionism, a group of Jewish Socialists organized the Bund, representing a united and militant Jewish proletariat.

> At the turn of the century, the Bund's ranks had been augmented by tens of thousands of young Jewish men and women, youths for whom the Bundist promise of a land liberated from Czarist and capitalist oppression was irresistible.[15]

Brenner was among those thousands, and for a short period was active in publishing the illegal organ of the Bund in Homel, Der Kampf.

As in the case of Zionism, Brenner's commitment to the socialist ideology was not very great. His primary goal during these years was still to acquire a secular education. Because of his religious training, he had not mastered the subjects required by the Russian universities; even if he had, the government quota for Jewish students was so small that he probably would not have been admitted. [16]

Like most of the others of his generation who had broken away from Orthodoxy, he had to rely on voluntary teachers, and mostly on his own resources. Within a short time he learned Russian and read widely in Russian and European literatures.

Like the neo-romantics in the west, Brenner turned to the writings of Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky in his rejection of positivism--in this case Jewish positivism as represented by Achad Ha-Am. Achad Ha-Am was the most important Hebrew essayist of the day, and his influence in shaping the cultural and literary destiny of Eastern European Jewry cannot be overestimated. But for Brenner and his generation of writers, the biological and social philosophy of Achad Ha-Am, based on the writings of Comte, Renan, and Herbert Spencer, left no room for an investigation of the individual, the personal, and the subjective. [17]

At the turn of the century, Brenner published a number of short stories, and in 1902 was called into the Russian army. His experiences in the army, his desertion, capture and daring escape engineered by members of the Bund, form the bridge to the next major period in his life. It is important to note that by the time Brenner reached London in 1904, his literary and artistic taste was well formed. His first two major novels, Bahoref and Misaviv LaNikudah, written before his twenty-fifth birthday, exhibit the deep influence of both

Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche: concern with the over-intellectualized mind and sexual masochism. Also expressed in the novels are guilt growing from decadent traditional Jewish culture, and the desire to create, unrestrained by either political or scientific ideology. These themes will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Brenner remained in London from 1904 through 1908, during which time he wrote, edited, set the type for, and published his own magazine, HaM'orer. How he achieved this, alone, with no financial resources and under terrible mental strain, is one of the miracles of modern Hebrew literature. His correspondence with Berdichevsky and Bialik,[18] as well as the eyewitness report of Asher Beilin,[19] revealed the extent of Brenner's material privation. Nevertheless, the magazine did appear, and at the same time, the author was able to experiment with the drama, a new medium for him. The atmosphere of creative madness in which MayAyver LiGvulin was written seems to substantiate Brenner's own fears about the precarious state of his sanity.[20] Financial burdens finally became too great, and the publication of HaM'orer was suspended. For a short time thereafter, Brenner worked with Beilin as a typesetter for a Yiddish newspaper and then left London permanently. He went to Germany for a brief visit with Berdichevsky, and then to Lwow in Poland where

for a nearly a year he helped edit some Hebrew and Yiddish periodicals.

In 1909, Brenner immigrated to Palestine where he remained until his death in 1921. Whatever his motives for this move, it is evident that he was not inspired by the Zionist ideology.[21] For a short time he fulfilled a desire from youth to be a laborer, and worked as a well-digger in Hadera. But his talents as a writer were sufficiently well known to the new Palestinian community, and he probably felt himself compelled to return to literature. In the following years, he was an editorial consultant to HaPoel HaTzair and a number of other magazines, journals and newspapers. His connections were primarily with the labor movement in Palestine, and he was present at the founding of the Histadrut. These were difficult times for the Jewish worker; competition with the Arab labor was fierce. The Arabs worked more cheaply and efficiently than the young idealists whose training suited them better for middle-class professions. Brenner was close to A.D. Gordon, and much of his interest in the labor movement can be traced to Gordon's influence.[22]

Again, however, it should be stressed that the author's commitment was to literature rather than to a philosophy or ideology. During his first few years in Palestine, Brenner completed two major works, Bayn Mayim L'Mayim and Mikan UMikan,

which retain the same concern with the individual as had his previous novels. Large passages of Mikan UMikan are devoted to a detailed discussion of the position of the Jewish people in Palestine and elsewhere, but these reflect areas of conflict between the author and the prevailing Zionist and labor ideologies.

Before World War I, Brenner taught at the Gymnasium in Jaffa, and when the school moved to Shomron under wartime pressure from the Turks, he went with it. In addition to teaching, he also gave lectures on Hebrew literature to adult groups and lessons in the Hebrew language to laborers. He wrote no novels for a period of almost nine years, from 1911 to 1919. In this interval, he married and had a family, but for reasons which are unclear to me, he seems to have separated from his wife when their boy was about five or six years old.[23] Despite eulogistic biographies which describe Brenner's last years as being emotionally calm and externally peaceful, his letters from 1919 to 1921 show his anxious involvement in literary and editorial tasks, as well as in teaching and organizational activities. In 1920, his last novel, Shkol V'Kishalon, appeared, and it was by far the most mature and important which he produced. The content is devoid of propagandistic overtones, and the author examines in great detail sexual masochism, insanity, and personal salvation in

a world without religious certainty. Brenner was killed with the members of the family in whose house he resided near Tel Aviv in the Arab-Jewish riots of 1921.

The purpose of this brief biography has been to point out the major influences upon Brenner's development as a artist, as well as significant facts of his personal life which might indicate the source of his literary concerns. It has been maintained that his novels reflect a larger trend in European culture known as the neo-romantic movement which was marked by a rejection of nineteenth century positivistic thought.[24] Certainly Brenner did not attain the stature of Dostoyevsky before him or even that of his European contemporaries, such as Joyce or the French Symbolists. But he shares with the latter two a desire to capture the fleeting thought and the agony of the modern mind, and to see man in terms of the individual, the personal, and the subjective.

A word is in order about Brenner's place in the history of Hebrew literature. There is much controversy concerning the influence of modern Hebrew writers upon him and whether their impact was equal to or greater than that of the Russian novelists. The comment by Bialik in a letter to our author is indicative of the desire expressed by many critics of Hebrew literature to retain Brenner within the "tradition" established by modern Hebrew writers:

> You know, in this story (referring to Misaviv LaNikudah) and in the rest of your stories-with all the great influence that the wondrous Russian authors have had upon you-I find at each and every step the influence of our own great ones: Abramowitz (Mendele), Achad Ha-Am, Berdichevsky, etc.; not that you imitate them, but you are unconsciously influenced by them, their spirit is immersed and mingled with your spirit...the power of your creation, even though seemingly there is Europeanism in it, in its foundation and essentials is the power of Hebrew creation-and of a son of the Exile, to be sure, a son of the Exile of our period, whose desire is stronger than his ability, who sees the decay of the nation and wants its freedom, and who believes and doesn't believe in the possibility of freedom...[25]

It is true that Brenner was thoroughly familiar with the Hebrew literature of his own and the previous generation. But Bialik uses faulty judgment when he speaks as if the critical spirit of Mendele, and Berdichevsky were united with the positivism of Achad Ha-Am. The differences between Brenner and Achad Ha-Am have already been noted, but Brenner was influenced in both style and social outlook by Mendele and Berdichevsky. He used a Hebrew similar to that which Mendele had forged into a literary language, and followed him in expressing penetrating and highly ironic social criticism. Like Berdichevsky, our author made a strong plea for new values in Jewish life, and in the matter of technique, expanded the use of broken syntax and dreams which Berdichevsky introduced into Hebrew Literature. Nevertheless, the influence of these

writers is much less crucial than that of the Russians, primarily that of Dostoyevsky. Brenner's concern with man's internal mental state can only be understood as part of a broader pattern of culture; as the Jewish expression of the neo-romantic movement at the turn of the century.

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In the next chapter I will examine Bahoref, Brenner's first novel, in order to show the patterns which will be repeated with only minor variations in the rest of his works. The other novels will be treated as a totality in Chapters III, IV, and V, with emphasis on structure, form and symbol. Chapter VI will be devoted to a summary and interpretation of value in Brenner's novels.

CHAPTER II

Bahoref

Bahoref was Brenner's first major novel. It plays the same role in his development as a writer as Portrait of the Artist did in Joyce's career. The literary techniques, the imagery, the thematic content and, to an extent, even characters are repeated and expanded in his other works. In its own way, Bahoref was as revolutionary in Hebrew literature as was Portrait in English literature. Both share a concern for portraying the inner thoughts of a character as they spontaneously occur, and it is not an exaggeration to say that Brenner's dream sequences border on the stream-of-consciousness method.

In treating Bahoref, it will be my purpose to show in detail the basic elements which are retained in varying forms in every other novel Brenner wrote.

Brenner uses a common literary device to open Bahoref. A man sits down to write some impressions from his life on a few pieces of notebook paper. Unlike Dostoyevsky's Notes from the Underground, there is no forward by the author telling us that what follows is a fiction which he has

contrived.[1] In later novels of biographical form, Brenner would add an author's note indicating how he found or wrote manuscript to be read. Here, however, the "writer" simply begins with an explanation of his own motivations for writing about himself.

Bahoref is a first person novel; it is not the story of Brenner's early life. While there is much of Brenner in Bahoref, as there is of every novelist in his work, we must judge the literary and not the autobiographical elements. Certainly, one would not consider Dostoyevsky identical with his Underground Man.[2]

The first person novel is primarily descriptive in nature.[3] Characters and events are recorded after they occur in the life of the fictional writer; dramatic action and dialogue are related through his pen, and never directly. Consequently, there is a passive quality which pervades Bahoref.

The central character in this type of novel has a unique function. He unifies an often unorganized plot and makes it appear whole because he relates what has occurred.[4] There is no other character through whom the author could speak. In Bahoref, Brenner makes Jeremiah Fierman this unifying speaker. Fierman's personality dominates from beginning to end, and through his eyes and judgment the world of Bahoref

unfolds. To understand this novel, then, we must examine thoroughly who Fierman is and what he represents.

Brenner makes Fierman's character very clear. In the opening section, Fierman tells about this life:

> "My life"---in double quotes: I have no future or present. Only the past remains---
> The past...If anyone heard this last statement, he would think for sure that I have some fearful events to tell from 'my past', some great tragedy causing the heart to rage and penetrating the reins--
> But it just isn't that way.[5]

Fierman denies that there has been anything of significance in his life in the past, nor anything for which he can hope in the future. Though he is writing a book about himself, he concludes that he is quite unlike the heroes about whom books are usually written.

Fierman writes of his lack of success as a student in the town of N. He was poor and unsuccessful in acquiring voluntary teachers who would help prepare him for examinations.

> I don't know what the feelings of a romantic hero would be in this situation-I was exhausted...[6]

He was afraid that communal activities, which attracted him, would keep him from studies vital to his future. He had to make up subjects which had not been taught in the Heder, but which non-Jewish children learned in school. This was degrading for him, and, in addition, he could not

sufficiently discipline himself to study. In despair he cried out as reason for his failure, "because I am not a hero."[7] A "hero" would have had the fortitude to pursue the goals he set for himself.

Fierman measures himself against an image of the hero, and finds himself wanting. His life is uninteresting and void of profound experiences; he is weak of character. In a word, Fierman is an anti-hero.[8] There are some similarities between Brenner's anti-hero and one of Dostoyevsky's descriptions of the Underground Man:

> It was not only that I could not become spiteful, I did not know how to become anything: neither spiteful nor kind, neither a rascal nor an honest man, neither a hero nor an insect.[9]

Brenner established a cluster of traits which reinforce this type of character. Fierman is obsessed with his own ugliness. His physical appearance is related to severe discomfort when he is in the presence of women, and to a sense of sexual depravity.

> ...my relation to the second sex was always restrained and shy...as I grew up, my estrangement and shyness also grew--extrangement and shyness that were the extreme opposite of reserve and purity...within me was the recognition that my appearance, my voice and even my movements were a burden for the daughter of Eve...[10]

The anti-hero is always alone and wants to be alone. Further, he never ceases to examine himself and criticize his thoughts and actions.

> Indeed, I am a faultfinder and pick at my dung hill. I don't let go of any passing feeling, any light thought arising of itself, without analysis piercing to the depths... my carping is cruel.[11]

The parallel to Dostoyevsky is striking. The critic Ernest J. Simmons writes:

> The underground man is a profound analyst of his own feelings and those of others. He is deeply, morbidly conscious of his personality and an astute logician in explaining its complex nature...he minutely dissects his thoughts, emotions and actions.[12]

Brenner rounds out the picture with a discussion of Fierman's origins. He comes from the bottom of the social ladder; on one side his grandfather was "some R. Lizer", and on the other, his mother, an orphan, grew up in the home of R. Baruch, the barkeeper.

The anti-hero is powerless to achieve the goals he envisions for himself; his life is insignificant; he is ugly, repulsive, filled with perverse desire. Constant self-criticism gives him no rest, and he delights in it. Finally, he is of humble origin. Like the Underground Man, "he wishes to be something that he is unable to be."[13] This character type is central in most, but not all of Brenner's other novels,

and exhibits the traits which have been described.

What causes the development of the anti-hero in Hebrew literature? Is he any more than a superficial adoption of a Russian type? Brenner views the anti-hero (unlike the Underground Man) as a definite result of the breakdown of values in traditional Jewish life. He peculiarly understands this cultural-religious crisis in terms of what I shall call the problem of literature.

If we unravel the tangled threads of Fierman's past we discover the impact of literature upon his life. The setting of his childhood is his hometown Tz., a small Jewish community in which the influence of traditional Judaism is all-pervasive. The books which contained religious values are the only sources of Fierman's early education. Because he is a serious, sensitive child, he fully accepts the account of the origins and meaning of the sacred lore.

> Everything was given to Moses at Sinai; all the words in all the books, the earlier as well as the later ones, all the embellishments, all the points, all the letters in the holy Torah--- all are holy and awesome, all are full of terrifying secrets and deep hidden thoughts, in all of it is included the entire wisdom of the world, all the many and different stages (of holiness) which man may possibly attain... this is everything.[14]

God revealed the Torah and the other holy books to Moses. They are the "word of God", embodying the absolute standards

of right and wrong, good and evil. They are filled with deep and terrible secrets, but also with all the wisdom that man may desire to attain.

Young Fierman's devotion to this literature is complete and unequivocal. He measures himself by its values, and interprets his defects in conformity with its religious outlook. He knows that he is ugly, but God has so made him in order that he might overcome the evil inclination. Following pietistic teachings, Fierman makes a Brit, a covenant, not to look at young girls.[15]

However, the child is constantly disturbed that he can not live up to the standards of the religious literature. He struggles to do what he knows is proper, but with little success. Plagued by a sense of guilt, he compares himself unfavorably to his fellow students.

> You are worse than they: they don't know, they err from ignorance; but you, you know the lives of all those Hasidim, and holy ones, and great ones---can you liken yourself to them?[16]

The answer to the rhetorical question is negative, and the struggle continues. Fierman hopes first that Bar Mitzvah will help him in his battle against the evil inclination. According to the books, on that occasion he will become a man and responsible for his own actions. "But that day was a day like other days,"[17] and he is disappointed.

He feels that now only his forthcoming studies at the Yeshivah can aid him to walk in the proper path. His motivations for going there are religious:

> I am studying not so that I will be called "rabbi"; I am studying because it is impossible not to study, because life is nothing without the Torah of God, because it is the foundation of the world...I have no purpose...except to study Torah for its own sake.[18]

While at the Yeshivah, Fierman begins to question the divine origin of the religious literature. His doubts do not spring forth of themselves, but are immediately caused by reading secular Hebrew books. Fierman had always been a compulsive reader. As a child he bought Masiyot, tales, in Hebrew and Yiddish, from itinerant book peddlers, against his father's wishes. Once he was so absorbed in a story about Shabbtai Zvi that he forgot to prepare his Talmud lesson.[19] Now, this becomes the norm: the more he reads, the less time he devotes to rabbinic studies, until he stops studying altogether.

The literature of the Haskalah has both immediate and longterm effects on Fierman. On a conscious level, it helps him to view Biblical characters in true perspective. On an unconscious level, it causes the doubts which lead eventually to a crisis of faith. Jokingly at first, Fierman begins to

point out to his friend Obadiah certain historical anachronisms in the Talmud: Abraham wore a yarmulka, and Sarah prepared a special meal for the second day of a festival celebrated in the exile![20] Such humor becomes a worm which begins to bore under the very foundations of religious life.

The two friends are expelled from the Yeshivah because Fierman was caught writing articles which were considered heretical. They return to their home town and, after a short stay, Fierman goes to another small community in a desperate effort to repent and continue his rabbinic studies. This effort is a catastrophic failure; he has completely lost his faith. The divine source of the sacred literature has died for him, and all the years he spent in study seem wasted. The absolute standard of truth falls apart like a house of cards, and Fierman spiritually collapses with it.

Everything he has been, he has been because of the religious lore. Now he realizes his own responsibility for his past as well as the responsibility of the literary environment in shaping him.

> Yes, my past is a past dark, miserable and lowly because it is mine, the past of a man like myself; but in a certain measure, I also am what I am because I have a past like this, a past of pettiness, a past dark, and miserable and lowly.[21]

The void created in Fierman's life by the crisis of faith is filled as it was formed by the light of secular studies. He returns to N. as an extern, and tries to find teachers who will prepare him for university examinations. However, his desire to study geography and mathematics is not great; he turns instead to literature. But now, the books of the Haskalah are replaced by the works of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Pushkin, Lermontov, Turgenev, Chekov and Gorky. Even before he has completely mastered Russian, Fierman samples the great masters. His pronunciation of the name Turgenev is so awkward that it evokes laughter from his friends.[22]

Here is the twist: instead of the traditional sources of Judaism, Russian literature becomes the standard of values and the goal to which Fierman devotes himself. He has not changed personally; he is still ugly, sexually repulsive and shy. But the books, in whose light he sees himself, have changed. Even when there is no disagreement on a particular issue between Russian and Jewish religious literature, it is Russian literature that he considers authoritative.

Yet much is different in Russian literature. It does not have the divine certainty which once stood firm behind the Bible and Talmud. There is no agreement as to truth. Pushkin and Lermontov can disagree with Pisarev on the most fundamental issues and there is no criterion for deciding who is right.

Emotional security cannot be found in these writers.

Russian literature is also "foreign", not only because of the language barrier, but primarily because of the society with which it is associated. Its themes are related to a Christian culture; aesthetics and beauty are emphasized rather than justice and righteousness. Now Fierman can no longer justify himself by appealing to God's beneficent providence. He is simply ugly and awkward; he will never be bold, courageous, gallant. To accept the values of the new literature means assimilation--in dress, in action, in thought. Long after leaving the Yeshivah, he cannot bring himself to change his obviously Jewish attire and unkempt appearance.

> Nothing changed also when I went forth to the "air of the world"...my lack of attention to my external appearance and to my clothes didn't change, a matter which the Yeshivah developed in me to (the point of) fanaticism. A long time passed without my being separated even from my long Kapotah. I quite understood, however, that a "European must dress in European clothes", but it seemed to me that my form would be even more ridiculous were I to change my attire. Also the direction of my thoughts on beauty did not change, only instead of there being two sides within me, which made use of Biblical passages, statements of our revered sages, and chapters of books of interpretation and investigation and morals, there stood afterwards one against the other: the spirit pervading the novels of Turgenyev and the poems of Pushkin and Lermontov on the one side, and the articles of Pisarev, Shelgunov and their associates, destroyers of aesthetics during the 60's, on the other side...Yes, this

> matter does not have to influence the conditions of my life. I am decisive evidence for the viewpoint of Judaism. Righteousness is the principle and not beauty. There is no value to external animal beauty... I shouldn't feel any guilt that I don't delight by my appearance whoever sees me. Pisarev says...however it is easy for him to speak thusly; he himself is a man of stature, beautiful to praise, but I...Certainly beauty is an asset for a man...sufficient for me is the recognition that an ugly person can also be a good man...no, only the ugly person (can be good).[23]

The problem of literatures is almost unbearable for Fierman. Because of the crisis of faith, Russian authors have replaced traditional sources. But Fierman can not change himself sufficiently to acquire the image which they present. His outlook is "Jewish", but Judaism is dead. The closing line, that only the ugly can be good, is a pitiful, futile outcry for only in Jewish sources is ugliness related to goodness--and these books are dust and ashes. The anti-hero is a Jewish type cut off from Judaism, but also unable to become what Russian literature desires him to be.

Simmons explains Dostoyevsky's characters as the products of a situation similar to that of Fierman:

> In his great novels he is usually concerned with characters who belong to the intelligentsia, and he depicts their spiritual life at a time when they are tearing themselves away from the people...explaining both the spiritual and intellectual conflicts of his heroes and their

> unusual actions...These intellectuals become introspective and take refuge in their thoughts and dreams.[24]

However, Dostoyevsky's anti-hero, the Underground Man, who is also the negation of a proper literary type, is really the result of a universal human situation.

> Why, to tell long stories, showing how I have spoiled my life through morally rotting in my corner, through lack of fitting environment, through divorce from real life, and rankling spite in my underground world, would certainly not be interesting; a novel needs a hero, and all the traits for an anti-hero are expressly gathered together here, and what matters most, it all produces an unpleasant impression, for we are all divorced from life, we are all cripples, every one of us, more or less.[25]

Brenner wrote Bahoref through the eyes of Jeremiah Fierman. Fierman had not always been an anti-hero; as we have seen, in his early years he was a deeply religious child. Only because of the religious crisis and the problem of literatures did he assume this role. Consequently, the point of view expressed in the novel is that of the anti-hero as he looked back over his life in the perspective of what he had become. For example, commenting on his former religiosity he writes:

> Now, of course, it is impossible for me to penetrate the extent of my mood at that time. Now it seems to me that my "diligence" was always external, for appearances only: my lips would move, but my thoughts were far from "Leprosy and Plagues". But it is possible that I am deciding this only from my inability now to understand the possibility of chewing in faith all this mass of straw, and I forget the influence of the surroundings, the power of habit--and the power of a wall of nails leaning on a tender child.[26]

Employing this point of view, Brenner is able to effect a constant tone of ironic realism. Brenner's realism, which is almost photographic in quality, becomes ironic when he imposes the outlook of the anti-hero on what is being described. Fierman, who is terribly aware of his own defects, is also sensitive to those in the world about him. Thus he "sees through" appearances and reveals hypocrisy, superficiality and self-deception at their base. The event of his parents' wedding is heavy with ironic realism.

> And it was not long before the new couple, accompanied by all the inhabitants of the city, with drums and groom's attendants and burning candles and R. Hanan Natan, the rabbi of the town, stood next to the dung heap in the court-yard of the Klaus, under an embroidered curtain spread over four poles. Mazel Tov![27]

The same tone is closely related to the physical description of the characters. As a child Fierman thought of his mother as the symbol of Jewish womanhood.

> ...just as our writers of the well known variety describe her...she is modest, she is proper, she is tolerant, she is devoted to her husband and children...she...in a word, she is - "the Jewish Woman"!

As an adult, however, he viewed her as

> a Jewish woman, sure: a miserably poor Jewess suffering afflictions.

Then the physical description:

> She is dwarfish. Her face becomes smaller and smaller toward its bottom and filled with little holes, traces of chickenpox. The breast is sagging. Her eyes are not large, but soft, and in the moist blackness of her pupils glints some declaration of sadness which eats your heart out.[28]

The vivid physical qualities of Brenner's characters reflect their internal condition as understood by the anti-hero. To Fierman, his mother is a sad, miserable creature, and she looks the part.

Fierman views other characters with the same honesty. He understands them for what they really are. These characters have often been called types rather than well-formed personalities[29]: the religious type, the revolutionary type, the assimilated type, and the Zionist type. Certainly those which will be discussed have views on life which reflect differing ideologies, but it is not the ideologies per se which interest Brenner. The characters with their various positions are important. Do they, as human beings, measure up to the values they proclaim; do their theories stand the test of real life; and can they, embodying their various positions, remain firm under the penetrating criticism of the anti-hero?

These are vital questions for Brenner. Fierman is rootless, suspended between two literatures representing two worlds and unable to achieve the ideal of either. If there

are people whose lives exhibit honesty and meaning, he can adopt their ways as a substitute for contradictory literary values. Characters represent possibilities for Fierman. Each one is treated with profound seriousness; consequently, weaknesses are bitterly exposed.

His typological treatment of characters has parallels in Russian literature. Simmons comments on Dostoyevsky's use of characters in Brothers Karamazov:

> Like symbols in a modern allegory of life, the characters are personifications of ideas, but personifications treated so realistically that we effect a willing suspension of disbelief and accept them as living human beings...[30]

In Bahoref, and in all of Brenner's other novels, minor characters are delineated very carefully. Each one is named, and the author gives us some information about him, no matter how insignificant he is. Tolstoy seems to have shared a similar concern, although the motivation was perhaps different.

> The technique of giving even minor characters proper names and of saying something about the lives they lead outside their brief appearance in the novel is simple enough, but the effect is far reaching...Tolstoy reverenced the integrity of the human personality and would not reduce it to a mere implement even in fiction.[31]

Finally, Brenner is an expert at introducing his characters

by an indirect method. Dostoyevsky in Crime and Punishment presents Sonia Marmeladov through her father's confession to Raskolnikov in a bar. In a like manner, Brenner has Fierman mention at least five characters (Narman, Lerner, Obadiah, Borsef, Elimelech the Lender) long before they have direct relevance to the plot. These names are dropped carefully while Fierman recalls some incident or muses on his own problems. Sufficient information is given in that split second thought to arouse our curiosity about these characters. The mystery thus created is later solved when they do appear. This technique used throughout Brenner's works becomes more highly refined. In Shkol V'Kishalon, one individual introduced in this manner never enters the scene directly, yet his presence is constantly felt.

Over twenty-five characters appear in Bahoref. Nearly all are subject to the point of view expressed through ironic realism. Most of them function symbolically; some are presented through indirection. However, only a few can be classed as significant in Fierman's development, and they will be treated now.

The description of Fierman's father is unquestionably the most biting in the entire novel. This man's dominant quality is his ability to adapt himself to any situation.

> In his Torat-HaHaim (law of life) it is written: Everything goes according to the custom of the surroundings. With a Hasid, act the Hasid; and with a Maskil, act the Maskil. Be soft as a reed, and before a "Prince"--like wax.[32]

The Hebrew, im hehasid tithased v'im hamaskil titmaskel, is filled with alliteration. The effect of the sounds is parallel to the meaning: there is a smooth musical quality like the gliding movements of one who constantly ingratiates himself with others.

The purpose of adaptability is improvement in status; Fierman's father is trying to enter Jewish upper class society. With that goal foremost in his mind he uses whatever means available to achieve it. His cruelty to his wife is excessive; the behemah, or domestic animal, as he calls her, does not understand what he is trying to do. He exploits his son mercilessly, building himself up on the boy's reputation as a good Talmud student.

Consequently, the expression Torat-HaHaim describing the father's outlook is highly ironic. The phrase, "be soft as a reed", is a quotation from the Talmud referring to the proper conduct of a scholar.[33] In order to preserve the Torah, one should be sufficiently pliable to be able to withstand changes of fortune and to weather historical crises. Here,

the quality of adaptability is the father's slogan, not for the preservation of the Torah, but as a rule of thumb for raising his own social position. Fierman, because of the rigid nature of his own personality can not accept his father's goals. He is unpliable, and follows the dictates of his heart even when they lead to the most tragic results. Conscience is his own law of life, and he follows it as strictly as if it were Torah. The only positive quality of the anti-hero, honesty, will not permit him to deceive himself. Association with the rich or the acquisition of wealth are hollow goals.

For many years, Fierman's companion was Obadiah, the Rabbi's son. The two studied together as children and later both went to the Yeshivah. Because Obadiah's minor transgressions were overlooked by his otherwise strict father, he never felt the terrible oppression of the law nor experienced a severe crisis of faith. When Obadiah tells Fierman of the defects in the latter's character, we learn by inference that Obadiah's own conception of what is proper includes friendliness, the ability to make a nice impression on others, stability, awareness of one's material interest, and devotion to an unquestioned conception of what is valuable.[34]

Obadiah refuses to accompany Fierman who is returning to N. for a secular education . He sees no need to abandon

either his home, in which he will be provided for, or the religious literature with which he has grown up. The road Obadiah chooses is that of compromise and security. In later years, he plays the part of the Maskil, teaching Hebrew and Enlightenment in the name of the Zionist movement. He remains nominally Orthodox, and preaches national revival only after that position is no longer extreme. Finally, Obadiah accepts a match made by his father with a girl who is physically deformed. A large dowry is offered, and he will be comfortable for the rest of his life.

Obadiah represents a definite possibility for Fierman, albeit a possibility which must be rejected. Fierman has already gone too far in his alienation from the religious life for him to make compromises. Without God can there be any future at all for Jewish life? Fierman eventually has to take Hebrew students, but only to earn enough money to study abroad. Zionism, as we will see later, does not appeal to him because people like Obadiah are connected with it. Finally, just as Fierman has refused his father's ideal in which wealth is sign of status, he also feels that Obadiah's acceptance of this arranged marriage means compromising his integrity. Comfort as a value is too ludicrous for one who has suffered the trials of an anti-hero. Ironically, Obadiah, by his actions, fulfills the very goals which Fierman's father has envisioned for his own son.

When Fierman returns to N., he acquires a new circle of friends. These people are an odd assortment of young Jews, all dedicated to a variety of cynical or revolutionary ideologies. The spokesman for the group is Himovitz, in whose room Fierman finds a temporary home. While Fierman cherishes a certain kinship with him, Himovitz's position is unacceptable.

> For Himovitz everything is clear and evident. Two words, "Bourgeois" and "Proletariat" swallow up his entire existence. All the questions of life are included by him in the question of work and capital (property), or, more correctly, he has no other question in life...in his eyes everything is included in this question, which swallowed up his entire life. I, oye, I can't explain everything to myself in this way.[35]

Fierman previously noticed a glint of foolishness in Himovitz's eyes.[36] It is the foolishness of trying to explain all life on the basis of one "idea". Although Fierman at one time was drawn to this same position, he now sees in it:

> ...much Don Quixotism, confusion of concepts, commonness, ugliness..superficiality, foolishness, hidden lack of faith, a relationship not proceeding from the heart, peculiar and strange submission to the members of society who are not Jewish...[37]

The popular version of the socialist-revolutionary ideology can not account for the individual and personal, which are part of the very fabric of the anti-hero's sensitivity. Fierman, who himself is unable to assimilate, can not accept Jewish self-abnegation before non-Jews. The rejection of

general socialism as a viable answer for Jewish problems is a constant theme in Brenner's early novels.

There are a number of minor characters among the group in N. who reappear with a change of name in many of the other works. They function by reinforcing the picture of the world which Fierman finds alien. By temperament, these characters are nasty, cynical, insensitive to others, over-impressed with their own importance, and filled with venom for anything hinting of Jewishness. However, among them is one very different kind of character who plays a major role in another novel and retains his name there.[38] Because of his prominence in Misaviv LaNikudah, the significance of Davidovsky in Bahoref has received little attention.

Davidovsky is like a passing shadow in this story. Of his personal characteristics we learn only that he is an intellectual with aristocratic bearing. While others hate him, Fierman considers him the only one with whom he can communicate. He often visits Davidovsky when they can be alone. They sit together, silently, in darkness, and feel some undefined purpose in the quiet repose, "some unnatural pleasure". After a time they sigh deeply and share their moods, impressions, strange moments. When others come and disturb them, "the two of us tremble without noticing and resemble slightly a lover and his beloved hiding in the thicket of the forest when people pass by".[39]

Davidovsky has no official position nor ideology. His major function seems to be that of calming Fierman in the midst of the arguing, shouting, and drinking of the others in the group. There is ever so slight a hint of homosexuality in the relationship between the two friends, and that will be taken up later. What clearly stands out is Fierman's singular respect for this passing figure.

Lerner and Rochel Moesayevna are typical of the young women who inhabit Brenner's novels and cause his major characters much grief.[40] The concern of the anti-hero for his sexual perversity forces him to look to such girls for pure love in which his problems will dissolve and his desires find unstained satisfaction.[41] Like the heroes in some of Dostoyevsky's novels Fierman is faced with two females quite different from each other.

Lerner is Himovitz's disciple, and she is devoted to her teacher. Fierman's feelings for Lerner are a mixture of love and pity. He resents Himovitz molding her into a revolutionary type. In a sense, Lerner symbolizes a poor young creature who needs compassion, and can neither be rejected nor truly loved.

Fierman is in love with Rochel, madly, helplessly, immaturely in love. She is not only sexually appealing but she also comes close to Fierman's understanding of the ideal

woman. She is soft, bright, moody; her goal in life is to study abroad in Switzerland. In a large measure, Rochel represents for Fierman the "heroine" of Russian literature. The sexual drive plus a last desperate effort to become a "hero" make his love for her one of the most profoundly tragic experiences of his life. The deep and obvious differences between them doom the relationship from the start. Though he wants her, he can no more attain his desire than become the hero he is not. Fierman never rejects Rochel directly, but in the foul act which climaxes the novel, he symbolically cuts himself off from any further contact with her.

Alexander Samuelovitch Borsef is Brenner's example of the hero. Fierman, however, understands each of Borsef's positive, hero-like qualities in terms of his own negative traits. Borsef's looks, good family background and confidence rankle him; and he sees through the false exterior under which Borsef pretends to hide "incomparable richness of soul".[42] Fierman hates the hero with his whole being and envies Borsef's physical perfections and assimilated mannerisms. He is terribly jealous of the attention Borsef receives from women, and especially from Rochel. Fierman rejects Borsef violently and unequivocally, and in so doing denies everything which this character symbolizes. Fierman's action destroys forever the possibility that he might become a "hero".

When Fierman returns to his home town after a few years of study in N., he finds that much has changed. Jewish life is no longer dominated by Orthodox Judaism. Zionism is the major force in the community. Zionism is the last possible answer for one who has cut his ties with Judaism but retains some sense of loyalty to the Jewish people. But Fierman can never become a Zionist—he knows too well what the movement really means for people. His own friends, Jacob Ovdaman and Obadiah, play their roles in Zionist activities as if it were a children's game. They join in the discussions with vigor, and send letters of correspondence far and wide to see their names published in newspapers. Their immaturity does not cloud from Fierman's eyes the evil which is at the core of this movement. The leading Zionist in town, and the most powerful member of the Jewish community is Elimelech the Lender. Elimelech makes his fortune lending public money on interest! Both childishness of its adherents and corruption of its leadership force Fierman to preclude the possibility of Zionism.

The quest of the anti-hero to find a substitute value to which he can devote himself is futile. The religious crisis which shattered his soul has also made him too sensitive to superficiality and dishonesty; others cannot stand under his critical eye. The ideologies and styles of life represented as possibilities appear empty and ineffectual when compared

with the reality. In this, Brenner's anti-hero is very close to Steiner's evaluation of Dostoyevsky's characters:

> They stand in radical antagonism to worldly utopias, to all paradigms of secular reform which would lull man's soul into a sleep of comfort and material satiety, thus banishing from it the tragic sense of life...[43]

The story of Bahoref represents the development of the anti-hero. Underlying the events and personalities in his life are a number of closely related symbols which function as internal unifying factors in the novel. These symbols have structural value in the sense that they are interwoven in the plot sequence; they also serve to reinforce the overall meaning of the novel and the impression it makes upon us.

"War" is the central image of any struggle which a character has with a particular problem. Obadiah wages war for Enlightenment and Himovitz fights the verbal battles of the revolution. These battles are very pale when they are compared to that which takes place within Fierman. His crisis of faith is represented as a war of religious and personal destruction in which the dominant symbol is the "fortified wall". It is mentioned three times:

> a) My soul...resembled a fortified wall about to fall.[44]
> (Fierman's description of himself during the second half of his Yeshivah period)

b) The stones of the fortified wall and darkness have already dashed my head as they fell away one by one. The pillars were destroyed at the foundation; decay arose and the moth has eaten my heart. Will the defective plaster that I have pasted up endure?[45]

(Fierman's remark some time after he left the Yeshivah, but before his final break with the religion).

c) Indeed, can you find fault with the Talmud which was the fortified wall of our nationality during all the days of our exile?[46]

(Obadiah's response to Fierman when the latter is on his way back to N. for secular studies).

The fortified wall has two referends; Fierman's soul (a) and the Talmud(c). We know that during Fierman's religious period his whole being was tied to the religious literature so that his identification with it was total; consequently, the soul and Talmud are one. They both begin to totter because of pillars of Talmudic law are destroyed at the base (b). God, the source of truth, wisdom and certainty, is the foundation upon which the Talmud rests, because He revealed the Law to Moses. The decay of the foundation points to the death of God for Fierman. (A related reference pictures him buried under a "great dust pile of customs, opinions, and books," and concludes that his dreams are Elohim Maytim, dead Gods).[47] When God dies, the Talmud falls and Fierman's soul collapses with the entire religious structure. The defective plaster of a lifetime devoted to rabbinic studies will not endure.

The destruction of faith is complete and extreme. Soon after, Obadiah reproves Fierman for disparaging the Talmud. He appeals to its function in preserving the Jewish people, and attempts a nationalistic justification for the preservation of the religious literature (c). But his answer has no impact on Fierman, for whom God was the authority behind the Talmud. Without God, the Talmud is rubble, straw--nothing can save it. "The absolute crisis had come!" [48]

Brenner works through the religious problem in Bahoref and consequently none of his other central characters need experience the crisis of faith in so vivid a manner. The future references to Orthodox Judiasm are always tinged with death imagery. The rootlessness of the anti-heroes by necessity always begins in a world devoid of the traditional God.

Beginning in Bahoref and throughout all his other novels, Brenner makes use of what I call animal imagery. His characters are called flies, insects, eagles, dogs, cats, beasts and other names drawn from the sub-human animate world. Davidovsky is referred to by one of the other minor characters as a Pereh, a wild ass, recalling the Biblical Ishmael, a wild ass of a man (Gen. 16,12). These various epithets serve to degrade and disparage. By classing human beings with

animals, their animal nature is delineated and they appear to be much "lower than the angels".

In a touching scene near the end of Bahoref, Fierman's little brother and sister discuss the traditional Jewish concept of "compassion to animals". (Tsaar B'alay Haim).

> Freida explains to Beryl the reason it is forbidden to make a hen sit on duck's eggs--compassion for animals. The chicks grow up and go out to swim in the river, and the mother runs back and forth on the shore as one bereft of sense...she can neither bring her beloved chicks back to her, nor can she reach them...

Then Fierman comments,

> ...and my mother listens...poor miserable hen!...[49]

This is not the first time his mother is classed as an animal. Her husband continually calls her Behemah, domestic animal. As a child, when Fierman saw his mother crying, he felt "compassion for animals" toward her. In this story the constant animal imagery deepens our sense of the pitiful condition of this woman. It shows her unable to cope with the forces which compel her son to leave and swim on the river of his own life. It puts her in contrast with her husband who treats her as chattel. She is a dumb animal, a victim of her situation.

In three of his novels, Brenner uses a device which can be traced directly to Crime and Punishment. It is what I call the "violent act".[50] In Crime and Punishment Raskolnikov

murders the old woman-money lender relatively early in the story. Fierman's action, on the other hand, comes near the conclusion of the novel. In both cases, these incidents climax an aspect of the plot and at the same time symbolize the depths of personality disintegration in the central character.

Fierman is provoked to sudden anger and jealousy. He cannot compete with Borsef who is obviously winning the affection of Rochel; nor can he countenance Borsef's slighting remarks about Himovitz, his friend. With calculating yet uncontrolled passion, Fierman spits in Borsef's face. He does this in the presence of Rochel, her father, and her brother Jacob Ovdaman. Spitting at a person is vile, it is disgusting, in any context. Here, the violent act symbolizes Fierman's absolute recognition and acceptance of his role as an anti-hero. When he spits as Borsef, he defiles the embodiment of the hero, the Jewish version of the Russian literary model. At the same time, he destroys any possibility of a relationship with Rochel, the heroine and Borsef's female complement. He has shattered his last desperate hope and let go of the one weak reed which bound him to life. This is the final and all-inclusive rejection.

The position of the violent act in Brenner's novels is usually preceded by one or more dream sequences. While summarizing significant themes, the dreams also foreshadow

subsequent events and contribute to the meaning of those events. Their function is both structural and symbolic.

In the first of the two dreams of Bahoref, Fierman finds himself traveling in a train.

> The car is filled with people: my father, Beryle my little brother, Obadiah, Kleinstein. And here is the station. Cold bursts in from some place. Everyone gets off. The car is empty. The exiting of the passengers is delayed. Something is holding it up. "Hoy, idler!"-my father rebukes me..."Why don't you get off? Get off. Find favor in the girls' eyes!"..."Not in this world!...in Germany, where I am going with her, there is Friedrich Nietzsche and he has a thick moustache, and Borsef also has a moustache like that!"

The train leaves and Fierman is alone in the station, unable to cry. But he hears his mother crying in the corner while she flicks a chicken. The conductor asks for his ticket.

> "Conductor!"-Rabbi Hanan Natan shouts— "Obadiah! It is forbidden to travel without a ticket, it is a great transgression"... And the conductor is half rabbi and half Borsef.

Jeremiah's feet are held in chains. He is told to travel alone by the youth who guards the path. "Your nose is causing the delay"...Fierman grabs the youth, and it is "she". Borsef asks for the tickets and beats him on the head.[51]

The dream symbols are very rich, as is demonstrated by the train itself. It foreshadows the train Fierman will take when he leaves N. at the very end of the story. It concretizes

Fierman's character as a spiritual wanderer, on the move to find that which will give his life meaning. Further, the train is suggestive of the sexual problem in Bahoref; its forward motion hints of the thrust toward sexual satisfaction which Fierman has constantly repressed. He is ultimately frustrated when the train stops suddenly and he is prevented from reaching his destination and desire.

The cold which bursts in is reminiscent of Fierman's complaint that without God the world is cold and lonely.[52] It is also connected with the use of winter, which will be discussed.

The father's rebuke typifies his desire that his son achieve a position of importance so that the father himself may attain a higher status. He expects that Fierman will make a worthy marriage and receive a large dowry. To do this his father encourages Fierman to become popular with the girls.

But Fierman is unwilling to accept his father's command. He sees his own life directed toward a new world, the world of secular knowledge. Germany is the symbol of that world. He is going there with "her". His last desperate attempt to reach the new world is through the love object, Rochel, who is its symbol. But Friedrich Nietzsche is also there, Nietzsche, whose concept of the "superman" must have appeared to Fierman

in a popularized version as the hero. Borsef has a moustache just like Nietzsche's; the resemblance in the dream mechanism means identification. Borsef, the hero, is also his rival for Rochel.

The train leaves the station and he is alone. He is frustrated in his desire to proceed with Rochel, the sexual object and the symbol of secular culture. He remains alone, foreshadowing the end of the story when Jeremiah does remain alone at the station. He cannot cry, as he wanted to do through the story. "Crying" and "tears" are words repeated in connection with both Jeremiah and his mother. The desire to cry brings him to consider his mother who is crying in the corner while she is flicking the chicken. Interweaving the later image of his mother as a hen who has lost her chick, her pulling feathers out of the chicken points to "pulling herself apart", because she cannot cope with him.

When the conductor asks for his ticket there is an immediate word association with an incident drawn from an almost forgotten memory. When he and Obadiah returned from the Yeshivah, Obadiah remained in his home town and became a Maskil. His father, the rabbi, resented this and called him "Conductor and Agent", using these words to express his displeasure for his son's modernistic activities.[53] In the dream, the Rabbi

tells Obadiah that it is forbidden to travel without a ticket. This is a reverse image for in reality he never permits his son to travel the road leading away from Judaism, and Obadiah remains an Orthodox Jew.

The figure of the conductor which fades into Borsef and the rabbi symbolizes the poles toward which Fierman is drawn: the world of religious values in the guise of the rabbi, and the secular assimilated world of Borsef.

But Fierman can no longer choose--he is chained to his rejection of both worlds. And so he must go on alone. There is no solution for his problem. His nose causes the delay because it represents his ugliness and his Jewishness, both of which make him repulsive to Rochel. A youth, the railroad guard, tells him to continue alone. But when he grabs the youth, the young man turns in Rochel. Previously it was Davidovsky who shared with Fierman strange moods and tender moments of communication. Perhaps the transformation of the guard into the girl parallels the transfer of Fierman's affection from Davidovsky to Rochel. In any case, she rejects him: she and Fierman have nothing in common. Finally, to reinforce the impact of the dream, Borsef asks for his ticket, the ticket of admission to the assimilated life, the ticket of the hero which Fierman does not and cannot have. He is

beaten because of his attempt to enter Borsef's world. Fierman has been defeated.

The second dream is shorter and more direct. Through it Fierman's childhood is united with his present. The unity represents what life meant for him.

> I am placed in a dirty sack. A weight of sand is on my head and heavy stones on my hands and feet. I break forth from inside the sack--- and my father beats me from above. I am--a fly playing on that young woman's cheek...she takes and cuts my wings...and the pain is like that which I felt in my childhood when I saw hell in my dreams...[54]

This dream alludes to Fierman's childhood appearance which was described earlier in the novel:

> ...The dirty and unnatural body is placed in a garment resembling a long torn sack...on the head, covered with a handkerchief...the "Tephila shel Rosh" carved from a potato... and the "Tephila shel Yad", like the other, well fastened to my arm with a string...[55]

Now, in the dream, the sack covers him entirely, shutting out the wider world. He is suffocated within the Jewish religious environment and weighed down by sand and stones, representations of the phylacteries, on head and arms. When he tries to escape he is beaten from above by his father, both his real father and his "Father in Heaven". God and father try to force Fierman into conformity, torturing him with guilt.

The fly reminds us of Jeremiah's self image of ugliness,

and his sense of inadequacy with girls. Clipping his wings may be a castration symbol, or it may be a sign of frustrated hopes. He cannot fly away with Rochel to a new life; she will not allow it. Hell, in this case, is not a symbol of tortures in the afterworld; for Fierman, hell is the life he lived.

Finally, a number of words point to the dominant symbol of the story: winter. The words are repeated over and over again: nothingness, emptiness, alienation, loneliness, forsakenness, grief, boredom, despair, desolation, purposelessness, hunger, cold. These terms form the complex out of which Fierman describes his experience. He uses them when he, as narrator, muses on his life or describes other characters and their situations. The words do not appear often in direct dialogue. Consequently, we may call them tone words; they set a tone and give the story an underlying mood.

No better image could be chosen to sum up this cluster of signs than "winter". It seems that winter is the only season in the life of the anti-hero. Though the story covers a period of years, the warmth and radiance of the other seasons are absent from it. There is no harvest nor colorful blooming countryside. The winter world is bleak and gray-black. As both a time setting and as a symbol, winter pervades the novel with its desolation and cold, but also with some-

thing more. Winter is death.

Death is one of the two final alternatives open to the anti-hero.

> In my Torah is found a verse like this: "See, before you are two paths: one against your will, and the other according to your own desire--insanity or suicide. Therefore, choose death! [56]

Compare these alternatives to the source: Deuteronomy 30,20.

> I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life that thou mayest live...

In Fierman's world, with no God, and no substitute value of any merit, a world that is hell--insanity or death are the only ones possible.

Unlike the central characters of Brenner's other major novels, Fierman does not accept insanity; however, he comes close to it. With great irony, his father screams to his face that like all the sick, Fierman considers himself healthy but everyone else mad.[57] Earlier, in an obvious allusion to Crime and Punishment where the police inspector inferred Raskolnikov's guilt, Fierman says that an inspector would declare him a murderer because of his own agitated condition.[58] He indicates by this that he is very unstable and on the verge of a mental breakdown. But Fierman is too much in control of himself to be driven mad. His denials notwithstanding, he has great strength of character.

Fierman's final struggle is really between life and death. At the end of the novel, just before leaving N. to travel to A., he writes a letter to Davidovsky. In it he speaks of his love of life and of his desire to go on in spite of all the difficulties. He never sends the letter, and with ominous ambiguity concludes it, "Tomorrow I leave this".[59]

The story closes at a railroad station. Fierman is taken off a train for not having a ticket. He leaves the station and finds a woodpile nearby. His last words are, "and I lay down. The drops of rain and snow descended to the earth".

By the very fact that Fierman "writes" his own story, we know that he has survived. Symbolically, however, the conclusion points to the choice he desires. When Fierman lies down in the snow, he chooses winter and death.

The significance of Bahoref in Brenner's development as a novelist cannot be overstressed. Only twice will Brenner depart significantly from the basic literary techniques of this work. The other major novels are only modifications and expansions of the first person form. Characters who first appear in Bahoref reappear with great frequency. The anti-hero is the model for all his central figures. In the other works the anti-heroes are not faced with Fierman's religious problem, but they possess the same complex of personality

traits. Women always retain an important role in the lives of these characters, acting as images of what might help mental balance and also as real objects for twisted sexual drives. The minor characters continue to function in a double capacity as persons and as symbols of well defined ideologies. Because Brenner moved from Russia to Palestine, there is a change of local color in his later novels, but the thematic content remains constant. His work evolves rather than changes. In the following chapters I will deal specifically with how Brenner develops and modifies the forms and themes which are first found in Bahoref.

CHAPTER III

Growing Sensitivity: Form and Anti-hero

This chapter will deal with three areas which reflect Brenner's growing sensitivity as an artist: the form of the novels and its implication, the evolution of the anti-hero, and the function of women in the life of the anti-hero. I will attempt to show that there is a direct relation between the formal organization of the works and the author's broadening concern with human problems.

Brenner's second major work was Misaviv LaNikudah, which appeared in 1904-5 in the periodical HaShiloach. Bialik, then an editor of the periodical, wrote Brenner that this novel would establish him as the foremost Hebrew writer of the day.[1] He concluded by saying that he considered Misaviv LaNikudah to be the continuation and completion of Bahoref. Bialik's opinion has clouded some very obvious and important differences between the two novels.

Misaviv LaNikudah is the first of two instances in which Brenner uses the third person form entirely. Jeremiah Fierman "writes" his own memoirs, but someone else tells us the story of Jacob Abramson, the central figure in this work.

One implication of the third person novel is the increase in dramatic effect. Instead of dialogue and description being subsumed under the larger category of recollection, they appear to the reader unmediated by the vehicle of memory. The action begins immediately at the railroad station where Abramson takes leave of his former pupil Solomon Frankel.[2] Even the descriptive sequences, either of external objects or of Abramson's internal thoughts, have a dramatic quality because they confront us directly or through a mind which we perceive directly.

The most important advantage of this type of novel is that the author's point of view need not be identical with the outlook of his main character. Since the author is omniscient, he may reveal the inner thoughts of a number of characters and judge them by standards which he holds independently of the novel itself. It is my contention that Brenner's point of view in this work is not represented by Jacob Abramson, even though Abramson does convey the central message of the novel.

Misaviv LaNikudah bears the same tone of ironic realism as Bahoref. Here, however, this tone does not emanate from the personality of the main figure. Abramson has some qualities of the anti-hero, but he is a much more positive person. As we shall see later, he possesses goals and a certain enthusiasm

for life which Fierman lacks. Consequently, ironic realism cannot be traced to factors internal to the novel; its source is the author himself.

Brenner does not simply impose his point of view from above: he cleverly and briefly involves himself on a fictional level with his characters. I believe that the author enters this story momentarily, disguised as Mr. Becker, the secretary of the local chapter of the "Builders of Zion". Becker is one of six who volunteer to serve as librarian of the small cabinet of books, the cherished possession of the Zionist club. Brenner lists the names of the other volunteers and concludes with, "the writer of these columns, that is to say, the secretary, Mr. Becker, Bichvodo uV'atzmo".[3]

It might be argued that the reference, "writer of these columns", indicates Becker's function as the secretary of the organization. But then why the words, Bichvodo uV'atzmo, which are added, at first glance, only to increase the bite of the sarcastic description. Such words might be used by a man disparaging himself for some foolish act or shameful statement he has made. With chagrin he employs this expression to indicate the reverse of what he really is since he has conducted himself without honor. Brenner's introduction of Becker reveals the trait of self-hatred, so common to the

anti-hero. Similarly, the words, "the writer of these columns", do not refer to the secretary as such, but rather are a sarcastic euphemism for the writer of the columns of the story itself. Becker's "poisón smile" and description as a pereh, a wild ass, reinforce this impression.[4] Finally, the short ominous statement, "and Becker knew", which expresses his awareness of how people felt about him, suggest the possibility that he will repay their enmity by describing them in this novel with the full power of his ironic perception.

Brenner probably would not have gone into such detail with a minor character like Becker unless he had a special purpose in mind. Becker is the author's device for identifying and conveying a point of view which has little relation to Abramson's struggles as a Hebrew writer, the story of Misaviv LaNikudah.

The two minor works, Shanah Ahat and MayAlef ad Mem, are organized primarily on the pattern of the first person novel. They are based thematically on Brenner's first hand experiences in the Russian army and in Russian prisons, and retain the tone of ironic realism with only slight variations. In Shanah Ahat, the unidentified narrator relates an autobiographical story which he heard from a veteran of the Russian army, Hanina Mintz. The introduction of the narrator has no

particular artistic value here since the tone remains constant whether Mintz[5] or the narrator[6] is speaking; both sound like the anti-hero.

MayAlef ad Mem is told entirely in the first person by a young man who is being sent by prison trains back to the Pale of Settlement for having traveled in the Russian interior without a passport. He has revolutionary tendencies, and when he is first captured his tone is brash and "chummy". Like the lower class English gangster with a flair for the literary, he tries to gain our affection with such phrases as "my brothers and friends", "as you know", "but listen..."[7] He impresses us as flippant, informal; and the use of twisted Biblical allusions adds to this image. However, as the novel progresses, the tone changes and becomes more somber and bitterly ironic as the reality of prison life is made manifest to him. These two minor novels are interesting because of the social and political picture they reveal; however, they do not exhibit any marked improvements in literary form nor developments in the author's basic outlook.

While Brenner was in England, he experimented with the drama and published a few plays in HaM'orer. The plays are important for us because of their formal influence on his next novel Bayn Mayim L'Mayim, the only other work composed

entirely in the third person. Brenner now exploits this form to the fullest measure. Unlike Misaviv LaNikudah, Bayn Mayim L'Mayim contains little descriptive material; settings are quickly and effectively delineated and action is the dominant characteristic. A playwright would not be hard pressed to convert this story for the stage because it is already so rich in dialogue.

Because of the predominance of dialogue, the author is restricted to simple physical descriptions of his characters, and cannot explore their minds at length. Even the interior monologue of the central character as he contemplates suicide is so convincing as speech that we forget that he is communing only with himself.[8] The tone of ironic realism, usually interwoven with character descriptions, is peculiarly absent from this novel. In addition there is no evidence which would identify Brenner with any of the characters, including Saul Gamzu, the main figure.

For the first time the reader is forced to make his own conclusions about rather highly ambiguous people. Unlike any of the previous works, most of the characters here have a spontaneity which is quite refreshing. Some of them may be unsympathetic, but their own qualities are responsible for that rather than an all-pervasive point of view imposed upon them.

Brenner does not incorporate this major technical and artistic achievement into his next work, Mikan UMikan. As in Shanah Ahat, a narrator is used to introduce someone else's autobiography. The narrator remarks that the author's style possesses photographic realism, a comment which partially indicates the point of view to be expressed in this novel. Then the first person author of the impressions which comprise Mikan UMikan says of himself:

> Yes, my past, my past. Again the same reckoning, the same reckoning: kingly honor and heroic power were not in it (my past); incidents of earth-shaking revolution and victorious escapes from prison were not in it; gatherings with applause from thousands of persons were not in it; grandiose endangering of life and supernatural miracles were not in it. And on a lower level; arms of dancers never embraced me; I never hunted in the jungles of Africa; not even trips to the other side of the Jordan.[9]

Here is the anti-hero again with his unexciting and eventless life. However the expected tone of ironic realism is modified by a deep sympathy for the plight of the Jewish people. There is an easing in the severity of the author's point of view.

In 1920, nine years after Mikan UMikan, Brenner finished his last work, Shkol V'Kishalon. While the bulk of the novel is written in the third person form, it opens with an explanation of the story's origin. On a ship, before his

death, a sick, unhappy man gives to the narrator a satchel of papers containing his personal history. The narrator uses these documents as the basis for writing a tragic novel.

The narrator tells us his point of view in his brief introduction:

> Afflictions of the unfortunate man, one must imagine, shall remain forever, and those who commit suicide or become insane because they cannot bear the shame of their wretched private lives will chance to exist even in the most glorious times...[10]

Men, unhappy men, suffer from the shameful acts and thoughts of their own private lives. Using the device of an anonymous narrator, Brenner's fully developed conception that all men are victims of their own circumstances allows him to deal broadly with almost all the characters. They must confront in their own ways the same terrible realities which face Ezekiel Haifetz, the main figure in the story. Haifetz has many of the traits of the anti-hero, but his outlook does not dominate the story. Although Brenner can never free himself entirely from using the tone of ironic realism, this work does contain a genuinely sympathetic understanding of human beings. It is Brenner's most personal and tragic creation.

Except for Bayn Mayim L'Mayim, the novels preceding Shkol V'Kishalon express a point of view which prejudges and

condemns all characters as false and self-deceiving to their very core. The honesty which reveals and mocks human frailties often seems out of place and artificial. At the end of a period of twenty years as a novelist, Brenner himself seems repelled by his own sarcasm and is able at last to pity rather than mock human weaknesses. His eye continues to probe, but his mind no longer condemns so harshly.

Brenner's appreciation of the nature of the human condition can be traced not only in the form of his novels, but also through the parallel internal development of the anti-hero. What happens to this type through the years is a striking example of a very limited character who becomes representative of all men. Turning again to Brenner's earliest novels, our examination will center on the evolution of the anti-hero, with emphasis on his own concerns and his relations with women.

There are minor differences between Fierman and his conceptual alternative Jacob Abramson. While both are distinct products of situations within Judaism, Abramson represents a semi-secular nationalistic response to the breakdown of traditional values. He is a writer who is devoted to Hebrew literature as the vehicle for the physical and spiritual redemption of the Jewish people. In Bahoref, young Fierman

had envisioned himself as a compiler of religious codes and commentaries, and later wrote articles about nationalism and enlightenment.[11] But nowhere does he exhibit Abramson's almost religious confidence in the efficacy of Hebrew literature to evoke a renaissance of Jewish life.

> Behold, the ice of the long black exile has already been shaken. The sun, in its glory, has risen to light the earth and them that dwell therein...the people yet lives...it will yet return firm and erect, free men upon its country and land...and he, he, the man in whose girdle is the pen of the scribes to rebuke and to comfort, to chasten and to strenghten, to awaken the sleepers and to make hearts tremble- he goes before them at the head of the line. The spirit of Second Isaiah speaks with him, and his word is on his tongue.[12]

Abramson sees himself as a literary prophet chosen to lead his people. The identification with the Second Isaiah (is Brenner humoring us with his knowledge of Biblical criticism?) is apt; the task is to chasten and comfort, but primarily to give hope for the future.

Here is a positive, life affirming occupation and program. When Abramson's personality begins to disintegrate it is because doubts are cast on both the validity of his role and the future existence of the Jewish people. Abramson is forced into insanity because his outlook is so very positive, and he is unwilling to accept the historical verdict that his

is the last generation of Hebrew writers. He is tied to modern Hebrew literature as was Fierman's to the Talmud, he too is an anti-hero in a semi-parochial Jewish world.

At this stage of artistic development, Brenner remains restricted in his portrayal of the anti-hero and bound to the use of ironic realism. He can only develop central characters whose interests are similar to his own; that is, who are also men of literature. In his first two novels there are no "round" figures except the anti-hero; all others are limited to set patterns of behavior because Brenner is unable to imagine them otherwise. The function of women in these novels is instructive; they never become real personalities, either in themselves or for the anti-hero.

In Misaviv LaNikudah, for example, Abramson, like Fierman before him, is conscious that his soul feels drawn to two vastly different worlds: the Jewish and the universal. He believes that this inner division can be healed only by the woman he loves, Hava Blumin. In his mind the girl has a therapeutic function, and he makes no effort at all to understand her beyond his own needs. Hava is instrumental in bringing on Abramson's insanity for the very reason that she is different from him. Her political orientation is socialist-revolutionary and she has no appreciation of his life's work

as a Hebrew writer. She cannot heal him because she represents the opposing extreme in his own personality, and the hope he places in her is doomed to disappointment. As a character in her own right, Hava Blumin does not greatly impress the reader; Brenner joins Abramson in being unable to conceive of her as a fully developed personality.

In all subsequent novels except Mikan UMikan, the direct connection of the anti-hero to literature disappears, and there is a growing variety of central types. Since the characters in the two minor novels are placed in the exceptional situations of army and prison, we will turn directly to the next important figure, Saul Gamzu in Bayn Mayim L'Mayim. Unlike either Fierman or Abramson, Gamzu is a school teacher. While he is concerned with books and himself is writing an anthology for children, he is committed totally to Jewish education rather than literature. The setting of the story in Palestine places him in a context in which his educational and cultural concerns might be satisfied. Further while the poem at the beginning of the story has symbolic significance in the plot structure, poetry itself is only of passing interest for its author. The poet David Yaffa, Gamzu's friend, is consumed by a passion for women and not for literature![13]

In the same way that Brenner can expand his horizons to

create a new kind of anti-hero, so he has gained sufficient experience to allow other characters to develop more fully, particularly the women. The crisis of the plot in Bayn Mayim L'Mayim is entirely related to the onesided love of Gamzu for P'nina. He is a devoted but desparately lonely teacher who needs permanence in his relationship with a women to satisfy his own needs. Gamzu's choice of P'nina for a wife is completely incomprehensible unless we realize that he has no conception of the girl's wild and promiscuous character. His middle-class desires to establish a home and have chidren with her must meet failure. In the first novel which is free of the tone of ironic realism, and in which the central character is no longer bothered by the problem of literature, Brenner creates a woman who is almost, though not completely real. Nevertheless, the central character cannot comprehend what this woman represents, he is still limited to his own selfish needs.

The last of Brenner's anti-heroes is Ezekiel Haifetz in Shkol V'Kishalon. Haifetz is particularly burdened with problems of sexual guilt and has never had a satisfactory relationship with a woman. With respect to the literary problem, however, we are surprised to remember that Haifetz bequeathed a diary to the narrator since there is no indication anywhere in the novel that he ever wrote anything. He is

alternately a member of a collective farm, a wandering and starving student, a minor secretary in a clothing factory, again a farm hand and a bookkeeper, but nowhere a writer. The introduction to Shkol V'Kishalon is, I suggest, an inadvertent regression on Brenner's part to a situation he created long before, but which has little in common with Haifetz. In reality, the problem of literatures has disappeared from the make up of the anti-hero.

The author now creates a female character who is as real as any of his anti-heroes. The relationship between Haifetz and his cousin Esther is not based on a deep appreciation of the other partner. The complication in the story arises because both use one another as objects to fulfill their separate desires. Esther slavishly serves Haifetz because she is as sick emotionally as he is, and she can no longer remain alone and unloved. He allows the relationship to continue because he desires the attention she lavishes on him and is not courageous enough to tell her of his impotence. Both are deceiving themselves, but Haifetz's sin is the graver because at least he is aware of her need to be loved. When Esther finally rejects him, he comes to appreciate the full extent of her feelings for him. Simulatenously, Esther realizes that she cannot use him as a tool because she despises him too much. This mutual recognition is the first of its kind in Brenner's

work, and its dramatic expression is achieved only after a long development. The transformation of the anti-hero from Fierman to Haifetz and the relation of these characters to their women suggest that Brenner finally came to realize that suffering is the portion of all sensitive men and not just of the uprooted intellectual or artist.

CHAPTER IV

Structure

Before beginning an analysis of the structure of Brenner's novels, it is necessary to define the meaning of the term "structure" as used here. I take it to refer to elements which combine to form the underlying foundation of a novel. Specifically, this means the settings, both physical and natural, in which action takes place, the patterns or special usage of language; and the rhythm or tempo of the plot's unfolding. Using this definition, I will examine the structural peculiarities which recur rather uniformly in the novels under discussion.

The primary setting which Brenner uses is the city, whose atmosphere or color pervades both character and plot. Tindall's remark that "the city is a common image for our condition or our desire",[1] may be taken as an insight into structure as well as symbol. For example, the Russian cities, which Brenner signifies only by a letter of the alphabet, are the settings in which the anti-hero leads his nearly anonymous life.

In the first two novels, the city is the hub of education,

both rabbinic and secular. Students and writers like Fierman and Abramson move there for work, freedom, and intellectual stimulation. It is also the home of the fiery intellectuals who consume themselves in discussions of economic and class war. Finally, Jewish life is concentrated in the city where poverty and spiritual decay go hand in hand.

Steiner describes the impact of the city on literary circles in the last century:

> What readers and spectators of the mid-nineteenth century knew and feared was the encroaching vastness of the city-particularly when the recurrent cause of the industrial revolution had filled it with dark slums and the visage of hunger... But of all the chroniclers of the metropolis in its spectral and savage guises, Dostoyevsky was pre-eminent.[2]

Brenner builds his own image of the city on lines indicated by Dostoyevsky; the following backdrop of Abramson's attempted suicide is strongly reminiscent of a similar incident in Crime and Punishment:

> He stood on the bridge and looked into the water. Late evening...Black were the heavens above and black was the water below...He froze and the waves of the river trembled...Silence and gray-blackness were round about. The sound of soft small footsteps, like the footsteps of a lost woman, were heard from afar, from afar... The distant footsteps came near. An elderly women who sells her body for bread and drops of brandy, passed. She was drunk, swayed, and there were no words in her mouth...[3]

Even in the Hebrew novel, the darkness of the night, the river, and the passing prostitute are signs of the city.

Once Brenner takes up residence in Palestine, the action of his novels in the main shifts to Jerusalem; however, European cities still play an important structural role. Paris, Vienna, and Warsaw are interjected as beacons of culture, Bohemianism, and sexual freedom drawing the disappointed and the weary away from danger and hardship in Palestine.[4] The brightly lighted theater with its anti-Semitic play in Warsaw, or Jewish control of prostitution in Buenos Aires form the setting at one remove from the center of the novels, of moral degeneration in general and Jewish society. Finally, Chicago, with its giant industrial complex, is the background of a vicious struggle for life.[5] The cities outside Palestine lure and repulse: they are ever present as an alternative to which one may flee for freedom or meet unexpected bestiality.

Jerusalem, however, is a different kind of city; it is the center and embodiment of physical and spiritual sickness. The plague which afflicts both the old and new sections of Jerusalem, in Bayn Mayim L'Mayim, gives an eerie tone of death to the otherwise youthful quality of modern Palestinian life. In Shkol V'Kishalon, Haifetz is brought to Jerusalem

because he is sick, and he acknowledges his condition by identifying himself with the city of sickness: "now I will be a complete Jerusalemite".[6] The courtyard of the general hospital where he is being treated for his hernia represents the city as a whole, where sickness is the norm rather than the exception.[7] The image is reinforced by the reiteration of stone imagery; the dead rock of the surroundings seems to reflect back the unhealthy atmosphere.[8]

Sickness also describes the mental and spiritual state of the inhabitants of the Holy City. In the most grotesque sequence of all his writings, Brenner describes in Bayn Mayim L'Mayim the spiritual degeneration of Jerusalem through the wedding of Baruch the Golem and the blind orphan girl, which takes place under a Black Huppa.[9] The wedding is arranged by the city fathers and the rabbinate as an expiatory rite to bring the plague to an end. Another prop on this stage of sickness is the wailing wall; Orthodox Judaism, the dead religion, inflicts even the most revered site with its own decay. No one works in Jerusalem, and the city survives on charity collected from Jewish communities throughout the world. Perhaps Jews do not come here any longer to die; they do come, however, with their illnesses to the place of sickness, and slowly deteriorate. The city is the larger setting for the stories, and often is illusive in its influence,

hidden behind more immediate surroundings.

After writing Bahoref, Brenner seems to have perfected the technique of describing the immediate background through which he gives greater depth to character and plot. In Bahoref, for example, we always know where Fierman is, but we rarely see him in the midst of distinct objects which set him in relief. Even the vivid description of Rav Hanan Natan in his room surrounded by his books is more of a still life than the staging to which I refer.[10]

Beginning with Misaviv LaNikudah, the author carefully describes each place within which a story unfolds. The scenes of his novels now change like acts of a play, and each serves to reinforce action or mood and to highlight character.

The setting of the dramatic action which opens Misaviv LaNikudah is a railway station, a center of confusion and excitement.[11] Abramson is the typical traveler, expressing his nervous anticipation through excessive gaiety and puns on Biblical and Rabbinic verses. The inside of the railroad car provides a slightly different setting for the biting picture of two Jewish merchants who barricade themselves from other passengers behind a wall of luggage.[12] Once the train begins to move, however, it becomes a sealed container encompassing a microcosm of the Jewish world in the Pale of Settlement. The merchants tell stories; an old man tries

to organize a quorum for prayer; other travelers are bored, yawn, ask the name of the coming station. Abramson sees this humanity before him, but he also looks out the window, and the passing countryside triggers a flow of memories of the recent months. This is the setting in which Brenner supplies us with background information necessary to an understanding of the plot. The rear platform of the train is a side stage, a substitute balcony upon which the young man muses about Hava Blumin, and considers the physical, sexual, and psychological problems connected with his love for her.

While the train is a stage upon which certain events take place, the various rooms and homes which Brenner describes not only provide a background for action but also reflect the character of those who live in them. Abramson becomes a lodger with the family of his friend Uriel Davidovsky in these surroundings:

> The room wasn't small in length, but narrow and strange, and had only one not very wide window. The wall on the right of the entrance was painted blue-grey and crowned with cobwebs at the top, and on the left— a wall made of boards, a partition between this room and the dining room, warped a bit, and covered with green and dotted paper. The landlady...raised the glass lamp in her hand toward the wall— and the shadows of blurred pictures, hung there in disorder, moved and the heads of rabbis...and generals...with their gold epaulets appeared.[13]

Here Abramson lived and worked on his article and eventually went insane. The room is long and narrow, just as its occupant whose outlook is confined to the problems of the Jewish people. It has one small window, like Abramson's soul which receives light only from the dwindling source of Hebrew journals. The cobwebs on the walls give the room an atmosphere of death and decay which is indicative of its former occupant, Davidovsky. In this connection, later we learn that "strange fire" flares up in Davidovsky's eyes when he hears that Abramson has rented his room.[14] What this means specifically is unclear, but we are given to feel an intimate tie between the character and his former quarters.

Similarly, the room in which Davidovsky is presently living:

> In the corners of the lonely square room dark shadows stretched out, and the room in its entirety gave the impression of an ascetic's tent removed from the vanities of the world.[15]

He is an ascetic, and the shadows represent the desire for death which is overtaking him.

The two centers of opposing ideological groups are the home of Isaac Rivkash which contains the Zionist library, and the dwelling of Menasha Katzman where the externs and socialists gather. Brenner uses an auditory rather than a

visual device for indicating what takes place at the former residence: the voices of the Zionist youth arguing and fighting with each other, the voice of Rivkash's wife complaining that the Zionists use her home free of charge, and the voices of crying children who attend the school which Isaac conducts.[16] Each of these voices adds a sense of confusion and commotion; the three combined provide the framework for a further description of activities at this center of Jewish life.

Katzman's dwelling has a much different flavor and is described in detail:

> Menasha Katzman's small apartment, in one of whose three rooms Hava Blumin lived, stood on a deserted street, far from the center of town. This apartment, one story high, was built strangely: narrow on the inside and broad on the outside; its walls filled with crevices and cracks, and their plaster falling apart; two dirty windows facing the street, low and near the ground... a wondrous barn.[17]

The windows are so placed that Katzman, a clown by nature, can dive directly into the apartment without going through the door. The structure is built partly underground, and is the home of the creatures of the underground, the externs. It is narrow on the inside like the students who themselves are caught up in onesided ideologies of the day; and its broad exterior reflects the intellectual bravado of its

inhabitants. The walls are as cracked as the mind of Katzman, and the term "barn" is a general designation for the animal-like characteristics of each lodger. These various settings in Misaviv LaNikudah give a new dimension to Brenner's art which is not previously evident.

The dramatic quality of Bayn Mayim L'Mayim, treated above, is particularly exemplified in the staging of this novel. The action is concentrated on a balcony typical of the newer buildings in Jerusalem. Beneath the balcony is a courtyard in which a well is being dug; a step-ladder connects the two levels. There are two entrances to the balcony from the rooms of the house, one leading to Saul Gamzu's room and the other to that of his mother.[18] The actors in the drama make their appearance guided by the most explicit stage directions:

> Aaron Gamzu and Ahuda his sister ascended the ladder to the balcony.[19]

> Walking mincingly on the surface of the balcony, and by means of a half-melody, David Yaffa proclaimed...[20]

> The fez of Issacher ben Gershon appeared near the ladder...His voice was heard from there also...[21]

The use of the balcony as a stage, and the dramatic form of the novel, create a special problem for the author. Descriptive and background information which the reader must know in order to understand the plot development, must be

conveyed within the drama itself. This is achieved through dialogue between the two teachers who are waiting for Gamzu at the beginning of the novel. In other words, what initially occurs on the balcony is equivalent in structural function to Abramson's train trip and a number of other passages in Misaviv LaNikudah which serve as settings for information presented through recollection.

Nature also provides through its annual cycle a loose but nevertheless constant backdrop for action in Brenner's novels.[22] Unlike Bahoref, in which there was no change of season, the other works usually cover at least three of the four seasons, and these are directly related to the plot. For example, Misaviv LaNikudah opens in winter, but time passes quickly to the night when Abramson attempts suicide. That night, dark and damp, occurs at the every end of winter.[23] Later, when Abramson explains to Davidovsky that his love of life kept him from suicide, he concludes by saying that spring is coming, spring is coming soon.

Spring, the time of renewed life, comes, and with it Passover, the festival of freedom and redemption. Yet Passover signals another occasion in the life of Russian Jewry: the annual commencement of pogroms. In this novel, the news of renewed slaughter makes a profound impression on Abramson and is the proximate reason for his insanity.[24]

The same pattern occurs in Shkol V'Kishalon, where the impact of spring is even more forcefully present. When Haifetz first came to Palestine as a worker, he showed signs of insanity at this season. An Arab girl asks him by chance if he has seen her little brother, and he reacts by shouting at her that Jews don't use the blood of little children.[25] The spring-pogrom construct is a unique combination of natural and historical events which Brenner develops into an important time-setting for his novels.

Summer has a dual function; in Eastern Europe it is the season for fresh ideas:

> Hot summer days were then in the land, and a new spirit suddenly passed through the Yeshivah...light and pure wind which burst into the parched days of summer, into the midst of the consuming flame of the heat wave...[26]

In Palestine, however, summer is the season for insanity,[27] and actually the period in which Haifetz has a hernia, the symbol of his mental distress.[28] Finally, winter appears in the last story as the time of great physical discomfort, and the rainy season in February is the signal for the whole population to change apartments.[29]

The next structural element important in Brenner's work is the use of language. Bialik was the first of many to suggest Brenner's style was slack, untidy, and often full of

gramatical errors.[30] As I have stated earlier, I consider that Brenner was most careful in his writing, and this includes a conscious use of language. His Hebrew is not the polished prose of Bialik's short stories, nor does it contain the midrashic flavor of Mendele. It can best be characterized as the direct predecessor of modern spoken Hebrew embellished with a store of direct and often twisted quotations from Biblical and rabbinic literature.

Brenner is one of the first who distorts and shatters Hebrew syntax for the sake of artistic effect. His dream and delusion sequences are excellent examples of broken structure, short phrasing, constantly changing and shifting subjects, all of which parallel the thought processes of the deranged mind. In doing this he is typical of the broader stream of European literature. Wilson writes;

> The Symbolist Movement broke those rules of French metrics which the Romantics had left intact, and it finally succeeded in throwing overboard completely the clarity and logic of the French classical tradition...[31]

While Brenner does not fully capture differences of dialect or accent, he does make an attempt to imitate real speech. The inability of children to pronounce certain letters[32] and the deep guttural qualities of Sephardic Hebrew are reproduced,[33] but the author spoils his effect by telling us what

he is doing in each case. Depending on the context, his stories are also liberally sprinkled with Russian, Yiddish, and English words which add local color.

Finally, Brenner uses two particular stylistic devices with such regularity that they become a burden on the reader. The first of these is the repetition of words or complete phrases which conclude one paragraph to begin the very next paragraph.[34] The second device is the long sentence describing action which concludes with a dash and then a verb in the waw consecutive form.

> Abramson hurried into the coach, removed from under the bench his satchel in which were to be found three shirts and a number of books--and he left.[35]

The device probably was first introduced in order to give a surprise or definite ending to a short series of actions and then became a habit of which the writer was unaware.

Setting and language are the primary elements in Brenner's structural organization. The third element, rhythm, is more difficult to discern, yet it appears in almost identical form in each of the novels. The rhythmic pattern consists of alternating fast and slow movements. His opening sequences (not the narrator's introductions) thrust the reader directly into the dramatic development of the plot and at the same

time serve to initially introduce the main characters. A leisurely descriptive scene follows in which additional information is given about these characters either through their own recollections or through dialogue between other people who have some knowledge of them, as previously mentioned.

Then a series of movements of both dramatic and descriptive nature, allow the plot to unfold slowly, and prevent it from plunging directly toward its conclusion.

Minor characters and sub-plots act as a retarding force which is indirectly connected to the main story, yet gives it greater depth. For example, the description of the history of the Ark of Books in Misaviv LaNikudah, the story of Baruch the Golem in Bayn Mayim L'Mayim, and the separate careers of Goldstein, Hamilin, Hanoch, and both of Haifetz's uncles in Shkol V'Kishalon, are all interesting deviations from the central movement of the stories. In the latter portions of the novels the rhythm becomes very fast as a crisis occurs in the love relationship. Dream sequences are either the lull before the storm of the violent act or the sudden calm after it which leads directly to the climax and conclusion.

Finally, objects are placed at certain strategic positions in the rhythm pattern which add to the impact of a

particular scene. These include such things as letters, hats, lamps, and books. It is to be noticed where these occur in the stories, but since some of them have symbolic rather than purely structural value they will be discussed in the next chapter.

The blend of setting, language, and rhythm in Brenner, does not form a highly symmetrical structure, such as one might find in Anna Karenina. The digressions are often too long, action is underplayed except in Bayn Mayim L'Mayim, and especially in the earlier novels the rhythmic movement often degenerates into jerking or hurried spurts. This cannot be specifically pointed out in each work; the reader must judge for himself whether or not the occasional disruptions add or detract from his own enjoyment. Personally, I believe they do help the overall effect by emphasizing the general sense of dislocation and uprootedness in the world Brenner describes.

CHAPTER V

Symbol

Brenner's symbols can be divided into three major areas: objects, illness, and dreams. Our treatment of these areas will focus on the specific occurrence of the symbol as indicative of a general pattern within a novel. We will begin with a discussion of objects which do not appear in dream sequences.

In Misaviv LaNikudah, lamps are used to highlight the tension between life and death. In two situations, the extent of light cast by lamps indicates the strength of a character's relation to life. When Abramson, who works at the Zionist library, leaves there early on the night of his attempted suicide, he extinguishes the lamp which lights the reading room.[1] In effect, this action symbolizes his conviction that Jewish life, and with it Hebrew literature, is doomed, and he too is finished as a writer.

The lamp in Davidovsky's room has a similar meaning, but serves also to place Davidovsky's thwarted suicide into contrast with Abramson's abortive attempt. The latter visits Davidovsky because he sees light in his friend's window, a

sign that he is awake and alive. But the light is very low and nearly goes out when Abramson enters the room. Davidovsky came close to death a moment before, and now he is nearly engulfed in darkness. However, he did not turn down the lamp, signifying his readiness to commit suicide fully aware of what he is doing. Unlike Abramson who is nearing insanity because he cannot cope with life, Davidovsky understands the human situation, and finds nothing of value for which to live.[2]

While light is used in the story to symbolize life, fire denotes a character's excessive enthusiasm or passionate personal devotion to a cause which Brenner considers unworthy or unrealistic. For example, Shnisser, a particularly obnoxious individual who hates Davidovsky, nevertheless finds it necessary to pour out to him twice a week "all the fire which is kindled in his heart".[3] Ironically, Abramson's heart also is aflame with the vision of his people's tragedy and his hopes for its glorious future; yet it is by fire that he destroys his work as a Hebrew writer.[4]

In this regard, the closing scene of Mikan UMikan is particularly moving. Aryeh Lapidot, the idealist and philosopher of labor in Palestine, gathers branches for kindling with his grandson. After depositing them near the

stove, the boy and the old man sit down to relax, covered with thorns and thistles, which represent the bitterness of their lives and perhaps allude to the crucifixion. However, the same thorns are consumed by fire for the beneficial production of bread. Lapidot is passionately devoted to his cause, but his greatness has within it the power to redeem his painful existence.[5]

The sun is the ultimate source of light, and in Shkol V'Kishalon, it is the dominant object in Haifetz's return to life and health. Unlike the lamp which can be turned on and off at will, Haifetz considers the sun as the source of permanent blessing.[6] This is the final expression of light imagery in Brenner's works, and the eternal nature of the symbol undoubtedly represents the author's own affirmation of life, no matter what its difficulties.

The next object symbol to be discussed is the Aron HaSefarim (book case) in Misaviv LaNikudah which symbolizes a progressive deterioration in modern Jewish life. The name of the object is itself significant; the Aron HaSefarim is the secular counterpart of the Aron Hakodesh, the Holy Ark which contains the Torah. The Ark of Books functions as if it were the bearer of a new religion, and it is surrounded by cultic functionaries just as the tabernacle of the Israelites in the desert and later the temple in Jerusalem.[7]

The wanderings of the Ark of Books from the early days of the Hebrew Enlightenment to its final role containing the Zionist Library coincides with the rise and collapse of Jewish intellectual life in Russia and Eastern Europe. What begins as a great effort to bring the Jewish people into the modern world through education ends pitifully in the home of Isaac Rivkash. The Zionist library, built upon the books and pamphlets in this cabinet, is a graveyard of literature, frequented only by confused, insensitive, and ignorant readers, and even they slip away one by one.[8]

In the same way, the story of the Ark of Books symbolizes Abramson's tragedy. It was the sanctuary of what might have been a great revival of Hebrew letters, and he was to be the prophet of the new era; but "the sanctuary is destroyed forever".[9] Even the grandchildren of the present day Hebrew writers will not understand what their forefathers wrote. Assimilation, migration caused by economic deprivation, and violent anti-semitism will finally end all forms of Jewish life and literature.

Consequently, when Abramson burns his article, this violent act unites the fire symbolism with the meaning of the Ark of Books in a destructive conflagration. As writer-prophet he discovers himself speaking in a dead language to

a dying audience. Unable to destroy himself, he symbolically buries his past in the ashes of his writings and turns to the larger world of Russian literature for a career. His new role is unconvincing because he cannot make the adjustment, and the result is insanity.

In Shkol V'Kishalon, a Torah scroll is an object of major significance. Goldstein who controls the charities of Jerusalem and the former in-law of Haifetz's uncle Haim, receives a Sefer Torah by default when he forces Haim's son Hanoch to divorce his daughter.[10] The scroll is Haim's most precious posession, but he must turn it over to one who has no love for it. Later, in a calculated move to acquire favorable publicity in the foreign Jewish press, Goldstein organizes a community-wide celebration in which he donates the Torah to Hachnasat Orchim Synagogue and transient home. A mock wedding is staged for the transfer of the scroll, and it is attended by beggars, whores, travelers, and the Haifetz family which lives on the second floor of the synagogue.[11] The effect of the scene is to make the Torah, a holy object, into the symbol of the corruption and callousness of Jewish communal leadership.

Unlike the Sefer Torah, the next object to be treated- the chamber pot- has no original positive valuation. The

chamber pot, simply as a container of human waste and stench, is repulsive in itself. As a symbol in a story with these associations plus emotional impact, it is particularly disgusting. Previous to Shkol V'Kishalon, Brenner inserts chamber pots only incidentally into his stories. For example, in Bahoref Fierman comments on the socialist-revolutionaries who mock the Zionists:

> Society always needs a scapegoat to pounce upon and upon which to pour the chamber pot in its midst.[12]

In the last novel, however, this utensil is elevated to a place of central significance. The violent act in Shkol V'Kishalon occurs when Esther, standing on a second floor balcony, dumps the contents of her chamber pot on Haifetz who is coming to visit.

This symbolic act of defecation on Esther's part means murder; as Haifetz notes after glancing at her,"...one who strangles his enemy must certainly have a facial expression like this at the time of the deed".[13] In terms of the effect on Haifetz, being hit with the filth makes him aware of his own filth. Reality strikes him with so great a force that he must confront himself honestly and see through self-deception as well as his deception of others. He can no longer seek shelter in feigned compassion for Esther as an excuse for

not confessing to her his impotence. Further, he now understands his obligation to inform Uncle Haim of the death of his son Hanoch in Safed, and he does so that very night.[14] The end has come to lies and deceit.

Only in a world in which traditional values are destroyed could a transformation of symbols occur so radically. The Torah, the basis of Jewish morality, now testifies to corruption of leadership; and the chamber pot, filled with excrement, causes man to perfect himself by realizing guilt and irresponsibility!

In the novels written after Bahoref, sickness becomes a dominant recurring symbol expressed through a variety of minor ailments. Some of the ailments have specific meaning within the confines of a particular novel, while others point to the same condition whenever they occur. For example, Abramson's nervousness in Misaviv LaNikudah is related to his role as writer,[15] while Haifetz's is a general condition aggravated by his guard duties on the cooperative farm.[16] On the other hand, Saul Gamzu[17] and Haifetz[18] are both afflicted with nausea, the source of which is a relationship with women founded on deception rather than love. Headaches and sexual problems are common to all of Brenner's novels, but they are particularly well developed as symbols in

Misaviv LaNikudah for the former and Shkol V'Kishalon for the latter.

The headache is Abramson's physical response to the Nigudim, the contradictions within his personality. These contradictions (the Man and the Jew within him) are crystalized in his relationship with Hava Blumin. In a series of scenes, whenever Abramson thinks of this girl and at the same time considers his own work in Hebrew literature, his headache becomes noticeable.[19] Significantly, early in the story when Abramson walks past Katzman's house where she lives his headache becomes almost unbearable. In a scene in which he is almost delirious with excitement over being a writer-prophet in the temple of literature, his pain is relieved:

> ...his head doesn't ache, his head
> doesn't ache,...he is now free from all
> decayed externality and from all servitude...
> only the hidden God---remains in his heart
> and he shall serve Him...

Then suddenly,

> ...the happiness stops...and she, and
> she, and she...His head is pressed by tongs...[20]

Abramson's headache symbolizes the conflict of two external worlds within his personality; in Shkol V'Kishalon, however, Haifetz's ailment is a completely private matter.

> Since the cause of his illness isn't community misfortune---what is it! --- rather this, it seems to have a private basis; in plain terms, private pains which do not belong directly to the general situation and which don't touch upon, therefore, and need not touch upon others...[21]

Further, Haifetz's illness is more mental than physical. There is no medical reason why a hernia should cause impotence-- but he claims that he is impotent. Nevertheless, he is always aware of the fictional character of his malady.

> Haifetz listened and relaxed, but he announced from the first: in Jerusalem he would not seek doctors. It is forbidden for a man to make a mockery and scorn of himself. The doctors would laugh at him.[22]

Though the impotence is unreal, it does have psychological meaning with respect to Haifetz's personality; he is passive in every sexual encounter with Esther. He justifies his passivity on the basis of his wound, but his lack of action extends far beyond the sexual realm. Passivity is one of the major characteristics of Haifetz's insanity expressed through his endless discussions of general or international problems about which he can do nothing.[23] In other words, the original hernia is simply a pretext for insanity as well as an element in a complex of problems which symbolize his personality.

> You wrapped your sexual weakness which never existed in a prayer shawl of compassion, as it were, and of Mitzvah, and of joining in another's distress, cursed![24]

The insistence upon the private, non-universal symbolism of the physical defect is an integral part of the non-propagandistic nature of Shkol V'Kishalon. In a world where all men are sick, this is just another individual case of the human condition. Only one exception appears to contradict this analysis; after release from the mental hospital, Haifetz sits in the synagogue and feels himself alienated from those around him because of his questions about "sick erotocism and the tottering of religion".[25] However, the religious situation is a minor concern in the story, and is of interest only as it allows for the general development of the anti-hero type, as has been discussed. Haifetz's sexual problems are not specifically Jewish in nature; they are the difficulties of an individual Jew in a particular time-place context.

The nature of the dream sequences in Brenner's novels has been treated in connection with the analysis of Bahoref. This present discussion will simply be a commentary on selected portions of dreams and delirium passages occurring in Misaviv LaNikudah and Shkol V'Kishalon. As previously

indicated, my concern is primarily with the symbolic value of the dreams, although I will allude to certain structural features as they appear.

In Misaviv LaNikudah, Abramson's dream comes immediately after the scene at Katzman's in which news of the pogrom and the response of those present cause Abramson to have a seizure.[26] The dream is divided into three separate sequences, and it is not until the third of these that the author explicitly states that these are dreams. Yet the disconnected sentences and fleeting imagery leave no doubt as to the nature of this material. Selections from the first two sections will be treated here.

I. The dream opens on a typical Sabbath day in Nevucha, Abramson's home town. The name of the town, Nevucha, is a personalization indicating confusion or perplexity in the Jewish religious world. Sunlight shining on the Christian church subtly contrasts this center of life with the darkness of the Jewish world. In addition, the description of the church foreshadows the appearance of the same structure in Abramson's delirious walk to the Russian library, and there too it is surrounded by a halo of light. In this scene Abramson passes the church on a Sunday morning and fears that the whole Christian community will rise up against him, the last remnant of the house of Jacob.[27] This is typical

of the pogrom imagery which informs much of the concluding half of this novel.

The Jews of Nevucha take a leisurely Sabbath afternoon stroll, and among them is Abramson's father. There is a resemblance between the old man's beard and that of Tolstoy, and within the dream mechanism this indicates the identification of the father with the great writer. The dream contines, and Abramson's father examines the fringes of garments to see if they are ritually proper. In reality, while the father is a slaughterer and examiner, there is no indication in the story that he ever performed this particular service in public. Further, the tears of the old man and Abramson's guilt for having defective fringes would lead us to think that the writer was still greatly distressed over his alienation from Orthodox Judaism. Yet he broke with it in his youth, and it has not played any significant role in his further development. The meaning of these references to the religion will become evident in a moment.

The father announces to his son that he now receives a fixed income and consequently no longer needs his son's support. This is a direct contradiction of a letter which Abramson actually received in which the father told of his financial plight.[28] Abramson may feel guilt that he hasn't

sent his parents any money since he left his job as a teacher, in which case the image represents wish fulfillment.

The father's statement that Solomon Frankel is happy after returning home is contradicted by criticism expressed through a parenthesis in the dream itself. Abramson knows that Frankel has not returned, and, it may be added, there is no evidence in the story that Abramson's father ever knew of Frankel's existence. Instead, Frankel has moved to Katzman's house and is happy there!

A tentative conclusion may be offered that since reality as expressed in the plot contradicts information given in the dream, all images are inverted in meaning.[29] Thus, Frankel's supposed return home is actually his complete adaption to the style of life at Katzman's. Further, since the father lauds this move on Frankel's part, perhaps the father, as Tolstoy, is a symbol for something other than traditional Judaism.

This conclusion seems to be substantiated by the figure of the rabbi whose agents investigate every wayward Yeshivah student. The activities of these agents and sextons, tearing out the heart and examining it upon the table, has no religious referend, and is absurd if understood as it appears. Abramson's Yeshivah experience is long past but he has only

recently turned from the school-like atmosphere of Menashah Katzman's. The students who dwell there and the visiting relatives do tear out Abramson's heart figuratively by constantly deriding his attachment to Jewish causes and Hebrew literature! In this context, when the father asks him to give up foreign gods, represented in the dream by the Hebrew journal HaTechia, he is in reality forcing him to cut the very ties which hold him to Jewish life.[30] Consequently, the father cannot represent the voice of Judaism calling his son back to the fold.

The Sabbath imagery continues with an exchange between father and son about the permissibility of traveling on the Sabbath to save a life. This is criticism from within the dream demanding that there be some consistency in the dream content.[31] Even though the father is not really what he seems to be, he still must conform to the rules of Orthodoxy which he outwardly represents.

The father disappears and the rabbi begins to pursue Abramson who tries to run away. Abramson's thoughts turn to the vexing question of how he may repent and satisfy the rabbi, and he says:

> --But I burned the writings, but I burned the article...to no avail--.

His real reasons for burning the article have no connection with Orthodox Judaism or with a return to faith. Rather, they are based on the dismal future of Hebrew literature, and his desires to satisfy and please Hava Blumin whom he loves. We are forced to conclude that the rabbi represents, on the deepest level, the overwhelming pressure upon Abramson to conform to the assimilationist and revolutionary ideal.

Now the images become even more confused. The chase continues, and Abramson is near Hava Blumin's home. He thinks that if he can reach her, she will hide him, and under her approving eye he will read HaTechia. This is the most glaring example of wish fulfillment and the reversal of reality in the entire first section. Hava is the one who mocks his efforts as a Hebrew writer, and she is completely opposed to any literary activities not directed toward the Russian masses.

The rabbi shouts to Abramson to stop running because in front of him is a large village where the people will not understand his language. With the end of knowledge of the Hebrew language, "your brothers, the children of your people shall dwell and serve other gods". Neither the God of Hebrew literature nor Abramson as His prophet has any hope in a society in which economic and social pressures drive Jews to revolutionary-socialism, emigration, or death.

Hava announces that a pogrom is taking place by screaming and falling upon the ground. This also is wish fulfillment for Abramson, since Hava has denied that such occurrences can happen again in Russia. But they do happen, and he wants her to be shaken as he is by the catastrophe. Continuing the dream content, Abramson cannot run away, he is surrounded by the rabbi, the village, and the pogrom, all of which leave him no exit.

This first section of the dream can only be understood by inverting the plain meaning of the symbols so that the representatives of Judaism stand for Russification. In addition, what appears as fact often should be taken as wish fulfillment of Abramson's deeper desires. The note upon which the dream concludes is a final indication of the terrible forces which Abramson has to face, and which, because he cannot overcome them, cause his insanity.

II. In this dream, the symbols are more obvious; however, not all of them fit into the story. The cold snow and sea of ice which surround Abramson are a throwback to Bahoref in which cold signifies the world without the God of tradition.[32] In such a world, Abramson's coat is covered by active, intelligent, barefoot bed-bugs. Perhaps Brenner means that without God, man must warm himself in the company

of other men no matter how insignificant these other men are. If this is the case, then the reference to bugs, typical of the author's animal imagery, is well chosen.

Next, Abramson explains to Davidovsky that the collection of bed-bugs on his coat is really the colony which Davidovsky had founded. There is no evidence in the story that Davidovsky ever established a colony unless it be the group of people who originally gathered around him, but who now frequent Katzman's house. Brenner himself tried to found a colony based on the combined principles of Tolstoy and Nietzsche, and this biographical fact may be taken as the referend of the scene since there is no way to explain it internally.[33]

Abramson's pitiful exclamation of despair that Davidovsky is leaving him is representative of the relationship between the two young men. As in Bahoref, there may be a hint of homosexuality in Abramson's constant self-abnegation before his friend. When he first comes to Davidovsky's room in the story, he is filled with love and wants to embrace his old friend; but Davidovsky turns away to fill his pipe as if in rejection.[34] In any case, Davidovsky's departure in the dream scene foreshadows his suicide which occurs near the conclusion of the story.

There is a sudden shift in the dream sequence to a desert setting. Abramson wanders about and finds an Egyptian with whom he shares his bread. The Egyptian is identified with Gavrilov, a Russian drunkard who also lives at Katzman's, and is known for his obnoxious and occasional anti-semitic remarks. The Egyptian takes up an axe against Abramson, a rather ironic image since the latter had given him food. Abramson contrasts himself with the bellicose Egyptian and is filled with a terrible compassion for everything and everyone in the world. This scene summarizes Abramson's view of non-Jews and the Jewish attitude toward them; in response to kindness, the Russian-Egyptian, the enemy, organizes a pogrom.

In the final scene of the second sequence, Abramson is alone, walking down a long and difficult road. He expects something great to happen and he carries a banner. This symbolizes Abramson's self-image as a prophet-writer, leading his people to redemption. However, as in the story, he is stopped short by Hava Blumin, who now tells him to look up at the Nikudah, the point in the sky. The Nikudah is the dominant recurring symbol of this novel as its title indicates. It signifies a point beyond which Abramson is never able to go in his relationship with Hava Blumin.

> Fine and shy were those feelings about her, about this near—yet far one, about her who could perfect his life, improve it and raise it, were it not for the one point between them...[35]

Similarly, in the dream he cannot pass beyond the point which rends his heart. Suddenly he understands the impossibility of crossing it because, "The point is in the sky and not on the earth, and how shall he pass it by?" Abramson realizes that what alienates him from the girl is not just a difference of opinion on the value of Hebrew literature, but is something built into the very structure of the universe. They are, as it were, worlds apart, and he must give up all hope of a satisfactory relationship with her precisely because of what he is.

Following the seizure and the dream sequence, Abramson goes to the Russian library to speak to the girls who had been at Katzman's the night before. He is delirious, and the images conveyed through this state of mind reinforce the general symbolic meaning of the dreams.

> Jacob—the chosen of the patriarchs. He already visited Laban. His brother already left him. Haran and Beersheba, where they pursued him for his 'vision'—he has already passed. He has already wrestled with Esau's officer and beaten him. Now he will be a teacher of children in the land of Edom until the end of the sixth millenium, until the day which is entirely Sabbath, which is entirely good and rest...[36]

Abramson has tried to become Russified, but he has been persecuted by Laban, the traditional symbol of Gentile wickedness. The reference to Esau points to Abramson's "brothers", the externs and Katzman's relatives who have derided him for his prophetic vision of the Jewish future. But he has overcome this opposition and is content to remain a humble teacher in Edom, another name for the enemy nation, i.e. for Russia. The passage concludes with a reaffirmation of his role:

> No, he will defend his life. If it means war--then to war. His tongue, the tongue of the prophet of the Lord, shall break the strong.

In a world which denies the validity of Abramson's life work, he is doomed to insanity, yet it is the insanity of the God's elect who refuses to compromise himself.

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The dream sequence in Shkol V'Kishalon is divided into four sections.[37] Before treating the first of these, I will deal briefly with some interesting features of the other sections. These dreams center about the relationship previously mentioned between Haifetz and Esther. The symbolism expresses Haifetz's guilt feelings because he deceives her and yet allows her to continue to take care of him. Water imagery is important in these sections: the bitter waters, Marim, a

play on the name of Miriam, Esther's sister; the cursing waters which are poison to be used for suicide; water mixed with ashes like the thick mucus of one who is sick. Most peculiar is the setting of the last section in a New York tenement in which Haifetz, with a revolver in front of him, contemplates suicide. The revolver is broken and will not shoot, a symbol of Haifetz's own impotence and inability to act.

The scene of the first section is the Jaffa gate in Jerusalem, and the two characters who appear are Haifetz and his friend Menachem, an itinerant worker with a positive and jovial disposition. The Jaffa gate appears to be made of iron and it is closed, although the gate is never closed; a hot sun beats down on Haifetz's head, yet he is chilled; he is speaking to Menachem, even though Menachem is not really there. These three impossible facts strike Haifetz as wondrous, and his reaction informs the dream with a confused, but nonetheless significant measure of reality.

The dream itself consists of a dialogue between the two friends which is rather rationally formulated in contrast to the Kafkaesque setting. Haifetz complains that he can go on no longer as he is, yet he has not the power to change. The compassion he had for others is false, and life is hell. Menachem answers that as long as one is alive there are still possibilities of new experiences, and because Haifetz is only

concerned with his own troubles he has too narrow a view to judge the value of life. The conversation fits well into the story. Haifetz does hide behind false compassion in his relationship with Esther, and toward the end of the novel he reaffirms life much as Menachem counsels him to do in the dream.

In this light, the image of the Jaffa Gate being closed seems to reflect Haifetz's condition. He is bounded on all sides by absorption in his own problems and is unable to see beyond himself. He cannot appreciate either the larger world or other people until his moment of realization during the violent act. Consequently, we find no justification for the assertion that the closing of the Jaffa Gate means the end of the creative life in Palestine![38]

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

This concluding chapter is a summary of Brenner's theoretical outlook and value system. Of necessity, I will have to repeat briefly or allude to much that has already been said. As a cautionary reminder, what will be discussed is taken from the novels, only a part of the author's complete writings. His newspaper articles and literary criticism have not been examined, and they might reflect more accurately the position Brenner took on the issues of his day or indicate an ideological orientation not found in the works treated here. Further, since novels do not contain a logically formulated system of philosophical and social thought, ideas presented in them are often contradictory; characters can change their minds or be forced through circumstances into a position opposite to that previously held. Consequently, it can only be stated that the schematic presentation to follow seems to me to be the logical development of Brenner's thought.

The foundation of all of Brenner's novels is the radical rejection of Orthodox Judaism. As a result, man is detached and alone, and therefore begins a frantic and

unsuccessful effort to re-establish the original security he had when surrounded by God's presence. Alternative ideologies present themselves to fill the void: Marxism and Zionism. Each of these is rejected initially because it does not take into account nor can it remedy the personal tragedy of the individual. In particular, the general revolutionary movements promise a universal salvation which holds within it the seeds of destruction for Jewish life because of assimilation.

Zionism is a possibility which might satisfy the author's Jewish concerns; it presents a solution to the problems of Jewish physical and spiritual survival. In Brenner's early period, however, Zionism is repulsive, not so much as an ideology, but rather because of the people associated with it. The leaders of the movement are not idealists, but well established business men, nominally Orthodox, who conceive of the salvation of Jewry in financial terms. They would never leave Russia to go to Palestine, nor would they admit the hypocrisy of holding fast to religious traditions in which they no longer believe.

Does Brenner's attitude toward Zionism change in the Palestinian novels? The shift in locale does not bring about a change of perspective, but simply reinforces the original position. A section from a newspaper article by Oved Atzot, the author's spokesman in Mikan UMikan reads:

> ...Not only is the political and economic solution of the question of the Jews...through large and broad colonization of the land of Israel a vain idea; but also, the idea of the renaissance of the people of Israel by means of the creation of a small spiritual Hebrew center in the historic land of our fathers is nothing but an idea. It is clear: a small colony of some few thousands of people, who do not excell nor are able to excell over others in anything, cannot serve as a center for millions of brothers scattered throughout the world.
>
> The truth has thus been openly declared: the Zionist movement isn't and can never be a true communal movement, a movement of those who conquer paths; but rather a kind of spasmodic movement of those who go astray after nothing,... which takes the form of selling shekels and choosing chattering representatives for vociferous assemblies...[1]

In this attack, Brenner is saying "a pox on both your houses". He denies the validity of Herzl's attempt to create a Jewish state through political means, and at the same time, mocks Ahad Ha-Am's conception of Palestine as a spiritual center. The author's penetrating vision will allow him no illusions about any ideology - Jewish or otherwise.

Brenner's answer to the problem of Jewish survival is close to a philosophy of labor.

> And the Hebrew worker, if he doesn't exist, he surely can exist - this is the necessary condition for the life of our people - and in it is our salvation... Let there be a Hebrew worker, let him multiply and be fortified in all the branches of labor. And it is necessary to add: not only in the land of Israel.[2]

Not a Jewish labor movement, but Jews who can do physical labor - only in this will there be hope for the people.

The place of Palestine in Brenner's thought is not really different from that of any other center of Jewish life. Because a "Hebrew majority will never exist here", Palestine is also in the Galut, the Exile.

> In Russia is Exile, in Poland is Exile, in America is Exile, in the land of Israel is Exile, and there is no way out of the Exile; yet man should dwell in the midst of his people and dedicate all his powers to the creation of some foundation in the midst of the Exile...[3]

This is not an ideology but a program for Jews wherever they live, in Palestine or elsewhere. As a program, it is reminiscent of the advice that Jeremiah gave to the Babylonian Captivity:

> Build ye houses, and dwell in them, and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them... (Jeremiah 29:5)

Lacking the prophet's confidence that the people will survive, Brenner still proposes a program of work as the first step toward the future. Beyond that minimum plan, he hesitates to suggest an elaborate theoretical construct. He is too much of a realist to believe that an ideology can be more than hollow words held in desperation by hollow men.

The notion that Galut is everywhere is another way of

describing the human situation. After God has died, all men are in Exile. Only the most sensitive are aware of this condition, and they understand that they are living in hell on earth. History is static, or at most cyclical; there is no passage of time; past and present are equally unbearable. The pattern of troubles repeats itself even in the lifetime of a single individual.

> Again the same thing...again the same thing...it repeatedly goes...and repeatedly returns...indeed some time ago - fifty years ago, or two years ago, or a year ago, or perhaps yesterday or this morning - he anticipated from the beginning and felt, he felt clearly, that now, now, that is, after fifty years, or after two years, or after a year, or tomorrow, or this evening, now, at this moment, it will be the same... actually the same...and again it is destined to be the same...actually the same...and before his death he will feel that this vision is destined to be repeated.[4]

The most for which the group can hope is survival, and the most the individual will ever know is the same horror over and over again.

The author is concerned in almost all of his novels with the individual and not with the Jewish people as a collective body. Brenner's artistic achievements, such as the use of dreams, delusions, and the interior monologue, reveal his constant efforts to portray the personal and subjective levels of human experience. These formal features of his writings,

which place him in the cultural context of neo-romanticism, also indicate certain values inherent in Brenner's style of individualism.

There can be no doubt that the value of honesty is central in Brenner's thought. It allows and even forces the writer to destroy every illusion which comforts and deceives man; it pushes man to the limits of despair as he tries to discover something upon which to lean. Nevertheless, honesty by itself will lead man to self-destruction because nothing survives the penetrating critical eye. Beyond honesty there must be a deeper value, one which will not permit man to succumb to desolation and suicide - it is the blind affirmation of life.

> Life is good not only because it is possible to fill it with good deeds, not only because there is love in it, happiness, ideals, etc., etc., in short, not only because of this or that content in it which fills it, but because it is good in itself alone.[5]

There is no evidence upon which this affirmation of life could be built; it is contrary to what the senses perceive or the mind thinks. When Brenner says life is good, he does so out of a full awareness of its tragedy and foolishness. Accepting the verdict that there is no God to ease one's suffering, and in spite of the difficulties of the human situation, the author counsels us to "choose life".

APPENDIX I

This appendix includes the important dates in Brenner's career. In addition to his novels, a list of characters whose names appear in the thesis is given.

1881 - born in the Ukraine

1897-1902 - in Homel

1902-1904 - in Russian army; prisoner

1904-1908 - in London

1904 - Bahoref: Fierman, Obadiah, Himovitz, Davidovsky, Lerner, Rochel Moesayevna, Elimelech the Lender.

1904-1905 - Misaviv LaNikudah: Abramson, Solomon Frankel, Hava Blumin, Isaac Rivkash, Menasha Katzman, Davidovsky.

1906 - MayAlef ad Mem

1908-1909 - in Galicia

1908-1909 - Shanah Ahat: Hanina Mintz.

1909-1921 - in Palestine

1910 - Bayn Mayim L'Mayim: Saul Gamzu, P'nina, David Yaffa.

1911 - Mikan UMikan: Oved Atzot, Aryeh Lapidot.

1920 - Shkol V'Kishalon: Ezekiel Haifetz, Esther Haifetz, Uncle Haim, Hanoch Haifetz, Goldman.

1921 - killed in riots near Tel Aviv.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

1. Other authors who began their careers in the same period are:
Schofman, Gnessin, Berkovitch, Kabak, J. Steinberg.

2. The edition of Brenner's novels quoted in this thesis is that edited by Menachem Poznanski, Kol Kitvay Y.H. Brenner, Vol.I, Tel Aviv, HaKibutz HaM'uchad, 1955. All stories cited in the footnotes will be found in this edition. Both the translations and transliterations are my own, and the transliterations follow contemporary Sephardic pronunciation.

3. A. Ben-Or (Orinovsky). Toldot HaSifrut HaIvrit HaHadasha. Tel Aviv, Jezreel, 1947. II. P. 415-444. Ben-Or uses a biographical approach, tracing Brenner's characters and situations to real people and events in the author's life. Daniel Ben-Nahum ("Adam V'Hevra B'Sipuray Y. H. Brenner". Orlogin, v. X, 1954. P. 330-337; v. XI, 1955. P. 173-176) follows a Marxist orientation in analyzing the novels, with often excellent results.

4. Yosef Haim Brenner. Iggrot Y. H. Brenner. Tel Aviv, Davar, 1941. Vol. II, P. 20f. Brenner states that his autobiography is portrayed in his early novels. While that may be so, the value of the novels as literature can never be assessed only on the basis of biographical information.

5. The biographical sources are: Ben-Or, op. cit.; Joseph Klausner. "Y. H. Brenner", HaEncyclopedia HaIvrit VI, P. 876-880; Joseph Seh-Lavan. Y. H. Brenner. Tel Aviv, Merkaz L'Tarbut, 1941.

6. Simon M. Dubnow. History of Jews in Russia and Poland. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1918. Vol. II, III; Howard Sacher. The Course of Modern Jewish History. Cleveland and New York, World Publishing Company, 1958. Chapters IX, X, XII, XIII, XIV. Both works give historical background of the period under discussion.

7. "Social disorder, economic crisis, and institutional malfunctioning had contributed to the growth of Socialist parties and to the spread of Marxist doctrines. The decade of the 1890's was to be the great period of expansion in the history of European Socialism." H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society. New York, Random House, 1958. P. 41.

8. H. S. Hughes, ibid., P. 34, and Edmund Wilson. Axel's Castle. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959. P. 19. Hughes and Wilson use the term "neo-romantic" to refer to the movement in western literature which reacted against scientific positivism and turned to the subjective and irrational factors of human experience as the source of truth.

9. Hughes. ibid., P. 36.

10. Hughes. ibid., P. 34.

11. Hughes. ibid., P. 104. Hughes writes that Nietzsche's "Beyond Good and Evil and The Geneology of Morals contain a theory of natural drives, of rationalizations, of sexual masochism and sublimation, of guilt as a result of cultural thwarting...".

12. Wilson. op. cit., P. 19.

13. Hughes. op. cit., P. 63 ff.

14. Brenner. Iggrot Y. H. Brenner. op. cit. P. 20 f. The author comments that in his youth he read widely in Russian and European literatures.

15. Sacher. op. cit., P. 291.

16. Dubnow. op. cit., vol. II, P. 348 ff. Educational restrictions against Jews in Russia are listed.

17. Dan Miron. "HaSifrut HaIvrit B'rayshit HaMayah Ha20". M'asef II, 1961, P. 463.

18. Brenner. Iggrot Y. H. Brenner. op. cit., I. See letters to Berdichevsky from period in London. Haim Nachman Bialik. Iggrot H. N. Bialik. Tel Aviv, Dvir, 1938. See Bialik's letters to Brenner, Vol. I, during the year 1905.

19. Asher Beilin. "Brenner B'London". HaTekufa XIV-XV, 1921. PP. 646-671.

20. Beilin, ibid., PP. 650 ff. A number of incidents which Beilin reports are reflected in Brenner's last two novels. The description of Chicago, the factory, and funeral in Mikan UMikan can be traced directly to the London period. P. 670.

21. I could find no evidence satisfactorily explaining Brenner's motives for moving to Palestine.

22. Samuel H. Bergman. Faith and Reason. Washington, D. C., B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, 1961. Chapter V. Bergman has a concise summary of A. D. Gordon's philosphy. He writes, "The return to nature through labor will enable man to rediscover religion and to regain a sense of cosmic unity. Gordon's religion may therefore be defined as a religion of labor." P. 111.

23. Brenner. Iggrot Y. H. Brenner. op. cit., P. 281. This contains the last mention of his son in his letters. The letter is dated June 6, 1919.

24. Baruch Kurtzweil. Sifrutaynu HaHadasha. Jerusalem, Schocken, 1960, P. 31. Kurtzweil notes here the romantic foundations in Brenner's novels.

25. Bialik. op cit., II, P. 269. Letter number 149.

Chapter II

1. Ernest J. Simmons. Dostoevski, the Making of a Novelist. New York, Oxford University Press, 1940. P. 123. Simmons notes that the use of the narrator was a favorite device of the Russian author.

2. "No doubt, personal experience confirmed and sharpened his (Dostoevsky's)sense of the fantastic. But we must not identify a poetic method and a philosophy as tenacious and subtle as Dosteovsky's with the more restricted domain of biographical fact." George Steiner. Tolstoy or Dostoevsky. New York, Random House, 1941. P. 92.

3. Percy Lubbock. The Craft of Fiction. New York, Viking Press, 1957. P. 131. Describes the function of the hero in the first person novel.

4. Ibid.

5. Yosef Haim Brenner. Bahoref in Kol Kitvay Y. H. Brenner. op. cit., P. 7.

6. Ibid., P. 26.

7. Ibid., P. 29.

8. Irving Howe and Eliezar Greenberg. A Treasury of Yiddish Stories. New York, Meridian Books, 1959. PP. 39 ff. Howe and Greenberg describe the anti-hero in Yiddish literature: "It is he, long-suffering, persistent, lovingly, ironic, whom the Yiddish writers celebrate: it is the poor but proud householder trying to maintain his status in the Jewish world even as he grows poorer and poorer..." Needless to say, this image of the anti-hero, based on Peretz's Bonsche Schweig and Sholom Aleichem's Tevye is quite unlike Brenner's anti-hero, a much more intense, bitter character.

9. Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Notes From Underground. New York, Dell Publishing Company, 1960. P. 27.

10. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 14.

11. Ibid., P. 11.

12. Simmons. op. cit., Vintage Edition, 1962. P. 121.

13. Ibid.

14. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 13.

15. Ibid., P. 14.

16. Ibid., P. 13.

17. Ibid., P. 19.

18. Ibid., P. 20.

19. Ibid., P. 14.

20. Ibid., P. 21.

21. Ibid., P. 25.

22. Ibid., P. 26.

23. Ibid., P. 15.

24. Simmons. op. cit., Oxford Edition. P. 154.

25. Dostoyevsky. op. cit., P. 139.

26. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 26.

27. Ibid., P. 8.

28. Ibid.

29. David A. Friedman. "Y. H. Brenner V'Giborav". HaTekufa V, 1950, P. 412. Friedman correctly shows Brenner's use of symbolic names (Diasporin, Oved, Atzot in Mikan UMikan) for signifying types rather than fully developed characters. Nevertheless, even these types have more reality as characters than the types employed by Mendele or Sholom Aleichem.

30. Simmons. op. cit., P. 347.

31. Steiner. op. cit., P. 101.

32. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 20.

33. Babylonian Talmud, Taanith: 20a.

34. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 20.

35. Ibid., P. 32.

36. Ibid., P. 30.

37. Ibid., P. 32.

38. Other characters in Bahoref who reappear under the same name in a later novel are Yudlin and Kleinstein in Mikan UMikan.

39. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 38.

40. In Bayn Mayim L'Mayim the two dissimilar women are Ahuda Gamzu and P'nina; in Shkol V'Kishalon, Esther Haifetz and Miriam Haifetz.

41. Nicholas Berdyaev. Dostoevsky. Cleveland, World Publishing Company, 1957. PP. 188 ff.

42. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 33.

43. Steiner. op. cit., P. 299.

44. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 20.

45. Ibid., P. 23.

46. Ibid., P. 25.

47. Ibid., P. 20.

48. Ibid., P. 23.

49. Ibid., P. 56.

50. In Misaviv LaNikudah, the violent act occurs when Abramson burns his Hebrew article; in Shkol V'Kishalon, it takes place when Esther Haifetz dumps her chamber

pot on Ezekiel Haifetz. Notice that compared to Raskolnikov's action, these incidents seem very minor; but within each of Brenner's stories they have an impact no less forceful than the murder in Crime and Punishment.

51. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 54.

52. Ibid., P. 37.

53. Ibid., P. 24.

54. Ibid., P. 56.

55. Ibid., P. 10.

56. Ibid., P. 58.

57. Ibid., P. 56.

58. Ibid., P. 30.

59. Ibid., P. 59.

Chapter III

1. Bialik. op. cit., II. P. 269. Letter number 149.

2. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah in Kol Kitvay Y. H. Brenner. op. cit., P. 60.

3. Ibid., P. 69.

4. Ibid., P. 70.

5. Brenner. Shanah Ahat in Kol Kitvay Y. H. Brenner, op. cit., P. 127.

6. Ibid., P. 105.

7. Brenner. MayAlef ad Mem in Kol Kitvay Y. H. Brenner. op. cit., P. 146.

8. Brenner. Bayn Mayim L'Mayim in Kol Kitvay Y. H. Brenner. op. cit., P. 317.

9. Brenner. Mikan UMikan in Kol Kitvay Y. H. Brenner. op. cit., P. 323.

10. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon in Kol Kitvay Y. H. Brenner. op. cit., P. 375.

11. Brenner. Bahoref. PP. 16, 20, 22.

12. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 12.

13. Brenner. Bayn Mayim L'Mayim. P. 305.

Chapter IV

1. William York Tindall. The Literary Symbol. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1962. P. 136.

2. Steiner, op. cit., P. 196.

3. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 3.

4. Vienna, London, Paris, Buenos Aires, New York, and Chicago are the major cities outside of Palestine mentioned in the last three novels.

5. Beilin. op. cit., P. 670. Beilin here describes conditions in London which Brenner seems to have used as a basis for his description of Chicago.

6. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. P. 383.

7. Ibid., P. 382.

8. Ibid., P. 383, 402. References to stone imagery.

9. Brenner. Bayn Mayim L'Mayim. P. 311 f.

10. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 18; Lubbock. op. cit., PP. 297 f. where he discusses the use of "the scene".

11. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 61.

12. Ben-Nahum. op. cit., X. P. 335, gives excellent analysis of use of two merchants in terms of the new Jewish capitalistic class they represent.

13. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 63.

14. Ibid., P. 66.

15. Ibid., P. 65.

16. Ibid., P. 67.

17. Ibid., P. 76.

18. Brenner. Bayn Mayim L'Mayim. P. 293.

19. Ibid., P. 297.

20. Ibid., P. 300.

21. Ibid., P. 301.

22. See S. Zemach. "Y. H. Brenner". Hashiloach XXIII, 1913, P. 470. Zemach holds that Brenner uses nature to highlight human frailties. See also Ben-Nahum. op. cit., v. X, P. 331. Ben-Nahum agrees that man is the center of Brenner's description of nature. My point that Brenner uses nature for staging is not far from Zemach's position. I think Ben-Nahum exaggerates when he claims that Brenner's descriptions of nature are glorious.

23. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 93.

24. Ibid., P. 99.

25. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. PP. 378, 402.

26. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 69.

27. Brenner. Bayn Mayim L'Mayim. P. 314.

28. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. P. 375.

29. Ibid., P. 415.

30. Bialik. op. cit., I. P. 267. Letter number 146.

31. Wilson. op. cit., P. 16.

32. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 64.

33. Brenner. Mikan UMikan. P. 341.

34. Other examples of words or phrases which conclude one paragraph and commence the next are to be found in Misaviv LaNikudah, PP. 62, 72, 74, 76, 79, 83. 91.

35. Examples of the sentence structure: Misaviv LaNikudah, PP. 13, 64, 65, 66, 68, 70, 78, 92.

Chapter V

1. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 92.

2. Ibid., P. 93.

3. Ibid., P. 73.

4. Ibid., P. 95.

5. Brenner. Mikan UMikan. P. 374.

6. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. PP. 417, 418, 447.

7. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 69.

8. Ibid., P. 89.

9. Ibid., P. 90.

10. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. P. 400.

11. Ibid., P. 431.

12. Brenner. Bahoref. P. 37.

13. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. P. 437.

14. Ibid.

15. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. PP. 75, 91.

16. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. P. 376. Friedman (op. cit., P. 12) points out the nervousness of Brenner's characters.

17. Brenner. Bayn Mayim L'Mayim. P. 319.

18. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. PP. 429, 436.

19. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 62, 63, 74.

20. Ibid., P. 75.

21. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. P. 378.

22. Ibid., P. 377.

23. Ibid., P. 378.

24. Ibid., P. 437.

25. Ibid., P. 408.

26. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. PP. 100 f.

27. Ibid., PP. 101 f.

28. Ibid., P. 89.

29. Sigmund Freud. The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud. New York, Modern Library, 1938. P. 338. In Freud's discussion of dream displacement he points to the effects of overdetermination in which new significant values are created from elements of slight value. In the dream under discussion, Brenner achieves his effect by reversing the meaning of his symbols, a technique which is close to that of overdetermination.

30. From an Orthodox point of view, such journals as HaTechia were considered to be the cause of heresy.

31. Freud. op. cit., P. 463. Secondary elaboration, "the psychic agency which approaches the dream-content with the demand that it must be intelligible, which subjects it to a first interpretation, and in so doing leads to the complete misunderstanding of it, is none other than our own normal thought." The references to the Jewish figures in the dream under discussion has a logical consistency which would also prevent the real meaning of the dream from appearing.

32. See analysis of the first dream in Chapter II.

33. Hillel Zeitlin. "Yosef Haim Brenner". HaTekufa XIV-XV, 1922, P. 637. Zeitlin discusses Brenner's attempt to found a colony on Tolstoyan principles and the disdain with which Peretz greeted the idea.

34. Brenner. Misaviv LaNikudah. P. 65.

35. Ibid., P. 63.

36. Ibid., P. 102.

37. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. PP. 394-6.

38. Harold Spivak. J. H. Brenner as a Novelist. (Unpublished Masters Thesis) New York, Jewish Institute of Religion, 1955, P. 63.

Chapter VI

1. Brenner. Mikan UMikan. P. 360.

2. Ibid., P. 371.

3. Ibid., P. 372.

4. Brenner. Shkol V'Kishalon. P. 394.

5. Ibid., P. 410.

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