

A STUDY AND INTERPRETATION
OF THE
JUDAIC ALLUSIONS
IN
THE SECOND SCROLL
AND
THE COLLECTED POEMS
OF
A. M. KLEIN:
ANNOTATIONS AND COMMENTARY



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JUDAIC ALLUSIONS IN A.M. KLEIN

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ABSTRACT

Klein was an heir to the tradition of the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment of the nineteenth century), in particular the school of "Jewish Science." The school sought to prove, by European standards, that Judaism possesses a creative culture equivalent to that of other nations. Klein, as discussed in the introduction of the dissertation, was influenced by Montreal intellectuals, disciples of the Haskalah, and ambitiously resolved to create equivalents to the English classics using Jewish subject matter. We therefore find among his works ballads, nursery rhymes, sonnets, Eliotic poems and a novel in the style of Joyce's Ulysses with overtones of the King James Bible. The Jewish subject matter is conveyed mainly through allusion. The dissertation traces Klein's allusions to their biblical, talmudic and folkloric sources. His poems are critically interpreted in relation to their Jewish content. In The Second Scroll, Klein's only published novel, terms and concepts are explicated and the biblical parallels are elucidated.

ABREGE

Klein était légataire de la tradition de la Haskalah (civilisation Juive du dix-neuvième siècle), plus particulièrement de l'Ecole de la "Science Juive." L'Ecole cherchait à prouver, selon les normes européennes, que le Judaïsme possédait une culture créatrice qui valait celle des autres nations. Klein, ainsi qu'il en a été fait mention à l'introduction de la dissertation, a été influencé par les intellectuels de Montréal, disciples de la Haskalah, et a pris la résolution ambitieuse de créer, à partir de thèmes Juifs, l'équivalent des classiques Anglais. Nous trouvons, par conséquent, parmi ses oeuvres; des ballades, des comptines, des sonnets, des poèmes inspirés d'Eliot et un roman dans le style de l'Ulysse de Joyce avec des reminiscences de la Bible du Roi James. Les thèmes Juifs sont surtout évoqués par allusion. La dissertation suit les allusions de Klein à partir de leurs sources bibliques, talmudiques et folkloriques. Ses poèmes sont surtout compris en fonction de leur contenu Juif. Dans The Second Scroll, qui est le seul roman de Klein à avoir été publié, les termes et concepts sont explicités et les parallèles bibliques élucidés.

PREFACE

An understanding of A. M. Klein's poetry and his novel presupposes a knowledge of the tradition in which he grew up and which pervades his works. Klein wrote of it un-selfconsciously, assuming his readers were well acquainted with the customs, history and classical texts of Judaism. However, there is a general ignorance of Jewish tradition which deprives readers of a full appreciation of Klein's creative talent. Sensing there is more than is generally understood, they usually share the frustration expressed by a reviewer of The Second Scroll:

The most irritating thing for me, a Gentile, in reading Klein is that Klein is writing only for Jews. His talent is too great, too powerful, too fine, to be so jealously directed. Couldn't he write for us too? (Roy Kervin, Montreal Gazette, 29 Sept. 1951).

E. E. Palnick ("A. M. Klein: A Biographical Study," Diss. Hebrew Union College, 1959) and Usher Caplan ("A. M. Klein: An Introduction," Diss. University of New York at Stony Brook, 1976) aid readers by providing a biographical background to Klein's works, and Gretl K. Fischer (In Search of Jerusalem: Religion and Ethics in the Writings of A. M. Klein, Montreal: McGill-Queens Press, 1975) helps by describing a philosophical

context to many poems and to Klein's novel. But the specific Judaic allusions in Klein's works remain without explication and the relationship between the cultural setting of Klein's tradition and his writings has not been fully explored.

This dissertation describes Klein's cultural background and proposes a motivation for the styles and forms he used as well as the content of his poems and novel. It traces Klein's Judaic allusions to their sources, explicates the specific terms and concepts and analyzes the Jewish content in the context of each relevant poem and of the novel. Subjects requiring a lengthier treatment than annotation and commentary appear in appendices at the end.

It is hoped that the dissertation, by elucidating obscure and difficult elements in his works and rendering them more accessible to the general reader, will contribute to a greater awareness and appreciation of the intellectual depth and allusive wit of Abraham M. Klein.

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Line and page numbers (separated by a colon) of Klein's poems in this dissertation refer to The Collected Poems of A. M. Klein, compiled and with an Introduction by Mirriam Waddington, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1974. Page numbers of The Second Scroll refer to The Second Scroll, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969, New Canadian Library #22 and New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951 (with the Knopf reference following the stroke /). In cross references, CP and SS are used.

Biblical quotations are taken from The Holy Scriptures According to the Massoretic Text, translated by Isaac Leeser, New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1914; Gospel quotations are taken from The New English Bible, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962; talmudic quotations are taken from The Talmud, London: The Soncino Press, 1948. "Talmud" refers to the Babylonian version unless the Jerusalem version (T. Y.) is indicated.

Klein did not use a standard transliteration of Hebrew into English. Inconsistent variations are therefore inevitable and should not be regarded as significant.

There are some religious scruples about writing out the name G-d in full in secular works. Klein may not have observed them, but they are observed in the notes and comments of this dissertation.

INTRODUCTION

In order to appreciate the full intellectual and cultural context of Klein's poetry and prose, of which the witty, heavily allusive style is a typical product, one must understand the ideological milieu in which he grew up and matured. Its roots go back to the eighteenth century and the immediate post-Enlightenment when Jews were gaining political equality and were being granted admission to European society. After many centuries of isolation behind the walls of the ghetto, Jews suddenly came into contact with nations that possessed celebrated traditions of literature, culture and history. Their own cultural efforts as a people were viewed as primitive, antiquated and frozen. Although able to point to the Hebrew Bible and much creedal scholarship related to it, they self-consciously accepted this judgment, for they now found themselves facing a world indifferent, even hostile, to religion. As Raphael Patai observes:

The Enlightenment confronted the Jews with a culture which not only attracted them irresistibly by its glitter but comprised, as one of its fundamentals, a new attitude to religion--ranging from luke-warm to hostile, from practical indifference to opposition in principle, from enlightened deism to philo-

sophical atheism. . . . At best, religion was reduced to an abstract belief in G-d and to a humanistic ethic.¹

The Jewish people were socially, theologically and philosophically unprepared for integration into European society. To facilitate their acceptance a group of Jewish intellectuals organized a movement known as the Haskalah, a Hebrew term denoting enlightenment. Advocating the adoption of European cultural values and the promotion of universal ideals which could be shared by Jews and Christians alike, the movement "determined to liberate the Jew from a historically evolved social and religious framework."² In Germany Moses Mendelssohn, a colleague of Kant, tried to give the Jews of the ghetto a linguistic key to European culture by translating the Hebrew Bible, with which all of them were familiar, into German. His disciples went on to systematize Jewish thought according to Hegelian categories and to compose poetry and novels, with biblical themes, in imitation of current literary fashion. In Russia the efforts to modernize and acculturate the Jews were more radical. The government was called in to enforce European standards upon reluctant ghetto Jews.

The dream of a rapid rapprochement between Christians and Jews in the spirit of the Enlightenment, however, proved empty. Young followers of the Haskalah

acquired extensive knowledge of European culture and adopted European manners and behaviour, as advocated by their fathers. But they began to question why large sections of society continued to display hostility towards them. Disillusioned, yet unwilling to abandon the humanistic ideals of the Enlightenment, they sought a new philosophy of rapprochement with their gentile neighbours. Their fathers, they contended, did not realize that the reluctance of society to accept Jews was due simply to ignorance of Judaism's history and contributions to civilization. Once enlightened, Europe would soon accept Jews as equals. They consequently set themselves the task of adapting Jewish concepts to those of European society, and thereby showing "the beauty of Shem (Jews) in the tents of Japhet (Europeans)" (Genesis 9:27). To this end they founded the Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden, an association which was to "bring a new knowledge . . . on an equal level with general European knowledge."³ Eventually, under the leadership of Dr. Leopold Zunz (1794-1886), the ideology of the association evolved into a school of thought known as Wissenschaft des Judentums, or "Jewish Science." All the intellectual and spiritual transformations in Judaism since the beginning of the nineteenth century go back, directly or indirectly, to this school of thought which is the first and most characteristic

expression of Judaism's response to its encounter with modern-day culture.⁴

The philosophy of the school of "Jewish Science" influenced all segments of European Jewry. Certain that an objective, scientific investigation of their history and culture would make them worthy of the equality bestowed upon them, enlightened Jews developed a pride in their heritage and past. Zunz said, "The moral and social equality of the Jews will be the result of the equality of Jewish scientific research."⁵ It was incumbent upon all scholars to show both Jews and Christians that, by European standards, Judaism possessed qualities of culture that measured up to those of Europe.

The school of "Jewish Science" pursued its goals through historical and philosophical studies. A rising nationalism in Europe quickened a general academic interest in these two disciplines in the universities and benefited the school's efforts. "Jewish Science," however, also had an impact upon literature. Hebrew belles lettres, poetry, and novels began to proliferate and there emerged a modern literary tradition modelled upon that of Europe. Ultimately Yiddish, too, gained from the leavening effects of the school of "Jewish Science."

The dilemma of preserving the distinctiveness of the Jewish people and yet conforming sufficiently to European manners and thought to be accepted has confronted Jews

since the Enlightenment, and they have consistently followed the tradition of "Jewish Science" to resolve it, i.e. proving their worth to society through cultural and religious contributions equal to those of their neighbours. The challenging heritage of the school of "Jewish Science" therefore was to validate the Jewish past in such a way that it would lead to a stimulation of cultural and religious vitality in the present. Enlightened Jews were called upon to vindicate their tradition by elucidating Jewish equivalents to the great accomplishments of Western civilization. Success meant acceptance as a respected creative segment of society. That, in turn, would provide a rationale for remaining distinctively Jewish. The heritage has been the subconscious motivation of much Jewish literature. In the 19th century Leopold Zunz and Marcus Jost attempted to show Jewish history as a glorious chapter of world history. Nachman Krochmal gave intellectual dignity to Jewish philosophy by grounding it in Hegelian dialectics. Abraham Mapu wrote the first modern Hebrew novel, and Solomon Ettinger created epigrams and parables in Yiddish to "enrich a verbally poor language."⁶ In the early 20th century, Abraham Uri Kovner tried to elevate Jewish literature through the critical ideas of the Russian Pissarev.⁷ With Mendele, Peretz, Shalom Aleichem and Bialik, Jewish literature matured and entered the modern era of world literature.

Another intellectual challenge facing the Jews of the Enlightenment was the reconciliation of their theological beliefs with current thought. They desperately sought to be true to the ideals of humanism. But that required relinquishing the traditional belief in the biblical G-d of Israel. As a great part of the Jewish past and as an expression of Jewish distinctiveness this belief could not simply be abandoned. They therefore turned to Spinoza's monistic system of philosophy, which offered them a basis for adopting humanistic ideals while retaining Jewish tradition and a belief in G-d. In fact, they found Spinoza himself to be the perfect model for an Enlightenment Jew. He espoused humanism yet believed in G-d, and despite his radical religious views, he remained loyal to Judaism. Furthermore, his pantheistic deity, synonymous with nature and therefore following nature's scientific laws, was as modern as science itself. One of the founders of the association which gave birth to the school of "Jewish Science" wrote:

Judaism is redeemed in accord with its natural and eternal basic idea . . . according to the method of pure thought . . . in a purely scientific manner. This was done in the system of Benedict Spinoza, a genius whose penetrating and profound thought was hundreds of years ahead of his times.

Spinoza, he summarizes, must be considered as "the highest expression of Jewish and universal thought."⁸

The Enlightenment was by no means enthusiastically embraced by all Jews. Traditional religious leaders sensed the great dangers involved in assimilation to European culture. They feared mass defection as the attractive open culture beckoned to the tradition-bound religious Jew. To them even Spinoza's god was too secular to save Judaism. Indeed the universal secular ideals of humanism, of which the Haskalah was so enamoured, did take its toll. As Howard M. Sachar writes:

The abandonment of Jewish loyalties was visible not merely in religious nonobservance; it was also apparent . . . in "ethnic disaffiliation." . . .

The fall of the ghettos, the attractions--and indeed the blessings--of Western life very naturally exercised an irresistible appeal for thousands of literate and acculturated West European Jews Men . . . forsook their Jewishness altogether and submerged themselves biologically as well as culturally in the blood stream of European life.⁹

Some attempts to harmonize humanism with traditional Judaism by Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-88) and his "neo-orthodox" school gained currency, but most traditional religious leaders remained bitterly opposed to the Enlightenment and its ideals, exhorting their followers

to retain their ancient beliefs and traditional codes of behaviour.¹⁰

The ideological dilemma of the Enlightenment Jew, to maintain ethnic and religious identity even while pursuing the liberal aims of humanism, preoccupies modern Jews as well. To remain Jewish and yet embrace society's universalistic ideals, irreconcilable goals, are still the tense underlying themes of Jewish literature in the present day. The bulk of modern Jewry in the twentieth century subscribes to a hybrid "ethnic" humanism, inherited mutatis mutandis from the Haskalah, or more specifically from the school of "Jewish Science." A firm belief in humanism is combined with a logically inconsistent loyalty to tradition and autonomous peoplehood. Some find a modern acceptable view of traditional belief in the existential ideas of Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Mordechai Kaplan and Abraham Joshua Heschel; the serious-minded, however, seeking an honest philosophical and theological position, remain on the excruciating knife-edge of doubt, for there is no true midpoint.¹¹

Klein was an intellectual heir to both the traditional culture of Judaism and the progressive culture of the West, and the ideological struggle of the post-Enlightenment Jew is reflected in his poetry. Assuming a reasonable chronological parallel between the publication and composition of his poems we can see that for Klein, as for Uncle Melech, there were "hesitations. . .

going two paces forward, one pace back," making a "very jagged spiritual graph" (SS 42/42). The early poems describing tradition, such as "Five Characters" (8:9) and "Plumaged Proxy," (148:1) are contemporaneous with those showing the beginnings of doubt, "Exorcism Vain" (34:7), "Out of the Pulver and the Polished Lens" (128:21) and "Talisman in Seven Shreds" (133:1). These are followed by the "radical poems," such as "Barricade Smith" (102:9). Then there is a return to tradition with the nursery rhymes, "King Dalfin" (176:1), and the Psalms (210:1 ff), and another drift away from tradition towards the full humanism of the secular poems in The Rocking Chair (296:1 ff) before the final return to tradition reflected in The Second Scroll.¹²

In Klein's day, the heritage of creating Jewish literature which could match the standards of world literature, initiated by the school of Jewish Science, was continued by Moishe Leib Halpern, H. Leivick, Jacob Glatstein, Mani Leib, Moshe Nadir and Itzik Manger. Klein, who grew up in the Haskalah environment of Montreal, was well acquainted with the works of these authors. He translated many of them into English. Among his close friends were Jewish literati such as H. Wolofsky, publisher of the Montreal Yiddish Daily "Kanader Adler" and the Yiddish poet J. J. Segal.¹³ As an intellectual versed in both Jewish and general culture, with a talent for writing,

Klein, too, was challenged by the heritage of "Jewish Science." He therefore ambitiously undertook to interpret the traditions of his people in English by creating equivalents to some of the English classics. As a consequence we find among his works nursery rhymes, sonnets, ballads and legends patterned after classical English models, but using Jewish lore for subject matter. "King Elimelech" (174:30) is a Jewish Old King Cole; "King Dalfin" (176:1) is a Jewish Tom Thumb; "Ballad of the Dancing Bear" (164:14) is an imitation of an early English ballad, the Jewish content providing a grim irony in this context; "Portraits of a Minyan" and "Ave Atque Vale" (118:22, 112:1) are Jewish Canterbury Tales; Yehuda Halevi (244:1) is a Jewish Launcelot, and the princess Zion is a Jewish "Lady of Shalot"; Klein's Childe Harold (113:28) is a Jewish Byronic hero, with some added ironies in his new role; and Abraham Segal and Velvel Kleinberger (82:1, 89:1) are Jewish Prufrocks. Even Klein's "Psalms" follow the classical style of the King James translation rather than the style of the spare Hebrew original.¹⁴ The Hitleriad is, quite obviously, an attempt to create a modern Jewish "Dunciad"; and The Second Scroll, involving the entire range of Jewish mythology, with an archetypal hero, is a Jewish rewriting of the King James Bible in the style of Joyce's Ulysses.¹⁵

Klein employs many literary devices in his works, but the principal medium of his Jewish subject matter is allusion. In defending his work against the criticism that it unrealistically "presupposes on the part of the reader a knowledge of Hebrew tradition," Klein replied:

Milton's 'Paradise Lost' presupposes great Biblical knowledge Large tracts of English poetry assume on the part of the reader an intimate knowledge of Greek mythology and the close relationship between the various gods and goddesses of Greek lore Joyce's Ulysses . . . has its counterpart in . . . Homer's 'Odyssey'.¹⁶

All of these works are heavy with allusion, and obviously Klein regarded them as models for his own works. To his allusions Klein added scholarly wit, epigram and a paronomastic play on words.

In Klein's early work the allusions, though they seem difficult to the average reader, are rather simple. Most of them are based upon Jewish classical texts and ritual practices well known to the average Jew of Klein's day. In "Five Characters" (8:9) Klein alludes to the five main personalities of the Book of Esther and to rabbinical embellishments of the plot which were familiar even to heder (Hebrew school) children. (The allusions and wit are explained in the annotations on the poems.) The biblical book was very popular among Jews and was

read on the merry festival of Purim. In "Five Weapons against Death" (17:1), similarly, Klein alludes to Jewish mourning rituals and their significance. The allusions in poems such as "Joseph" (11:15), "Mattathias" (12:1), "Four Strange Sons" (78:22), "Plumaged Proxy" (148:1), are easily discernible and require no great scholarship to interpret. Klein's later historical allusions, for example, to the massacre of Jews in Europe during the Crusades in "Design for a Medieval Tapestry" (136:16), and to the pogroms in Hebron during 1929-30 in "Greeting on this Day" (124:1), are also quite open and uncomplicated but do require a knowledge of Jewish history to recognize.

Klein often combines irony with the allusions contained in the titles of his poems. In "Ballad of Signs and Wonders (14:1) and "Nahum-this-is-also-for-the-good Ponders" (138:17) the irony consists of the odd jarring sound the literal English translation of Hebrew or Yiddish phrases makes in contrast to the idiomatic original--a sort of irony of sound. But one must be acquainted with the original to appreciate the contrast fully. This type of irony is common in The Second Scroll in such phrases as "that issuer to a bad end" (17/3), "as knowingly as did the rooster on the page of the prayer of Bnai Adam" (21/8), "a black end" (21/15), and "suspends worlds on withoutwhat" (39/37).

Often Klein extends the irony of his title with numerical allusions. His "Ecclesiastes 13" (38:15) is to be understood as an ironic postscript to the biblical book which has only twelve chapters. Ecclesiastes broods; Klein's poet exults. In "Blueprint for a Monument of War" (96:1) the sub-title, "P.P.S. / Appendix for the Pious--Isaiah, chapter sixty-seven," is a little more explicit; there are only sixty-six chapters in Isaiah, the prophetic book forecasting universal peace. All the numbers of "Psalms" (256:1 ff) beyond one hundred and fifty--there are only one hundred and fifty Psalms in the Bible--are meant to suggest a contemporary extension of the biblical book. In this vein of numerical irony The Second Scroll, too, is an extension of the "first" Scroll, the Bible. The biblical books never really ended, Klein contends, they are being written now too! Indeed, in The Second Scroll Klein weaves an elaborate gematria, or mystical code of numbers and letters, as a symbolic elaboration of this idea.¹⁷

Klein frequently employs puns as a vehicle for allusive wit. Paronomasia is an old and respected tradition of humour among Jews. It goes back to the Bible, which uses puns especially with respect to names. Eve, the first woman, is called havah because she was the mother of all hai, living beings; and Babel, which in its idol-worshipping context means "gate of god," is

construed after the incident of the tower and the "confusion of tongues" to connote disorder, from the Hebrew, balal (Genesis 11:9). Klein's puns, too, are wittiest with respect to names and titles. In "Talisman in Seven Shreds" (133:1) he uses several puns simultaneously. "Talisman," in its literal sense, refers to the amulet which brought "the golem," or unformed clay, to life. In its metaphoric sense it alludes to the magic of religion and the mystery of life. Klein plays upon the word as a hybrid neologism composed of Hebrew-Yiddish and English. Talis is Hebrew-Yiddish for prayer-shawl. Talis-man would then be a term connoting "man of faith." Seven is a holy number; this suggests that doubt may tear traditional faith apart but somehow shreds of holiness remain. "In Seven Shreds" is part of a Yiddish proverbial phrase describing poverty, and undoubtedly Klein's allusion means to suggest that loss of faith is an impoverishment of the spirit.

(Cf. "The Cripples" 298:20.) "The Psalter of Avram Haktani" is, when translated, "The Psalter of Abraham Klein," but hakatan, which means "small" in Hebrew, as does "klein" in Yiddish and German, is also a prefix of modesty used by Jewish scholars in signing Responsa. It humbly disclaims any greatness one might attribute to the writer for the scholarly contribution of the contents. Melech Davidson, the name of the hero of

The Second Scroll, is a bi-lingual pun on the Jewish messiah, who will be a king (Melech, in hebrew), a descendant of David (Davidson). Melech is also a common Hebrew praenomen. Dalfen, the original name of Dauphin, the ambitious ghetto-bred young guide who conducts the journalist-narrator through Casablanca, means poor man in Yiddish. His new name, with its connotations of royalty and wealth, contrasts ironically with his humble origins. Krongold, a close associate of Melech, means "crown of gold" most appropriate for a "king."

Klein's allusive scholarly wit is varied and subtle. "A Voice is Heard in Ramah" (234:20), part of a biblical verse, alludes to the voice of the poet. However, Klein's subtle emphasis is upon the omitted second half of the verse, ". . . groaning, weeping and bitter lamentation; Rachel is weeping for her children"; the poems that follow are all elegies on tragedies sustained by the Jewish people. Assuming the role of Rachel, Klein expresses grief for the children of Israel in their sorrows. One must simply know the Talmud to recognize the surprisingly fabulous aspects of the lives of the rabbis poetically alluded to by Klein in the concise rhymes of "Ave Atque Vale" (112:1). In "Talisman in Seven Shreds" (133:1), two of the sonnets of doubting are entitled "Fons Vitae" and "Guide to the Perplexed,"

ironically alluding to two works by major Jewish philosophers intended to resolve crises of belief in their day. The titles of many of the "Psalms" allude to actual titles of the biblical Psalms and become metaphoric extensions of the poems' themes. "Psalm II" is entitled "A Prayer when He was in the Cave." The title alludes to Psalm 142 in the Bible, which was composed when King Saul, David's enemy, unsuspectingly enters a cave where David and his men were hiding. Instead of killing the king, David merely cuts off a corner of his garment. To his men David explains that he would rather rely on G-d's ultimate salvation for protection. Metaphorically speaking, the enthroned scientific attitudes of his day seek to destroy Klein's faith. He cannot defend himself alone and turns to G-d for help--"do Thou the deed, say Thou the word." In "Psalm XXII" Klein offers a prayer "against madness." The title alludes to the biblical Psalm 34 and the occasion when David, in order to save himself from death at the hand of Akish, king of Gath, feigns madness (1 Samuel 21:11-16). In ironic contrast Klein prefers death to madness, and prays:

. . . if such

The stumbling that awaits my path--

Grant me Thy grace, thy mortal touch,

The full death-quiver of Thy wrath! (223:27-30)

Klein's scholarly allusions become more subtle and complex in The Second Scroll. Describing Uncle Melech's early "wordly" strivings, he uses the expression "branch lopped from the tree" (18/4) and "cutter down of plants" (41/39). In using these rabbinic metaphors Klein alludes to the ambiguity of attitude in the Talmud towards a great second century leader who embraced Hellenism. There is a mixture of respect for the rabbi's intellectual capability and independence of spirit and a powerful contempt for his having scorned the "proper way."¹⁸ The allusion provides an overtone of mixed emotions rather than a flat condemnation. When Piersanti hands the nephew Uncle Melech's letter in Rome, he tells him apologetically, "The first page is missing" (43/43). Only a student of the Talmud in the original knows that all standard editions begin with page two. This allusion to the Talmud is one among many clues Klein has dropped, consciously or unconsciously, for the interpretation of Uncle Melech as a G-d figure. There are also many allusions to philosophical discussions concerning G-d found in Jewish medieval works and to theories regarding the social and political status of the Jewish people advanced by nineteenth century intellectuals in the dialogue of the plane passenger in the Deuteronomy chapter (App. A, D).

Many references to Uncle Melech as G-d figure are hidden beneath the literal surface of the novel.

They constitute a subtle structuring of what might be termed an allusive conceit. By suggestive ambiguity the mysterious figure of G-d is conjured in association with Uncle Melech. Our perspective of Melech changes as a result. We see him in more than human terms and we realize why the nephew searches for his uncle so compulsively and why he can never meet him. Uncle Melech hovers between divine symbol and epic hero.¹⁹

The allusions suggesting Uncle Melech as G-d figure are traced and interpreted below (App. A).

In addition to the composition of an allusive G-d figure shadowing Uncle Melech, Klein has also created highly original artistic allusive patterns in the text and texture of the novel. The outer form of The Second Scroll is an allusion by design. The chapter divisions and titles correspond to the Pentateuchal "First" Scroll, and the notes enhance the allusion by their topological resemblance to the commentaries on the pages of standard texts of the Hebrew Bible. The artistry of this allusion is extended further through the plot content of each chapter which delicately, almost imperceptibly, alludes to major incidents in each of the Five Books of Moses. And the Glosses follow suit with allusions to well known portions of biblical commentary. (See SS App. B.) This is one aspect of an inner allusive design.

A second aspect of this design, one which transcends the first in erudition and artistic sophistication, is the molding of the novel's elements into geometric patterns or images, virtually "theorems made metaphor," to paraphrase Klein's description of the Sistine Chapel ceiling (SS 104/136). It is allusion by image.

Early in The Second Scroll Klein suggests the basic geometric image upon which the novel is constructed. The first significant encounter between nephew and uncle takes place indirectly through a letter received during "the Feast of Rejoicing in the Law," a festival celebrating the conclusion and also the beginning of an annual cycle of readings of the Law in the synagogue. Klein pointedly describes it in circular terms:

A year of the reading of the Law had been concluded, a year was beginning anew, the last verses of Deuteronomy joined the first of Genesis, the eternal circle continued. Circular, too, was the dance, a scriptural gaiety, with wine rejoicing the heart, and Torah exalting it to heights that strong wine could not reach (2/8).

The Second Scroll completes the "eternal circle" of the "first" Scroll as forecast in the prophetic books. The people of Israel and Melech, their symbol and G-d figure, return to the Holy Land. To duplicate the circle in literary design the novel concludes with images of light--

"out of its tombs come light" (92/120); "holy city on whose hills once were kindled, as now again, the beacons . . . " (93/121)--which are a continuation of the first metaphor in The Second Scroll--" . . . a bright Eden" (17/3). Uncle Melech affirms his faith, after visiting the Sistine Chapel, "in a singular circular sentence without beginning or end" (52/58). It is contained in "Gloss Gimel," the most poetic part of the novel. The Gloss is a thematic summary of the novel in poetic prose, and the circle is outstanding in frequency among the Gloss's images--"circuit of those murderous medallions"; "circle-wracked," "caught in those wheels" (104/137); "circles circling the tableau of risen Eve" (110/140); "encircled by spheres and cycles of potency" (110/146); "magic circles" (112/150).

There are also circles within circles. Each chapter ends with a theme related to the one with which it opens. Genesis begins with the death of the journalist-narrator's father, " . . . my father--may he dwell in a bright Eden," a Yiddish expression used in connection with a deceased parent; it ends with the spiritual death of Uncle Melech. (See App. C.) Exodus begins with the journalist's childhood vision of the messianic age and ends with Melech composing biblical, talmudic and kabbalistic texts regarding the times of the Messiah. The Leviticus chapter begins with the journalist's plane

trip to Rome and ends with his plane trip to Casablanca. But more significantly it opens with his "deflecting compulsion" (39/36) to delay his itinerary and visit his uncle, and ends with Uncle Melech's compulsion to "feel in his own person and upon his own neck the full weight of the yoke of exile." He visits his Sephardic brothers in Casablanca and delays his journey to Israel. Numbers begins with a love song (57/64) and a "courtship of the city" of Casablanca (48/66); it ends with an ironically contrasting disgust of "false music" and of "this city of the teated domes and the phalloi of minarets" (69/84, emphasis added). Deuteronomy begins with the theories of the voluble passenger in which Providence plays no role and G-d has no place (73/90); it ends with "speeches . . . restrained . . . in quiet tones" about how Uncle Melech, G-d figure, "had become a kind of mirror, an aspaklaria, of the events of our time" and of "his influence . . . his philosophy . . . and the sheer force of his existence again in our life" (12/120).

Another allusive image of geometrical design found in The Second Scroll is parallel lines. As the name implies, The Second Scroll is a modern symbolic parallel to the Pentateuchal "first" Scroll. The parallel extends wittily to the intricacies of content as well. (See App. B.) There is in addition, however, a

geometrical symmetry that emerges as an artistic design in the texture of the novel. Whatever Uncle Melech encounters in suffering and ecstasy, the nephew experiences in parallel symbolic miniature. Uncle Melech is a scholar who has "weathered the ocean of the Talmud"; his nephew struggles with Hebrew texts, albeit on a more elementary scale (18/5). Uncle Melech's sister, mother of the narrator, makes the equation, "Oh that he might be like his Uncle Melech, a scholar in Israel" (18/4). Uncle Melech lives through a pogrom in Ratno; the nephew, by eavesdropping on the conversation of his mother and father as they discuss Uncle Melech's letter from Ratno, samples some of its dread. Amid "the choked sobbing" he hears "names . . . heard often before, connected with some holy parable or comic anecdote." Now they move about his "bedstead like ghosts" (21/10). Uncle Melech, during his Communist period, attends "various schools in Moscow" and becomes "the international authority upon the decadence of European literature" (26/17); his nephew similarly attends university to learn secular knowledge and becomes "conditioned to look at Marxism with a most unfilial impartiality" (25/16). Even Uncle Melech's devotion to Communism has a pale reflection in his nephew's being "filled . . . with a secret pride" at his uncle's progress in the Party (25/16).

Uncle Melech's suffering in the Nazi Holocaust, prior to his "exodus" from Europe, and his journey to the Holy Land is duplicated in symbolic form by the nephew in his preparation for a visit to Israel. The passport application, the inoculations required for travel abroad, and the apprehensions of the traveller provide the elements of the parallel line image, and a good example of Klein's neat and precise symmetry of design:

Uncle Melech

I scan the tattooed arms--
the arm before me bears the
number 12165 (31/25).

. . . the men who cheated
the chimney, those who by
some divine antitoxin were
preserved from thirty-two
fictitious diseases
(31/25).

. . . some worthies of the
community had gathered . .
. public worship had been
forbidden (33/27,
28). (Then follows a

Nephew

. . . my passport . . .
it bore No. 9 (29/21).

Scarified . . . against
smallpox, punctured against
typhus, pierced for tetanus,
injected for typhoid, and
needled with cholera . . .
(28/21).

I was of the first minyan
(29/22). (Minyan is a
quorum of ten required for
public worship.)

ghastly parody of
Jewish public worship
directed by Nazi "semitic
expert.")

I hope . . . I may write
you . . . of the kindness
of the wild beasts of the
wood who did not seek my
life (36/33).

The world, say the old
liturgies, is full of
'wild beasts that lie in
wait' (29/21).

With the six-pointed Star
of David we were inocu-
lated against the world
(32/27).

. . . germs, viruses,
microbes; against their en-
counter they pointillated
upon my arms their pre-
scribed prophylactic
prayers (29/21).

There is a similarity of assignment by Uncle Melech's JDC director and by the nephew's publisher, and a similarity in frustration. Late in the Numbers chapter Dauphin, the JDC chauffeur, reveals Uncle Melech's assignment in Casablanca: "We sent him into the mellah to gather up statistics for us" (67/82). Uncle Melech compiles the unexpected "statistics on blindness, on trachoma, on ringworm of the scalp, on itches, scabs and young boys' baldness" (67/82). But he cannot have them published--"He sat down and wrote a letter to the

editor of Le Maroc, . . . made public all the facts and figures The letter wasn't even published!"

(68/82) Poverty and disease are rampant in the streets, a matter too embarrassing for the authorities to admit. The nephew, too, sent to "gather up" Israel's poetry for an anthology, finds an unexpected poetry of "nameless authorship" that "flourished in the streets" (84/108). Diffused in the everyday language of the people, it could not be published!

Finally, the novel begins with a prohibition against the mention of Uncle Melech's name--"For many years my father . . . refused to permit . . . even the mention of that person's name" (17/3), and it is only at the end of the novel that we realize the name of the narrator-nephew is never mentioned!

Varying the parallel imagery, Klein often creates a contrasting irony between the parallels, accenting still further the geometric design. Uncle Melech's original devout piety in Ratno (A) and his subsequent scoffing irreverence as a Communist (B), for example, are ironically parallel in their contrast:

A

Nor was he, as are so many of the subtle-scholarly, any the less pious for his learning. The six hundred and thirteen injunctions of Holy Writ, or at least those that remained binding and observable in the lands of the Diaspora, he sedulously observed;

punctilious he was in his ritual ablutions; and in his praying, a flame tonguing its way to the full fire of G-d. He was removed from worldly matters: not the least of his praises was that he knew not to identify the countenances on coins (19/5, 6).

B

Uncle Melech, it was reported, had shaved his beard. Uncle Melech, it was stated, was with the Russian cavalry; an imaginative gossip went so far as to add that Uncle Melech had made his phylacteries part of his horse's harness. Uncle Melech, it was whispered, ate pork. He broke the Sabbath. He had become a commissar and was especially active with the zealots of the Society of Godlessness (25/15, 16).

In the Exodus chapter, the short, rather happy apocalypse of "Hierosolyma, the golden" descending from the clouds is contrasted with the lengthy and sadly passionate description of the tragic humiliation and massacre of the Jews of Kamenets (27/19, 32/23 ff), and a gay, holy ritual in Canada is symmetrically in contrast to its "unspeakable" counterpart in Nazi occupied Kamenets (20/7 ff, 33/27 ff). Uncle Melech's burials are also a study in contrasting parallelism. In Kamenets he is buried alive in a mass grave amid the groans of his people and he rises in darkness, "a shadow

of the shadows of the night" (36/33); in Israel he is buried in great honour, in "a land . . . where out of its tombs come light" (91/120), and he rises in apotheosis.

The most stirring and poetic parallel of contrasts occurs in the Numbers chapter, and there the irony, too, is most intense. The chapter begins with a rhapsodic description of a Romantic Orient, but the mood is then suddenly changed by the contrasting ugly picture of real life in the Jewish mellah with its "offal and slime . . . sun-stirred putrescences . . . white pupilled blindness . . ." (56-60, 62 ff /64-70, 73 ff). The beauty and ugliness are meticulously balanced between the nephew's first impressions of an "Arabian Nights" East and the discovery of the true condition of the Eastern Jews of Morocco:

First Impression	True Condition
Everything was a fascination, rich, crayoned I had been sustained by the richness of the scene (58-9/67).	Everywhere poverty wore its hundred costumes . . . This was a population of beggars (62-3/73).
. . . these succulent chicken-wings that here made dripping moustaches	. . . behind his veil of flies . . . one pendulous hooked piece of liver . . .

for the round Levantine
in a fez, or by mounds
of saffron and rice, or
even the cubed sheep's
meat glistening fat
(59/68).

. . . a rite of grossness
and plump-fingered deli-
cacy (59/68).

. . . abstracting the
beauty of the world to its
planes and lines, rolling
in intimate involvement the
intertangled triangles, the
paired squares eschewing
image, delighting form
(60/69).

. . . some palmettoed
atrium (60/70).

and for tripe there are
customers . . . the guts
of fish, blood and pale
balloon, lie in the road-
way alongside which the
seven scrummed tunnels
slowly flow in filthy
arabesque (63/75).

. . . a population of
beggars greeting me with
outstretched palms, with
five-fingered plea (63/74).

The streets, narrow and
mounting, mazed descen-
ding and serpentine,
formicated with life
(62/73).

. . . there at the side
of that house is a kennel,
into it her assistant

pushes her and as circumstances require, withdraws (64/76).

. . . the ghosts of roses,
the seven-veiled shadows
of jasmine (59/68).

. . . garbage and refuse
steam mephitic on the
ground (65/77).

This "white and black" contrast of mystery and misery is foreshadowed in the oriental architecture which the nephew notes and describes as his unreal tour begins: "white marble gave way to black, the black to white, twins of symmetry in polite accommodating dance" (60/69).

The parallelism of contrasts extends to some of the themes of the novel as well. The modern poetic and literary accomplishments of Israel are viewed through the contrasting perspectives of the past: "Canaanite" poetry is regarded as "a reaction from the experiences of exile" (80/100); the most radically modern poet the nephew encounters comes from ancient Tiberias, "sacred home of the punctators who had vocalized our script" (82/104); "nameless authorship [which] flourished in the streets" is essentially ancient biblical and talmudic terms "alive again, . . . shaping Hebrew imagination" through everyday conversation into an "epic revealed" (84/107, 108).

Even the very search for modern Israel's poetry is cast in such terms:

Go into the market-place and get me an Isaiah.

Of psalmodists, bring me only the best. Cull me
a canticle in the fields of En Gedi! (79/99)

The irony here, too, derives from the contrasting perspective. Contrapuntally, Uncle Melech, symbol of the past, is engaged by the Renaissance art of Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling, art which is definite and specific; his nephew, on the other hand, emblematic of the modern impulse, is pre-occupied with the new poetic art of Israel which is general and diffuse, "the great efflorescent impersonality" (50/55; 85/108). At the end of the novel, as Uncle Melech's spirit becomes part of the land and people of Israel, the symbols of the past and present coalesce and the "parallel lines" meet!

Creative design by matching ideas, themes and images is itself a biblical technique, according to Klein. He explains it as a product of suppressed creativity in the plastic and graphic arts in Israel resulting from the second commandment. In an article, "The Gesture of the Bible," (The Canadian Jewish Chronicle, July 16, 1948) he writes:

With the unfortunate exception of the Golden Calf affair . . . neither in sculpture nor in painting did Hebrew chisel or brush create the forbidden image.

Nevertheless, "the soul hungers for such creativity." Jews, therefore, found a Freudian escape from this prohibition by the production of verbal images in poetic form, the most prominent example of which is the parallelismus membrorum. In the Bible, not only are poetic phrases made parallel to each other but, more important, so too are the thoughts. The result is a literary and philosophical image of symmetry. Since the image is auditory and intellectual, rather than visual, the second commandment is not violated. In The Second Scroll Klein artistically parallels the Bible in form, and within the parallel creates another subtle reflection of the same design.

Klein has contributed to the art of Canadian poetry with his verbal talents. But compounded with his poetry one can detect the irresistible urge of the Haskalah, particularly the school of "Jewish Science," to raise the prestige of the Jewish past to that of other nations. Klein's allusive devices hint at a vast Jewish "mythology" which, he attempted to show, matches the allusive background of English classics in richness of archetype and image. Even the King James Bible, one of the English classics which derives from a Jewish source, he recast in a modern idiom with elements of biblical and post-biblical Jewish "mythology." The geometric designs and symmetry that emerge through

Klein's allusive creations embellish his poetic forms even as they retrace ancient biblical patterns. His wit is delightfully subtle, providing humour and irony as well as scholarly challenge.

If indeed, as Ludwig Lewisohn states, Klein is "the first contributor of authentic Jewish poetry to the English language,"²⁰ It is mainly on account of the erudition, wit and literary cast of his Judaic allusions.

NOTES

1. Raphael Patai, The Jewish Mind (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), 1977, p. 280.
2. H. H. Ben Sasson, A History of the Jewish People (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), p. 782.
3. Ibid. p. 837.
4. Max Wiener, "The Ideology of the Founders of Jewish Scientific Research," YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science, 5(1950)193.
5. Ibid. p. 195.
6. Israel Zinberg, History of Jewish Literature (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1978), XI, 187.
7. Ibid. XII, 154 ff.
8. Wiener, "Jewish Scientific Research," p. 194.
9. The Course of Modern Jewish History (New York: Dell Publishing Co.), 1958, pp. 158-59.

10. Ben Sasson, History, 839 ff.
11. See William E. Kaufman, Contemporary Jewish Philosophies (New York: Reconstructionist Press and Behrman House), 1976; Milton Himmelfarb, The Jews of Modernity (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society), 1976; also Arthur Hertzberg, "Modernity and Judaism," Great Confrontations in Jewish History, ed. Stanley M. Wagner, and Allen D. Breck, (Denver: University of Denver, Dept. of History), 1977, pp. 125-35.
12. Cf. S. Spiro, "The Second Gloss: An Exegesis of The Second Scroll by A. M. Klein," Diss. Concordia University (Sir George Williams) 1971, pp. 47-59. The chronology of the poems follows Usher Caplan in "A. M. Klein, A Bibliography and Index to Manuscripts," The A. M. Klein Symposium, ed. Seymour Mayne (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press), 1975, pp. 87-122, in the series Reappraisals: Canadian Writers, ed. Lorraine McMullen.
13. Usher Caplan, "A. M. Klein: An Introduction," Diss. University of New York at Stony Brook, 1976, p. 78.

14. Cf. SS 142/197, "For the Day Psalm the Thirtieth" which is entirely a direct quotation of the King James translation.

15. See Spiro, "The Second Gloss," 85-99; 122-55.

Also App. A.

In a letter to Shmuel Niger, prominent Yiddish literary critic (1883-1955) Klein writes, "I did not set out of purpose to accomplish a tour de force; to show that Hebrew values could be translated into English terms"--an apparent contradiction to what he really did accomplish. But Usher Caplan correctly surmises, "the emphatic denial of any intention to 'accomplish a tour de force' seems rather revealing of a guilty conscience. Klein's poetry often is a tour de force, and what we may really have here is his own suspicion that this is so" ("Klein: Introduction," p. 89).

16. Caplan, "Klein: Introduction," p. 88.

17. Klein's pre-occupation with numbers is interesting to note: "Five Weapons against Death," "Talisman in Seven Shreds," "Portraits of a Minyan (ten)," "Arithmetic," "Four Sonnets," the numbered Psalms, etc. and the numerology of Melech in The Second Scroll.

18. The conflicting emotions form the basis of Milton Steinberg's As a Driven Leaf (New York: Behrman House, 1939), a novel portraying the life of this apostate rabbi.
19. It is not suggested that other interpretations of Uncle Melech are not valid. However, Uncle Melech as G-d figure seems to have definite and specific allusions which Klein consciously or unconsciously wove into the artistic design of the novel.
- 201 Foreword to Klein's Hath Not a Jew (New York: Behrman House, 1940). Obviously Lewisohn does not consider the King James Bible "Jewish" poetry in the English language. Indeed, it was written by Christian scholars primarily for Christians.

COLLECTED POEMS

8:9 FIVE CHARACTERS

The five sonnets are based on the biblical Book of Esther and allude to various aspects of the story and to some rabbinical elaborations. Klein also adds some fictional details.

The biblical story tells of King Ahasuerus, who, deep in his cups at a royal banquet, commands Vashti, his queen, to appear before him so that he can display her beauty to the guests. She refuses and is beheaded. Following the advice of his counsellors, the king gathers virgins from his entire kingdom to choose the most beautiful as his new queen. Among them is Hadassah, known as Esther, an orphan whom Mordecai, the Jew, had adopted as a daughter. The king is struck by her beauty and crowns her queen of Persia. Upon Mordecai's instructions Esther does not reveal her nationality.

Shortly thereafter, the king appoints a favourite nobleman, Haman, Grand Vizier. The vain Haman immediately orders all citizens to bow down to him in public. But pious Mordecai, whose faith prohibits such obeisance except to G-d, defies Haman. Considering it beneath his dignity to avenge himself on Mordecai alone, Haman persuades the king to permit the destruction of all the Jews of Persia and the confiscation of their property. A date is chosen by lots.

Mordecai, learning of Haman's plans, informs Esther of her people's jeopardy and urges her to plead for them with the king. Esther tells Mordecai that anyone entering the king's presence without being called is summarily beheaded unless the king shows his favour by putting forward the royal sceptre. She had not been called for some time. Esther asks Mordecai and the Jews of Persia to pray for her.

When Esther enters the king's chamber, Ahasuerus is once again charmed by her beauty. He puts forward his sceptre and gently asks her, "What wilt thou, queen Esther? What is thy request? If it be equal to half of the kingdom it shall still be given thee!" Esther does not reveal her true request yet. Instead she invites the king and Haman to a series of banquets to be given in the palace garden.

In the meantime, the king, one night, is unable to sleep. He calls for the royal chronicles to be read. It is recorded there that Mordecai had saved the king's life by discovering and reporting the regicidal plot of two noblemen, Begthan and Teresh. Ahasuerus decides he must reward Mordecai. Haman, ironically, enters the palace at that moment to tell the king of the gallows he has erected for Mordecai. The king asks him, "What shall be done to a man whom the king delighteth to honour?" Thinking there can be no man other than

himself deserving of such honour, Haman suggests a ride on the king's steed with royal robes and a herald shouting in the streets, "Thus is done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour!" The king, then, in the climax of the biblical Book, commands Haman, "Make haste, take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast spoken, and do this to Mordecai the Jew; . . . leave out nothing of all that thou hast spoken!"

The last of the banquets to which Esther had invited the king and Haman now takes place. Esther reveals her hitherto unknown nationality and accuses Haman of attempting to destroy her people. The king orders Haman executed and issues a decree saving the Jews.

The Book ends with Haman hanged on the gallows he erected for Mordecai, Mordecai becoming Grand Vizier, and the Jews of Persia celebrating their deliverance on the day chosen by Haman for their destruction in a joyous holiday called Purim, Feast of Lots.

The rabbinical elaborations and Klein's fictional details will be noted in the text.

The holiday of Purim traditionally has a carnival atmosphere. "Since ancient times comic and jesting tricks were played, all kinds of parodies were recited and, in later times, merry farces (Purim-shpiln) were presented" (Israel Zinberg, A History of Jewish

Literature, New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1975, VII, 316-17). In the light-hearted tones of the sonnets Klein tries to capture the gay spirit of the holiday, especially of the farces which invariably involve characters from the Book of Esther. The holiday's more serious theme of survival is present only by implication in the poems, as it is in the biblical book.

The plot of the Book of Esther lends itself easily to dramatization; there is a hero and a villain, a king and a beautiful orphan who becomes queen. Indeed the merry farces of Purim were recreated into elaborate plays, or Aktionen in the Renaissance, and constituted the earliest Yiddish drama (Zinberg, Jewish Literature, VII, 317). Klein's title becomes significant in this context; it is a parody of Pirandello's "Six Characters."

8:11 Set in the jewelled . . . was not known . . .

--A fictitious enhancement of the biblical story. The "naked innuendo cameo" of the queen arouses the voluptuous king and, as implied in the next sonnet, he calls for her to appear at his banquet naked. When she refuses her "naked" beauty ironically becomes the cause of her death.

That the king had commanded Vashti to appear at his feast without clothes is taken from the Midrash, a rabbinical commentary on the Bible which deduces details

from an exegesis of the text. The rabbis also state that the queen had refused to obey the king's command only ostensibly out of modesty; the true reason was she had contracted a repulsive leprosy (The Legends of the Jews, ed. and trans. L. Ginzberg, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1968, IV, 374-75). Klein uses the archetypal themes of love, death, disease and feasting in a mock serious vein.

8:15 It smiled as if it knew what was not known . . .

--The feminine mystery of a Mona Lisa smile is applied to Vashti's naked innuendo cameo.

8:16 The king arose . . . Let wine flow!

--Esther 1:7, "And they gave them drink . . . and royal wine in abundance, according to the bounty of the king."

8:26-9:2 The chamberlain burst . . . the king's oracle.

--Esther 9-11, "Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded . . . the seven chamberlains that ministered in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to show the peoples and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to look on."

9:4-5 pale as East / Before the worshippers may praise
the dawn,

--The simile alludes to a Jewish ritual law which states morning prayers are to begin only after it is light enough (Talmud Berakot 1:2).

9:6 Shushan

--Mentioned as the capital of Persia and associated with gardens in the Book of Esther (1:5). It is identified with the ancient site of Susa (Qal' a-e Shush) in Iran.

9:7 a naked swan

--Klein succinctly combines Greek mythological associations with the rabbinic comment on Vashti's nakedness (see above 8:11) for a heightened erotic effect.

Jupiter seduced Leda in the form of a swan.

9:10 leprous white.

--See above note on 8:11.

9:14 some new star's sudden naissance,

--Esther is the Persian name for Venus. (Cf. Talmud Megillah 13a.) Stara is Persian for star.

9:16 Hadassah is out walking in the garden.

--Esther 7:7-8. Hadassah is Esther's Hebrew name (Esther 2:7).

9:19 the secrets of her pardon

--For entering the king's presence without being called (Esther 4:11). See above note on 8:9.

9:21-23 He does not lust her . . . how Persian-hot he kissed her.

--In ironic contrast to Vashti, Esther induces a more gentle love in Ahasuerus. "His wild love racing" is confined to "his lips."

9:22 His wild love racing

--Esther 2:17.

9:24-25 Giving her his sceptre What is thy request my Esther?

--Esther 5:13. See also above note on 8:9.

9:27-28 He revered no idol, nor of gold / Nor silver.

--An allusion to the biblical prohibition, "Ye shall not make with Me--gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make unto you" (Exodus 21:20).

9:28 certainly not one of flesh.

--Esther 3:2, "But Mordecai bowed not down, nor prostrated himself before him."

9:30 . . . by being told.

--Esther 3:2, "And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed down, and prostrated themselves before Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him."

9:31-10:3 Had he not justly loyally revealed . . .
proud.

--Klein alludes to the problem of dual loyalty with which Jews have had to contend ever since their exile. Mordecai's defiance of Haman was treasonable, and he therefore seeks to prove his faithfulness to the king. For a scholarly review of the subject of dual loyalty see Leo Landman, Jewish Law in the Diaspora: Confrontation and Accommodation (Philadelphia: The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning), 1968.

9:32 The plot of Bigthan and Teresh.

--Mordecai was able to save the king's life because he overheard the traitors Bigthan and Teresh conspiring against Ahasuerus (Esther 2:21-23).

10:2 Was he not a king's grandson?

--According to the rabbis Mordecai was a descendant of King Saul (Talmud Megillah 12b). As a member of a royal family Mordecai argues, he would certainly be faithful to Ahasuerus.

10:7 No one could tell for whom the people bowed

--Esther 3:1-4. Klein's own commentary. By refusing to bow to Haman, Mordecai not only upholds his faith but also cleverly deprives his vain enemy of an undeserved veneration.

10:8 Haman

--Haman's fate, in the Book of Esther, is full of irony. At the beginning of the book he is a favourite of the king, destined for greatness and about to destroy his enemy Mordecai and Mordecai's people; at the end he is ignominiously hanged at the command of the king, while Mordecai becomes the Grand Vizier of Persia. Klein expresses this irony in a rather brutally sarcastic view of hanged Haman's movements in the wind. He imagines the villain re-enacting his struggles for power and honour. The rope upon which he hangs is likened to the "accolades" which emanate from a crowd and figuratively "caress" its hero (9-12). As the wind moves the dead body, causing a clicking of the teeth and a gurgling, Klein sees Haman remonstrating against these ironic accolades (13-16). In a further ironic contrast to Haman's present state, the climax of the Book of Esther is recalled, when the king, intending to reward Mordecai for a good deed, asks Haman, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?"

Haman, at the time, had entered the palace to inform the king about the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Haman's downfall begins when he is commanded to honour Mordecai by leading him on a horse through the streets and shouting, "thus is done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." --a dignity he sought for himself. (See note on 8:9.) Further movement of Haman's body by the wind causes it to sway as if the wind were a charger upon which Haman finally gets the honoured ride he thought was due him (19-22).

Klein also punningly interprets the biblical phrase at the beginning of Esther, "After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman . . . and advanced him (literally, in Hebrew, 'raised him'), and set his seat above all the princes that were with him" (3:1), as dramatically ironic (18-19).

10:23 CONJECTURES

--Imaginary flights of fancy, involving hallowed traditions and whimsy, on the divine origin of snow-flakes.

10:25 Age of miracles not past!

--According to the Talmud (Yoma 29a), the age of miracles ended with Esther (mid-fifth century BCE).

10:27 angel's wings

--In the visions of both Isaiah (6:2) and Ezekiel (1:6) angels have wings.

10:28-29 Snipt from the new-made saintly gown?

--G-d is seen as clothing the righteous with "garments of salvation" by Isaiah (61:10). The metaphor is whimsically extended to include G-d tailoring the garments as well, and casting down the remnants.

11:4 Linnaeus is dissecting now,

--Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), a Swedish botanist, formulated the modern system of defining genera and species. He is imagined dissecting butterflies. Pieces of their delicate wings float down from his laboratory table in heaven.

11:8 his Blossom-rood?

--After the rebellion of Korah against the priesthood, G-d signified that Aaron was indeed his Chosen priest by commanding all the heads of the tribes to place their staffs, with their names inscribed upon them, next to the ark. In the morning the staff of Aaron "put forth buds, and bloomed blossoms . . ." (Numbers 17:23). The poet imagines Aaron, now an old man, with the excitement of the controversy behind him, absent-mindedly whittling

his staff, and the white petals of the blossoms falling to earth.

11:10-11 The Shepherd Lord . . . Holy Lambs . . .

--Klein borrows these images from Christianity. The "Holy Lambs" are a metaphoric heavenly flock owned by G-d. As in the case of the patriarchs, through their fleece they are a source of wealth and G-d gives alms to his earthly creatures by throwing down some of the fleece--a divine gift.

11:12 White curds dripped from the Milky Way?

--The tightly grouped stars known as "the Milky Way" is poetically taken as a stream of divine milk which G-d has curdled, perhaps from "the Holy Lambs." He kindly drops the curds down from heaven.

11:14 . . . Crystal stars

--The repetition of the opening theme is appropriately suited to the Milky Way image of the previous lines and brings the reader back from the poet's reveries to the reality of the falling snow-flakes. But the flakes are now invested with poetic imagination.

11:15 JOSEPH

--The essence of this sonnet is taken from Genesis 37. Old father Jacob favours his young son Joseph and makes

him a coat of many colours. (According to modern interpretations it was "an ornamental tunic" or "ceremonial robe." See E. A. Speiser, The Anchor Bible: Genesis, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964, pp. 289-90.) Joseph's envious brothers begin to hate him. Their hatred is compounded when Joseph tells them of his dreams. In one dream he and his brothers are binding sheaves. Joseph's sheaf arises and the sheaves of the others bow down to it. In another dream the sun, the moon and eleven stars bow down to him. On one occasion Jacob sends Joseph to look for his brothers. As they see him approach they plot to kill him but Reuben, the eldest, convinces them to cast him into a nearby pit instead. To account for Joseph's disappearance the brothers kill a young goat and dip their brother's "coat of many colours" into its blood. They show the coat to Jacob, saying "This have we found. Know now whether it is thy son's coat." Jacob, recognizing it, exclaims, "It is my son's coat, an evil beast hath devoured him . . ." (Genesis 37:32-33).

Klein depicts the various emotions of the biblical characters, succinctly compressing them into the lines of a sonnet.

11:16 "Behold the dreamer cometh!"

--Genesis 37:19.

11:21 Let him in this pit.

--Genesis 37:22-24.

11:22 A star is lord, a sheaf stands upright . . .

--Genesis 37:7-9.

11:23 Let scorpions interpret his dreams.

--The rabbis of the Talmud state that there were scorpions in Joseph's pit (Sabbath 22a).

11:24 They stript him . . .

--Genesis 37:23-25.

11:25-28 coat of many dyes . . . red retribution hue.

--"Dyes" used here as a synonym for colours, accentuates the irony of the colourful coat dyed a common red by guilty blood. "Retribution" for the entire incident of the "sale of Joseph" by his brothers was exacted from later generations, according to Jewish tradition, through suffering and oppression. It is alluded to by Amos in his denunciation of Israel, "Because they sell the righteous for silver (2:6) and in the legend of "The Ten Martyrs" recorded in the High Holy Day Prayer Book. See High Holy Day Prayer Book, transl. and ed. P. Birnbaum (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1951), pp. 838-44.

12:1 MATTATHIAS

--A sonnet based upon an incident described in the apocryphal Book of the Maccabees (1, 2:1-28).

Israel (2nd century BCE) is under the domination of the Syro-Greek empire which has imposed its culture and religion upon the Jews by force, forbidding the observance of Judaism. A great number embrace the new culture and religion, but the majority observe their ancestral faith secretly. Because it diverts dangerous government attention, discretion is therefore considered a virtue. Unlike the majority, Mattathias, an old priest of Modin, defies the government openly. When a royal emissary, a Jew, is sent to offer a swine as a sacrifice on the altar, Mattathias slays him. "Discretion" is discovered to be "a false jewel" and is thrown "to the winds." Mattathias' courageous act stirs a revolution which leads to political and religious freedom for the Jews in 165 BCE. (Cf. Josephus, Antiquities, 12:6.) Disdain for the oppressing culture and those who embraced it among the Jews is expressed in the final image of "A swine's blood and the blood of traitor Jew!" in a common pool.

In the context of the theme of survival, salvation from assimilation to a dominant culture comes unexpectedly and miraculously from an old priest.

12:16 TO THE JEWISH POET

--Jewish poetry has traditionally been preoccupied with themes of tragedy and sorrow. Jeremiah's mournful Lamentations is considered its prototype by Klein. With the founding of the State of Israel, a new poetic "dawn arises," and Klein calls upon the Jewish poet to celebrate the "sweat" of the pioneer building the new land instead of prizing the tears with which the Jew "graced his sorrow all the years." The image of dawning hope is therefore "tinted white and blue," the national colours of Israel. The "cup of bitter wine," a common biblical image for national tragedy (e.g. Jeremiah 25:15) is seen cracking, with the magnitude of the crack being symbolically equivalent to the "whole length and breadth of Palestine."

13:1 CANDLELIGHTS

--This sonnet alludes to the festival of Chanukah. After driving out the Syro-Greek oppressors from the land in 165 BCE (see above 12:1 "Mattathias"), the Jews rebuilt their Temple. At the dedication they could not find sufficient undefiled holy oil, only one small cruse, enough for one night. Miraculously the oil burned for eight days, allowing time for the preparation of a new supply. The festival, which celebrates both the victory of the Jews and the miracle

of the oil, is observed by the lighting of candles in the home on eight successive nights in a special eight-branched candelabrum known as a menorah.

As his father lights an "heirloom'd" candelabrum and sings the festival prayers and songs, the poet is reminded of the ancient heroes of his nation who fought the war of independence as well as the songs which David sang in the Temple. These memories of former glories are symbolized by the lights. They warm and illuminate the cold winter night, metaphoric for the predicament of the Jewish nation in exile. The sentiments of hope they bring forth are as "blossoms breaking" in that season. (Chanukah occurs in late December.)

Descriptive images in the sonnet subtly present an irony of contrasts. The serene domestic rite of family candlelighting is in memory of a bloody martial victory. The songs the father sings are like the songs of David, described as the "sweet singer of Israel" (2 Samuel 23:1); but David was also a celebrated warrior of the Jews. And finally, in the days before the establishment of Israel, when this poem was written, the idea of Jews rising against their enemies, the basic theme of the poem, was as ironic as "blossoms breaking on a winter night."

13:5 five brave brothers

--Sons of Mattathias (1 Maccabees 2:1-28).

13:7 Heirloom's candelabra

--Jewish families pride themselves on the beautifully decorated Chanukah candelabra handed down from one generation to the next.

13:10 songs of degrees

--The titles of Psalms 120-134.

14:1 BALLAD OF SIGNS AND WONDERS

--From the Middle Ages to modern times, (see Maurice Samuel, Blood Accusation: The Strange History of the Beiliss Case, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1966) Jews have been accused of killing Christian children and using the blood for ritual purposes, especially on Passover. The vulnerable Jewish community thus easily became a convenient scapegoat for murderers among Christians. In imitation of early English ballads describing miracles of saints, Klein tells the story of a dead Christian maiden identifying her murderer and saving the Jewish community from blood libel. The tone of the poem is ironic. In addition there is a more subtle irony in the theme. Ostensibly the ballad celebrates a "Jewish" miracle, but upon reflection the reader

realizes it is the "Christian" daughter of the prince who is the object of the miracle. She reveals the true villain. There is an implied rebuke to the Christian community for not taking the trouble to seek out its own evil-doers, and not even composing ballads on this theme!

The phrase "signs and wonders" in the title is a biblical idiom expressing the miraculous (Exodus 7:3, Deuteronomy 7:19).

14:4 Judengasse

--"Jew street" or the ghetto.

14:5 Abib

--The biblical name for spring (Exodus 13:4; 23:15).

15:8 Holy Ark

--Containing the Scrolls of the Law or "Torah".

(SS 20/8)

15:13 screw his thumbs off!

--The thumb-screw was an instrument of torture during the Spanish Inquisition.

15:21 horse-radish

--One of the bitter herbs used on Passover. (See above 14)

15:22 Kaddish

--Prayer for the dead recited by male heirs for a year in the synagogue morning and evening. (See below 119 and SS 87/112.) By extension it means orphan, which is its context here.

15:32 the coffin there

--Sarcastic. An obscene and ironic reference to the Holy Ark. See 151:21.

15:33 hangings

--Traditionally all Holy Arks have curtains as in the biblical sanctuary (Exodus 26:1-14).

16:2 Ad-nai

--The L-rd's name in Hebrew.

16:7 (Hear, O Israel, G-d is One! . . .)

--Cf. Deuteronomy 6:4. Customarily the last utterance of a Jew before death. See also SS 35/31.

16:21 shofar

--A ram's horn, signifying liberation (Leviticus 25:9-10, 40-41). See also SS 113/150.

17:1 FIVE WEAPONS AGAINST DEATH

--These five sonnets were written after the death of Sam Koslov, father of Klein's high school sweetheart, Bessie, whom he eventually married (Palnick, "Klein; Study" Cap. 2, p. 2). They depict five typical human responses to the tragedy of death. The responses are classified metaphorically as "weapons against death," each "weapon" serving as the title of a sonnet. In "Arrow of Aloofness" the poet attempts putting the idea of death out of his mind, but to no avail. Sights and sounds become metaphors for death and mourning and insinuate themselves into his thoughts. On the other hand, in "Irony of Fourteen Blades," he is revolted by those publicly expressing emotions of sorrow. In fourteen sharply sarcastic lines (14 blades) he describes the ironic grieving of a host of mourners at a funeral, each with his own dishonest motive for sorrow: "The merchants weep--they have one less to cheat; / The gossips whine--they have one less to doom." Those engaging in the religious rites of mourning are portrayed as equally insincere. The rites, enumerated in the sonnet, are designed to preoccupy the mourners with solemn thoughts, to "stare" on "sorrow" and "discern fatality." But the mourners find their burden too heavy and cease to mourn, rationalizing their attitude, ironically, with a religious argument. They

paraphrase Job: "He who has given, He has snatched away." Death should rather be accepted as G-d's decree. In "Sling for Goliath," the poet expresses his compassion with his beloved's bereavement. Through his compassionate concern for her he finds the strength to cease brooding. The last sonnet, "Club of Final Pain," describes the poet's consolation of his beloved. He assures her that the tragedy of death has not diminished the beauty of the world nor their love. Indeed his sympathy for her in her grief has deepened his love. The "pain" of bereavement is "final" in the sense that it does not endure forever; love and beauty effect a healing and initiate a new beginning.

Reverting to the mood of deep melancholy which characterizes the foreword, the poet compared man in his grief to a crow sitting on a hawthorn bush (cf. 20:17). As the crow "pecks at the haws until they bleed," so man painfully concerns himself with his mortal condition. The contemplation of his sadly useless life in a vast universe ("red earthworm . . . along a slimy weed") destroys any comforting "weapons against death" man may devise. He then can utter only meaningless expressions of "arrant unbelief." The last two sonnets, which seemed hopeful, now acquire an irony consistent with the previous two sonnets.

It is to be noted that the thoughts on death in these sonnets contrast sharply with the more traditional, religiously inspired ideas expressed by the narrator of The Second Scroll at Uncle Melech's funeral (SS 92/120).

17:28 They lavd his body . . .

--Alluding indirectly to taharah (purification), the ritual lavng of the body before burial in symbolic preparation for Resurrection. See below 39:18.

18:1 the post-mortem praiser

--The rabbi preaching the eulogy who does not know the deceased yet praises him.

18:12 And they have torn their garments;

--After the funeral the immediate family of the deceased observes a week of ritual mourning. Customs and practices followed during that week are referred to in the sonnet:

1. Upon receiving news of a death the outer garment is torn as a wordless expression of grief.
2. Portraits are turned to the wall and mirrors are covered, usually with a white cloth. As symbols of vanity they have no place in a house humbled by tragedy.

3. Mourners sit shoeless on low stools in symbolic humility before death.
4. Religious services are held in the house of mourning for seven days during which Kaddish (above 15:22) is recited. The Kaddish prayer represents an affirmation by the mourners of G-d's justice even in the face of tragedy.

18:15-16 . . . they have stared . . . discerned . . .
 . . . and they have truly mourned

--Stated ironically. The mourners have performed the solemn, somber rituals perfunctorily.

18:17 And ceased to mourn.

--The poet's honest assessment.

18:18-19 suddenly stand upright . . . the Kaddish . . .
lately learned.

--It is customary to stand for the recitation of the Kaddish. The mourners, who are not very religious (and therefore have only "lately" learned the words of the Kaddish prayer), are ignorant of the order of the service. They consequently "suddenly stand upright."

18:25 He who has given . . .

--A paraphrase of Job's exclamation upon learning of the death of his children (1:21), "The L-rd gave, and the

L-rd hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the L-rd."

19:19 And kissed no worn mezuzah . . .

--A mezuzah is a cylinder containing a section of the Bible (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21) on parchment which is affixed to the doorposts of Jewish homes. Kissing the mezuzah on entering and leaving the house is an old custom (Talmud, Abodah Zarah, 11a). The poet remembers sadly the last time his beloved's father passed the doorpost of her house. Now, lifeless on his bier, he does not rise to kiss the mezuzah which has been worn down by many previous kisses.

20:1 KOHELETH

--The Hebrew name for Ecclesiastes. According to Jewish tradition King Solomon wrote Song of Songs in his youth, Proverbs in his middle years, and Ecclesiastes in his old age (Midrash, Yalkut, 965). Utilizing biblical and legendary sources Klein reconstructs the brooding mood and philosophy of old King Solomon through this dramatic monologue. Having pursued pleasures, riches, wisdom and honour, and having found them to be "wind and vanity," he "sups on boredom" and awaits death. Personified as a darkly mysterious member of the royal entourage--"a tall, a stripped and oil-anointed Negro chamberlain"--death mocks the king,

robbing him of his royal dignity. Solomon will share the mortal fate of king and commoner alike.

20:6 in wormwood and with gall

--A biblical metaphor for anguish (Lamentations 3:19). Gall is also an ingredient of ink.

20:7 erected dust

--Cf. Genesis 2:7, "Then the L-rd G-d formed man of the dust of the ground." and Genesis 3:19, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

20:11 lion-guarded throne

--1 Kings 10:18-20, "Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with the finest gold. . . . and there were arms one either side . . . and two lions standing beside the arms. And twelve lions stood there on one side and on the other"

20:13 Death is an oil-anointed slave,

--For he toils ceaselessly.

20:15 who have known the speech of birds,

--Wise Solomon allegedly understood animal and bird language. (See Ginzberg, Legends IV, 134 ff.)

20:15 the love of the fair Shunamite

--In Song of Songs (7:1) the reading is "Shulamite."
 "The fair Shunamite" was Abishag, the virgin chosen to sleep with King David in his old age to keep him warm (1 Kings 1:3). However, commentators assume Solomon's Shulamite came from Shunem. It would not be incorrect, then, to call her "Shunamite." (See Robert Gordis, Song of Songs, New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1961, p. 68.)

20:16 The import of the thorn-pierced rose

--Cf. Song of Songs 2:2, "As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."

20:18 pleasures of the wise

--Ecclesiastes 1:13, "And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom concerning all things"

20:19-20 The glories of the goblet The ecstasies of damosels

--Ibid. 2:3, 8, "I searched in my heart how to pamper my flesh with wine and . . . the delights of the sons of men, women very many."

20:21 wind and vanity

--A constant refrain in Ecclesiastes (1:14, 2:15 et pass.).

20:22 Many the provinces I rule,

--I Kings 5:4, "For he had dominion over all the region on this side the River."

20:23 my gem-crammed coffers

--Ibid. 10:14-29, "Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, beside that which came of the merchants, and of the traffic of the traders and of all the kings of the mingled people and of the governors of the country"

20:24 A thousand concubines are mine --

--Ibid. 11:3, "And he (Solomon) had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines."

20:25 There is naught new beneath the sun;

--Ecclesiastes 1:9.

21:9 BUSINESS

--The sonnet, using commerce as a metaphor for the composition of poetry, ends with non-Judaic images borrowed from the Faust legend. The tradition of selling one's soul to the devil is not found in Judaism.

28:1 DIALOGUE

--A nostalgic comparison between the "glories" of the "old country" and the "difficulties" of "America" by immigrants was a common source of humour among the sophisticated in Klein's day. The fully acculturated poet is amused by the naive attitudes of two immigrant old ladies and indulges in some irony as he describes their conversation at a fish market.

28:2, 2 . . . buying fish, / . . . spices of the Sabbath dish.

--Fish is a traditional dish for the Sabbath.

28:6 the golden land

--"America" (which also included Canada) was called "the golden land" (di goldeneh medinah) by Jewish immigrants.

28:16 Ratno

--A small town in Russia. Klein's parents came from Ratno and Uncle Melech, hero of The Second Scroll, comes from there.

28:18 Reb Yecheskel Chazan

--"Reb" is a prefix of respect used when referring to

older men or religious functionaries by their first names. Here the women refer to Ezekiel (Yecheskel, in Hebrew), the Cantor (Chazan), of Ratno.

29:1 THE WORDS OF PLAUNI-BEN-PLAUNI TO JOB

--Plauni-ben-Plauni, a term used in the legal portions of the Talmud (e.g. Sanhedrin 6:1), is the equivalent of "John Doe." Literally it means "such a one, the son of such a one." Its biblical roots are found in 1 Samuel 21:20; 2 Kings 6:8; Ruth 4:1. In a poetic context Plauni-ben-Plauni is Everyman. The poem alludes to Job's impassioned entreaty for death as a succession of tragic misfortunes befalls him. Plauni-ben-Plauni accuses Job of being in love with death and of seeing the joys of the world only as embellishments of the grave. Underscoring the great adventure and challenge of life, he offers a rejoinder to Job.

29:5 O Man of Uz

--Job lived in the land of Uz (1:1).

29:15 Job jubilant

--See Job 1:1-5, " . . . this man was the greatest of all the children of the east . . . and his sons used to go and hold a feast etc."

30 CHRISTIAN POET AND HEBREW MAID

--This poem was composed to celebrate the marriage of Klein's poet friend Leo Kennedy, a Catholic, to a Jewish girl, Miriam Carpin (Palnick, Klein: Study, Cap. 2, p. 18). The occasion is seen, in a poetic exuberance, to be a portent of a revolutionary new era of religious harmony. The poet imagines all of nature invested with divine beauty harmoniously singing praises to G-d; there are no credal differences. He looks forward to the day when Jew and Christian will equally praise G-d as members of a universal faith. Combining the representative signs of both religions, he creates hybrid symbols of the harmony he anticipates.

31:25 double triangle

--Star of David.

31:27 Pendules

--Fringes worn on the four corners of a prayer shawl in accordance with biblical command (Numbers 15:37-41).

31:27 the Shield weds ball

--Lines circumscribing a cross resemble a shield in outline. A line around a Star of David is circular, or ball-shaped. (Cf. below 49:4.)

31:28 The vulgate and the scroll.

--The Gospel and the Torah, or Hebrew Bible, which is written on a parchment scroll.

31:29 The spire and the dome

--In Klein's youth all major synagogues were capped with domes in imitation of Eastern (Holy Land) architecture.

31:36 Virgo and Leo fade in one

--Virgin and Lion, representative of Christianity (the Virgin Mary) and Judaism (Lion of Judah) respectively, coalesce to symbolize the union of the two religions as well as the marriage of "Christian Poet and Hebrew Maid."

32:1 SATURDAY NIGHT

--A seamy portrait of Saturday night in the Jewish ghetto of Montreal. It was the busiest night of the week in Klein's day.

32:2 It being no longer Sabbath, angels scrawl /

The stars . . .

--Jews are forbidden to write (and do business) on the Sabbath which, according to Jewish Law, begins Friday at sundown and ends Saturday when the stars come out (Talmud, Sabbath 12:3 and 35b). The angels are portrayed as waiting for the Sabbath to end so that they

may "scrawl / The stars upon the sky," to give mortals the sign to begin weekday social and commercial activities on Main Street.

32:12 Hebraic arms

--Gesturing while speaking is a habit of which Jews are acutely self-conscious. Cf. Jean Paul Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew (New York: Schocken Books), 1965, p. 123.

32:15 O . . . zabachthani!

--A quotation from Psalms (22:2) meaning "my G-d, my G-d why have you forsaken me?" It is also the title of a sad yiddish song popular in Klein's day the theme of which is the affliction and persecution of the Jew. The poet obviously is repulsed by the image cast by the community and asks G-d why He has forsaken His people.

It is noteworthy that Klein does not use the Hebrew transliteration of the phrase in Psalms but the Aramaic cited in the Gospels as the last words of Jesus on the cross (Matthew 27:4, Mark 15:34). Is he subtly linking the depicted unattractive characteristics of the ghetto Jew with the crucifixion as companion causes of Jewish persecution? In other poems, such as "Heroic" (39:1) and "Autobiographical" (271:19), and

in The Second Scroll, however, Klein glorifies the ghetto Jew.

33:1 FUNERAL IN APRIL

--The poet hears a crow, symbol of death (Cf. above 17:1, 19:24), in spring. But he and his love will not pay attention to the sombre connotations of its call.

33:6 crow-frocked Cantor and his caw,

--Alluding to the black-gowned cantor chanting, in the customary minor key, a well-known Hebrew memorial (Moleh) prayer. The cantor, resembling a crow, also becomes a symbol of death.

33:10 CALVARY

--The splashes of red colour on the leaves of maples are metaphorically depicted as the blood of a dying autumn, crucified on the trees. So vivid is the image that the poet almost hears the season echoing Jesus' last words on the cross. (See Matthew 27:4, Mark 15:34. Cf. also above 32:15.) And if they are not heard it is because the echo too has died!

The poet implies the moral message of the crucifixion has also "died." Klein, especially in his early poetic period, often borrowed Christian symbolism for his imagery.

34:7 EXORCISM VAIN

--One of the doctrines of the Kabbalah posits a divine essence which was dissipated to allow the creation of the grosser material world. A by-product of this process was the generation of evil and of evil spirits. Proper pronouncement of the tetragrammaton, G-d's four-lettered name, by one who has purified himself through a life of study, fasting and pious deeds redeems evil and expels the evil spirits. (See Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, New York: Schocken Books, 1954, pp. 261-75; Kabbalah, New York: Quadrangle, The New York Times Book Company, 1974, pp. 182 ff.; A. E. Waite, The Holy Kabbalah, New York: University Books, 1930, pp. 277 ff.)

The poem describes a Kabbalist who spends a lifetime preparing to utter the tetragrammaton and fails to do so properly. His arduous preparations are in vain and the opportunity to dispel dark demonic evil is lost. (Cf. "The Seventh Scroll," Canadian Jewish Chronicle, 12 September 1947, Klein's short story about a scribe whose lifetime ambition to write a special Torah-scroll is fulfilled but for the discovery after his death of an error in the tetragrammaton which invalidates the scroll.) The theme of the poem is taken from the legend of Rabbi Joseph della Reyna, the Kabbalist who attempted

to rid the world of Satan. (See A Treasury of Jewish Folklore, Edited Nathan Ausubel, New York: Crown Publishers, 1948, pp. 206-215.)

34:10 The ghouls return to fructify their lemans.

--In Kabbalah evil spirits are associated with the mystery of sex. See Waite, Kabbalah, pp. 277-290.

34:12 The circle broken:

--The "circle," also called by Klein "the Cabalistic wheel" (49:10), refers to the interrelationship of the ten manifestations of G-d (sefirot) involved in the creation of the world. They are usually represented diagrammatically by a circular figure. (See Scholem, Kabbalah, p. 146; Waite, Holy Kabbalah, frontis piece.) To break "the circle" in Kabbalah terms, then, means another dissipation of "Divine essence." See above 34:7.

34:12 bird feet traced

--According to the Talmud demons have the feet of a cock (Berakot 6a). Cf. below 238:14.

34:20 ON THE ROAD TO PALESTINE

--A Zionist poem in the style of a nursery rhyme. In 1931, when this poem was written, a return to Zion was

virtually a "childish" dream. But, it should be noted, Klein attaches great importance to childhood memories. Cf. "Autobiographical" (271:19) and Klein's letter to S. Niger in which he writes, "Rilke once . . . said that all poetry is an attempt to recapture one's youth and even one's childhood. For me that means recapturing the nostalgia and the beauty of my childhood" (Caplan, "Klein; Introduction," p. 87).

34:26 Baruch Hu!

--In Hebrew "Blessed be He."

35:19 YOSSEL LETZ

--Yossel is a common Yiddish diminutive of Yosef, or Joseph, and a letz is a joker. The title of this "Simple Simon" rhyme is equivalent to "Simple Joey".

36:13 matzo

--Unleavened bread eaten on Passover (Exodus 12:15).

36:14 morrer

--Bitter herbs, also eaten on Passover. Cf. above 14:9.

36:18 Asked four queries

--At the Passover eve ritual feast, called Seder, children traditionally ask four questions concerning

the festival.

36:21-24 Or when he dipped/. . . Every sin.

--As the ten plagues visited upon the Egyptians before the Exodus (Exodus 7:19-11:10) are recited at the Seder, it is customary to dip the finger into the cup of wine and extract a drop to signify compassion, even to enemies. See below 143:20, "Black Decalogue."

37:11 MESSIAH

--In the style of alphabetical nursery rhymes this poem reviews the Hebrew alphabet (2-24), which is composed of consonants, and then the vowels (25-29), which are not separate letters but merely points below and above the consonants.

38:11 INVOCATION TO DEATH

--The modern sophisticated poet looks with intense revulsion at the appearance and comportment of elderly Jews and shudders to think of himself and his lover experiencing a similar old age. Death, he says, would be preferable, and he invokes it to come before they "will be old."

38:6 pious grey perruque

--Pious Jewish women wear wigs to cover their hair.
See 143:12, SS 96/125.

38:13 mezuzahs

--See above 19:19. Mezuzahs are kissed by touching them with the fingers and then kissing the fingers.

38:15 ECCLESIASTES 13

--Ecclesiastes has only 12 chapters. Klein, in a "postscript," replies to the brooding philosopher king who finds life vain and empty, Cf. "Koheleth" above 20:1. As the "meanest vermin" are "often bred in riches it is not theirs to assume," so man often does not appreciate the beauty of the world around him.

39:1 HEROIC

--In direct opposition to the theme of "Saturday Night" (32:1) the poet expresses his love and admiration of ghetto Jews. Instead of seeking inspiration for his creative imagination from an artificial Romanticism among the Gentiles the poet determines to seek it among his own people. Pride and poetic imagination transform bearded Jews into goblins, shrill scolds into music and moonshine on the streets of the impoverished ghetto into "burnished gold." The ghetto Jew, in his eyes, is a true Romantic hero, hence the title.

39:10-11 . . . these bearded Jews / Praising the moon,
 --Alluding to the Jewish custom of blessing the moon
 after its monthly conjunction. See below 49:2.

39:16 SENTIMENTAL

--The poet wonders how his beloved will react when he
 dies. Klein's attitude on insincerity in the expres-
 sion of sorrow in "Five Weapons Against Death" (17:1)
 should be noted for comparison.

39:18 When I am laved upon a naked plank,

--See above 17:28. The ritual laving of a dead body
 before burial is performed on a plain wooden plank
 (called a taharah breit, or purification board).
 The word "naked" reflects back by association to the
 poet's dead body ("I") and also alludes to Job's
 "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall
 I return thither" (1:21).

39:23-24 In what terms will you thank / The L-rd

--Alluding to the Talmudic dictum that one must
 pronounce a blessing for evil as one does for good
 (Berakot 60b).

39:24 the sombre horses

--in 1932, when this poem was published, hearses were
 horse-drawn.

39:28 when sextons grow unkind

--The sextons who take the dead body away.

39:30 Kaddish-voice

--The prayer recited by heirs of the deceased. See above 15:22.

40:1 NEHEMIAH

--The poem is based on Nehemiah 1:1-4; 2:1-3. Nehemiah, Hebrew cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes, grieves for the destruction of his native Jerusalem. (Ultimately the King sends him there to aid in its reconstruction.)

40:14 FESTIVAL

--A humorous poem in ironic imitation of the style of 18th century verse describing some aspects of the festival of Purim. See above "Five Characters" 8:9. The bantering tone reflects the characteristic atmosphere of the festival's celebration.

40:15 maskers

--Masquerading youngsters, called Purim spielers, go from house to house reciting ditties and receiving in return drink, sweets and coin. The most common masquerade is boys dressing as girls and vice versa.

40:21 haman-taschen

--Special Purim cakes.

40:23 To-night G-d loves his Jews a trifle tipsy:

--Alluding to the Talmudic statement that on Purim one drinks until one cannot tell the difference between "cursed is Haman" and "blessed is Mordechai" (Megillah 7b).

41:2 Wherefore did Vashti Queen refuse her beauty.

--Alluding to King Ahasuerus' command that Vashti, his queen, appear before him to display her beauty (Esther 1:11-12). See above "Five Characters" 8:9.

41:3 Zeresh

--Haman's wife (Esther 5:10).

41:4 The time you crowned him with pot mephitic?

--The Talmud (Megillah 16a) mentions an oral tradition concerning the incident of Mordechai riding on the king's horse with Haman as herald proclaiming, "Thus shall be done unto the man whom the King delighteth to honour" (Esther 6:11). As the procession passed Haman's house, Haman's daughter (not his wife, as Klein imprecisely implies), assuming the herald to be Mordechai, her father's enemy, emptied a chamber pot on

his head. Allusions to the incident form part of the festive humour of Purim spielers (above 40:15).

41:7 Rattle you rattlers, at the name Haman,

--On Purim the Book of Esther is read in the synagogue and children rattle noisemakers whenever Haman's name is mentioned. See below 273:14, 343:1, SS 97/125.

41:10 Gehenna

--Hell. The Hebrew-Yiddish term is taken from Jeremiah 7:31.

42:15 FOUR SONNETS: MY LITERATI FRIENDS IN RESTAURANTS

--A sonnet satirizing the supercilious and cynical attitude of Jewish intellectuals of the thirties. They habitually gathered in certain restaurants to expatiate on glib political and religious ideas. The poet contends that only true love matters in the world and therefore he finds little in common with his friends. His idea of love seems out of place in the loud debates about abstract and artificial "love for the working classes."

42:20 Annul the Jew with paragraphs from Graetz;

--Heinrich Graetz (1817-91) is a Jewish historian and Bible scholar. In his magnum opus, the comprehensive

and classical History of the Jews, Graetz expresses his belief that Jews have a mission to propagate ethical monotheism among the nations of the world. The poet's "literati friends" construe the idea to imply that the nations, having assimilated the essence of the mission, may now "annul the Jew."

44:28 the memory of Joseph's coat.

--Jacob gave Joseph a "coat of many colours" (Genesis 37:3). See above 11:15.

45:20 EARTHQUAKE

--The Messiah, according to Jewish tradition, will come riding on a white ass (Zechariah 9:9, Cf. SS 75/93), and in his day there will be a resurrection of the dead. In the poem the dead hear of the Messiah's arrival from their graves. Stirring, they ambiguously murmur "We are not dead!" and go back to sleep. As a metaphor in a Jewish context the poem has several interpretations:

a) The long waiting period for their messiah is a source of much wry humour among the Jews. (See Ausubel, Folklore, pp. 216, 337.) The dead, having given up hope for resurrection, do not believe the signs of the Messiah's arrival and sarcastically remark, "If this is the Messiah, we are not dead!" They then go back to sleep.

b) The Jewish people have had many pseudo-messiahs promising salvation. (See Gershom Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973; also The Messianic Idea, New York: Schocken Books, 1971, by the same author.) Klein humorously depicts the dead, thinking the real Messiah to be another false saviour, mechanically going through the motions of another "pseudo" resurrection and then sleeping again.

c) In an Eliotic protest against boredom Klein portrays even the dead regarding the momentous occasion of their resurrection with ennui. "We are not dead," they say with apathy.

d) One may also take the poem simply as a witty, even irreverent, conjecture on a matter of faith which taxes the imagination.

49:11 KALMAN RHAPSODIZES

--"Kalman" is the praenomen of Klein's father, but in the poem Kalman is the prototypical pious old Jew for whom meticulous religious observance is no burden and for whom there is no problem of injustice in the world because his belief is so strong.

In the first half of the poem, the poet compares the praise of the moon by old fashioned religious Jews with his own more sophisticated romantic attitude

towards the moon as a symbol of love--"We gild it with alchemistic stuff." There is intended irony in the comparison, for the old Jews appear to "rhapsodize" more about the moon than does the poet. In the second half of the poem the poet accounts for the "rhapsody" of the old Jews. They are oblivious of the contradictions to G-d's justice, ironically attributed by the poet to mischievous members of the divine "Angelic Band." The implied conclusion of the poet is that love is needed to overcome evil.

The two seemingly disconnected halves of the poem are thus "pieced together," an archaic meaning of "rhapsodize."

49:2-3 The old Jews greet the moon with triple elevation of the heel.

--See above 39:10-11. The blessing of the moon at its conjunction was at one time accompanied by joyous dancing. The custom no longer prevails and Jews merely elevate their heels in a symbolic gesture as they recite references to the dance three times during the service.

49:5 They laud the gold round shield of David.

--Cf. 31:27. The six-pointed star, or shield of David (Magen David) is seen by the poet as circumscribed by

a symbolic circle, in this case the moon. The symbol has special significance here in view of the many references to King David in the "blessing of the moon" service.

49:10 annotations to the Cabalistic wheel.

--Cf. 34:12. The mystic inter-relationship of the ten manifestations of G-d in the world (Sefirot) are usually depicted diagrammatically in the Kabbalah books as a circle or "wheel." The moon appears, to the poet, as a "Cabalistic wheel" and the stars as the accompanying Hebrew annotations which explain the "wheel."

49:18 the Devil

--There is really no "devil" in Jewish theology and Satan is not a rebellious angel but G-d's messenger. Klein borrows this image from Christianity. See Julius Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion, (New York: Atheneum, 1975), pp. 17, 49, et. pass.

49:22 the Angelic Band

--In Jewish tradition G-d consults with His "heavenly household" (Palmalya shel maalah) in many actions. Cf. SS 88/113.

50:9 MURALS FOR A HOUSE OF G-D

--Like Browning Klein attempts to construct poetic equivalents to visual art. (Cf. "Design for Medieval Tapestry" 136:16; "Gloss Gimel" on Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, SS 103/135.) Through language and style he "paints" a mural describing events leading to the destruction of the Jewish community of Mayence (Mainz) during the Crusades. The "House of G-d" is ambiguously a church and a synagogue. Bitter irony is therefore expressed as the event is seen to be an occasion of glorious triumph by Christians and an occasion of poignant tragedy by Jews. The poetic images are meant to run into each other as do figures in a mural, giving the whole a kaleidoscopic effect. A variety of verse forms enhances the effect.

The events alluded to are historical. The following descriptive paragraph from Heinrich Graetz's History of the Jews (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America; 1967), III, 302 - 303 a work with which Klein was well acquainted, gives the context. It no doubt inspired the poem! (Cf. above 42:19. See also Spiro, "Second Gloss," pp. 59-74).

The day after the massacre of the remnant
[of Jews] in Worms, the crusaders arrived in
Mayence. Here their leader was a Count Emmerich,
or Emicho, of Leiningen, a close relation of Arch-

bishop Ruthard, an unprincipled, bloodthirsty man. He desired the riches of the Jews of Mayence as much as their blood, and together with the archbishop, an opponent of Henry IV, devised a fiendish plan of extermination. The archbishop invited all the Jews to take shelter in his palace, until the danger had passed. Over 1300 Jews took refuge in the cellars of the building, with anxious hearts and prayers on their lips. But at break of day (Tuesday--27th May [1096]), Emmerich of Leiningen led the crusaders to the bishop's palace, and demanded the surrender of the Jews. The archbishop had indeed appointed a guard, but the soldiers refused to bear arms against the fanatical pilgrims, who easily penetrated into the palace and the terrible scene of Worms was repeated. Men, young and old, women and children, fell by the sword of their brethren [in a suicide pact to avoid forced conversion] or their foes. The corpses of thirteen hundred martyrs were eventually conveyed from the palace. The treasures of the Jews were divided between the archbishop and Emmerich. Ruthard had kept sixty Jews hidden in the church, and they were conveyed to the Rhine district; but on the way they also were seized and murdered. Only a few were baptized; two men and two girls, --Uriah and

Isaac, with his two daughters--were induced by fear to accept baptism, but their repentance drove them to a terrible act of heroism. Isaac killed his two daughters on the eve of Pentecost, in his house, and then set fire to the dwelling; then he and his friend Uriah went to the synagogue, set fire to it [to prevent it being converted into a church], and died in the flames. A great part of Mayence was destroyed by this fire.

50:10 SCATTERBRAIN SINGETH A SONG

--This short song introduces the mood of the poem, a mood of demonic evil, blood and lucre, associated in the medieval Christian mind with the Jew. Scatterbrain, functioning like the Fool in Lear, tells us that the hatred and superstition, "imbibed" from childhood and reinforced by creed and at tavern gatherings, will result in bloodshed.

Since this is a "mural" Klein introduces the mood with colour as well. A flaming red sunset the evening before the massacre, "an evil screed," ominously portends the bloodshed and fire in Mayence.

50:15 The moon is pricked, and it will bleed;

--The 27th of May, the day of the massacre, is recorded as the 3rd day of the Hebrew month Sivan. Since the

Hebrew calendar is based on a lunar month, that means the "new" moon was three days old then, deficient, and therefore "pricked." The red sunset is seen as the blood of the wounded moon. There is also an allusion to the accusation of "torturing" the host and causing blood to flow from it made against the Jews in the Middle Ages. (See below 135:5.)

50:20-24 At the gate . . . coins in his kegs

--Though he is a wise Fool, Scatterbrain ironically does not realize that the once wealthy Jew knocking at the gate has barely escaped with his life from the mob of crusaders.

50:25 AT THE SIGN OF THE SPIGOT

--Count Emmerich incites his crusaders to murder and pillage. He is in debt to Jewish money-lenders in Worms and Mayence. By destroying the communities he will absolve himself and others from payment. (This was the common motivation for the organized massacres of Jews by the crusaders. See The Jew in the Medieval World, ed. Jacob R. Marcus, (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 137-141.

51:14 For thirty pieces of gold they . . .

--Actually thirty pieces of silver. See Matthew 26:14-16.

52:4 a flame

--The "key" which will open the Jews' houses to expose their treasures is the fire which will destroy Mayence. The subsequent "toasts" are Emmerich's ghoulish attempts at humour. Ironically it is the Jews who set fire to Mayence, in the end. By destroying their own property they deprive the Count of his sought after riches. (See later 56:37, "while the loud flames still scurried up and down Count Emmerich and his soldiers left town.")

52:9 FROM THE CHRONICLES

--See above 50:9

52:16-19 The Archbishop, soft hearted beyond belief . . .

--The Christian chronicler's interpretation of events is ironic for this was part of the archbishop's conspiracy against the Jews.

52:19 Quis custodes custodiet?

--A Latin proverb meaning, "Who will watch over the guards?" "Ask not . . .," is ironic. The guards, the chronicler knows, won't protect their wards against the crusaders.

52:20 JOHANNUS, DEI MONACHUS, LOQUITUR

--"John, monk of G-d, speaks." The monk happens to be

in the tavern at the time that Emmerich delivers his diatribe against the Jews, and feels he must add ecclesiastical approval--"enounce the Holy Word." His impassioned homilies reflect the general attitude of Christian preachers in the Middle Ages. (See Malcolm Hay, Europe and the Jews, Boston: Beacon Press, 1960, pp. 27-32 et. pass.) Scatterbrain's lines "Hatred is roted with creed; / And swilled at mine host's taps." (50:13-14) now become more significant.

53:10-14 So do you pluck the thorn . . . womb.

--With vivid metaphors Johannus urges the mob to root out the Jews, who are a source of heresy ("the stem, the fruitful womb") rather than fare to Jerusalem merely "to chase the unfâithful" Moslems from the Holy Land ("pluck the thorn, abort the child").

53:17 The Holy Ghost is borne through our streets--

--In church parades. An anachronism, for it is doubtful if church parades went through ghetto streets in the Middle Ages.

53:21-22 Before you cast the beam . . . the mote from Mainz;

--The metaphor, ironically reversed, is taken from the Gospels (Luke 6:41-42). Before undertaking the removal

of the many infidels ("the beam") from Palestine, the crusaders should rid Mainz of a relatively smaller number of Jews ("the mote").

53:28 BALLAD OF THE HEBREW BRIDE

--To enhance the tenor of medieval antiquity this poem is composed in the style of old English ballads. The style thus creates an ironic tension, for obviously this "mural" is one for a Jewish "House of G-d." (See above 50:9.)

Fearing torture and forced conversion to Christianity, many in Mayence and other communities committed suicide and killed their children. (See Graetz, History, pp. 300 ff, and especially Marcus, Jew in Medieval World, pp. 115-120.) The ballad uses an extended metaphor of pre-nuptial arrangements to portray the sad preparations of a young Jewish girl to die, death being her "lover."

54:14 Church bells will sob: Ding-dong! Ding-dong!

--Klein often borrows Christian symbols as images for Jewish poems. See above 11:10-11 and below 228:2.

54:10-11 "Who are the guests . . . / Three hundred soldiers and a priest!"

--The crusaders, and the priest inciting the mob.

55:1 AN ELDER COUNSELS SELF-KILLING

--Although Jewish tradition forbids suicide, under circumstance of "sanctifying G-d's name," i.e. exhibiting faithfulness to the covenant, especially in times of religious persecution, it is considered as the most praiseworthy of acts (Maimonides Code of Jewish Law, Principles of the Torah, Cap. 5, par. 3).

The contextual background of this poem is given in the following excerpt from a historical account describing the mood of the martyrs of Mayence by Solomon bar Samson:

Now we must delay no longer for the enemy are already upon us. Let us hasten and offer ourselves as a sacrifice to the L-rd. Let him who has a knife examine it that it not be nicked. and let him come and slaughter us for the sanctification of the Only One, the Everlasting, and then let him cut his own throat or plunge the knife into his own body (Marcus, Jew in Medieval World, p. 117).

The knife used for suicide in the poem as in bar Samson's account, is the same used by a ritual slaughterer (shohet) to kill livestock. It must be examined for nicks--a rough blade renders the animal unfit--by running the fingernail up and down the cutting edge. The elder in the poem mournfully compares the present tragic use of the knife for humans with its usual function.

55:4-6 a soft wassail . . . many a grail

--The throats, full of blood, are compared to drinking cups which will be emptied. The terms used are ironically associated with Christianity.

55:7 gaberdine

--A Jewish garb in the Middle Ages. Cf. Merchant of Venice 1:3.

55:17 . . . Death comes beneath a cowl

--the monk's cowl.

55:21 A YOUNG MAN MOANS ALARM BEFORE THE KISS OF DEATH

--Klein imagines that not all the Mayence martyrs desired death and describes the emotions of a young man who accepts his fate reluctantly.

57:1 SCATTERBRAINS LAST SONG

--The naive simplicity of the song accentuates the absence of compassion for the victims of the Mayence tragedy. And that is the main theme of the poem.

57:20 LEGEND OF LEBANON

--In imitation of Keats' Eve of St. Agnes Klein relates the romantic tale of a beautiful Galilean maiden, Shoshannah (rose in Hebrew), with whom an

Arabian prince has fallen passionately in love. Though he is the youngest son, the prince has been chosen king at his father's death. He comes secretly one night to take Shoshannah to his country to become his queen. The eldest son in the meantime usurps the throne and has the prince beheaded as he arrives with the beautiful Shoshannah. The maiden flees and is never to be heard from again. However, she becomes a legend and young lovers sing about her romance and her sad fate.

60:30 Ashtaroth

--A fertility goddess (Judges 10:6 et. pass.).

61:7 Iyar

--One of the summer months in the Hebrew calendar.

64:16-18 For he was wise who sang with tuneful skill

That Death is strong, and Love is stronger still

--Solomon in Song of Songs (8:6).

66:25 JONAH

--A fanciful nursery rhyme based on the biblical story of Jonah.

75:9 SONG OF SWEET DISHES

--Each Jewish holiday has a special food or dish associated with it. On the two holidays in the poem Passover and Purim, celebrating triumphs of the Jews over their enemies, unleavened bread and haman taschen (special Purim cakes) are eaten. The poet wonders what dish will be eaten when Hitler will be hanged as Haman was (Esther 7:10).

75:10 Paroah was plagued with lice and frogs,

--Exodus 7:28; 8:1-2, 12-14.

75:13 Wherefore we eat unleavened bread

--Exodus 12:15.

75:22 GETZEL GELT

--A nursery rhyme about a Simple Simon type. Determined to be a merchant he gathers all the flowers from the field into his barn and charges money for smelling them. But the youngsters send bees into the barn and exact revenge.

77:9 CALENDAR

--Another nursery rhyme describing the seasons of the Hebrew months. It begins with Nissan, a spring month and, according to the Bible, the first in the Jewish

calendar year (Exodus 12:2, 13:4). The tenth month (Shevat) is for some reason omitted.

77:13 make holy gestures

--Lifting their branches and leaves heavenward as if in prayer to G-d.

77:15 When thunder and Torah came from heaven;

--Sivan, according to tradition, is the month in which G-d revealed himself to Israel on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1).

77:20 Messiah somewhere in a cell;

--In the month of Av Jews commemorate the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (70 C.E.). Jewish tradition states that the Messiah, poor and ill, waits somewhere for the appointed time when he will come and restore the Temple. It will be dedicated in Av, the month in which it was destroyed. (Cf. note on SS 68/83.)

78:1 BALDHEADED ELISHA

--A humorous poem alluding to the incident in 2 Kings 2:23-25 in which a number of youngsters mock the prophet Elisha, calling him baldhead. He curses the youngsters and bears come out of the forest and devour forty-two of them.

78:22 CONCERNING FOUR STRANGE SONS

--An epigrammatic paraphrase in rhyme of a passage in the Haggadah, a book of readings, prayers and songs used at the Passover eve ritual feast (Seder). There are variations in four expressions in the Bible referring to questions asked by children of their parents about Passover (Exodus 12:26; 13:8; 13:14; Deuteronomy 6:20). From them the Rabbis constructed a dialogue at an imaginary ritual feast attended by four sons with differing attitudes.

The complete text of the passage in the Haggadah reads thus:

Of four sons the Torah speaks--the wise, the sceptic, the simple minded, and the one who knows not even to ask. I. The Wise. "When thy son shall ask thee in time to come, saying, 'What mean the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances that the L-rd our G-d has commanded you?'" (Deuteronomy 6:20), impart to this wise questioner all the laws of the Passover down to the last detail of the final Afikoman (dessert), which though it concludes the meal does not end the celebration. II. The Sceptic. "And it shall come to pass that when your child shall say to you, 'What is this service of yours?' . . . (Exodus 12:26)

"Of yours," not of his! He has excluded himself, and withal by not mentioning G-d he seems to deny Him. You may taunt him in like manner and thus retort, quoting, "And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying, it is because of that which the L-rd did to me when I went forth from Egypt." (Exodus 13:8) "To me," not to him, for had he been there he would not have been redeemed. III. The Simple. "And it shall be that when in time to come thy son shall ask thee, saying 'What is this?' (Exodus 13:14) thou shalt say to him, 'With strength of hand the L-rd brought us out from Egypt from the house of bondage.'" (ibid.) A simple answer to a simple questioner. IV. The Child Unable to Ask. "Thou shalt tell thy son on that day, saying, it is because of that which the L-rd did to me when I went forth from Egypt" (Exodus 13:8)--even though thy son ask not (The Haggadah of Passover, ed. and trans. David and Tamar de Sola Pool New York: Jewish Welfare Board, 1944, pp. 23-25).

82:1 DIARY OF ABRAHAM SEGAL, POET

--In this Eliotic poem Klein portrays the emptiness of modern life through the diary of a member of the Jewish intelligentsia. Abraham Segal, a poet, who must work

in a factory to earn his living, records with passionate disgust a typical day in his mechanical, ennui-ridden life. Only at the end of the day, as he repairs with his girlfriend to a park, a patch of nature in the heart of the city, does he experience a temporary pastoral delight. Leon Edel characterizes Abraham Segal as "a Prufrock in shirt sleeves, only he is better than Prufrock; he is a poet" (cited in Caplan, "A. M. Klein; Introduction," p. 50).

The name, "Abraham Segal," is composed of Klein's first name and the surname of J. J. Segal, a prominent Montreal Yiddish poet and friend of Klein.

The theme of the poem and its treatment are Eliotic but the style and wit are Augustan, satirizing the drabness of life's circumstances through mock Romantic, religious and literary images. In 7:15--He rises, the poet's noisy urban waking is compared with rising in a pastoral setting; in 8:45--He considers the factory hands, "man, the paragon of animals" is reduced to chemicals worth eighty-seven cents; in 9:05--He yawns . . . slogans on the office walls and 12:20--He worships at the North Eastern, commerce and restaurant eating are parodied in sublime religious terms. And in 12:20-12:45--He reads . . . Shakespeare provides the satiric vocabulary for a cynical perspective on modern society rendered by the poet at noon in a restaurant.

84:10 Open, ye gates . . .

--A parody of Psalms 24:7, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates . . . that the King of glory may come in."

84:20 Consider the bloom which does not spin, nor toil

--A paraphrase of Matthew 6:28, "Consider how the lilies grow in fields, they do not toil, nor do they spin . . ."

84:26 Milady Schwartz . . .

--A caricature of the middle class bourgeois Jewish wife aspiring to culture and elegance.

86:3 Mosaically

--This gustatory parody of a grave theological view of Man's condition begins with a pun on Moses and the cafeteria floor tiles.

86:5 de profundis

--The opening words of Psalm 130, "Out of the depths have I called thee, O L-rd."

87:5 Let me lie in thy lap, Ophelia.

--Cf. Hamlet 3:2, "Lady, shall I lie in your lap?"

88:16 Within the meadow on the mountain top

--Klein refers to beautiful Mount Royal Park in the

heart of Montreal.

82:27-31 So have . . . Dusters

--In the visions of Isaiah (6:2) and Ezekiel (1:6-14) the angels' wings cover their bodies like a cloak or "duster." The mass conversion of "clipped . . . wings of fiery seraphim" into mundane "dusters" is a metaphor for what happens to the poet's visions. They are vulgarly reduced by the modern industrialized society, with its emphasis on the machine, to monotonous, aimlessly mechanical images.

83:17 What a piece of work is man! the paragon
Of animals! the beauty of the world!

--A direct quotation, although not seriatim, from Hamlet 2:2. Hamlet's words are a paraphrase of Psalms 8:6-7.

84:2-5 Blessed the men . . . inherit the earth

--A parody of the beatitudes (Matthew 5:5) "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."

89:1 SOIREE OF VELVEL KLEINBURGER

--Another of Klein's Eliotic poems. (Cf. 82:1, "Diary of Abraham Segal, Poet.") Velvel Kleinburger is not a member of the intelligentsia (as is Abraham Segal) but a simple wage-earner. Life for him is filled with

hopeless monotony and endless poverty. He finds solace only in cards. As Velvel rationalizes his behaviour in the face of moral and religious criticism from his brother, cards become for him a metaphor for life. Chance, as opposed to a merciful G-d, is a "Deity" who "Sets out to quarrel" with him, and defeats him:

When the deck is opened
The pauper once more [gives]
His foes the Kings and aces
and [takes] himself the knave (91:29-32).

Unlike "Abraham Segal," the Poet, who at the end of the day can find spiritual restoration through communion with Nature, Velvel at the end of his day can only indulge in the chronic gambler's despairing dream of fabulous riches at the next shuffle of the cards. And even this indulgence is unsatisfyingly short as "a raucous bell" on his door symbolically reawakens him to ugly reality.

The title is, of course, ironic and the name Velvel Kleinburger is a clever combination of Velvel, the praenomen of one of Klein's brothers (Caplan, "A. M. Klein: Introduction," p. 50), the family name, "Klein," and the German, burger, meaning citizen, commoner, or bourgeois. The resultant "Kleinburger," taken as a German phrase, could be translated as petit bourgeois.

89:18 Then Velvel adds a footnote . . .

--In response to (an understood) moral criticism from his brother.

89:26 Easy to praise the sleep of the righteous,

--Cf. Proverbs 3:24-25 " . . . thy sleep shall be sweet"

90:3 But, prithee, wherefore these thumbed cards?

--These words are spoken by Velvel's brother and refer to 89:32, "Tell me with what bay, tell me with what laurel . . . , " which they match in sarcasm. Jews traditionally answer a question with another question.

91:13-16 O good my brother . . . for a man to do?

--Velvel's brother speaking to him in the traditional style of Jewish preaching (especially of the magid, or itinerant preacher).

91:17-18 Who / Are you, my saint, to show us what is right?

--Velvel's card partners answer for him, also with a question. (Cf. 90:3.)

91:20 Reb. Jew.

--English rendition of a Yiddish expression (Reb Yid) used to address an older Jew. (Cf. with above 28:18.)

92:5-6 . . . as large . . . / The eyes of Og, the giant king of Bashan.

--See Deuteronomy 3:11. Og's bed was nine cubits long (approximately $13\frac{1}{2}$ ft.) and four cubits wide (approximately 6 ft.). "As large as Og, King of Bashan" is a common Yiddish simile. (Cf. SS 84/107.)

92:10 OF DAUMIERS A PORTFOLIO

--Honore Daumier (1808-1879) was a French caricaturist and painter. Again, attempting to translate the visual arts into poetry, Klein presents verbal representations of Daumier's caricatures. (Cf. 50:9, "Murals for a House of G-d.") The sub-titles are mainly ironic.

93:6 A SONG OF THREE DEGREES

--The subtitle of this poem, satirizing the "third degree" used by police to extract a confession from a reluctant prisoner, is also a pun on the opening phrases of Psalms 120-134, "A song of degrees."

96:1 BLUEPRINT FOR A MONUMENT OF WAR

--A satire, in epistolary style, on those who profit directly and indirectly from war.

99:1 P.P.S.

Appendix for the Pious--Isaiah chapter sixty-seven.

--There are only sixty-six chapters in Isaiah! Written in mock Isaiah style, this satire on a soldier going to war, is ambiguously a second postscript to the poem's "letter" and a sarcaistical appendix to the Book of Isaiah with its well-known message of universal peace (2:4, 11:6-9).

Klein frequently extends the numbers of biblical chapters in the titles of his poems (38:15, 256:1-261:5), suggesting that he is continuing the holy books. The idea culminates in The Second Scroll. See Introduction.

99:21 . . . the prospect of seven fat years

--An allusion to Genesis 41:17. Joseph interprets Pharoah's dream to mean Egypt will enjoy seven years of plenty.

102:9 BARRICADE SMITH: HIS SPEECHES

--Barricade Smith is a social revolutionary. Heaping sarcastic ridicule upon society, its institutions and its elite, he exhorts the downtrodden to revolt against their lot.

The poet is subtly ambiguous about Barricade Smith. He evokes much sympathy for Smith's ideals-- "there is one beauty; put it on the table / A loaf of bread, some salt, a vegetable"--and for his vision of a

new deal for the working class--"if not create new heaven at least abolish hell." But the very name "Barricade" Smith, the violence of the language and the excess of sarcasm combine to produce a sense of caricature. Behind the irony of Smith's call to eschew violence and the sarcasm of his observations on society's institutions another irony can be discerned: the poet ridiculing Smith's absurdly unrealistic utopian expectations even while evoking sympathy for his hopeful visions. By this ironic ambiguity the poet creates an emotional distance from Barricade Smith and intimates his own ambivalence towards radical revolution as a means of achieving social justice.

102:10 OF VIOLENCE

--An ironic call for eschewing violence to create social revolution. The speech is patterned after Mark Anthony's funeral oration at the death of Julius Caesar (3:2). One can almost hear Smith say to himself at the end of his speech, as Anthony does, "Now let it work. Mischief thou art afoot / Take thou what course thou wilt." In the context of caricature, "Of Violence" may be in mock imitation of Shakespeare as "Of Psalmody" is in mock imitation of the Bible See below.

102:18-19 Is there not heard a sound / Of belching in
the land?

--Cf. Song of Songs 2:12, "The time of singing is come,
and the voice of the turtle [-dove] is heard in our land."

103:24 that great genesis

--The new order which follows the chaos of revolution.

104:6 If not create new heaven . . .

--Cf. Isaiah 65:17 concerning the Messianic age, "For,
behold, I create new heavens and a new earth."

105:1 OF PSALMODY IN THE TEMPLE

--In mock imitation of Psalm 23 (The L-rd is my
shepherd). Barricade Smith describes the movie theater
in sarcastically metaphoric terms as a religious temple.
He feels movies, like religion, are the "opium of the
masses," diverting attention from revolution.

108:11 OF THE LILY WHICH TOILS NOT

--The title is a pun on Matthew 6:28, "Consider how the
lilies grow in fields, they do not toil . . . "

Barricade Smith describes the luxurious life of Lily,
a daughter of the wealthy class, whom he can love, but
only "from afar." The "speech" is obviously intended
to excite envy and revolutionary anger but, ironically,

it is pity for Lily's empty life that is evoked. The final "perhaps, however, you cannot get away" (110:15) is too weak to destroy the irony which, if the poem is satiric (see above 102:9), is not misplaced.

"Tillie the Toiler," Lily's working class foil in the poem, is the name of a working girl comic-strip heroine popular in the thirties.

111 HATH NOT A JEW . . .

--The name of this book of poetry, taken from The Merchant of Venice (3:1), expresses Klein's motivation for writing. He intended to create a body of Jewish literature in the English language based upon Jewish culture and mythology, equivalent to English classical works. The implied paraphrastic conclusion of his anacoluthic title is: " . . . mythology? Hath not a Jew culture, literary works, sonnets, ballads, nursery rhymes?" (See above Introduction.)

In Klein's later poems, and in his novel, the struggle to find G-d is a prominent theme; in these poems the poet's theological doubt is strongly expressed, and folk (cultural nationalism) is an overriding value.

112:11 AVE ATQUE VALE

--"Hail and Farewell!" in Latin. The Jewish poet takes leave of his friends Shakespeare, Marlowe and Jonson,

the classical English writers, in whose company he imagines himself to be, to return "for a space" to the great men of his own tradition. Self-conscious about the accusation, expressed by the sub-titled quotation from Two Gentlemen of Verona (2:5), that Jewish tradition is puritanical and tragedy-ridden, suited only for those "of sober mien and melancholy way," the poet reviews the lively tales about many rabbis of the Talmud in whose "parfait jolly company," again in poetic imagination, he has spent his youth, or "salad days."

Being in the company of the great masters of the English and Jewish traditions is a metaphor for intimate knowledge of both traditions. Written in an Elizabethan style, with overtones of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, the poem expresses Klein's urgent desire to dignify his Jewish heritage in accordance with the Haskalah tradition. (See above Introduction.) Using a medium and context of English classical poetry he attempts to show that the colourful richness of Jewish literary tradition compares with that of the English tradition. Klein glories in the erudite allusions of this poem.

112:17 O sages of Sura, Pumbeditha's wise

--Two cities in Babylonia prominent for their scholars

and academies in the Talmudic era (circa 220-800 C.E.).
See SS 19/6.

112:18 Drawers of elephants through needle's eyes!

--A Talmudic metaphor used in describing the acuity of Pumbeditha's scholars (Baba Mezia 38b), "Perhaps you are from Pumbeditha where they draw an elephant through the eye of a needle." (Cf. Matthew 19:24.)

112:19-20 Jabna-town, / Which brave ben-Zakkai, . . .
lean Rabbi Zadoc.

--The Talmud relates (Gittin 56a-56b) when Vespasian (not Titus, who took command of the Roman legions after Vespasian) laid siege to Jerusalem (70 C.E.), Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, certain of the city's doom, concealed himself in a coffin and had his disciples carry him out of the city in an attempt to negotiate with the Romans. During the negotiations, he correctly prophesies Vespasian's election as emperor and as a reward is granted three requests. He asks for
1) the sparing of the town of Jabna and its scholars
2) the saving of the dynasty of Rabban Gamliel, a descendant of King David and 3) a physician to heal the weakened Rabbi Zadoc who fasted forty years (eating only

a little in the evening) and prayed that the Temple should not be destroyed. (For the Talmud's record of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai's scholarly and literary accomplishments see Baba Batra 134a.)

112:23 Swallowing his fig . . . transparent and ascetic
 --Concerning Rabbi Zadoc, who fasted forty years (above), the Talmud states he became so thin any morsel of food he swallowed could be seen passing down his throat (Gittin 56a). The fig associated with Rabbi Zadoc was not eaten by him, as Klein implies, but sucked and thrown away. A noblewoman, reduced to starving poverty, found it, ate it and died.

112:26 jousters of the supple thumb
 --Jews traditionally argue Talmudic matters with gestures of the thumb. See below 118:30.

112:29 Abbaya and Rabba . . . washing away their sins
 --Abbaya and Rabba were two Babylonian scholars of the fourth century whose arguments and discussions are found throughout the Talmud. They were as pious as they were scholarly, and their many good deeds are recorded in the Talmud. (See Berakot 17a, 48a; Ta'anit 20a; Yoma 72b.)

112:31 The smiling Kahana

--Rabbi Kahana, a celebrated third century Babylonian scholar, came to Israel. His probing sharp intelligence promptly earned him the designation "a lion out of Babylon!" Consequently, when he entered the academy of Rabbi Yohanan, the leading rabbi of Israel, he was seated in the first row among the honoured and respected scholars. But Rabbi Kahana had promised his mentor in Babylonia not to vex Rabbi Yohanan with questions for seven years so he was silent at the lectures. As a result his reputation was considered overrated and he was gradually moved back to the seventh row. Unable to restrain himself, Rabbi Kahana, reasoning that the disgrace of moving back seven rows was equivalent to seven years silence, began to refute Rabbi Yohanan's opinions. The humiliated Rabbi Yohanan looked up to face his questioner and noticed the latter's lips were parted. Taking this as a smile of derision Rabbi Yohanan cursed him. Rabbi Kahana immediately became deathly ill. When the members of the academy, however, told Rabbi Yohanan that Rabbi Kahana always appeared to be smiling because of a facial wound the curse was withdrawn and Rabbi Kahana returned to normal health (Baba Kama 117a).

112:31-32 Shammai in a mope; / Hillel instructing an obtuse Ethiop;

--Hillel and Shammai were famous first century Jewish leaders concerning whom there are many anecdotes in the Talmud. Klein alludes to the one in which a heathen ("Ethiop") approached the two sages and asked "to be taught the whole of the Law (Torah) in no more time than a person can remain standing on one leg." Shammai ("in a mope") angrily dismissed him but Hillel taught him "What is hateful to you do not to your neighbour, that is the whole Law, while the rest is the commentary thereof; go and learn it" (Sabbath 31a).

Hillel's "instructing an obtuse Ethiop" may refer to another incident in which someone wagered that he could anger the gentle Hillel and plied him with foolish questions such as, "Why are the heads of the Babylonians round?" and "Why are the feet of the Africans wide?" just as he was preparing for the Sabbath. Hillel patiently and lovingly answered all the questions (thus "instructing an obtuse Ethiop"). Upon being told of the loss of the wager, Hillel said: "It is meet that you should lose twice as much and Hillel should not get angry " (Ibid.). Cf. SS 84/108.

112:34 Reb Meir and his se'en score ten excuses

--Rabbi Meir, a second century scholar, had a mind so

acute he could find one hundred and fifty sophistic arguments permitting the eating of vermin, a form of food expressly prohibited by the Bible (Leviticus 11:41-44).

113:1-2 Ambiguous Resh Lakish, gladiator / . . .

glutton . . . debater;

--Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, nicknamed Resh Lakish, was the chief of a robber band before he became a Talmudic scholar (third century). His opponent in legal debates was Rabbi Yohanan. (See above 112:31.) When the two first met in a forest by chance, Resh Lakish remarked to Rabbi Yohanan, who was very handsome, "You should be a ladies' man, not a rabbi!" Rabbi Yohanan replied that he had a sister whose features were even finer than his, and that he would offer her hand in marriage to Resh Lakish if he would reform. The latter accepted and became one of the great Talmudic scholars of his time (Baba Mezia 84a).

Resh Lakish's ravenous appetite was legendary. He once ate so much that his mind began to wander and a search party had to be sent to look for him (Berakot 44a).

113:3-4 Obese Reb Paupa, whose belly so did wax

It sheltered a camel, hump, and load of flax.

--Rab Papa was a fourth century Talmudic scholar who became a wealthy beer maker (Berakot 44b; Menahot 71a; Niddah 12b). He could eat four times as much as anyone else, a characteristic which irritated colleagues who broke bread with him (Pesahim 89b). His waist was as large as "a wicker basket" (Baba Mezia 84a).

Klein is generally accurate in his Talmudic references, but here in the hyperbole of obesity he inadvertently confuses Rab Papa with other rabbis whose exaggerated girth is mentioned with that of Rab Papa; moreover, the hyperbolic image there involves a team of oxen, not a camel and its load of flax: "When Rabbi Ishmael, son of Rabbi Jose, and Rabbi Eleasar, son of Rabbi Simeon, [whose waists were so large,] met [and stood waist to waist] one could pass through with a yoke of oxen under them without touching either" (Baba Mezia 84a).

113:5-6 That consummate apocalyptic liar, / Bar Huna . . .

--Rabba bar bar Huna (4th cent.) was the fabler of the Talmud. His fantastic tales involve fish as large as islands, geese so fat they produce rivers of oil and desert guides who could tell the distance to an oasis by smelling the sand under their feet (Baba Batra 73b).

113:7 Uncouth Akiva

--Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph (second century) was an "uncouth" ignorant peasant (am ha-arez) until he was forty. Referring to his attitude in those early years he said, "If I would have a scholar before me I would maul him like a wild ass" (Pesahim 49b). At forty he met and married the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in the land. Encouraged by his wife to educate himself he joined an academy and eventually became one of the greatest scholars of the Talmud (Ketubot 62b-63a).

113:7 cobbler Jochanan

--Rabbi Yohanan Ha-Sandler (second century) was a contemporary of Rabbi Akiba and a cobbler by trade. He unashamedly incorporated his occupation into his name--Ha-Sandler means "the cobbler".

113:8 Achair who quoted Greek;

--Achair's real name was Elisha ben Abuya. He was enamoured of Greek culture and ultimately became an apostate (Hagigah 15a-16b). For more on Achair see SS 18/4, 41/30.

113:9-10 Yitschok . . . hilariously conjectured

What Adam wrought . . .

--Alluding to Rabbi Yizhok's dictum (Sanhedrin 38b)

that Adam, as part of his rebelliousness in Eden, pulled the foreskin over his penis to hide his Jewishness! This assimilationist practice was common in Hellenistic times (Josephus, Antiquities 12:5).

113:11 Abba Saul . . . Murmuring jests at each throw of the spade.

--Abba Saul, another great scholar of the second century, was a gravedigger, and like the gravediggers in Hamlet he spouted wit and humour (Niddah 24b).

113:16 Reb Judah . . . Anatomy below the brain.

--Rabbi Judah, the Prince (third century) compiler and editor of the Mishna, basic element of the Talmud, was called "the Holy One" because his hands never descended below the waist, symbolic of his intense preoccupation with the sublime and disdain of the physical (Sabbath 118b). Rabbi Judah wept very easily and many incidents which provoked his tears are related in the Talmud (e.g. Hagigah 15b; Abodah Zarah 10b).

113:26-27 This Jew / Betakes him to no pharisaic crew . . .

--All the above rabbis are Pharisees or heirs of the Pharisees but, as is obvious from their biographies, they were far from "pharisaic" in the negative sense in which the term is used here, and in common parlance.

(See R. Travers Hereford, The Pharisees, Boston: Beacon Press, 1962.)

113:28 CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

--In this Judaic version of Byron's poem Klein portrays the problem of the modern Jew desperately seeking complete acceptance by society and never achieving it. The strong proud faith which sustained his ancestors in their isolation the modern Jew either sacrificed for the unattainable goal of acceptance or lost irretrievably to secularism. Alone and ever vulnerable to tragedy, he waits, with "frozen patience," for each cycle of violence against the Jew to pass and looks forward to no more than a comfortless "saecular imperturbability." Klein's protagonist in the poem is Childe Harold, an ageless Jew, symbol of his people, who makes a "pilgrimage" from ancient times in the land of Israel to the modern era in the Western world. His encounters with individuals, as he traverses countries and passes through historical periods, are descriptive of the Jews' encounters with society in those places and times; the difficulties he faces in contemporary times are representative of the difficulties faced by modern Jewry. (Cf. "In Re Solomon Worshawer" 234:21.)

113:29 Zvi . . . Cerf . . . Hirsch . . . Harold

--Klein takes the Hebrew praenomen Zvi, which means "hart," through French (Romance language) German and English translations to simulate the historical order of Jewish settlements in Diaspora lands. The antiquity of the Hebrew name is matched by the archaic English used with it, a device Klein employs with great effect. (See Spiro, "Second Gloss," 146-52, also Miriam Waddington, "Signs on a White Field," Canadian Literature 25 [1965] 29.) The well-known and often burlesqued assimilatory practice of changing traditional names to those common in the prevailing culture is satirically alluded to.

114:8 Esperanto

--A simple international language which the Jewish physician Ludwig Lazar Zamenhof (1859-1917) developed. Zamenhof dreamed Esperanto would become the universal language of mankind and lead to mutual understanding among nations. The contrast between Zamenhof's dream and the divided "polyglot" world is epitomized in the poem by Childe Harold's numerous passports in many languages. All of them are cancelled; he is not granted "permission" to enter anywhere.

114:11 To seek an audience with the consul of the moon.

--Alluding to the grim humour of Jewish refugees during World War II. They flooded the consular offices of free countries for a visa, and being refused remarked in despair that only "the consul of the moon" was left for them to consult regarding a visa for his domain!

114:16 Madagascar

--In 1903 the British Government made a very tentative offer to the Jewish victims of Russian pogroms to settle in British East Africa (actually Kenya or Uganda, not Madagascar). The idea, at first entertained by Theodore Herzl and some Zionists, was rejected by the Jews. Israel Zangwill, a British-Jewish writer, tried unsuccessfully to revive the idea with his British Territorial Organization. See Robert G. Weisbord, African Zion (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1968).

114:25 And leave my household gods in the customs house.

--In the Bible Rachel steals her father's "household gods" (trafim) as she runs away at night with Jacob (Genesis 31:19). The image of religion as goods which can be taken or left, and even taxed, is also used in The Second Scroll (73/90). Contextually the meaning

here is: the Soviets will treat Jews as equals if they relinquish their religion before coming.

114:29-30 By showing the doorman . . . Several thousand pounds . . .

--The Turks and Arabs exacted exorbitant sums for land from the early settlers in Palestine (Hay, Europe and the Jews, 266 ff).

114:32 O mummied Pharaoh . . . shrew proliferous Israelites!

--Exodus 1:9-10 "And he (Pharaoh) said unto his people, Behold, the people of Israel is more numerous and mightier than we. Come let us deal wisely with it"

114:35 Son of Hamdatha,

--Haman, son of Hamdatha, the villainous Grand Vizier of Persia, sought to destroy the Jews (Esther 3:1).

114:35 witless Mede

--Because of his impetuosity, King Ahasuerus, Haman's master, is called "a foolish king" by the Talmud (Megillah 12a).

114:36 did gibbet thee

--Esther 7:10. In the climax of the book King Ahasuerus orders Haman hanged.

114:36 thy inventions

--To destroy the Jews (Esther 3:7-15).

115:4 Antiochus

--Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.E.) imposed harsh repressive decrees upon the Jews of Judaea. His defeat came at the hands of the Maccabees. (See above 12:1, 13:1.)

115:6 Torquemada

--Tomas de Torquemada (1420-1498), first head of the Spanish Inquisition, became a symbol of Church-inspired persecution of Jews.

115:9 A cross with claws

--The swastika (cf. 239:3).

115:12 Attila's laws

--Attila's pitiless terms dictated to the Romans becomes a metaphor for Hitler's Nuremberg laws (Sept. 15, 1935) which officially introduced racial discrimination in Nazi Germany.

115:26-27 Horst Wessel / Wrote for his strumpet!

--Horst Wessel, son of a Protestant chaplain, forsook his family and studies and went to live with a prostitute while devoting his life to fighting for the Nazis in their street wars with Communists. He was killed in 1930 and declared a hero when his viciously anti-semitic song became the official anthem of the Nazi party. (See William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications Incorporated, 1962, p. 207.)

115:35 my spattered gaberdine

--Cf. Merchant of Venice 1:3, "And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine."

116:11 true marrano

--Marranos were Jews who converted to Christianity during the Spanish and Portuguese persecutions of the fifteenth century but who remained secretly loyal to their original faith. A true marrano, ironically then, would be a fully observant Christian. Childe Harold offers to convert to be accepted.

116:13-14 No so, you say, for being a generous mind
you will forgive the false.

--These lines refer to line 8 in which Childe Harold

asks if his ancestral faith, "My father's heresy, his obstinate creed," is the reason he is not accepted by essentially Christian Western society. "Not so," replies the society, "we are of a generous mind and would 'forgive the false' faith of your tradition." Childe Harold paraphrases the reply in the second person. His offer to convert, however, is rejected.

The ironic use of "true" and "false" ("true marrano," "forgive the false") subtly matches the irony of Childe Harold's offer to convert and society's ironic reply to him.

116:16 babel speech

--Genesis 11:7, "that they may not understand one another's speech."

116:27 And that is false

--Note again the ironic play on words involving "true" and "false."

117:16 gathered to his fathers

--A combination of two biblical phrases (Genesis 25:8; 1 Kings 2:10) meaning "died." Childe Harold envies the faith of his dead ancestors.

117:20 Esau, my kinsman

--Genesis 25:19-26. Esau, in Jewish tradition, is considered the ancestor of Rome and of Christian civilization. (Among many Talmudic references are Megillah 6a, Abodah Zarah 8b, and Jerusalem Talmud Abodah Zarah 1:2.)

117:29 the sixth thunder of Sinai

--The sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). Childe Harold believes the Diaspora Jew could not defend himself by arms because this commandment is too deeply embedded in his conscience.

117:34-35 Above this disappearing Jew / Three bubbles burst upon the lake?

--Cf. "And in that Drowning Instant," SS 141/195.

118:4 Ur of the Chaldees

--Abraham's birthplace (Genesis 11:27-28).

118:22 PORTRAITS OF A MINYAN

--Minyan, literally "counting," is a quorum of ten men required for public worship. (Cf. SS 29/21). With deft strokes the poet depicts the major occupations and common stereotypes of Jews he meets in the synagogue at prayer. There are ten "portraits", some irreverently drawn.

118:23 LANDLORD

--The landlord is learned but lacks compassion.

118:26 rashi script

--Rashi's (Isaacides, 1040-1105; see SS 81/102 and App. B) commentary on the Pentateuch appears in standard Hebrew editions at the bottom of the page in a smaller special style of type commonly called "rashi script" (although the style is used for other commentaries as well). Because reading the type as well as understanding the subject matter requires some study, one who can read "rashi script" is considered more or less learned.

118:30-31 his thumb . . . a doubtful logic

--See above 112:25.

119:2 To Tau from Aleph

--Tau is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet and Aleph the first.

119:5 PINTELE YID

--Literally "little dot of a Jew," a metaphorical Yiddish expression for the spot or spark of Jewishness that remains in every Jew despite outward assimilation. The picturesque expression derives from Hebrew letters of the alphabet which have dots in the middle or, more

symbolically, at the "heart" or "core." When the letter fades the dot, because of the concentrated pressure in printing, remains. The poet caricatures the Jew who is irreligious but who, paradoxically, attends the synagogue daily for as long as a year after the death of his parents in order to recite the kaddish. See above 15:22.

119:10 REB ABRAHAM

--A jolly worshipper who radiates happiness. For the meaning of "Reb" see above 28:18, 91:20.

119:19 TORAH

--Literally, the law, but also a term that connotes all of Jewish learning.

119:21 A milah-banquet

--A feast accompanying the performance of ritual circumcision.

119:25 The onion and the herring

--Traditional fare for the Saturday night meal called Melaveh Malkah, or "the ushering out of the Sabbath Queen."

119:27-30 On Ninth of Ab . . . In wailing beards?

--In a letter to Prof. A. J. M. Smith (The A. M. Klein Symposium, ed. Seymour Mayne, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1975, p. 4) Klein explains:

The Ninth of Ab (a month of the Jewish calendar) commemorates the destruction of the Temple. It is a day of mourning and fasting. It is customary on that day for youngsters to gather burrs and thistles, bring them to the synagogue, and throw them--not always with impunity--into the beards of the mourning elders--so as to give a touch of realism to their historic weeping. For the kids, this is a lot of fun.

The custom of throwing burrs on the Ninth of Ab is not recorded in the tradition, and no doubt was peculiar to the synagogue Klein attended in his youth.

120:1 And who on Purim came in . . . / They rattled.

--See above 41:7.

120:8 Scrolls

--The Scrolls of the Law (torah), metaphor for Jewish learning.

120:13 And at Messiah's greeting . . . Of roast
leviathan

--According to Jewish tradition when the Messiah will come the righteous will be invited to a feast at which the flesh of the leviathan, the monster of chaos subdued at the creation of the world (Psalms 89:10), will be served as a delicacy (Baba Batra 75a). Cf. below 243:8.

120:21 SHADCHAN

--Matchmaker, and object of much Yiddish folk humour. He is traditionally a slick talker, minimizing his clients' defects and emphasizing their dowries. Romantic love has no place in his considerations.

121:9 SOPHIST

--Modelled after Rabbi Simcha Garber, a great Talmudic scholar, and teacher of Klein in his youth (Palnick, "A. M. Klein," Cap. 2, pp. 3-4).

121:14-17 One placed a pin upon a page / Of Talmud print,

--All editions of the Talmud have standard pagination. Scholars of the Talmud make a point of remembering page numbers when studying its volumes. Some with photographic memories even remember the number of lines on a page. A traditional method of testing such scholars is to stick a pin into a word on a line of a volume and

ask the scholar to quote from memory the words appearing on succeeding pages. This accomplishment is popularly regarded as the highest measure of bekiyut, universal Talmudic knowledge. (A living example of such a scholar is the present Chief Rabbi of Montreal, Rabbi Pinhas Hirshprung.)

121:18 pilpul

--Elaborate sophistic arguments involving talmudic logic. Cf. SS 26/17, 18.

121:24-25 Interprets . . . / To G-d the meaning of His book.

--A similar whimsy is recorded in the Talmud regarding one of the rabbis (Baba Mezia 59b).

121:26 READER OF THE SCROLL

--Every synagogue employs a reader who must be expert in pronouncing the unmarked vowels of the Torah script and intoning the cantillations.

122:1-4 For a single breath to hiss / The ten outrageous names . . .

--According to tradition the reader of the Book of Esther must utter the names of the ten sons of Haman who were hanged (9:7-10) in one breath to indicate they all

mercifully died at once (Talmud Megillah 16b). This difficult feat--the names are long and hard to pronounce--is considered a test of the reader's talent.

122:5 SWEET SINGER

--An ironic title for a gravel-voiced reciter of Psalms. David is called "sweet singer of Israel" (2 Samuel 23:1).

122:15-17 And being ignorant, / Cannot in learned wise / Win Paradise.

--Studying the Talmud is considered the highest form of service to G-d. The less learned recite Psalms and give charity to win a place in Paradise.

122:25 But on the High, the Holy / Days . . . While litanies are clamoured.

--During the High Holy Days (New Year and the Day of Atonement) there is a custom to say the prayers louder than usual to prompt additional fervour. See Solomon Ganzfried, Code of Jewish Law, trans. Hyman E. Goldin, (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1927), Cap. 3, p. 75.

123:11 AND THE MAN MOSES WAS MEEK

--Numbers 12:3. Klein's Uncle Mayer served as a model for this "portrait." (Palnick, "A. M. Klein," Cap. 2,

p 6). The short lines and simple words of the poem match the theme of humility--"to save some room!"

123:14 four ells

--A standard talmudic measurement which defines the area of a person's immediate surroundings legally and symbolically. Cf. SS 22/11.

124:1 GREETING ON THIS DAY

--"This day" is August 15, 1929, when an Arab pogrom was organized against Jewish settlers in Palestine. Ironically it was also the Ninth of Ab, a traditional Jewish day of mourning (above 119, SS 75/93) when greeting must be curtailed (Ganzfried, Code, Cap. 3, p. 63). Though grieving, Klein sees visions of future salvation brought about in human terms for Jews and Arabs through socialist Zionism.

For details of the Arab pogrom see Howard M. Sachar, The Course of Modern Jewish History (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1958), pp. 384-393.

H. Wolofsky, whose autobiography, Journey of My Life, (Montreal: Eagle Publishing Company, 1945) Klein translated, was an eye-witness to the pogrom. His book contains a personal account of the events.

124:11 fashion a pen from bone;

--Cf. Jeremiah 17:1, "The sin of Judah is written down with a pen of iron, with a point of a diamond: it is engraved upon the table of their heart, and on the horns of your altars."

124:14 Omit your adjectives, sad Jeremiah

--Jeremiah's Book of Lamentations is read on the Ninth of Ab.

124:11 Messiah is a conspiracy / Of throat and air.

--Political Zionism is essentially an anti-Messianic movement, relying on human endeavour rather than divine intervention to regain the Holy Land. In The Second Scroll Klein synthesizes the two contradictory philosophies.

125:1 Rabbi Joseph Caro

--Safed mystic and codifier of Jewish law (1488-1575).

125:4 Reb Isaac Luria, surnamed the Pard,

--A fifteenth century mystic. The initials of his name in Hebrew spell ARI, lion, or by association, leopard. See SS 87/112.

125:10 Scholar on whose neat earlocks piety ascended

In spiral to the sky--

--Pious Jews wear earlocks to emphasize the prohibition of not cutting the "corners of the hair of the head," i.e. the temples (Leviticus 19:27). These hairs, untouched since birth, are curled for the sake of neatness.

125:14 The ghosts of Hebron . . .

--Alluding ambiguously to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their wives who are buried in Hebron in the Cave of Makpelah (Genesis 23, 25:9, 35:27-29, 50:12) and to the Jewish citizens of Hebron who died in the Arab riots of 1929. The ghosts, disturbed by the bloodletting, rise to avenge the victims.

125:16 Talpioth

--Taken from Song of Songs 4:4 and interpreted by the Septuagint and the Talmud (Berakot 30a) as referring to a specific location, i.e. Jerusalem. The allusion, therefore, is to saints buried in Jerusalem and to those who died during the Arab uprisings.

125:19-26 So are there those . . . to grow white.

--In a Macbethian vision the poet sees the ghosts

striking terror in the hearts of the Arab participants
in the pogrom.

126:11 O, who is this, rising from the Sharon,

--Cf. Song of Songs 3:6, 8:5, "Who is this rising from
the wilderness" Section VI is in the style of
Song of Songs.

126:19 memory of faggots

--From autos de fé.

126:21 Ashkenaz

--Ancient Hebrew name for Germany, or more generally,
Europe.

126:29 Sphorad

--Spain.

126:24 He has said to the sun, Thou art my father . . .

--Cf. Psalms 89:27, "He shall call unto Me: Thou art
my Father." The poet alludes to a cult of the soil
popular among early settlers.

126:28 For a thousand shall come upon him,

--Cf. Psalms 91:7, "A thousand may fall at thy side
. . . it shall not come nigh thee."

126:30 A son has returned to her that bare him.

--The metaphor is used by Isaiah (49:20-21) in prophesying the return of Israel to its land: "The children of thy bereavement shall yet say in thine ears . . . 'Give place to me that I may dwell.'"

127:3 "Forgive them, L-rd, they know not what they do?"

--Luke 23:34. There can be no peace or forgiveness so long as greed ("sleek Syrian landlord") and hatred ("fanatic priest") hold sway.

127:14 To them no peace, but unto you, O fellaheen,

--Socialism, the poet believes, will create harmony between Jew and Arab.

127:29 Elation lifts the Jew from off his heels.

--Cf. above 49:1-2 for a similar image.

127:30 Izak and Ishmael are cousins met.

--Genesis 16:15, 21:3.

128:1 the Wall of ancient pain

--The Western, or Wailing Wall, remnant of the Temple in Jerusalem and a holy shrine for Jews, is the symmetrical symbolic counterpart of "Omár's dome."

128:4 Shalom

--Peace, and a traditional greeting. The day of mourning is transformed into a day of peace.

128:6 SONNET IN TIME OF AFFLICTION

--The poet, a Zionist, reflects as his co-religionists are killed in Arab uprisings (1929). With sorrow that he must do so, he calls upon the remnant to leave their tradition of peace and protect their settlements from the enemy as did David and Bar Cochba (a Jewish leader in Roman times, below 128:12). And with sorrow also he realizes the moral ambiguity of his call, "from beneath . . . northern stars" He does not have the courage to become a pioneer in the Holy Land himself. Cf. above "Greetings on this Day," 124:1.

128:9 shield of David

--The six-pointed star of David is called in Hebrew Magen David, shield of David.

128:10 lion of Judah

--Genesis 49:9. Judah is compared to a lion by his father Jacob.

128:12 Bar Cochba's star

--Simon bar Kozba led the Jewish rebellion against Rome

in 132-135 C.E. and for a time gained independence for his people. Because of his early successes he was called Bar Cochba, son of a star, a metaphor taken from Numbers 24:17. His heroism and courage have made him a symbol of the Jewish fight for independence and freedom. (Cf. SS 28/20, 79/99.)

128:14 The jackal leaves foul marks on temple-stones.
--Cf. Lamentations 5:18, "For the mountain of Zion is desolate, the foxes walk upon it."

128:17 the hammer of the Maccabees
--Judah, son of Mattathias (above 12:1), led a revolution against tyranny in 165 B.C.E. He was called "Maccabee" because he dealt "hammer" blows--the Hebrew for hammer is makkebet--to the enemy, and his followers were called "Maccabees."

128:21 OUT OF THE PULVER AND THE POLISHED LENS
--Benedict (Baruk) Spinoza (1732-77), famous Dutch philosopher, was a lens grinder by trade. Because of his heterodox views on G-d and religion (pantheism) he was excommunicated by the Jewish community of Amsterdam, where he lived. Spinoza's syncretic harmony of science and religion and his tolerant acceptance of alienation from his people have made him a model for liberal Jewish

intellectuals since the Enlightenment. (See above Introduction.)

Ambiguously identifying himself with Spinoza, the poet describes the philosopher's struggle against the prejudices of society, as well as against his own doubts, toward independent thought about G-d.

The title of the poem alludes metaphorically to Spinoza's philosophy. Embodying simultaneously "the infinitesimal and the infinite," pantheism, like a "polished lens," afforded a hitherto unperceived view of G-d. It also alludes to Spinoza's lens-grinding trade. The "pulver" additionally suggests the philosopher's personal suffering and alienation ("grinding" and "discarded" dust). The metaphors are interpreted again in the body of the poem in a slightly different form (130:21-22).

128:23 The paunchy sons of Abraham . . .

--This section portrays a psychological gathering of strength to defy the community. Only death, not excommunication, claims "Spinoza," can eliminate a man's heresies. The plosives (p's and sp's) add onomatopoeia to the images of the community's scorning contempt for Spinoza even as they also heighten the sense of his angry defiance as a response.

128:24, 27 Spit . . . spatting spittle.

--The poet assumes that members of the Jewish community deliberately spit on excommunicants, but there is no source for this practice. However, to be spit upon is considered an insult and a disgrace in Jewish tradition (Numbers 12:14).

128:25 Baruch alias Benedict,

--Ironically Spinoza, object of malediction, has praenomina in Hebrew (Baruk) and in Latin (Benedict) which denote "blessing."

129:5 ram's horn blown. / And candles blown out

--Rituals of excommunication in Jewish tradition.

129:12 Uriel da Costa

--Uriel da Costa, a contemporary of Spinoza, was a Marrano (above 116:11) who returned to the full practice of Judaism. However in 1618 he published a pamphlet, "Proposals against Tradition," attacking his faith and the community of Venice promptly excommunicated him. He recanted, as a result, but not long after renewed his attacks on tradition, wavering between faith and heresy until the end when he took his own life (1640). Da Costa's vacillation is cited by "Spinoza" as proof of his contention that excommunication is ineffective

in eliminating heretical thinking.

The verses in this section consist of short lines and simple rhymes resembling doggerel to accentuate "Sponiza's" contempt for da Costa's cowardly lack of conviction.

129:18 Malevolent scorpions . . .

--In this section "Spinoza" and ambiguously the poet, cast in a similar role of alienated intellectual, exhort themselves to defy doubt, tradition and communal authority with courage.

130:2 scripture on the wall

--Cf. Daniel 5:5-6: "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the palm of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed in him, and his thoughts affrighted him"

130:5 The bribe of florins jingling in the purse.

--Spinoza's teacher offered him 1000 florins a year not to publish his heretical views.

130:17 Play his game of celestial solitaire.

--Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d,

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the L-rd is One," the major tenet of Jewish faith. In this section "Spinoza" derides the traditional notions of G-d. (Here too, the poet is ambiguously Spinoza.)

130:18 Reducing providence . . .

--A poetic summation in prose form of Spinoza's pantheism. Aspects of Spinoza's trade become metaphors for his pantheistic perspective.

The contrasting change in imagery from poisonous crawling creatures and slime (section iii) to prismatic colours and light (section v) suggests intellectual enlightenment and religious revelation. Pantheism, a synthesis of science and belief in G-d, has resolved all doubts and given a new vision of the universe and G-d to mankind. "Spinoza" ecstatically acknowledges this saving idea to be a triumph of the mind (section vi). The magnitude of the discovery stuns him (section vii). He recovers and sings a hymn of praise to the newly discovered pantheistic G-d (section viii), the G-d who is Nature.

130:24-25 deciphered a new scripture in the book

--An allusion to Spinoza's Tractatus Theologico-politicus, the first systematic criticism of the Bible (1670). Pantheism required a new interpretation of the Bible.

131:2 O cirque of the Cabbalist!

--The human head (brain), responsible for pantheism, is compared to the "wheel of the Kabbalah" containing the secrets of creation. (See above 34:12, 49:10.)

131:6 O golden bowl of Koheleth!

--An allusion to the rabbinic interpretation of Ecclesiastes 12:6. The passage "while the silver cord is not yet torn loose, and the golden bowl is not crushed . . . ," is assumed by the rabbis to be a metaphor for old age, which withers the spinal column (silver cord) that controls locomotion and shrivels the head (golden bowl), the container of human thought. (Kohelet Rabbah, ad. loc.)

131:19 L-rd, accept my hallelujahs,

--For Spinoza G-d is Nature and therefore bound by all the laws of science and necessity. There is consequently much irony in a hymn to an impersonal pantheistic G-d, and especially asking Him to "accept . . . hallelujahs." Nevertheless "Spinoza," so overwhelmed by his creative thought, spontaneously sings praises to his newly discovered G-d. More likely it is the ambiguous poet who, disregarding logical consistency, bursts forth in "hallelujahs" at the contemplation of the beauty of Spinoza's pantheistic idea.

It is significant that the two most poetic sections of the poem are in prose, the heightened description of Spinoza's philosophy (section v) and the peacen to G-d or Nature (section viii). By setting them apart stylistically, the poet equates them. He thus symbolically elevates Spinoza to the "stars in the firmament" (132:16). "Even in dust I am resurrected," (132:20) refers to Spinoza whose idea lives on and to the poet's faith in G-d which was restored through pantheism.

Simultaneously, however, the poet also subtly calls attention to the contradiction between the two sections. Man needs a G-d to pray to and Spinoza's deterministic G-d, coldly mathematical, axiomatically following the laws of Nature, cannot respond to praise or answer in affliction. No doubt this accounts for the surprising apologetic tone of the last stanza (section ix). The poet no longer embraces pantheism as a religion. He is satisfied merely to "think of Spinoza," a contributor to the store of ideas in Jewish culture. Though his thought shook the foundations of traditional belief, Spinoza was not like Sabbatai Zevi, a false deceiving messiah (below 132:23); he was a sincere "lover of the L-rd."

131:22 thou art the blossom . . .

--Cf. Isaiah 5:7, "For the vineyard of the L-rd of hosts

is the house of Israel. And the men of Judah the plant of his delight."

131:26 Thy glory fills the earth;

--Cf. Isaiah 6:3, "The whole earth is full of His glory."

131:26 the noise of the deep . . .

--Cf. Ezekiel 1:24, "like the noise of the great waters, like the voice of the A-mighty." Also Psalms 29:3,

"The voice of the L-rd is upon the waters."

132:2 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there;

--Psalms 139:8.

132:6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard,

--Proverbs 6:6.

132:13 I am thy son, O L-rd,

--Cf. Psalms 2:7, "The L-rd said unto me; Thou art my son."

132:20 in dust I am resurrected;

--"Dust" alludes ambiguously to a) death, brought about by the "pulver" of lens grinding (below 132:29) and b) the "infinitesimal" of pantheism (above 130:22).

Spinoza's idea lives after his death. His suffering

and alienation, symbolized by "pulver" (128:21), are redeemed.

132:23 Shabbathai Zvi

--A Jewish pseudo-messiah, contemporary of Spinoza (1626-76), who ultimately converted to Islam. To demonstrate the divinity of his calling, Shabbathai Zvi "married" a Scroll of the Law (Torah) in a public ceremony. Because he led astray many thousands of Jews who believed in him, Shabbathai Zvi became a symbol of a deceitful and insidious undermining of traditional faith. (For a comprehensive treatment of Shabbatai Zevi see Gershom Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi.)

132:25-26 the silken canopy / Thou art hallowed unto me.

--In a Jewish wedding the bride and groom stand under a canopy. As the groom places the ring on the bride's finger he states: "Thou art hallowed unto me . . ."

132:29-33 consumptive fretting . . . unwedded

--Spinoza, a bachelor, died of consumption brought about by the dust of his grinding lenses. (See above 132:20) Spinoza's celibacy, besides emphasizing the contrast to Shabbathai Zvi who "took to himself the Torah for a wife,"

becomes symbolic of his noble "passion intellectual of G-d" (130:26). His passion was reserved exclusively for G-d. Cf. Uncle Melech's passion for "ideas," substituting "for the woman he never married" (SS 54/61).

133: TALISMAN IN SEVEN SHREDS

--The poem alludes to the legend of Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague (1525-1609) and the human being he created out of clay. The golem (Hebrew for unformed clay), as the creature was called, came to life, according to Klein's version of the legend, when a parchment amulet with the Divine Name (tetragrammaton) was inserted under its tongue. The main task of the golem was to rescue the Jews of Prague from accusations of ritual murder by tracking down the true killers but, lacking speech and intelligence, it soon did more harm than good. The rabbi then removed the Divine Name from the golem and returned it to its original lifeless elements. (See Frederick Thieberger, The Great Rabbi Loew of Prague, London: The East and West library, 1954.)

"Talisman" refers to the parchment amulet which gave life to the golem. It becomes a symbol for traditional faith associated with the Divine. There is also a paronomastic play on words which interprets the symbol. Talis is a prayer shawl in Hebrew; "talisman," then, refers to the classical "man of prayer," or "believing man."

"Seven shreds" derives from a Yiddish expression describing poverty--"ah kabtzen in ziben poless," a poor man [dressed] in [a garment of] seven overlapping edges [to hide the holes]"--and represent the tattered remnants of faith torn apart by doubt. The theme, man spiritually impoverished by his loss of faith, is pursued in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" ("a pauper in spirit, a beggar in piety" 117:18), "Psalm XXXIV" ("most unworthy, doubt-divided me" 233:8), and the lapses of Uncle Melech in The Second Scroll (24, 40/15, 39). There are also seven sonnets, emblematic of poverty's "seven overlapping edges," in which belief is debated and torment at the loss of certain faith is expressed.

The aura of mystery inherent in the legend of Rabbi Loew is preserved in the poem. The golem is ambiguously a deity and man; Rabbi Loew, his creator, is ambiguously a historical figure and G-d. In the first sonnet, "Syllogism," the golem is Spinoza's pantheistic god, a god bound by the laws of scientific necessity as the golem, without a mind of his own, was bound by the instructions of Rabbi Loew. "Golem" is equated with Ananke, Kismet, or deterministic fate.

The title, "Syllogism," alludes to the mathematically logical method and style of Spinoza's philosophical treatises.

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133:17 EMBRYO OF DUSTS

--In the second sonnet the poet moves from deterministic pantheism to the concept of the transcendent G-d of the Bible who is separate from Nature and omnipotent. He introduces the concept of the transcendent G-d of the Bible who is separate from Nature and omnipotent. He introduces the concept indirectly, by implication. Sketching the condition that necessitated the creation of the legendary golem, namely evil, which is epitomized by the anti-semitic excesses of Prague, he implicitly asks the age-old but still unanswered question; "How can an omnipotent G-d allow evil?" Nor does the poet accept the idea that G-d is omnipotent but does not care, that He "takes a nap." The biblical G-d "sleeps not, neither does He drowse!" He is concerned with men and their deeds.

As a tentative answer the poet postulates that G-d has given man, "a guided nit-wit," control over his own destiny, and waits for him to cease doing evil in the world. The golem now becomes the symbol of man and Rabbi Loew, attempting to "rouse" the divine element in the golem, becomes a metaphor for G-d prompting man to eradicate evil from his heart.

133:20 to bring Hebrews to unhallowed clay,

--Alluding to the exhumation of corpses from the Jewish

cemetery of Prague during a church-inspired pogrom,
Easter Sunday, 1389 (Graetz, History, IV, 165).

133:21 suckle them upon a Catholic pap;

--Alluding to the Bull of Pope Benedict XIII (1415)
which compelled Jews to hear Christian sermons (Graetz,
History, IV, 216). Cf. Browning's Holy Cross Day."

133:22 Johann Silvester in his scarlet cap.

--Johann Silvester, Bishop of Sabina, became Pope for
three months in 1045.

133:23 aproned Havlicek.

--Karel Havlicek-Borovsky (1821-1856), Czech poet and
journalist, wrote epigrams offensive to Jews. He is
portrayed as a butcher flaying Jews with his words.

133:25 In vain: He sleeps not / . . . He entrusts /
unto a guided nit-wit . . .

--See above 133:17. Besides the irony of G-d taking a
"nap," and the matching irony of a biblical quotation
(Psalms 121:4) to "prove" He does not, there is an
allusion in this verbal exchange to another irony--the
persecution of the Jews is a contradiction to Christian
traditional belief in the biblical G-d as well as Jewish,
for it is an evil, as any other, which a benevolent Creator
must not permit.

134:1 TETRAGRAMMATON

--This sonnet is a reply to the previous one which posits G-d's waiting for man to cease doing evil. Again the golem is a symbol of man and the parchment amulet a symbol of the faith in G-d which prompts man to resist the evil in his heart. Man no longer regards faith holy, it is "even as spit," and he is therefore unresponsive to the challenge of evil. Man is just a "golem's shard."

Rabbi Loew in this sonnet represents G-d again, and the Kabbalistic deprivations he suffers in order to bring the golem to life (cf. above 34:7) are, symbolically speaking, G-d's anxious concern that man does not heed His prompting. (A similar concept of G-d suffering in his concern for mankind appears in The Second Scroll when Uncle Melech, a G-d symbol, delays his journey to Israel "to feel in his own person and upon his own neck the full weight of the yoke of exile." SS 55/63. See Appendix A below.)

134:3 Zohar's spark

--The Zohar is a classical book of the Kabbalah. The word zohar means glow or shine.

134:4 candles nibbling se'en wounds in the dark,

--The holy ~~candelabrum~~ candelabrum of Moses had seven lamps (Numbers 8:2, cf. above 53:29-30). Rabbi Loew is portrayed

engaging in mysterious rites of Kabbalah in the glow of such a candelabrum. The seven flames "nibbling . . . wounds in the dark" suggest the inability of faith to do much more than dispel a little of the overwhelming darkness of evil.

134:16 FONS VITAE

--The poet continues the description of the Kabbalistic rites of Rabbi Loew performed in creating the golem and mentions two medieval philosophers, Solomon ibn Gabirol (Avicbron 1020-57) and Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) who it is said, also created life. He then asks the question if G-d is perhaps life itself, an unfathomable elan vital. The question remains unanswered.

Ibn Gabirol's major work, a long poem preserved in Latin translation and called Fons Vitae "Font of Life," gives this sonnet its title.

135:1 ENIGMA

--In this sonnet the poet reviews the many accusations against the Jews of Europe which sparked innumerable pogroms, and asks if the extra-ordinary survival of the Jews, G-d's covenanted, as described in the Bible, is a basis for belief. "Is it the finger of the L-rd's right hand?" Or is their survival merely a chance historical peculiarity? This is the "Enigma." The golem becomes symbolic of those fortuitous random factors responsible

for the unique but completely natural phenomenon of Jewish survival. His "earthy paw" is ironically contrasted with the biblical "finger of the L-rd's right hand" (Exodus 8:15, 15, 6).

135:3 Jews spit . . . Christian infants are their drink and food;

--In the Middle Ages Jews were accused of a) stealing the host and pricking it "until blood flowed profusely," b) of killing Christian children to use their blood for Passover rituals, and c) of bringing on the Black Plague by poisoning Christian wells. See Max L. Margolis and Alexander Marx, History of the Jewish People (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society), 1956, pp. 402 ff; Edward H. Flannery, The Anguish of the Jews (New York: The Macmillan Company), 1965, pp. 110 ff.

135:16 GUIDE TO THE PERPLEXED

--The poet finds the number and variety of religions bewildering; each claims to have true knowledge about G-d. He considers the possibility that none is correct. Religion is but "a baying at the moon." There is no G-d and the universe is ruled by chance! Consequently, he grimly concludes, there would be no absolutes for "good and true and beautiful." The golem, following suit, assumes the symbolic role (in the plural) of the

random forces operating in the world.

The sonnet's title is taken from the major philosophical treatise of Maimonides (see above 134:16) establishing a rational basis for belief in G-d and in the Bible. It is, of course, ironic.

135:18 do you genuflections to the Rose.

--Symbol of the mystic center of all life. See J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1973, p. 275.

135:19 Be merry, eat and drink . . .

--Epicurean hedonism.

135:21-22 the Anvil and the Smith / . . . yeas and noes.

--Mystic feminine and masculine principles associated with creation of the universe (Cirlot, Symbols, pp. 14, 137).

135:23 trisected . . . arose.

--The Trinity.

135:24 Rock of Ages is a monolith.

--Alluding wittily to Isaiah 26:4, "For the L-rd is G-d, Rock of Ages" and to Deuteronomy 6:4, "the L-rd is One."

136:1 IMMORTAL YEARNINGS

--Echoing thoughts found in Plato's Phaedo, the poet, in this final sonnet, seeks belief through the idea of immortality shared by all mankind. But there is no empiric proof! The golem, symbol of those who believe in immortality will answer "yes" when asked about this doctrine because "it suits the golem to disclose it so." The poet in the end is condemned to the anguish of endless doubt regarding belief and immortality. Unable to accept the uncertainty, however, and striving to believe, he ceaselessly tries to revive a traditional faith which has died. Metaphorically, he will endlessly "take a prong in hand, and go / over old graves and test their hollowness"--until "doomsday's sunrise."

136:16 DESIGN FOR MEDIAEVAL TAPESTRY

--Another of Klein's attempts to portray art in poetry. Like "Murals for a House of G-d" (above 50:9), the theme is the crusades from the ironic perspective of the Jewish victims whose suffering one would not expect to see illustrated in designs on a tapestry. The terza rima, which connects the successive stanzas (aba, bcb . . .), adds to the kaleidoscopic impression of scenes and figures on a tapestry.

136:17 Somewhere a hungry muzzle rooted . . .

--The poet sets the tone of fear and violence with an ironic contrast between eerie animal noises and frightened Jewish silence.

137:7 REB ZADOC HAS MEMORIES

--Jews of the medieval ghetto have different reactions to their persecutions. The poet subtly expresses his own sentiments, casting those Jews with whom he has little sympathy ironically. Reb Zadoc accepts persecution with sad resignation.

For the meaning of "Reb" see above 28:18.

137:11 Soldiers . . . holy mottos

--Crusaders.

137:20 Judengasse

--The ghetto, literally "Jew street."

137:24 Jacob

--Common prophetic term for the Jewish nation. See Isaiah 41:8, 44:2.

137:30-31 The yellow badge . . . / a papal wreaking.

--Pope Innocent III (1160-1216) forced the Jews to wear a yellow badge and imposed financial burdens upon them. (Margolis and Marx, History, pp. 374-75.)

138:10 REB DANIEL SHOCHET REFLECTS

--A shochet is a ritual slaughterer of fowl and animals (cf. above 55:1). Reb Daniel shares Reb Zadoc's attitude (above 137:7).

138:17 NAHUM-THIS-IS-ALSO-FOR-THE-GOOD PONDERERS

--Nahum-this-is-also-for-the-good is the translated name of a saintly rabbi mentioned in the Talmud (Ta'anit 21a) who always interpreted events, no matter how tragic, for the good. As a divine reward for such profound faith in G-d's goodness, his interpretations were always miraculously confirmed by subsequent events. In the poem Nahum-etc. considers persecution "most desirable" as 1) a preparation for a glorious next world, 2) a lesson in endurance, 3) an example of faithfulness. The ponderous name, deliberately translated literally (instead of being transliterated), and the enthusiasm for suffering are subtly ironic, revealing the poet's antipathy towards Nahum's view.

139:1 ISAIAH EPICURE AVERS

--Epicure (apikoros) in Jewish tradition denotes one who denies a Creator and Divine Providence (Talmud Rosh Hashanah 17a)--historically the most prominent model of a rational basis for such a belief was Epicurus' atomistic theory. The term is also used loosely to refer

16.11
to anyone entertaining heterodox ideas about Judaism.
Isaiah Epicure denies that suffering has any redeeming
qualities.

139:11 JOB REVILES

--Outdoing the biblical character whose name he symbolically carries, Job reviles and reprimands G-d. The sarcasm casts an ironic light on Job's words from the poet's point of view and again reveals his lack of sympathy for Job.

140:1 JUDITH MAKES COMPARISONS

--The Jewish maid resisting assault by a crusader becomes a symbol of the wide discrepancy between the Romantic stories of chivalrous knights and ugly historical reality.

140:11 EZEKIEL THE SIMPLE OPINES

--Ezekiel believes persecution is the consequence of sin and backsliding. It will be withdrawn when charity, prayer and good deeds are increased. The portrayal of his simplicity borders on the ironic and again reveals the poet's unsympathetic attitude, albeit with some ambiguity.

140:19 SOLOMON TALMUDI CONSIDERS HIS LIFE

--The tragedy of persecution to Solomon Talmudi is not suffering but the loss of valuable knowledge and scholarly fame. His manuscript, containing "secrets from the Pentateuch" never fathomed by exegetes or philosophers, is cruelly burned. These exaggerated arrogant claims of Solomon Talmudi alienate the reader's sympathy even as they indicate the poet's own antipathy toward the scholar whose only concern, amid the suffering of his brothers, is his "lost . . . name." (Cf. Browning's "A Grammarian's Funeral.")

140:25 The script that gave the maggot the alarm.

--Talmudi's manuscript will rescue him from the maggots, a metaphor for death, by its enduring contribution to religious knowledge.

140:26-28 Rashi . . . Ibn Ezra . . . Maimonides

--Three great commentators on holy writ. (See above 118:26, 134:22, SS 81/102 and App. C.) Talmudi maintains their works would be discarded if his manuscript, with its superior exegesis, had been preserved.

141:7 Duns . . . aquinatic Thomas

--Duns Scotus (1266-1308) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), Christian theologians and philosophers. "Aquinatic" is

Klein's own descriptive adjective formed from the genitive "Aquinas" (of Aquino).

141:8 Moslems

--Arab scholars laid the foundations of Medieval philosophy.

141:16 SIMEON TAKES HINTS FROM HIS ENVIRONS

--Simeon sees everything around him as symbols of Christianity. The tone is ironic almost to the point of caricature, especially the final "in his life, at any rate." The poet's feelings are obvious.

141:23 Whereby our slavish ears have punctured lobes.

--The ears of slaves who did not accept freedom were punctured (Exodus 21:5-6).

142:1 ESTHER HEARS HIS VOICE

--Esther's lament for her pious husband (lover?) killed by the crusaders is an unsuccessful graft of Jewish images onto a Romantic conceit of tragic love. The images of piety are incongruous with Romantic love. But the absence of intended irony indicates the poet's sympathy with her sad plight.

142:9-10 kiddush benediction / . . . spilled like wine.

--Kiddush is the prayer ushering the Sabbath into the home on Friday evening. Chanted with a traditional melody, it includes a benediction over a cup of wine.

142:15 eighteen prayers

--The main element of the daily prayer service. (See below 345:11, "Stance of the Amidah," and SS 139/193.)

143:1 HAGGADAH

--Memories of a Passover Eve seder (ritual repast) are given picturesque and symbolic expression. The Haggadah is a book of readings, prayers and songs used at the seder.

143:3 dotted like th' unleavened bread,

--The surface of unleavened bread, or matzah, which Jews eat on Passover, is perforated before baking to retard leavening. Cf. SS 20/8.

143:4 The moon a golden platter in the sky.

--Passover occurs in the middle of the lunar month Nissan of the Jewish calendar, when the moon is full.

143:9 ONCE IN A YEAR

--The festive seder is fundamentally an annual Jewish family celebration.

143:12 brown perruque

--See above 38:6; SS 96/125.

143:20 BLACK DECALOGUE

--At the seder the ten plagues with which G-d smote the Egyptians for refusing to grant the Israelites freedom are recited. At each plague some wine is extracted from the wine-cup used in the service. The ten plagues and their equivalents in the poem are:

- 1) The Nile turns to blood (Exodus 7:19-25)--"a gash."
- 2) Frogs (8:1-10)--"frogs."
- 3) Lice (8:12-15)--"the itching guest."
- 4) Pestilence (9:1-7)--"the pest."
- 5) Murrain (8:16-20)--"murrained carcasses."
- 6) Boils (9:8-12)--"full boils."
- 7) Destructive hail (9:17-21)--"guerdon of hot hail."
- 8) Locusts (10:3-19)--"swarms of locusts."
- 9) Darkness (10:21-23)--"thick darkness."
- 10) Death to the first born (11:1-10; 12:29-30)--"and first born slain."

144:4 In Goshen these were never seen.

--Exodus 8:18; 9:26 et. pass. Goshen is where the Israelites lived in Egypt (Genesis 46:34; 47:6, 27).

144:5 THE BITTER DISH

--Several dishes commemorating the afflictions of Egypt in symbolic form are set out at the seder table.

They are:

- 1) unleavened bread, or matzah,--"bread of our affliction."
- 2) a mixture of ground nuts, apple and cinnamon--
"symbol of the clay that built Ramses."
- 3) horseradish-root--"root of bitterness." (Cf. above 14:9, 15:21.)

144:11 SONG

--At one point near the end of the seder a special goblet is filled with wine and the door is opened in symbolic anticipation of the arrival of Elijah, the prophet, who will herald the coming of the Messiah (Malachi 3:23).

144:11 CHAD GADYAH

--The Haggadah ends with a song in the style of "The House that Jack Built" or "The Old Lady and Her Pig." It tells of a little kid (chad gadyah) which a father buys for two zuz. A cat, Klein calls her "Gray-malkin," eats the kid; a dog eats the cat; a rod beats the dog; a fire burns the rod; water quenches the fire; an ox drinks the water; a ritual slaughterer (shochet,

cf. above 138:10) slays the ox; the Angel of Death slays the slaughterer and the Almighty slays the Angel of Death. It is a song about ultimate divine justice.

145:21 THE STILL SMALL VOICE

--1 Kings 19:12. The voice of G-d heard by Elijah is a "still small voice." In the poem, analogous dream voices call to those assembled at the table, "Jerusalem next year! Next year Jerusalem!"

145:23 The heirloomed clock enumerates the tribes,

--As the seder ends at midnight, the old clock strikes twelve as if it were counting the biblical twelve tribes of Israel.

145:25 matzoh

--Unleavened bread.

146:6 REB LEVI YITSCHOK TALKS TO G-D

--Rabbi Levi Yitschok of Berditchev (d. 1813) was a Hasidic leader famous for his conversations with G-d. Many of them are recorded in Yiddish folksongs. (Cf. SS frontispiece.) The poem, based upon the song "Rabbi Levi-Yitzchok's Kaddish" (Ausubel, Jewish Folklore, pp. 725-27), has as its theme the ever-unresolved contradiction between belief in a just G-d who is also

omnipotent, and the evil of undeserved suffering which He allows in the world.

In the original song Rabbi Levi Yitzchok boldly summons G-d to answer in court for His unjust oppression of the people of Israel. But after presenting his case Rabbi Levi Yitzchok accepts G-d's silence in humble resignation and recites the kaddish, a doxology also used as a prayer for the dead. The rabbi thereby implies that despite his arguments he is prepared to give his life for G-d. In the poem, however, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok is portrayed ambiguously as a "crony of the L-rd, familiar of heaven" debating with G-d about His "ethics" and as "an ever-querulous child" provoking a quarrel with his Father, raging, becoming sarcastic and finally, after his tantrum, exhausted, resigning himself to his Father's superior authority. Arguments against G-d's injustice, the poet implies, partake of this ambiguity. On the one hand, with his G-d-given faculty of reasoning man sees G-d's injustice striking at the heart of his belief and challenging the foundation of his traditional morality; on the other hand, with the same G-d-given faculty of reasoning, he is aware of the great mystery of the universe and G-d's impenetrable infinitude and realizes he must consider himself a child, with limited mind, addressing "infant arguments to G-d."

146:8 Familiar of heaven

--Because of his "conversations" with G-d.

146:11 Berditchev

--A city in Russia where Rabbi Levi Yitzchok lived.

146:13 Rebono Shel Olam

--Master of the Universe.

146:27 Beholding him free, the knave that earned the
thong.

--The one who deserves punishment goes free and Israel is flogged instead.

146:29 The moon grinned . . .

--The refrain emphasizes the seeming indifference of the natural world to human suffering and to the contradiction between belief in G-d and evil. It serves also as an implied further indictment of G-d by the rabbi. The childish tone is in keeping with the "querulous child" image of the second half of the poem. See above.

147:5 Why hast thou scattered him . . .

--The antecedent of "him" is "Israel" (146:28), symbolic personification of the Jews.

147:9 The lion of Judah

--Jacob calls his son Judah a lion (Genesis 49:9).

Cf. above 128:10.

147:19-22 Where . . . Messiah . . . wine . . . shofar
. . . his ass's one good hoof?

--According to Jewish tradition the Messiah will arrive on an ass (Zechariah 9:9, cf. above 45:22) and "on that day a great shofar (ram's horn) shall be sounded" (Isaiah 27:13). In addition a great feast will be prepared for the righteous at which wine, "aged since the six days of creation," will be served. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok sarcastically suggests the Messiah tarries because his ass is crippled! The shofar is therefore unused and the precious wine has turned sour.

148:1 PLUMAGED PROXY

--Before the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) there is a custom among Jews to take a live rooster and circle it about the head while reciting penitential prayers. The rooster is then slaughtered, cooked and fed to the poor (see SS 21/8). The custom is a symbolic enactment of the scapegoat ritual (Leviticus 16:21-22), but in the popular mind the fowl is a substitute ("proxy") for the individual whose fate is to die for his sins.

The poet interprets the custom, in this mock ode to the rooster, with ironic humour.

148:3-4 a beard / Pluck little feathers . . .

--The bearded ritual slaughterer (shochet) plucks little feathers from the neck of the fowl to prepare it for slaughter.

148:5-6 a thumb / Press down your gullet . . .

--After drawing a sharp blade across the neck of a fowl to sever the trachea and esophagus, the ritual slaughterer presses his thumb upon the epiglottis. This bares the two tubes and ascertains that they have indeed been severed.

148:23 DANCE CHASSIDIC

--Combining religious images and words of action the poet portrays a dance of the mystic sect of Hasidim.

148:28 pendules

--See above 31:27.

149:10 yahrzeit lamps

--Long-burning candles in glass jars lit on the anniversary of the death of parents.

149:20 PREACHER

--Itinerant preachers were part of shtetl life. Their popularity depended upon the appeal of their parables, the vividness of their descriptions of heaven and hell, and their witty interpretations of holy writ. The poet describes the preachers with a touch of irony.

149:21 midrash

--Rabbinical commentary on the Bible containing exegesis, parables and inspirational messages.

150:21 SCRIBE

--Torah Scrolls, parchments upon which are written the Pentateuch (see SS title), are penned by pious scribes who devote themselves to this saintly task by proper ablutions and abstinence from profane matters.

In the poem the scribe is depicted metaphorically in terms of the holy objects with which he is associated.

150:25 Sheen of Shadd--

--In a triple pun this phrase alludes to 1) Shin, the penultimate letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the initial letter of G-d's name, Shadd--, embossed upon the phylacteries; 2) the gleam (sheen) of divinity surrounding the pious scribe; and 3) the phylacteries which are usually dyed a glossy black. All of the allusions

become descriptive symbols of the scribe and metaphors of his piety.

151:1 pendules

--See above 31:27.

151:11 Let no hair . . . unhallow it.

--A hair falling on the wet ink of the tetragrammaton would smudge the letters and render the holy name profane.

151:12 imp alcoved in a fingernail

--Jewish tradition maintains demons hide in the fingernails. Cf. SS 136/189.

151:17-18 raised three pentateuchs / Aloft

--The Torah scroll is raised for all the congregation to see after it is read in the synagogue. (Cf. SS 33/28.) A scribe, who in his lifetime writes an average of three scrolls, will see three of his masterpieces raised in the synagogue "to be the praise of men." See SS 33/28.

151:21 He will descend unto that other ark

--A coffin is called aron in Hebrew. The same word is used for the ark into which the Torah scroll is placed in the synagogue. Cf. 15:32.

151:23 the slimy exegetes

--Continuing the metaphor of the scribe's brow as the margin of a parchment scroll (151:7), the poet imagines the earthworms in his grave as marginal notes of "slimy exegetes."

151:25-26 true essence . . . as a lark will settle on
G-d's wrist.

--The image is taken from the inscription ceremony (siyum hasefer) observed as a scribe completes the writing of a Torah scroll. In this ceremony, members of the congregation are given an opportunity to participate symbolically in the scribe's holy work by individually placing their hands on his wrist as he letters the final words of the Torah scroll. G-d is imagined as writing a Torah. The scribe's soul, his "true essence, joyous as a lark, / will settle on G-d's wrist" in the lettering of the final words as a reward for pious devotion. (An image of falconry, which this resembles, would be misplaced.)

152:1 SACRED ENOUGH YOU ARE

--The poet considers his beloved sacred to him. (In a Jewish marriage ceremony love and sanctity are indeed equated metaphorically; the groom "hallows" the bride. See above 132:26.) Praising his beloved, says the poet,

17
would be as redundant as adding sanctity to that which is already holy. The image involves phylacteries, which are worn to sanctify daily living. They are not worn on the Sabbath for the day itself is sufficiently holy (Talmud Menahot 36b).

152:9 SONNETS SEMITIC

--In the first sonnet the poet imagines the romantic adventures he would have undertaken in the past for his loved one and then contrasts it ironically with the grim humiliation he more likely would have had to endure in those times as a Jew. But he would have done that too for his beloved!

152:24 These northern stars . . .

--In the second sonnet the poet shares a Zionist dream of young love in Israel with his beloved.

153:10 Mazel Tov

--Good luck, or congratulations, in Hebrew.

153:11 Upon a time there lived . . .

--The third sonnet is a whimsical fairy tale of elfin romance.

153:15 shadchen

--Matchmaker. Cf. above 120:21.

153:25 I shall not bear . . .

--In the fourth sonnet the poet contemplates what he will leave to his beloved (or wife) at his death--mainly precious holy items. It is interesting to note that literary creations are not among the items!

153:26 our common door

--The grave.

153:29-30 The prayer shawl . . . blessing Israel with a man.

--At thirteen (bar mitzvah) a Jewish lad is considered a man and dons prayer shawl and phylacteries.

153:33 And Talmud huge, once shield from heathen stones.

--Talmudic volumes are generally very large in size to accommodate essential commentaries on the page of text. They therefore serve many a youngster as protection against a mischievous pelting. The metaphoric implication of spiritual protection is obvious.

154:4 a psalter book

--It was customary for women to say special prayers

(tehinot) on the Sabbath at home or in the synagogue.

Cf. below 210:1.

154:5 in perruque

--Pious women cover their hair with a perruque. See above 38:6, SS 96/125.

154:6 Now we will suffer . . .

--The theme of assimilation found in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" (113:28) is given sharply satiric expression in this (fifth) sonnet. No matter how hard the Jew tries to acculturate he is not accepted.

154:8 munch ham and guzzle milk

--Eating milk and meat together is forbidden to Jews (derived from Exodus 23:19) as is ham (Leviticus 11:7).

154:9 And this on hallowed fast-days.

--There are several fast-days, including the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:26), on which eating and drinking is forbidden. Eating forbidden foods on those days compounds one's transgression.

154:20 FOR THE LEADER - WITH STRING MUSIC

--A collection of nursery rhyme songs with Jewish content. (See Introduction.) The title is taken from

Psalm 61 which was presumably sung to music.

154:21 SONG OF TOYS AND TRINKETS

--Expressing the strong emphasis on learning, even in childhood, in Jewish tradition. See Patai, The Jewish Mind, pp. 502 ff, pp. 509-524.

155:3 pendules eight

--Each of the fringes on the four corners of a prayer shawl consists of eight threads. Cf. above 31:27, 148:28.

155:5 grager

--Noisemaker used on Purim during the reading of the Scroll of Esther. See above 41:7.

155:7 tallis

--Prayer shawl. Cf. above 133:1.

155:9-10 palm leaf and / Citron

--Used in a religious ritual on the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:40). Cf. SS 37/34.

155:13 zaddik

--Saint.

155:19 bam-bim-bim

--Hassidic melodies without words, with slow rhythm,
are sung with these sounds.

155:23 eh-beh-meh

--Hebrew consonants with vowel sounds as they are read
in primers.

155:27 ai-ai-ai

--Hassidic melodies without words, with lively rhythm,
are sung with these sounds.

156:2 oi. . . weh

--Yiddish interjection of sorrow.

156:3 SONG TO BE SUNG AT DAWN

--A Jewish version of "Hey Diddle Diddle" in which the
poet introduces the first prayer of the morning, Modeh
Ani (156:18). Modeh Ani is also the first prayer a
Jewish child learns.

156:14 MARKET SONG

--A Jewish version of "To Market to Market to Buy a Fat
Pig." A bird is substituted for the forbidden animal!

157:25 HEIRLOOM

--The poet describes his inheritance from his father.

Cf. Sonnet iv 153:25.

157:28 yahrzeit

--"Literally anniversary. It is customary to inscribe the date of the passing of an ancestor on the fly leaf of some sacred book. Special prayers are said on that anniversary date" (Klein's own commentary on this poem, Klein Symposium, p. 5).

158:1 Baal Shem Tov

--Israel Baal Shem Tov, legendary saint and miracle worker, founder of Hassidism. He left a heritage of story telling which has become part of the tradition of Hassidism. See SS 96/125.

158:5-8 though no pictures on them . . .

--"Hebrew prayer books are never illustrated. The only drawings that appear in the liturgy are the signs of the Zodiac illustrating the prayers for rain and fertility" (Klein's own commentary, Klein Symposium, p.5).

158:17 BESTIARY

--Modelled after medieval allegorical animal poems, in "Bestiary" Klein alludes exclusively to beasts

mentioned in the Bible and rabbinic commentaries.

158:31 The elusive unicorn . . .

--The Hebrew rem of Job 39:9-10 is translated "unicorn" by the King James Bible (following LXX). Modern translations render the word "wild ox."

158:33 The golden mice, the five:

--After being struck with a terrible plague, the Philistines sent the ark of the L-rd, which they had captured, back to the Israelites with a propitiatory offering of five golden mice (1 Samuel 6:4).

159:2 Gay peacock and glum ape.

--Among the exotic imports brought to Israel by Solomon's navy (1 Kings 10:22).

159:4 The fiery behemoth;

--The strange beast described in Job 40:15-24.

159:6 The crocodile's sneeze.

--Alluding to the Hebrew tanin, translated variously as crocodile, sea monster and dragon. It is found throughout the Bible, starting with Genesis 1:23.

159:7-9 He sees the lion eat / Straw . . .

--Cf. Isaiah 11:6-9, "The leopard shall lie down with the kid . . . and the young lion and the fatling together And the lion shall like the ox eat straw."

159:12 the roe and hind,

--Deuteronomy 14:5.

159:14 He holds the basilisk,

--Cf. Isaiah 11:8, "And the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den."

159:15 Pygarg and cockatrice,

--Pygarg is a kind of antelope mentioned in Deuteronomy 14:5, and cockatrice is the basilisk of Isaiah 11:8.

159:20 The beast Nebuchadnezzar.

--"This wicked king is reputed to have ended his days as a grass-eating animal" (Klein's own comments, Klein Symposium, p. 4). The tradition is rabbinic (Shemot Rabbah 8:2).

159:22 O, when they laved my uncle's limbs

See above 17:28, 39:18.

160:7 GIFT

--A mother's traditional gift of an embroidered bag to her son for his phylacteries. It symbolizes her expectations of her son's enduring religious commitment.

160:12 tfillin

--Phylacteries.

160:15 His name, and his father's name.

--For religious purposes a Jew is called, in accordance with biblical precedent (Numbers 13:4-15 et. pass.) by his Hebrew praenomen, the added phrase "son of," and the Hebrew praenomen of his father.

160:23 OF SUNDRY FOLK

--Poetic expressions of Jewish folk humour in nursery rhyme style, but there are also allusions to some of the serious themes in Jewish literature.

160:24 INTO THE TOWN OF CHELM

--The Jewish citizens of Chelm, a city in Poland, had a reputation of being fools. Their amazing ingenuity in justifying their foolish opinions has been a source of much folk humour. See S. Simon, The Wise Men of Chelm (New York: Behrman House, 1941).

161:21 JONAH KATZ

--The saint pretending to be a fool is a frequent character in Hassidic stories. He is especially prominent in the works of Elie Wiesel. Cf. below 164:14.

162:13 BANDIT; 162:20 A DEED OF DARING; 163:1 BIOGRAPHY

--Poetic variations on traditional Yiddish humour. "Bandit" involves the typical "schlemiel," a ne'er do well type of character found in much Yiddish literature.

See Ruth R. Wisse, The Schlemiel as Modern Hero (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

163:12 DOCTOR DWARF

--Another fairy-tale whimsy. Cf. above 153:11.

163:23-24 almond . . . raisin

--The shtetl's substitute for candies and chocolates.

164:13 OF KINGS AND BEGGARS

--Simultaneously a literal translation of an alliterative Yiddish title (Vegen Kenigen un Kabzonim) and a parody of Lewis Carroll's phrase "of cabbages and kings" ("The Walrus and the Carpenter").

164:14 BALLAD OF THE DANCING BEAR

--A poor Jewish water-carrier, Mottel, or Motka, is

forced to dance for the despotic Pan Stanislas to celebrate the lord's expulsion of the Jews from his hamlet. He dances so well that the evil Pan and all the onlookers get up to dance with him, even the lord's bed-ridden daughter, Paulinka. Motka is ambiguously the town fool, blithely unconcerned about the future, and the "hidden saint" prevalent in Hassidic stories. (Cf. above 161:21.) The theme of salvation at the last moment from an unlikely source is characteristic of biblical narrative and of Jewish folk tales. Rhyming couplets set the mood of the terrified Jews with vividness and economy and tell the tale of the dance with a pulsating rhythm.

164:5 Pan

--Sir or Esquire (Polish).

164:22 chalos

--Special enriched breads baked for the Sabbath.

170:12 The iotas of G-d's name.

--G-d's name is usually abbreviated in prayerbooks to two yods. Yod is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet as iota is of the Greek. See SS 98/127.

170:15 tfillin

--Phylacteries.

170:17 Tzizith

--Fringes or pendules. See above 31:27.

173:21 BALLAD FOR UNFORTUNATE ONES

--A poetic rendition of the "days of the Messiah" in Isaiah 35:5-6, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame man leap as a hart; and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

See also Zechariah 9:9 that Messiah will arrive riding on an ass or a colt.

174:30 KING ELIMELECH

--A whimsical retelling of the legend of King Solomon who was deposed by Asmodeus and became a commoner. (See below "In Re Solomon Warshawer" 234:21.) Klein imagines Solomon becoming a Jewish version of "Old King Cole" without fiddlers and more of a "schlemiel." Elimelech, a common Hebrew name, means "My G-d is King."

176:1 KING DALFIN

--A Tom Thumb who is also the King of Hearts.

177:1 WANDERING BEGGAR

--Again the mystic theme of the ambiguous "hidden saint."
See above 164:14

177:29 The turbulent Sambation?

--A legendary river separating the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel from civilization. All week its turbulence causes great stones to be thrown into the air; only on the Sabbath does it rest. (Cf. SS 37/35.)

178:1 OF HOLY VESSELS

--A literal translation of Klei kodesh, an idiomatic Yiddish-Hebrew term for religious functionaries. The metaphoric term is derived from the many holy vessels used in the sanctuary described in the Bible (Exodus 25-28). In the following poems functionaries are caricatured.

178:2 BAAL SHEM TOV

--Israel Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Hassidic movement, saint and miracle worker, was a teacher's assistant (belfer, SS 76/95 "Chatzkel Belfer") in his early years. He is portrayed as a fairy tale character who loves to play with children. In content this poem is a nursery rhyme, but the syntax is too sophisticated to match the childlike fantasy of its images.

178:25 ELIJAH

--The biblical prophet and herald of Messiah is portrayed as a Pied Piper type of teacher's assistant (belfer).

There is a touch of irony in this poem (and the previous one), for the Hebrew teachers in Klein's day were known for their severity and cruelty.

179:12-13 Aleph . . . Tauph

--The first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet respectively.

179:29 CANTOR

--Cantors are traditionally supposed to swallow raw eggs to improve their voices. This practice is the source of much Yiddish folk humour.

180:31 kdusha

--Part of the Sabbath and Holy Day synagogue service during which cantors traditionally display their vocal talents.

180:32 Mizrach

--The east wall of the synagogue where the notables sit.

181:1 SCHOLAR

--A goat eats a page of the Talmud and becomes a "scholar." Animal and pedant are humorously merged in a gentle satire on the latter.

181:4 gemara

--The Talmud.

181:9 rashi script

--See above 118:26.

181:22 mishna

--The basic element of the Talmud.

181:28-29 A scholar out of / Babylon!

--Babylon traditionally produced great talmudic scholars (Talmud, Baba Kama 117a). Among them were Hillel and Kahana. See above 112:30.

182:1 THE VENERABLE BEE

--The honey bee is seen in the poet's imagination as a synagogue beadle (shamash, in Hebrew) performing his duties. They include chanting, dusting the synagogue furniture, reading the Torah Scroll, donning phylacteries, offering the spice box to worshippers after the Sabbath and reciting the benediction over the wine Friday evening. All are translated into pastoral metaphors. The title is a play on the words bee, beadle and Venerable Bede (a seventh century Anglo-Saxon saint).

182:2 shamash

--Beadle.

182:20 besomim

--spices.

182:24 Kiddush

--A prayer ushering in the Sabbath. It is recited over a cup of wine in the synagogue by the beadle and at home by the head of the house. Cf. above 142:9.

182:30 REV OWL

--Rev is here a variation of Reb, an appellation of respect used when referring to elders by their first names. (Cf. above 28:18.) The owl, in this nursery rhyme, is the "rabbi" of the forest. Wearing a fur-trimmed hat ("shtreimel") donned by the pious on the Sabbath, he adjudicates civil and ritual matters.

183:9 And then tears gizzards . . .

--Certain diseases in the entrails of fowl (and animals) render them unfit, or not kosher, for consumption. On opening a bird a housewife looks for abnormal entrails which she brings to the rabbi for inspection.

186:1-208:18 THE HITLERIAD

--In obvious imitation of Pope's The Dunciad, Klein's 761 lines in various verse forms include an ode to the Muse, sarcastic references to specific events and individuals, and a final prophecy. However, whereas Pope forecasts "Chaos, and eternal Night," with Dulness reigning supreme, Klein foresees a "cloudless sky," with "the godly reign" and "mankind truly purged" (207).

The poem is not one of Klein's more successful works. Published in 1944, it must have been part of Klein's war effort. He doubtless felt he could serve best with his pen, devastating the Nazis and their leaders with the barbs of satire. But the evil of the Holocaust was too grave and too overwhelming to the imagination to be disposed of by caricature. Klein, it seems, was overly optimistic about his own abilities to compose a satire equal to Hitler's deeds. He also did not realize at the time the magnitude or extent of the destruction wrought by the Nazis. His "Elegy" (290:1) and portions of the Exodus chapter (30-36/24-33), published later, after the war, are more "objectively correlative" to the tragedy of the Hitler era. As Gretl Fischer says, "Satire cannot do without an element of the ridiculous, and the activities of the Nazi leaders defy laughter no matter how bitter " (In Search of Jerusalem, p. 157). The Hitleriad was, therefore, a heroic literary effort doomed to failure.

210:1 THE PSALTER OF AVRAM HAKTANI

--Avram Haktani is a literal rendering in Hebrew of Abraham Klein. Klein in Yiddish or German means small. Following a talmudic precedent (Sanhedrin 11a) rabbinic scholars append the word hakatan, "the humble" to their names in compositions and responsa as a gesture of modesty. More idiomatically, then, the Hebrew would be translated "Abraham the Humble."

Though patterned after the biblical Psalms, the poems of the Psalter exhibit the feelings and tone of the intensely personal devotions found in Yiddish psalters (tehinot) recited especially by women on the Sabbath and Holy Days. (Cf. above 154:4, also Introduction.) The titles are taken from the titles of Psalms and are modified to apply to the intense emotions of the poet "Abraham " which range from the joy of marriage and of communion with nature and with G-d to the anguish of religious doubt and fear of madness.

210:2 PSALM I: PSALM OF ABRAHAM, WHEN HE HEARKENED
TO A VOICE, AND THERE WAS NONE

--The poet seeks divine revelation to resolve his anxious doubts about belief, but he finds only silence. See 261:5.

210:4 Since prophecy has vanished out of Israel,

--Alluding to the Jewish tradition that prophecy ceased in the 5th century BCE with Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, who were the last of the prophets (Talmud, Sotah 48b).

210:6 Urim and Thummim

--A divine oracle associated with the breast plate of the High Priest (Exodus 28:30, 1 Samuel 28:6, Talmud, Yoma 13b).

210:7 Nor even a witch, foretelling, at En-dor,--

--Alluding to the biblical incident of King Saul, sore-pressed in his war against the Philistines, consulting a witch. The prophet Samuel is no longer living to tell Saul the word of G-d as in the past. In desperation, he approaches a witch at En-dor to raise Samuel's soul (1 Samuel 28:7-25; above 136:6). Confused and frantically searching for belief, the poet avers he too would go to such a witch if she could help him resolve his doubt. The irony of the king of Israel who drove the witches from the land (1 Samuel 28:9) consulting one himself is paralleled by the irony of the poet searching for belief through witchcraft, "an abomination unto the L-rd" (Deuteronomy 18:10-14). The ironies of King and poet dramatize their common frantic desperation.

210:10 O, these are the days of scorpions and of whips

--Alluding to the reply of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, when the people asked for relief from heavy taxes and conscription: "My father chastened you with whips, but I will chasten you with scorpions" (I King 12:11). The image here represents attacks against religion which leave the faithful in anguish, or the Holocaust.

210:11 When all the seers have had their eyes put out,

--Alluding to Samson whose eyes were put out by the Philistines (Judges 16:21).

210:12 And all the prophets burned upon the lips!

--Isaiah was burned upon the lips with a glowing coal by an angel (Isaiah 6:6-7). The poet turns the biblical image of purification into an image of inability to speak. The scoffers or oppressors speak convincingly but the holy ones are silent.

210:17 PSALM II: MASCHIL OF ABRAHAM: A PRAYER WHEN
HE WAS IN THE CAVE

--The title is taken from Psalm 142:1 which alludes to an incident recorded in the Bible. David, fleeing from Saul who seeks his life, takes refuge in a cave. Saul, unaware of David's presence, enters the cave. David could kill him but cuts off the corner of his garment

instead. To his men, surprised by this forbearance, David explains he would rather rely on G-d to avenge the wrong he suffers from Saul. The poet, previously one of the "scoffers," but now seeking faith, feels he cannot defend himself against his former peers. Like David, he too relies upon G-d to help him: "Do Thou the deed, say Thou the word." See Introduction.

The "Psalm" is an apology for religious poetry. In the first half of the poem the poet describes his previous scoffing attitude with a bantering satire. In the second half, with poignancy and heavy emotion, he describes his inability to articulate his present religious beliefs.

210:27 Who in his Zion lay at ease

--Alluding to Amos's ominous words to the unfaithful, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion" (6:1).

210:34 A writer of psalms, a liturgist;

--Cf. SS 81/102, 136/189.

211:1 A babbling pious woman,

--Cf. above 210:1. The Psalter is modelled after tehinot, private devotions recited especially by women.

211:20 The simple I am that I am.

--The simple name by which G-d identified Himself to the people of Israel (Exodus 3:14).

211:24 Do justify my ways to them.

--An ironic reversal of traditional theodicy which is to justify the ways of G-d to men.

211:25 PSALM III: A PSALM OF ABRAHAM WHEN HE WAS SORE
PRESSED

--It is better to be a beast of burden than a human bearing the burden of mental anguish. Cf. Ecclesiastes 1:18, "For in much wisdom is much vexation; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

212:1 PSALM IV: A PSALM OF ABRAHAM, TOUCHING HIS
GREEN PASTURES

--A parody of Psalm 23 with an antiwar theme.

212:15 PSALM V: A SONG OF DEGREES

--Psalms 120-134 are called Songs of Degrees. The poet ironically praises man's "wonderful" ingenuity in learning how to make weapons from the beasts. The ape's "flinging the cocoafruit," becomes a combined poetic image and imagined historical origin of ballistics; the elephants tusk of a sword; the porcupine of a bow

and arrow; the tortoise of armored vehicles; the odor of the skunk of gas, and the eagle "dropping volcanic rock" of airborne bombs, the "volcanic" suggesting explosive fire. And man is not too proud to learn from lower creatures this "beastly" knowledge!

213:5 PSALM VI A PSALM OF ABRAHAM, CONCERNING THAT WHICH HE BEHELD UPON THE HEAVENLY SCARP

--An impassioned cry against the horrors of the Holocaust presented in the form and style of the celestial visions of Isaiah (6:1-13) and Ezekiel (1:1-3:15).

213:15 It sang forth blasphemy against the L-rd.

But only pointed, . . . / Down to earth, . . .

--The "blasphemy" consists of "thinking" how G-d can allow earth's "unspeakable horde" to perpetrate "evil" while singing praises to Him.

214:3 Summoned the angels of Sodom down to earth.

--G-d could not abide the evil of Sodom and Gomorrah and sent two angels to destroy them (Genesis 18:20-22, 19:1-28). In his vision the poet sees G-d summoning the same angels to destroy Nazi Germany.

214:4 PSALM VII: FOR THE CHIEF PHYSICIAN

--The title is a humorous modification of "To the Chief Musician," the dedicatory title of many biblical Psalms.

The image of hunting is used to describe the white blood corpuscles ("white-robed hunters") seeking out and killing harmful microbes and viruses. Cf. 260:17, "A prowler in the mansion of my blood."

214:12 PSALM VIII: PSALM OF THE FRUITFUL FIELD

--A pastoral. The celestial images suggest the beauty of Nature is a heavenly gift to mortals, sweetening life and giving a foretaste of paradise. Cf. "Diary of Abraham Segal, Poet," 88:16-30, "Psalm 172," 260:2-14, "Autobiographical," 272:31-37, 273:1-4.

214:13-16 A field in sunshine is a field

On which G-d's signature is sealed;

When clouds above the meadows go,

The heart knows peace; the birds fly low.

--The field is imagined to be a literary creation and sunshine the heavenly seal and signature of the author, G-d. Even when "clouds above the meadows go," and the seal and signature are obscured, G-d sends down other symbolic representations of heaven--celestial "birds fly low." The poetic images suggest persistent manifestations of heaven on earth.

214:17 O field at dusk! O field at dawn!

--The images of persistent manifestations of heaven on

earth through symbolic representation (above 214:13-16) is extended to "dusk" and "dawn." At these two times sunshine, the chief manifestation of heaven, is absent. Nevertheless other manifestations are present: at dusk "golden fireflies" in the field, make it resemble "starry skies"; at dawn "dewdrops" appear on the field like gems on "the sun's laced hem." In the latter metaphor the fainter light of the dawn is depicted as an outer garment of the sun. Its hem, dragging on the ground of the field, is full of gleaming gems.

215:16 PSALM IX: A PSALM, TO BE PRESERVED AGAINST TWO
WICKED WORDS

--This prayer, to be spared the suffering of poverty and the corruption of riches, is based on the Talmudic statement that the people of Israel (and all peoples) cannot endure too much prosperity or too much want (Ta'anit 23a). The poem closes with hope for a classless society.

216:5 PSALM X: LAMED VAV: A PSALM TO UTTER IN MEMORY
OF GREAT GOODNESS

--Lamed vav are two Hebrew letters with a numerical value of thirty-six. (Hebrew letters are also used as cardinal numbers.) The Talmud states that G-d sustains the world for the sake of thirty-six righteous men living in every

generation (Sukkah 45a). No one knows who these righteous men, called "lamed vavniks" in Yiddish, are. There is however a folk tradition that one of their characteristics is childlessness and when one of them dies it becomes known in the neighborhood, somehow, "that he was one of the Thirty-six." Cf. SS 76/95 "Boris Trizachest"; also 100/129.

216:11 PSALM XI: A PSALM OF A MIGHTY HUNTER BEFORE THE
L-RD

--Another of Klein's playful nursery rhymes, with the schlemiel as hero. (Cf. above 163:11.)

The ironic title is taken from the phrase in the Bible describing Nimrod (Genesis 10:8).

216:15 Chatzkel the hunter

--Chatzkel is a diminutive of Ezekiel.

217:23 PSALM XII: TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN,
WHO PLAYED FOR THE DANCERS

--Many biblical Psalms begin with the phrase "To the Chief Musician." (Cf. above 214:4.) In this Psalm the poet satirizes the Talmudic dictum that one is obliged to bless the L-rd in encountering adversity as in encountering good fortune. The Talmud considers adversity part of G-d's divine plan in creation (Berakot 54a, 60b).

218:5 PSALM XIII: A SONG FOR WANDERERS

--Unlike the roving gypsy and sailor, the Jew sings no songs about his wandering. Beset by tragedy and sorrows, he cannot conceive of a Romantic ideal in endless exile. The songs the Jew sings are always of the "morrow" when his wandering will end and he will be home in the Land of Israel. The title is, obviously, ironic.

218:24 PSALM XIV: A PSALM FOR FIVE HOLY PILGRIMS,
YEA, SIX ON THE KING'S HIGHWAY

--The king's Highway is a road mentioned in the Bible (numbers 21:22) and the poet assumes it was used by pilgrims travelling to the Temple in Jerusalem. The poem, based on the passage in Psalms 51:18-19, "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: in burnt offering hast thou no delight; a broken and a contrite heart O G-d, wilt thou not despise," describes pilgrims bringing various gifts to the Temple in Jerusalem. The one bringing nothing but "his heart for pawning," is praised.

219:13 PSALM XV: A PSALM OF ABRAHAM, TOUCHING THE CROWN
WITH WHICH HE WAS CROWNED ON THE DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS

--The title is taken from a phrase in Song of Songs (3:11) referring to the nuptials of King Solomon. "Psalms XV-XX" allude to various rituals and customs observed at

a Jewish wedding. The "old Rabbi" in this "Psalm" is the groom's (poet's) religious teacher who, as is the custom, has been invited to conduct his student's wedding ceremony.

Klein may be imagining his own marriage to Bessie Koslov, his highschool sweetheart. The "Old Rabbi," then, would be Rabbi Simcha Garber (Palnick, "Klein," Cap. 1, p. 3). Klein was married in 1935; the poem was published in 1932.

219:19 the fringed talismanic vest

--In addition to the fringed prayer shawl (talis, above 133:1) worn during prayers, pious Jews wear a special vest with fringes on the four corners, called talis kattan (little prayer shawl), under their shirts. For Klein, this practice began at thirteen, the age of Bar Mitzvah, when a Jewish youngster is considered to be a man. The poet recalls the first time his teacher put the talis kattan on him and, punning on the Hebrew, describes the experience as "talis manic," suggesting the magic of transformation from boy to man as well as an association with the mysterious power of religion.

219:22 Who solved each letter's mystic hook

--According to Jewish Mysticism the secrets of existence are contained in the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

(See Gershom Scholem, Kabbalah, New York: Quadrangle, The New York Times Book Company, 1974, pp. 23-26 et pass.) Rabbi Akiba, a second century Talmudic scholar (above 113:7), derived "heaps and heaps" of divine laws from the hooks appearing on the top of Hebrew letters (Talmud, Menahot 29b). The poet compared his scholarly teacher to Rabbi Akiba.

219:24 kiddush wine

--See above 142:9.

220:1 PSALM XVI TO THE CHIEF SCRIBE A PSALM OF ABRAHAM,
IN THE DAY OF THE GLADNESS OF HIS HEART

--The "Psalm" is a set of instructions to the scribe who writes the Hebrew marriage contract. The parchment document is customarily illuminated ("the . . . brush") and inscribed with the names of the bride and groom in the final lines, ("your quill"). (See David Davidovitch, The Ketuba; Hebrew Marriage Contracts through the Ages, Tel Aviv: E. Lewin - Epstein Publishing Company, 1968.) Though the document deals with legal matters the poet sees it as a contract "That love will never wander hence."

The words "in the day of gladness of his heart," taken from Song of Songs (3:11), are a continuation of the biblical phrase in the title of the previous "Psalms."

220:13 the square letter

--Hebrew characters are mainly square in shape.

220:16 PSALM XVII: FOR THE BRIDEGROOM COMING OUT OF
HIS CHAMBER, A SONG.

--The title is taken from Psalms (19:5-6), "In them (the heavens) hath he set a tent for the sun, which is a bridegroom coming out of his chamber." The poet interprets some of the customs of the Jewish wedding as symbols of a commitment to love. Dwelling on themes of ascetic simplicity he suggests the virginal purity of the bride and the unaffected sincerity of his love.

220:18 The young men with the sparse beards laud the
bride;

--Rabbinical seminary students fulfilling the religious obligation to praise a bride (Talmud, Ketubot 17a).

220:19-25 "She puts no rouges to her lips . . .
Of henna on her finger-nails at all;"

--A poetically embellished translation of a quotation from an address delivered at the ordination of rabbis in the fourth century (C.E.) and recorded in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 14a). The highly metaphoric description of saintliness is used in a literal sense by the poet to describe the physical beauty of the bride. Allusion to

the original context adds a spiritual characteristic to the description.

220:26-28 The long haired virgins . . .

. . . around the bridegroom wheel,

. . . all the seven days love

--During a traditional ceremony the bride and her bridesmaids make seven circuits around the groom to signify eternal love, seven being the number of ever recurring days of the week.

220:31 He breaks the wineglass underneath his heel.

--Before the conclusion of the wedding ceremony it is customary for the groom to break a wineglass, a gesture which the poet interprets as "evidence" of a commitment to "serve" eternal love. The groom shows he disdains the material world and his selfish interests, symbolized by the wineglass, to devote himself to "eternal love."

221:1 PSALM XVIII: FOR THE BRIDE, A SONG, TO BE SUNG
BY VIRGINS

--A continuation of the nuptial theme.

221:3-4 She has laved her body in living water. She
Has touched no food all day.

--Before the wedding Jewish brides traditionally immerse

themselves in a ritual font (mikveh) of rain or spring water to symbolize purity and to express the human link to "Mother Earth." Furthermore, both bride and groom fast on the day of their wedding (until the ceremony), observing a personal "Day of Atonement" as a symbol of a fresh beginning and a new life together.

221:11 PSALM XIX: A BENEDICTION

--The expression of the benediction at a religious ceremony in pastoral images is consistent with the poet's notion of the pastoral's link with heaven (above 214:13).

221:27 PSALM XX: A PSALM OF ABRAHAM, WHICH HE MADE AT THE FEAST

--R. Patai observes the quantity and richness of Jewish food is due to historical and traditional factors:

1) As a result of dire poverty Jewish mothers were concerned with feeding their children. "The children were given as much food as they wanted and, if they did not want to eat, efforts were made to arouse their appetite by giving them what they liked."

2) Guests who would drop in on Sabbaths and holidays were "honored" with food. "Thus the earliest memories a child retained from the Sabbath in his parental home were those of a succession of fine, ample and leisurely meals."

3) "The Jewish religion places extraordinary emphasis on food observances Since every morsel of food and every drop of drink a Jew ingests is regulated by his religious law, there is no other aspect of that law of which he would be reminded so frequently as the food prescriptions. Whenever the Jew eats or drinks anything, he either obeys or disobeys a religious commandment."

Factors such as these, he concludes, have made eating "a much more significant act in the life of the Jews than it was in that of the non Jews" (The Jewish Mind, pp. 447-53).

222:17 PSALM XXI: A BENEDICTION FOR THE MOON

--See above 38:1, 49:1. "Each after his own fashion" blesses the moon for its poetic image.

The elder nostalgically sees in it "a rumour" of the face of the beautiful "Shunamite" or "Shulamite" about whom Solomon wrote The Song of Songs. (See above 20:15.) The young lover sees it as a mirror reflecting his love. For the warrior it is David's buckler (above 49:5) inspiring heroism, for the scholar a lamp for learning, and for the merchant a gold coin. For the sailor the moon is a mysterious force that pulls the oceans like fabric from a loom on which it is being woven; while the ships moving back and forth on them act like shuttles. As the moon races across the skies the hunters

see it as a most desirable quarry, a "hind" (below 227:14) which, however, they will never catch. And finally, the poet concludes, all men must see the moon as "the seal of G-d / Impressed upon his open writ." Nature is like a document written by G-d testifying to His existence ("open writ") and the moon is G-d's round seal impressed upon it. (See above 214:14 for a similar image.)

223:1 PSALM XXII: A PRAYER OF ABRAHAM AGAINST MADNESS

--The poet first prays for health. If that is not granted and he is destined to suffer, he prays that G-d will spare his mind. And if that too is not granted he prays that G-d will mercifully take his life.

The title is taken from Psalm 34 composed when David had been captured by the Philistine King Abimelech. He feigns madness and the King sends him away (1 Samuel 21:11-16). See also Introduction.

223:11-12 Palsy the keepers of the house;

And of the strongmen take thy toll.

--The body is imagined as a house; "the keepers" are the hands which minister to the body's needs and "the strongmen" are the limbs which support it. The poet alludes to the house image used by Ecclesiastes (12:3), according to Talmudic interpretation, to describe deterioration of the hands and limbs in old age (Shabbat 152a).

The passage in Ecclesiastes reads: "On the day when the keeper of the house shall tremble, and the strongmen shall bow themselves . . . "

223:13 Break down the twigs; break down the boughs.

--Metaphors for paralysis or amputation of the hands and limbs, which are preferred to madness.

223:14 the golden bowl

--The brain and its receptacle, the skull. Another allusion to a metaphoric interpretation of Ecclesiastes by the Talmud (ibid.). See above 131:6.

224:1 PSALM XXIII: A PSALM OF JUSTICE, AND ITS SCALES

--Protesting the suffering of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked to G-d, the poet says he would enter heaven and break the scales "on which the heavenly justice is mis-weighed." In a world ruled by random chance, he avers with bitter sarcasm, the distribution of justice would be more equitable!

224:16 PSALM XXIV: SHIGGAION OF ABRAHAM WHICH HE SANG
UNTO THE L-RD

--The title is taken from Psalm 7 and describes the poet's yearning to know his G-d. In the end, however, realizing it is impossible, he satisfies himself with

simply knowing that G-d is there and listening. The calm humility of this "Psalm" contrasts sharply with the rash presumptuousness of the previous one. "Shiggaion," a term used in Psalms, is "a dithyrambic song of irregular structure and of impassioned character" (Psalms, ed. and trans. A. Cohen, London: The Soncino Press, 1968, p. 15).

224:19 with what name shall I call you?

--Cf. Exodus 3:13, "And Moses said unto G-d: 'Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel . . . and they shall say to me: What is his name? what shall I say unto them?'"

225:1 PSALM XXV: TO THE PROPHETS, MINOR AND MAJOR,

A PSALM OR SONG

--In the New Year season the media report the predictions of soothsayers stargazers and astrologers for the coming year. But there is no one, complains the poet, to explain "the folded present." The present is "folded" a) because we do not know the future consequences, the "unfolding" of our present actions, or b) because the meaning of existence, the "present," is hidden from us.

The ironic title alludes to the traditional division of the biblical prophets into the major and minor ones. Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are

major prophets; the rest are minor. "A Psalm or Song" is taken from Psalm 83, entitled "A Song, a Psalm of Asaph."

225:12 the hapax legomena

--Words found only once in the Bible.

225:20-21 that inspired peasant / That prophet,

--Amos, who described himself as "a herdsman, a dresser of sycamore trees" (7:14).

225:23 PSALM XXVI: TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN, A PSALM OF ISRAEL, TO BRING TO REMEMBRANCE

--Reading of the Psalmist who remembers Zion as he sits by the rivers of Babylon (Psalm 137:1) brings memories to the poet of past oppression and suffering of Jews by the rivers of many lands where they were exiles. He prays that G-d will gather the waters of these rivers, purify them as they evaporate into clouds and cause them to descend as rain upon the river of Israel, the Jordan. The waters, associated at first with memories of suffering, become, ironically, metaphors for a) a return of the dispersed people of Israel and b) an obliteration of painful memories as they evaporate into clouds and fall as rain into the Jordan. The title, "To Bring to Remembrance," is therefore ironic.

225:25-26 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down
we wept / When we remembered Zion.

--Psalm 137:1.

225:28 The alluvium of Nilus is still fat
with the tender little bones of our firstborn,

--Exodus 1:22, "And Pharoah charged all his people,
 saying: 'Every son that is born ye shall cast into the
 Nile . . .'"

225:29 And Tiber is still yellow like our badge.

--The Fourth Lateran Council (1214) decreed that Jews
 of both sexes must wear a "badge" of shame on their
 outer garments.

225:30-31 the Jews like bears / That danced . . . Vistula?

--Cf. 164:14 "Ballad of the Dancing Bear."

226:2 So many fires

--Autos de fé.

226:3 Forget the Rhine?

--The Jewish communities along the Rhine (Speyer, Worms,
 Mayence) were destroyed during the First Crusade (1096)
 and the inhabitants massacred. Cf. 50:8, "Murals for a
 House of G-d," 136:16, "Design for Medieval Tapestry."

226:6 the furnace of thy wrath!

--Cf. Psalms 21:10, "Thou shalt make them as a fiery furnace in the time of thine anger."

226:11 PSALM XXVII: A PSALM TO TEACH HUMILITY

--The exaggerated praise of the cock, its crowing, its appearance and especially its ability to anticipate the day, is a parody of one of the benedictions in the morning service, "Blessed art Thou O L-rd who hast given the cock intelligence to distinguish day from night" (Daily Prayer Book, ed. and trans. with notes by Philip Birnbaum, New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1949, p. 16). Cf. SS 137/190. However the poet concludes the poem on a serious personal note, lamenting his inability to comprehend the mystery of life and to express himself fully in his art. The rooster is thus placed in ironic contrast to the poet. Having been given "wit to know the movements of the turning day," symbol of daily life, it seems "to understand" the mystery of life and expresses itself passionately in its own crowing language! There is, therefore, also an ironic poetic re-interpretation of the benediction parodied at the beginning of the poem. The rooster may very well be a "prophet of sunrise, and foreteller of time"--if only the poets understood!

227:1 PSALM XXVIII: A PSALM OR PRAYER--PRAYING HIS
PORTION WITH BEASTS

--In contrast to "Psalm V: A Song of Degrees (212:15), where the animals serve as a bloodthirsty inspiration for weapons of war, here the beasts gently teach man fundamental principles of life. (Cf. previous "Psalm.") The theme is based on a Talmudic dictum that if the Law had not been revealed we could learn morality from various animals (Erubin 100b). Like the rabbis, the poet considers nature a religious and ethical metaphor.

227:8 Isaac sacrifice;

--Genesis 22:1-19. G-d commands Abraham to bring his son Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. Isaac goes willingly, says the poet, having learned to bare his throat for slaughter from the lamb. In the biblical account, Isaac is ultimately not sacrificed and Abraham substitutes a ram for his son. Both Isaac and the ram are symbols of martyrdom and self-sacrifice in Jewish tradition.

227:9-10 The dove returning to Noah's boat,
Sprigless, and with tearful eyes;

--Genesis 8:8-9. The dove's return exemplifies gratitude (Noah had saved it from the flood) and faithfulness (it fulfills its mission to report on the receding waters).

The "tearful eye" represents compassion--the bird may have seen the dead victims of the flood in its flight.

227:11 The ass instructing Balaam

--Numbers 22:28. The prophet Balaam, on his way to curse the people of Israel, is stopped by his ass who tells him a fiery angel, sword in hand, is blocking the path. The poet imagines a sequel to the incident: the beast, given human intelligence, initiates a "discourse of inspired minds." Many profound subjects, G-d, prophecy, morality, the relationship of beasts and humans, suggest themselves as topics of the "discourse."

227:13 David's lost and bleating lamb,

--Referring to David tending sheep when Samuel came to anoint him (1 Samuel 16:11).

There are many legends concerning David's solicitous care for his flocks, however, Klein may be confusing David with Moses about whom there is a specific legend regarding a "lost and bleating lamb." See Ginzberg, Legends, 2:301, 4:82.

227:14 And Solomon's fleet and lovely hinds;

--Song of Songs 2:7 and 3:5, "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field, that ye awaken not, nor stir up love, until it

please." The hinds are symbolic of love which, like these "fleet lovely" animals, once "awakened" and "stirred up" will not rest.

See also Proverbs 5:19, "A lovely hind, a graceful doe"

227:16 their mystic parables--

--The poet is certain that the animals know the mystery of life which their behaviour communicates in parable form. Cf. above 226:11.

227:17 Of food that desert ravens set,

--Ravens brought food for Elijah when he was in the desert awaiting the word of G-d (1 Kings 17:6). They symbolize the rewards of faith and reliance upon G-d.

227:18 And of the lion's honeyed fells.

--Samson found a honeycomb in the carcass of a lion he killed (Judges 14:8). The honey is symbolic of sweetness and strength.

227:20-21 Azazel, that dear goat,

Sent forth into the wilderness

--Leviticus 16:20-22. The scapegoat takes upon itself the sins of the people and is sent forth into the wilderness where it dies. In the poet's imagination the animal

understands its holy, though sad, purpose, nevertheless it goes on its mission with unquestioning dedication. The poet hopes to learn the holy purpose of his life and aspires to the scapegoat's unquestioning sense of dedication.

227:23 PSALM XXIX: TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN, A PSALM OF
THE BRATZLAVER, A PARABLE

--In the style of Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav (1772-1811), a Hassidic leader who left a heritage of mystic fables to his disciples, the poet tells of an aged king advising his son to live with joy despite the inevitability of predetermined destiny. The theme is found in Ecclesiastes. The philosopher-king believes:

That which hath been is that which shall be, and
that which hath been done is that which shall be
done, and there is nothing new under the sun (1:9),
nevertheless he advises:

Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy
wine with a merry heart, for G-d hath already
accepted thy words (9:7).

227:30 from his seventh rib

--A literal translation of a Yiddish expression which means "deep down" (in der zibeter rip).

228:2 The eager belfry waits to cluck its bells;

--Klein borrows Christian symbols frequently. Cf. above 11:10-11, 54:14.

228:11 PSALM XXX: TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN, A PSALM OF
THE BRATZLAVER, WHICH HE WROTE DOWN AS THE
STAMMERER SPOKE.

--One of the tales of Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav (above 227:33) called, "The Seven Beggars," tells of seven mendicants, one of them a stutterer, who come to entertain a bride and groom at their wedding with stories. The poet imagines the Rabbi of Bratzlav jotting his own thoughts down as the stutterer speaks. See Martin Buber, Tales of Rabbi Nahman (New York: Horizon Press, 1956), pp. 149-178.

229:1 TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN, A PSALM OF THE BRATZLAVER,
TOUCHING A GOOD GARDENER

--One of the stories in "The Seven Beggars" (above 228:11) involves a deaf man who enters a country conquered by an immoral cruel enemy. With the aid of friends he organizes an army to defeat the foe and brings back a good gardener to cultivate the land again. Blessings and good fortune then ensue. The poet retells the story in terza rima.

230:23 PSALM XXXII: A SONG THAT THE SHIPS OF JAFFA DID
SING IN THE NIGHT

--A romantic description of Holy Land products shipped from Jaffa, the main port for export before the State of Israel was created.

230:26 Figs, coronets of sweetness

--Dried figs are usually shipped strung on a cord in a circle resembling a crown.

230:27 citrons . . .

--An especially aromatic citrus (not to be confused with lemon) which is used for the Tabernacles festival. (See SS 37/34.) Since Jewish law requires the citron used on this festival to be without blemish, the fruit is packed carefully in individual boxes, "like perfume vials."

231:3 Bleeding golgothas of red pomegranates;

--Another example of Klein's free use of Christian imagery.

231:5-6 Torah scrolls . . . pray'r-shawls

--Torah scrolls are parchments upon which are written the Pentateuch. See above 150:2 and SS, title. Most Torah scrolls and prayer-shawls come from the Holy Land.

231:7 And palm-leaves shipped to the Uncomforted,

--For use on Palm Sunday. The "Uncomforted" are Christians, who continually mourn the death of their saviour.

231:8 candlesticks to light some Sabbath gloom.

--Jews are forbidden to light fires on the Sabbath (Exodus 35:3). Sabbath eve "gloom," therefore is dispelled only by Sabbath "candlesticks" lit before sundown. (The Sabbath and holidays begin at sundown of the previous day in Jewish tradition.)

231:9-10 And little sacks of holy earth to spread

Under a pious skull in a far tomb . . .

--Pious Jews purchase Holy Land earth to be spread under their heads at burial. It is a token of belief in Resurrection and a return to the Land of Israel in the days of the Messiah (Ganzfried, Code, Cap. 4, p. 103).

231:11 PSALM XXXIII: A PSALM, FORBIDDEN TO COHANIM

--Cohanim (priests), descendants of Aaron, are not permitted to enter a home in which there is a corpse. This biblical prohibition (Leviticus 21:1-6) is still observed today. Family tradition among the Jews identifies those who are cohanim.

The poet describes someone who comes home from the synagogue on Sabbath eve expecting the traditional candles, special white bread baked for the Sabbath, and a cup of wine on the table "the sacred Sabbath triple sign," (cf. above 142:9); instead he finds the bread unbroken, the cup unfilled and the candles on the floor, beside the corpse of a dear one. Death has come quietly and unexpectedly. The three sacred symbols of Sabbath rest and peace, the candles representing the soul of man created on the sixth day just before the Sabbath, a filled cup of wine signifying the soul's delight on the holy day of rest, and the special white bread representing the manna from heaven, of which a double portion fell for the Sabbath (Exodus 16:5), are converted into symbols of death. The wine and bread, emblems of life and joy, are untouched. The candles now indicate mourning. (See next note.)

The custom of setting wine, bread and candles on the table Sabbath eve is still observed by most Jewish families. In Klein's day it was virtually a universal practice.

231:23 The candles flicker on the floor.

--An allusion to the Jewish custom of placing a corpse on the floor of the house in which death occurred and setting candles beside it. (Ganzfried, Code, Cap. 4, p. 91.)

231:24 PSALM XXXIV: A PSALM OF ABRAHAM, TO BE WRITTEN
DOWN AND LEFT ON THE TOMB OF RASHI

--Rashi is a Hebrew acronym derived from the name of one of the most popular commentators of Bible and Talmud in Jewish tradition, Rabbi Shelomo Yizhaki (1040-1105).

The young, just beginning Bible study, learn his commentary (Mark Zborowsky and Elizabeth Herzog, Life is with People, New York: International Universities Press, 1955, p. 96). Rashi lived in Troyes, France and was a vintner by trade. During his lifetime the Jewish communities of the Rhine were destroyed and the inhabitants massacred (1096). Cf. above 50:9.

The poet uses the text of the Law as a metaphor for faith. In his youth the answers to questions of faith were as clear and unequivocal as the answers given by Rashi to difficulties in the text of the Law. But now that he is grown, educated and living through a war (the poem was published in 1940), he no longer can find answers to his questions of faith and yearns for a Rashi to interpret what is happening and restore his faith.

232:5 Simple, and for a child were they . . .

--Rashi's commentary is characterized by succinctness and simplicity.

232:6-8 Bringing into silent wooded script,

--The uninterpreted words of the Law are imagined to be silent trees in a forest; Rashi's commentaries birds which bring life and song to them.

232:18 old Gaul

--Rashi. See above 231:24.

232:19 Onkelus . . . Jonathan

--First century biblical translators (into Aramaic) and commentators.

232:25 Parshandatha

--A proper noun found in the Book of Esther (9:7).

Klein breaks up the name in a play of words to yield parshan, Hebrew for "interpreter," and datha, Aramaic for "of the Law."

232:26 the chapter of the week

--A portion of the Pentateuch is read in the synagogue every week of the year until the five books are completed. The text for biblical study in the Hebrew school is usually taken from the "chapter of the week."

233:2-5 for you who left no son to read

The prayer . . . / Intone . . .

A Kaddish:

--Rashi had only daughters and therefore left no one to recite the kaddish, a special prayer said by sons at synagogue services in memory of parents. See above 15:22, 119:9, SS 87/112.

233:9 PSALM XXXV: A PSALM OF ABRAHAM, WHICH HE MADE
BECAUSE OF FEAR IN THE NIGHT

--There is a doctrine in Jewish tradition that when a man retires at night his soul is transported to heaven to be spiritually refreshed, and when he awakens in the morning he is a new creature (Ganzfried, Code, Cap. 1, p. 3). The doctrine is reflected in the "Night Prayer" recited before bedtime. Various angels accompanying the soul to heaven are asked to guard the body against harm. The prayer and doctrine are alluded to by the poet in his description of the delightful dreams resulting from the journeys of his soul in heaven during the night. In the morning, "exiled from that land," the soul goes "back to the lumpy sack of skin."

The traditional Jewish "Night Prayer" reads;

In the name of the L-rd G-d of Israel, may Michael be at my right hand, and Gabriel at my left; before me Uriel; behind me Raphael; and above my bed the divine presence (Birnbaum, Prayerbook, p. 784).

234:11 PSALM XXXVI: A PSALM TOUCHING GENEALOGY

--The poet considers himself one with his ancestors who seem to continue to live through his body and mind.

(Cf. SS 30/24 for a similar image.)

234:16 Torah scrolls

--See above 231:5-6; also SS title.

234:20 A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH

--Jeremiah 31:15, "Thus hath said the L-rd; A voice is heard in Ramah, groaning, weeping and bitter lamentations; Rachel is weeping for her children"

The "voice" in the title is the poet's voice "groaning, weeping" and lamenting bitterly in the succeeding elegies for the tragedies of the Jews. See above Introduction.

234:21 IN RE SOLOMON WARSHAWER

--Solomon Warshawer, like Childe Harold (113:28), is an ageless mythical Jew, invented by Klein, who has wandered through many countries and worked at numerous trades while living through the eras of Jewish history. He now finds himself in Warsaw, in December, 1939, when the deportation of Polish Jews begins. Confronted by a hostile mob and interrogated by a German SS man, he tells his story in a cryptic, highly allusive way which his

tormentors do not understand. (They lack poetic sensibility.) Solomon Warshawer is also the immortal King Solomon. According to Jewish legend King Solomon was dethroned by a demon, Asmodeus (below 238:1). Solomon Warshawer, who is named after the ancient King Solomon and the great European center of Judaism, Warsaw, identifies his Nazi captors with the cohorts of Asmodeus.

The poem is written in the form of a deposition by an unsympathetic mythical witness.

234:33 Vercingetorix

--A commander of Gauls in the Gallic-Roman wars.

235:27 signet ring

--See below 238:1.

236:8 nalewkas

--"Polish for 'streets'--the slum district of Warsaw" (Klein's own commentary, Klein Symposium, p. 4).

236:11-21 One of the anthropophagi . . .

--Solomon Warshawer identifies himself primarily in ethical terms: a) conscience of the nations, b) a pleader for reason as a guiding principle, (Cf. Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew, p. 125, "The Jew has a marked inclination to believe that the worst difficulties may

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be resolved by reason.") and finally, among those oppressing him, who are likened to beasts, c) he is a human being.

236:18 The eldest elder of Zion . . .

--An allusion to "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion," an anti-Semitic forgery purporting to show the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy to seize world power. Originally a French document (1864) attributing ambitions of world domination to Napoleon III, and without any references to Jews, it was adapted by Russian secret police to promote anti-Semitism. Since its first publication in Russia (1905) it has appeared in many countries, especially in Germany, where it served in the Nazi era as an implicit justification for the genocide of the Jews.

236:23 The Jew was interrupted; when he was revived . . .

--The interruption, it is implied, is due to sudden vicious maltreatment at the hands of "the SS man."

236:24-237:18 He deposed as follows:

--Solomon Warshawer belittles his captors saying he has outlived many nations and rulers that have sought his destruction. He alludes respectively to the Edict of Expulsion in Spain (1492), the Czarist inspired pogroms

in Russia (1881-1921), the Babylonian exile (586 B.C.E.), the Egyptian bondage (14th century B.C.E.), Carthage (which did not oppress Jews, but is mentioned merely as a power that passed into oblivion), the conquest of Judaea by Alexander (333 B.C.E.) and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (70 C.E.).

237:10 By that lone star that sentries Pharoah's tomb.

--"The architecture of the pyramids is such, that its principal doorway or entrance is so placed, that the light of a star . . . always falls upon it" (Klein's own commentary, Klein Symposium, p. 4).

237:19-24 "Ah but you are philosophers . . .

Tomorrow no bright sun may rise to throw

Rays of inductive reason on Judaeophobic foe.

--Solomon Warshawer, the mythical ageless Jew, symbol of his people, tries to reason logically with his captors that their efforts to destroy him must fail. His implied argument follows the scientific method. If a phenomenon repeats itself consistently it becomes established fact and will repeat itself in the future. The Jew has repeatedly survived persecution in the past and therefore will survive present persecution by the Germans--"is it by your devices I shall be undone?" (237:18).

(On the Jewish preoccupation with reason when in difficulties, see Sartre, Anti-Semite and Jew, p. 125. Cf. above 236:11.) But then Solomon Warshawer realizes that the Germans do not accept his "inductive reasoning." They must hold, he tells them with irony, the view of the British Empiricist David Hume (1711-76) that there is no necessary connection between cause and effect--"Ah, but you are philosophers, and know / That what has been need not continue so." (For Hume's discussion on this subject see Concerning Human Understanding, Section 7, Britannica Great Books, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Incorporated, 1952, 35:470 ff.) Using sunrise and sunset as an example to illustrate Hume's thinking, and simultaneously as a metaphor for rebirth after tragedy, Solomon Warshawer elaborates his irony. (One should note, in this regard, the German preoccupation with philosophy and science.) According to Hume, the fact that the sun has risen consistently in the past after setting does not mean that it must of logical necessity rise tomorrow. Solomon Warshawer tells the Germans they must believe that in a like manner his rising in the past, symbolic of Jewish survival after persecution, does not mean he will necessarily rise again ("Tomorrow no bright sun may rise . . ."). They expect to succeed in destroying him (i.e. the Jews,) though others have failed. Waxing sarcastic, he notes, that if the

Jew is destroyed there will be no one left to argue with them about the scientific logic of Jewish existence in the face of persecution. Still using the sun metaphor he puts it thus: "Tomorrow (defying the consistent pattern of the past) no bright sun (no Jew, who endured persecution) may rise to throw / Rays of inductive reason (will be present to argue philosophically) on Judaeophic foe" (with his enemies about his continued existence).

237:25-35 "is there great turmoil in the sparrow's nest
 --Solomon Warshawer concludes that despite Hume's arguments to the contrary, mankind is confident of sunrise every morning. The people of the world are poetically imagined to be little sparrows protected by a great bird, the sun, which flies across the heaven during the day and rests in the evening. They are sure it will return to them every morning. Solomon Warshawer, too, symbolic of the Jew, has no fear of destruction through persecution. His survival, like the sunrise, "is the very pattern of the world . . . its relenting and recurring life!"

Solomon Warshawer also symbolizes all persecuted peoples, in which case the sun metaphor represents reason and tolerance returning after persecution.

238:1 "Yes, but the signet ring . . .

--Klein alludes to a legend of King Solomon and Asmodeus. The king, to complete the building of the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 6) seeks a magical worm, shamir, which can eat through stone. He needs it because iron is forbidden in the House of G-d (ibid. 6:7). But only Asmodeus, arch-demon, knows the shamir's whereabouts. Through a signet ring on which is engraved G-d's name Solomon gains mastery over Asmodeus and forces him to reveal the worm's hiding place. By a ruse the wily Asmodeus gains possession of Solomon's signet ring and, posing as the king, banishes Solomon from his palace. The king becomes a beggar and wanders about the land shouting, "Ani Shelomoh!" "I am Solomon!" No one believes him and he is taken for a madman. See Ginzberg, Legends, 4:165-72, also Talmud Gittin 68b. Cf. 174:30.

On this aspect of the poem Klein comments:
The implications . . . are that the contemporary Jew has also been ousted from his position in society by Hitler, the Asmodeus of to-day. Solomon Warshawer, therefore, is the immortal Solomon, still seeking to prove his identity to the world (Klein Symposium, p. 4).

238:5 I was, I am the Emperor Solomon:

--The past and present tenses refer to Solomon's

immortality and also allude to the Talmud's version of the above legend. It states that King Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes during his wanderings, and therefore begins the work with, "I, Kohelet, was king over Israel in Jerusalem" (Ecclesiastes 1:12). See Talmud, Gittin 68b.

238:13-14 . . . beneath whose hēm

The feet of the cock extend, the tail of the demon hangs!

--According to the Talmud, demons have the feet of a cock. Cf. above 34:12. "The tail of the demon," however, is borrowed from Christian imagery and has no basis in Jewish tradition.

238:16-26 "Mistake me not . . .

--Solomon admits having human failings but he had tried to correct them. Furthermore, he claims, he attempted to show the proper way to men through the songs he composed and the justice he practiced in his reign. The evil men confronting him now, however, prove he failed. In his lifetime he had built the Temple of G-d (1 Kings 6:14), but he was unable "To build the temple of the more-than-man," a metaphor for the development of a morally improved mankind.

238:22 Whether of men, or birds, or beasts of the wood;

--1 Kings 5:12-13, "And he (Solomon) spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs were a thousand five, and he spoke also of beasts, and of fowl"

238:27-33 But he, the unspeakable prince of malice!

Usurper of my throne, pretender to the L-rd's!

--Christian imagery is borrowed to add a more dramatic satanic element to Asmodeus absent in Jewish tradition. See above 49:18.

239:3 His sceptre is a claw.

--The swastika, resembling a claw. Cf. 261:21, "The swastika clawed at the sun."

239:10-11 Asmodeus sits;

And I--"

--Solomon Warshawer remains despite Asmodeus' power. His last word is "I," a final reiteration of a major theme of the poem, "The immortal Solomon seeking his identity." See above 238:1.

239:13-15 The Jew was not revived

--A deliberately ambiguous end to suggest continued existence for the mythical Solomon Warshawer.

239:17 RABBI YOM-TOB OF MAYENCE

PETITIONS HIS G-D

--The poet alludes to the martyrdom of the Jewish community of York in the time of the Crusades. (Klein confuses Mayence with York. In both cities Jews died at their own hands rather than convert, but historically, Rabbi Yom Tob is associated with York.) On the eve of the Sabbath, March 16, 1190, the Jews of York were attacked by Crusaders preparing to go to the Holy Land. Expecting the king to protect them, the Jews took refuge in the royal castle. But the Crusaders laid siege to the castle. Exhausted and without food the Jews turned to their leader Rabbi Yom Tob to decide what should be done. Knowing that surrender would mean either torture or forced baptism, he exhorted them to commit mass suicide. (Margolis and Marx, History 387-88). The poet imagines the prayer Rabbi Yom Tob offers for divine guidance before deciding, and the subsequent exhortation he gives to his flock as G-d remains silent. Cf. above 146:6, "Rabbi Levi Yitschok Talks to G-d," also 50:8, "Murals for a House of G-d."

239:18-25 I am no brazen face . . .

--Rabbi Yom Tob does not complain or make demands of G-d though he and his flock face a cruel fate.

239:19 His horns of glory

--An image taken from Exodus 34:29-35. The poet ironically takes "horns" in its literal sense (as did Michelangelo in his statue of Moses). The proper idiomatic English translation is "rays."

239:21 the heavenly horde;

--See above 49:22, "the Angelic Band."

240:1 an earth worm

--An image of humiliation taken from Isaiah 41:14, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob."

240:7-8 my phylacteries are kin,

Kin to Thy sandal-strings.

--Phylacteries are worn with leather thongs.

240:25-29 He hears not

--A momentary blasphemous thought is immediately suppressed. Cf. 56:14-17, 147:22.

240:30 - 241:2 Who hails the cloud for love . . .

--The sign from heaven Rabbi Yom Tob awaits does not come through the clouds, the sun or the stars--such signs are awaited by worshippers of stones--but through the "still small voice" of man's heart. (A similar

theme is expounded elaborately by the Pope in Browning's The Ring and the Book, Book 10, lines 1284-1428.)

241:0-21 Be he who yields to baptism . . .

--The exhortation.

241:16-21 Blessed this day . . .

--The two images used by Rabbi Yom Tob are the kiddush, a prayer sanctifying the Sabbath and recited over a cup of wine (above 142:9), and the blessing by the ritual slaughterer before killing an animal (above 55:2). The bleeding severed heads of the martyrs become cups of wine sanctifying G-d, and the ritual slaughterer's knife is an instrument to pry open "the door to eternal life."

241:22 BALLAD OF THE THWARTED AXE

--Though the witnesses are false the accused in the dock is nevertheless found guilty. The judges direct the headsman to execute the accused, but he cannot do so because the accused is a ghost. (A similar theme is used by the plane passenger in The Second Scroll to account for the survival of the Jews. They are a "spectre people" and therefore immune to death, 72/89.) This poem, in the style of old English ballads, is no doubt intended as an allegory on the German attempt to

destroy the Jews during the Holocaust. The court proceedings are the propaganda justifications the Germans offered for their actions and the headsman's axe is the extermination camps. The poem was published in 1941.

243:1 BALLAD OF THE DAYS OF THE MESSIAH

__Alluding to a traditional Yiddish ballad describing the joyous feast of roasted leviathan and wine as old as creation which will be held in "the days of the Messiah." The ballad is rewritten in an ironic vein to reflect the desperation of Jews during the Holocaust, waiting and praying for salvation. The poem was published in 1941.

For text, music and background of the original ballad see A. Z. Idelsohn, Jewish Music (New York: Schocken Books, 1956) pp. 393 ff., 442, 443.

244:1 YEHUDA HALEVI, HIS PILGRIMAGE

--Yehuda Halevi, great Hebrew-Spanish medieval philosopher and poet (1075-1141), wrote many songs expressing his yearning for Zion (Zionides). He undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1139, near the end of his life, but there is no historical record of him ever reaching his destination. Folk legend, however, supplied what history left out. It tells that Yehuda Halevi, after a long and difficult journey which took him to many lands, did arrive in Jerusalem. As he was bending

down to kiss the stones of the holy city, a custom of many Jewish pilgrims, a galloping Arab horseman trampled him to death. He died with the last of his songs of Zion (Ziyyon halo tishali) on his lips. In retelling the legend Klein embellishes it with Romantic elements. Yehuda Halevi, famous and living in luxury in cultured Spain, dreams of a beautiful princess, symbol of the Land of Israel, imprisoned in a castle by a foe who conquered her father's kingdom. The princess asks Halevi to rescue her. Moved by the dream, the poet undertakes a voyage to the Holy Land. Jonah-like he calms raging storms by prayer and finally lands in Egypt. From there he travels to Palestine on foot. In Jerusalem he sings his last song, paraphrased by Klein, and dies saying "The daughter of the king will yet be free."

The language and tone of the poem capture the mood of Halevi's medieval Hebrew poem.

244:4 The learned rabbin,

--Alluding to Gedalya Ibn Yahya (1522-88) in whose homiletical and historical work, Shalsholet Ha-kabbalah (1587), the legend of Yehuda Halevi's pilgrimage is first mentioned.

244:12 The harp of David on the willow tree;

--Alluding to Psalms 137:1-2), "By the waters of Babylon,

there we sat down, yea we wept Upon the willows
 . . . we hung our harps."

The traditional singers have ceased their singing, says the poet, but the lyrics of Yehuda Halevi's legend must be sung. Though unworthy of the task, he will undertake it.

244:13 Solomon his song,

--"The Song of Songs which is Solomon's" (1:1).

244:14, 16 The sons of Asaph . . . The chief musician

--The authors of many biblical Psalms. See Psalms 73-83, also 1 Chronicles 25:1-2.

244:20 Bard - and no Levite . . . A process server . . .

--The poet (Klein, the lawyer) referring to himself.

The Levites were the musicians and singers in the Temple.
 See 1 Chronicles 23:4.

244:21 a pagan night,

--A metaphor for the bard's land of exile.

244:27 Whilom in Toledoth,

--"Whilom" is an archaic form of "once upon a time."

"Toledoth" is Toledo, Yehuda Halevi's birthplace. Klein alters the city's name slightly to form a Hebrew word introducing

biblical narrative. See Genesis 25:19, 37:2 et pass.

244:29 Christian Don

--Alfonso VI (d. 1109), who made Toledo a center of culture.

244:33 Melodious ibns

--"Ibn" is part of the name of many medieval Spanish-Hebrew poets. It is the Arabic equivalent of "son of."
Cf. SS 28/21.

245:4 Ezra's sons

--Halevi was an intimate friend of the sons of Abraham Ibn Ezra, medieval biblical commentator, poet and wit (1092-1167). According to legend he was their grandfather.

245:7 tallith

--Prayer shawl.

245:22-29 Of Al-Kazari chronicle that king . . .

Accepting only Torah and its puissance.

--"Al-Kazari," or more commonly, The Kuzari, is the title of Halevi's philosophical magnum opus. It is composed in the form of a dialogue between Bulan, king of the Khazars, and a Christian, a Mohammedan, a philosopher and a rabbi

respectively. Impressed by the rabbi's words, the king converts, "accepting only Torah and its puissance."

The king continues his dialogue with the rabbi, learning more about his new faith. Although the dialogue is fictitious, the conversion of the Khazars to Judaism in the early Middle Ages is historical. See D. M. Dunlop, The History of the Jewish Khazars (New York: Schoken Books, 1967).

245:30--246:2 Scorn not the largess . . .

--The poet describes the pastoral beauty, wealth and cultural richness of Halevi's Spain. In the descriptive imagery the sun and the moon are depicted as Spanish coins of gold and silver respectively and Spanish poetry as "grape clusters torn" by the brain from a "paradisaal vine," pressed and fermented by the soul into "that wine which sours not." Halevi, yearning for Zion, leaves all of this to make his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

246:2 Honey of Samson's bees and milk from Pharoah's kine.

--Samson found honey in the carcass of a lion he killed (Judges 14:8-9). Cf. above 227:18. Pharoah dreamed of fat cows which signified prosperity for Egypt (Genesis 41:18).

246:4 Where crypted is that psalter, writ on gold

In ink of molten ruby

--Alluding to the ornamental lettering (red on gold) of verses from Psalms on the walls of the El Transito synagogue in Toledo, Halevi's birthplace. (The synagogue was built by Samuel Halevi Abulafia in 1366. Yehuda Halevi died in 1141. A slight anachronism!)

For details and a photograph of the interior of the synagogue see Azriel Eisenberg, Jewish Historical Treasures (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1968), p. 99.

246:7-11 the learned glossators of old . . . his
leechcraft

--The facts of Yehuda Halevi's life are known from studies of his letters. He practiced medicine in Spain and was called to heal Christians and Mohammedans as well as Jews.

246:15 y-wis!

As in Shakespeare's English "y" takes the place of the German "ge" ("yclad," 2H6 1:1:33, "ycleped," LLL 1:1:240). The word then is gewiss, or for certain. Cf. above 113:29.

246:21 The stars are manna in the sky;

--Exodus 16:14, 15, "there was . . . something fine in grains, small as hoar frost They said to one another 'It is manna!'"

246:22 Fleshpot of Egypt

--Exodus 16:3.

246:24 Sleep, the Cushite, fawns

--The Cushites were dark skinned (Jeremiah 13:23).

246:35-36 And from that tower is heard a voice, a sigh

Bitter with Sorrow, sorrow that doth scald

--Jeremiah 31:15, "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping" Cf. above 234:20.

250:5 Alnath, alpherd, alferoz, ald'baran,--

--Names of stars.

251:8 Mizraim

--Hebrew for Egypt. The Egyptian communities urged Halevi to stay with them and forgo his pilgrimage.

252:12 - 253:35 "Grieving for them, thy captive sons . . ."

--These sixty lines are a paraphrase of Yehuda Halevi's last song of Zion.

For an accurate English rendering of Halevi's poem, with copious notes, see The Authorized Kinot for the Ninth of Av, translated and annotated by Rev. Abraham Rosenfeld (London, 1965), p. 152-153.

252:17 Hermon

--The highest mountain in Israel.

252:22 Peniel, Bethel, Mahanayim!

--Holy places where Jacob saw heavenly visions (Genesis 31:13, 32:3 and 31).

252:34 The chambers of thy cherubim

--The holy of holies in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:27).

252:36 I will cut off my hair,

--A gesture of mourning and sorrow in biblical times (Jeremiah 7:29, Micah 1:16, Job 1:20).

253:16 Can Shinor and Pathros equal thee for glory?

--Babylon and Egypt.

253:17 Urim and Thumim

--Divine oracle. See above 210:6.

254:4 Zion . . . Zien . . .

--"Zien" is either a misspelling for Zion or Klein's attempt to capture the Yiddish intonation of the Hebrew word.

254:12 In the third temple

--Two temples of the Jews in Jerusalem were destroyed (586 B.C.E. and 70 C.E.). A future third temple is described by Isaiah (2:2). By virtue of the prophet's holy words it already exists spiritually and Yehuda Halevi's soul dwells there.

254:13-14 the bells / Of the high-priest

--Bells were attached to the hem of the high priest's garments (Leviticus 28:33).

256:1 PSALM 154

--There are only 150 Psalms in the Bible. The following "Psalms" are therefore meant to be a modern "supplement," composed by "Abraham," to the Book of Psalms. See Introduction.

256:2 TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN UPON SHOSHANNIM A SONG OF
LOVES

--The title is taken from the title of Psalm 45.

"Shoshannim" is a type of ancient melody. In The Second

Scroll the poem is entitled "Grace before Poison," and appears as part of "Gloss Hai." See SS 137/190 for notes and commentary.

257:1 PSALM 155: TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN, AL-TASCHITH,
MICHTAM OF ABRAHAM; WHEN ONE SENT, AND THEY WATCHED
THE HOUSE TO KILL HIM

--The title is taken from the title of Psalm 59. "Al-Taschith" means "do not destroy" and denotes a song of deliverance. "Michtam" is interpreted as a "precious" song sung often, or a style of musical or literary composition. The biblical Psalm alludes to Saul sending men to watch David's house in order to kill him (1 Samuel 19:11). In Klein's Psalm it is Hitler, clearly, who sends men to watch the poet's house in order to kill him. The poet and his house are representative symbols of the Jewish people. The poem was published in 1941.

The second half of the poem is modelled after Psalm 109 in which David invokes G-d's punishment, described in detail, upon an unnamed enemy.

258:1 PSALM 166: A PRAYER OF ABRAHAM THAT HE BE
FORGIVEN FOR BLASPHEMY

--Many of Klein's poems (55:21, 146:6, 210:1, 231:24, 239:17) rage against G-d for allowing evil and remaining silent to the pleas of those who seek Him. In this Psalm

the poet asks for forgiveness for the angry words. He did not intend blasphemy; the words were outpourings of a soul in pain. Surely G-d prefers that to a polite "vacuous cliché!" As a Father He understands!

258:14 PSALM 170: TO THE CHIEF BAILIFF, A PSALM OF
THE KING'S WRIT

--The "peddler," in whose image death is cast, is the "customer peddler," or door to door credit merchant. He sells items such as clothing, furniture and jewelry on credit and collects long term weekly payments. If the customer defaults, the item is seized by the peddler and resold to another credit customer. Naturally, a default is to the advantage of the peddler for then in addition to having received payments for the merchandise "he revendicates the same."

The poet imagines Death as a peddler selling the same merchandise--life, belongings and joy--to each one of us but under different or "new" names. And, like the peddler, Death exacts regular payments in the form of anxiety over possible loss. He is jealous of any extra joy or possessions we have and expectantly waits for a default. As we expire Death "seizes" our joy and belongings, "hearth home hide," and finally our "breath" because there is nothing more to seize. Death then resells this "merchandise" to others: "The Chief Bailiff"

under whose authority ("The King's Writ") Death conducts his transactions, is G-d.

The choice of metaphor is rather ironic; many Jews in Klein's day were "customer peddlers."

259:4 PSALM 171: A PSALM OF ABRAHAM CONCERNING THE
ARROGANCE OF THE SON OF MAN

--Based upon the theme of Psalm 144:3, "L-rd, what is man, that thou takest cognizance of him, the son of a mortal, that thou regardest him."

The poet considers what could "induce humility" in man whose arrogance is founded upon and expressed by creative speech ("invented brag," perhaps most notably poetry); not comparison with lower creatures whom he resembles in many respects, not the vastness of the universe in which he is but a speck, nor the moral teachings of the wise, but the humbling necessity to eliminate, so absurd in the face of man's conception of himself as "grand noble, holy." Cf. "Desideratum" (268:2). In "Who Hast Fashioned" (SS 136/189), however, Klein, paraphrasing a morning prayer, expresses the idea that the excretory function of the human body is one of the wondrous life-sustaining processes of nature. Klein's ambivalent attitude reflects the dual attitude of Jewish tradition, deprecating bodily functions on the one hand (Deuteronomy 23:10-15) and regarding them as miraculous on the other.

260:1 PSALM 172: A PSALM OF ABRAHAM, PRAYING A GREEN
OLD AGE

--For other associations of the pastoral with heaven see "Diary of Abraham Segal, Poet" (82:1) and "Psalm VIII" (214:13).

260:15 PSALM 173: A PSALM OF ABRAHAM OF THAT WHICH
IS VISITED UPON HIM

--The poet suspects he has an unknown disease. Because he is not sure, he is all the more anxious and fearful. Using the metaphor of a prowler in his home "meddling" with food and "poisoning" wine, he describes his symptoms. The disease apparently upsets his stomach-- ("meddling with my food") and interferes with his poetic creations ("poisoning my wines," a similar image above 245:35-36). He has an instinctive feeling of something wrong--("a book misplaced") and a premonition of death-- ("the next day's meal, its sombre taste"). The poet believes he cannot be cured--("shout police") for the disease is hereditary--("He is of my kith and kin").

There is, however, a mood of acceptance in the end by the poet "of that which is visited upon him."

261:5 PSALM 175: A PSALM OF RESIGNATION

--Resignation to the silence of G-d is a theme often expressed in Klein's poetry. See above "Murals For a

House of G-d--A Young Man Moans Alarm Before the Kiss of Death" (55:21), "Reb Levi Yitschok Talks to G-d" (146:6), "Psalm I" (210:1), "Psalm XXIV" (231:24), "Rabbi Yom Tob of Mayence Petitions his G-d" (239:17).

G-d's silence, according to rabbinic tradition began after the era of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi when prophecy, direct communication with human beings by G-d, ceased (Talmud, Sotah 48b). It was most apparent at the destruction of the Second Temple. Paraphrasing a biblical passage (Exodus 15:11) the rabbis declared, "Who is like unto Thee, O L-rd, among the dumb (silent) ones!" as they witnessed the atrocities (Gittin 56b). The theme of G-d's silence is prominent in the works of Elie Wiesel and other writers of the Holocaust. They believe G-d's silence during the Holocaust surpasses that of the destruction of the Temple.

261:18 BALLAD OF THE NUREMBERG TOWER-CLOCK

--A macabre parody of the nursery rhyme "Hickory Dickory Dock." Nuremberg is the site of the establishment of the first branch of the Nazi party (1922) and of the promulgation of the infamous "Nuremberg Laws" (1935), the first legal sanctioning of discrimination against Jews in Nazi Germany.

263:17 BALLAD OF THE NURSERY RHYMES

--Using familiar nursery rhymes as an image the poet portrays the confusion and dislocation of war. A lone survivor, compared sympathetically to a child in an empty nursery, sits amid ruins and, like a child trying to recall nursery rhymes, he tries confusedly to recall his past. The poem is a parable on the re-establishment of culture after a world war. The singing of songs as an image of reminiscence about a destroyed culture is taken from Psalm 137 ("By the rivers of Babylon").

264:9 POLISH VILLAGE

--Christian suffering during the Holocaust.

It is noteworthy to compare the religious imagery used by Klein for Christian and Jewish suffering. Here, for Christian suffering, he uses the succinct and sympathetic image of the crucifixion. Cf. also 192:23.) Elsewhere, for Jewish suffering, Klein uses cumulative images of rage against G-d (often sharpened by sarcasm) followed by resignation to His silence. Cf. "Murals for a House of G-d--A Young Man Moans Alarm Before the Kiss of Death" (55:21), "Reb Levi Yitschok Talks to G-d" (146:6), "Psalm I" (210:1), "Psalm XXIV" (231:24), "Rabbi Yom Tob of Mayence Petitions his G-d" (239:17).

The reason may be twofold: a) Judaism has no image of suffering so theologically fundamental and so

esthetically spiritual as the crucifixion; it has only selected models of reaction to suffering, such as Job (rage) and Isaac (resignation). Klein's images are therefore respectively authentic. b) Klein reveals a sub-conscious envy of the firm faith of Christians compared to his own doubts. (See "For the Sisters of the Hotel Dieu," 300:16.) His Christian images are therefore sympathetic while his Jewish images "project" his own ambivalence towards his faith.

265:1 VARIATIONS ON A THEME

--The theme is death. In the style of Finnegan's Wake the poet calls personified Death by many names and describes him with many images.

266:1 SENNET FROM GHEEL

--Gheel, a city in Belgium, had a colony of insane since the Middle Ages. They came, or were sent there, to pray for salvation (Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization, Toronto: The New American Library of Canada, 1967, p. 20). The city has a church dedicated to Dymphna, patron saint of the insane. Written in the style of Finnegan's Wake, the "sennet" or sonnet (with one line missing) describes the war coming to Gheel. Perhaps it is the German invasion of Belgium in 1940--the poem was published in 1942. "Sennet," an Elizabethan stage

direction calling for a flourish of trumpets to mark the ceremonial entrance or exit of a body of players, would then, in Joycean fashion, also refer to the German army. The writer of the poem is not sure whether those waging the war are more sane than he. If they are, he prays G-d "fling" him and his fellows back to the "lunasyllum of the blest." Not having to contend with the world the inmates are "blest." Or "the lunasyllum of the blest" is the grave where all mortals are ultimately confined permanently. Man is born of the earth and is "flung" back ("zuruck") to it at death. It is "blest" because in Job's words "there . . . the exhausted weary are at rest, the prisoners repose together [and] they hear no more the task master's voice; the servant [is] free from the master" (Job 3:17-19).

The poem's parable on the madness of war and of the society which wages it is similar in theme to "Actuarial Report" (270:9).

266:3 shekels

--Conveying a Joycean multiplicity of meanings;

- a) captivity ("shackles"), perhaps by the Germans,
- b) enslavement by a war mentality, or to industrialization in general ("cracked steel"),
- c) subjugation to the mercantile society ("shekels").

266:5 Nick

--The Devil (derived from Scandinavian mythology).

266:6 Bedlam, Bicêtre and hundemonium

--Bedlam (Bethlehem Royal Hospital) and Bicêtre are English and French asylums for the insane. "Hundemonium" is a Joycean word combining "Hun," German; hunde, dog (in German), presumably a "mad" dog; "demon"; as well as its homonymic association with "pandemonium."

266:13 un-levined

--Unleavened, connoting an incomplete or unperfected state. The Israelites ate unleavened bread at the Exodus because they could not wait for it to rise properly (Exodus 12:34). Additionally, "levin" or "leven" in old English, is a flash of light, or lightning. "Un-levined," then, would also mean "unenlightened," without the light of reason, and is intended to be ironic

267:7 AND IN THAT DROWNING INSTANT

--See SS 141/195 for notes and commentary.

268:11 DESIDERATUM

--According to Jewish tradition there are six hundred and thirteen commandments in the Torah (Bible). They

are divided into two hundred and forty-eight positive ones, corresponding to the number of joints or bones in the body, and three hundred and sixty-five negative ones, corresponding to the number of nerves and sinews in the body, or alternatively to the number of days in the year ($248 \div 365 = 613$). See SS 19/6.

Klein considers the tradition Kabbalistic but it is primarily Talmudic (Makkot 23b). He also confuses the correspondences a little.

The poem's theme is the restraint placed upon the intellectual or spiritual activity of a human being by his bodily functions, and the dichotomy of body and soul. Cf. "Come Two, Like Shadows" (266:15); "Psalm 171" (259:4).

268:19 gematria

--Mystic numerology. Cf. SS 29/21, 31/29.

269:14 PENULTIMATE CHAPTER

--The poem is a parable on modern scientific culture. Imagining the resurrection of the dinosaurs, from which man allegedly derives, the poet foresees his destruction at the hand of cruel ancestors. Fear robs him of the opportunity to use his scientific knowledge to defend himself. The poem was published in 1943 when the extent of the Holocaust was becoming apparent. Klein's

poet compares the Nazis to primordial beasts come to life. The poem may also be a psychological metaphor; the beast in man, covered over by evolution and culture, is arising to destroy him.

270:8 ACTUARIAL REPORT

--An anti-war parable, published in 1943. Actuaries determining the mathematical probability of today's life expectancy report to their office concerning certain new factors causing early death ("the steps of death are hastened"). Ordinarily insurance companies exclude war as a condition for payment on policies, but these factors are "remote from battlefields." They prevail in the homes of the nation at war. They are: "anxiety, trouble at home, measured rations, / The abnormalities of separation; in fine / General absence from felicity." Death, personified, comes with his body guards, "famine, disease and other motely personages." Modern technology and culture have given him greater "ingenuity" and greater speed.

The actuaries conclude their report dispassionately. Quoting a biblical verse from Isaiah (9:5)--"a son is born"--ironically promising salvation from war, they cynically paraphrase its converse--"many a father [is] dying--as a statistical fact.

Indirectly the poet also indicts modern culture,

of which the actuaries are emblematic, for its unfeeling attitude to tragedy.

271:19 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

--See SS 95/123 for commentary and notes.

282:10 ADDRESS TO THE CHOIRBOYS

--In Jewish communities, preparations for the High Holy Days (New Year and the Day of Atonement) begin a month before (Ganzfried, Code, Cap. 3, p. 70). During this month, in the major synagogues, cantors and choirs of young boys rehearse the services, especially the solemn prayer of Rabbi Amnon, to which they devote much of their musical talent.

The prayer has a well-known history. Rabbi Amnon, spiritual leader of the community of Mayence (10th century) and advisor to the local duke, was continually pressed by the duke's council to convert to Christianity. On one occasion, to assuage the importunate councillors, he asked for three days to consider the matter. Realizing afterwards that his words betrayed a spiritual weakness, he deliberately refused to appear at the appointed time and was punished by dismemberment. It was New Year's Day and he asked to be brought to the synagogue. There, dying from his wounds, he composed his celebrated prayer (called Unesaneh Tokef).

The poet exhorts the choirboys to sing their solemn best. He notes the ironic contrast between their youthful innocence, devoid of sorrow, and the tragic background of the prayer they sing, implying that they therefore are symbols of hope and transcendence of tragedy. Quotations from the prayer alternate with the story of Rabbi Amnon in the verses of the poem.

To appreciate the solemnity of the "address" it is helpful to read the full text of Rabbi Amnon's prayer:

Let us tell how utterly holy this day is and how awe-inspiring. It is the day when thy dominion shall be exalted, thy throne shall be established on mercy, and thou shalt occupy it in truth. True it is that thou art judge and arbiter, discerner and witness, inscribing and recording all forgotten things. Thou openest the book of records and it reads itself; every man's signature is contained in it.

The great shofar is sounded; a gentle whisper is heard; the angels quaking with fear, declare: 'The day of judgment is here to bring the hosts of heaven to justice!' Indeed, even they are not guiltless in thy sight. All mankind passes before thee like a flock of sheep. As a shepherd seeks out his flock, making his sheep pass under his rod,

so dost thou make all the living souls pass before thee; thou dost count and number thy creatures, fixing their lifetime and inscribing their destiny.

On Rosh Hashanah (New Year's Day) their destiny is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) it is sealed, how many shall pass away and how many shall be brought into existence; who shall live and who shall die; who shall come to a timely end, and who to an untimely end; who shall perish by fire and who by water; who by sword and who by beast; who by hunger and who by thirst; who by earthquake and who by plague; who by strangling and who by stoning; who shall be at ease and who shall wander about; who shall be at peace and who shall be molested; who shall have comfort and who shall be tormented; who shall become poor and who shall become rich; who shall be lowered and who shall be raised.

But repentance, prayer and charity cancel the stern decree (High Holy Day Prayer Book, translated and annotated by Philip Birnbaum, New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1951, p. 362).

282:15-16 Keeping two fasts the week, the ram's horn blowing / Each morning.

--Many pious individuals fast every Monday and Thursday

a month before the New Year. The ram's horn is also blown every morning during that month in a symbolic call to repentance (Ganzfried Code, Cap. 3, p. 70).

282:17 The tombstone maker dusty with his stone;

--During the month before the New Year tombstones are traditionally placed on the graves of those who passed away in the past year.

284:1 THE GOLEM

--See above 133:1. In this poem Klein adds some details to the legend. Essentially the "Golem" was unable to conceive of common sense limits to his instructions. It is told that once the rabbi instructed him to go to the forest for some wood. With superhuman strength he chopped down all the trees in sight--"all Bohemia's forest did not suffice." The rabbi had to be called to tell the Golem to stop. The same occurred when the rabbi asked him to draw water--"the rivers trembled!" Finally, when the "Golem's" mischief outweighed his usefulness the rabbi had to dispose of him. The poet imagines himself a witness to this event and wonders if there are Faustian consequences. The rabbi's prayers for animating the Golem have been answered too easily ("the incantation, alas, was too well wrought"). Now he must nullify the divine power

which brought the Golem to life. Only black magic can accomplish that, and the rabbi may have to sell his soul to the devil to save the community. (On the devil in Jewish tradition see above 49:18.)

284:10 The rabbi Nubal and his holy vessels

--Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague is referred to in Hebrew as "Maharal." ("Nubal" is possibly an error.) For "holy vessels" see above 178:1.

285:1 SONNET UNRHYMED

--The Talmud considers wasting semen a destroying of potential lives and tantamount to murder (Niddah 13a). According to the Kabbalah wasted sperm evolve into unmaterialized beings which will come to haunt their progenitor. (See Y. M. Tukatchinsky, Bridge of Life, Jerusalem, 1947, I, 112, Hebrew.) The poet has had a nocturnal emission. His senses are heightened by the "extase" and he has a vision of unmaterialized beings at some time in the future piteously calling him, their father (Abba), "in the muffled night." They reproachfully "beg creation" and the poet guiltily feels responsible for the existence they have been denied. He cannot go back to sleep. The disturbing nature of his thoughts is anticipated in the "unrhymed" of the title.

285:15 my sons, my sons, my hanging Absoloms.

--A paraphrase of David's lament over his rebellious handsome son (2 Samuel 19:1). Absalom died when his beautiful locks tangled in the branches of a tree as he sought to escape his father's soldiers. He hung "between the heaven and the earth" (18:9). The poet sees the unmaterialized beings evolved from his sperm suspended in creation and metaphorically hanging "between the heaven and the earth." They are his "sons" and, like David, he too laments their plight.

288:8 MEDITATION UPON SURVIVAL

--The poet describes his guilt at remaining alive while his brothers died in the Holocaust.

288:11 their unexpired six million circuits,

--Cf. SS 30/24.

288:29-32, 289:1-6 Us they have made the monster . . .

--The poet imagines communities of Jews around the world to be different parts of the human body existing separately. (For a similar image see above "Desideratum," 268:11). North American Jews are a severed head, still functioning, but feeling the pain and loss of blood of its "torn torso," the Holocaust victims. The "bodiless legs" are the refugees fleeing from the many countries

of Europe during and after the war.

289:16 A PSALM OF HORSES AND THEIR RIDERS

--The ironic title for this whimsy is a phrase describing Pharoah's mighty chariots and is taken from Exodus 15:1.

289:22 Out of the stables of Solomon

--I Kings 10:26, "And he (Solomon) had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he quartered in the cities for chariots."

290:1 ELEGY

--See SS 98/127 for notes and commentary.

301:1 GRAIN ELEVATOR

--Emotions evoked by the sight of a grain elevator. The structure becomes a compact symbol for many fundamental human needs and desires.

301:11-12 as in a Joseph dream, bow down / the sheaves,

--Joseph dreamed that he and his brothers were binding sheaves of grain in the field and the sheaves of his brothers bowed down to his (Genesis 9:7). It was an augury of his future role as conserver and dispenser of grain stores in Egypt and also of his consequent power (41:48, 55, 56). Images of bounty and power are compressed in this neology.

306:1 BREAD

--Man's utter dependence on bread is described in a variety of images, some ironic.

306:18-19 Bakers most priestly, in your robes of flour,

White Levites at your altar's ovens, bind,

--Images taken from Leviticus (2) describing flour offerings as sacrifices.

343:17 BENEDICTIONS

--See SS 137/190 for notes and commentary.

343:23 WHO HAST FASHIONED

--See SS 136/189 for notes and commentary.

344:11 OF REMEMBRANCE

--See SS 138/191 for notes and commentary.

345:11 STANCE OF THE AMIDAH

--See SS 139/193 for notes and commentary.

THE SECOND SCROLL

The novel was inspired by a fact-finding mission to Europe, North Africa and Israel undertaken by Klein in 1949, after the war, at the request of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Klein published his impressions in a series of seventeen articles in The Canadian Jewish Chronicle (5 August--9 September, 1949) under the title "Notebook of a Journey." He then transformed his "notebook" into a highly symbolic novel-poem about a journalist who searches for his uncle while on an assignment by his publisher. The journalist, a character resembling Klein to a significant degree, is to find the poets of the new state of Israel and arrange for the publication of their works in Canada. As the story unfolds, Klein dramatically records the Jewish feelings and thoughts surrounding the two most significant events affecting contemporary Jewry--the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel.

The Holocaust destroyed the east-European shtetl, or small town ghetto, which was the prime source of Jewish vitality. Immigrants to western countries brought shtetl culture with them and bequeathed its values to their children. Through the early experiences of the principal character, Uncle Melech, Klein portrays some of those values with poignant nostalgia: the obsessive emphasis on scholarship, the unrelenting pre-occupation with religion and the stubborn retention of

established folkways. The shtetl also had its problems, in particular the outrages of pogroms and the attraction of the youth to radical ideologies, and Klein portrays these too. Uncle Melech lives through a pogrom, joins the Communists and suffers the horrors of the Holocaust. He recounts them in detail in a letter to his Canadian relatives. The events shatter his spirit. Only with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 does Uncle Melech regain his lost faith and his will to live. He then goes on to become a celebrated symbol of the resurrection of the people of Israel from the ashes of Europe's crematoria.

The novel's themes are universal, and include more than the obvious parallel between the events of the Bible's first five books and contemporary Jewish history. The quest for the mythic Uncle Melech is the quest of mankind for the lost innocence of childhood, for a mythical golden past, for the security of ancestral faith, for one's G-d, for redemption from suffering and for a key to the mystery of good and evil. The assignment of the narrator-journalist to find the essential poetry of Israel is the quest for a pure and perfect expression of art. The travels are symbolic journeys to understanding and self-discovery and the destinations are moments of inspiration and "epiphany." The narrator-journalist never meets Uncle Melech. He is however,

transformed by the search so that one may say in symbolic and spiritual terms there is an encounter. Like his vision of a renewed Zion the narrator's expectation of meeting Uncle Melech is not fulfilled "in all its details and particularities" (27/19), but there is enough of a correspondence to inspire and sustain faith. So mankind, Klein's novel maintains, must seek correspondences to its elusive goals in contemporary events to inspire and sustain faith in its own endurance.

Title--The Second Scroll

--The word "scroll," as it is commonly used with reference to Judaism, is the translation of the Hebrew sefer torah, and is generally taken to mean a parchment scroll upon which is hand-written the Five Books of Moses; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. A portion of the "scroll" is read every Sabbath and Holy Day of the Jewish calendar year as part of the services of the synagogue, so that within a year the entire "scroll" is heard. At a special ceremony of rejoicing at the end of the year the last portion is read together with the first portion to indicate the never ending validity of the holy books. The occasion is poetically depicted in the Genesis chapter of the novel (20/7-8).

This cycle of repetition is the underlying theme of The Second Scroll. The original "scroll", Klein

asserts, is being repeated in contemporary history. The dramatic tale of the Bible, the formation and birth of a people, their suffering, exodus, wandering and final arrival at their destination, the Holy Land, is being relived. As in the year-end ceremony the reading of the "scroll" commences anew, so in history ancient events begin again. The chapter headings of the novel follow the Five Books of Moses and many of the incidents contained in them have a subtle correspondence to those recorded in these books. Hence The Second Scroll.

p. ii, opposite title page / title page

. . . And ask a Talmudist
what ails the modesty
of his marginal Keri
that Moses and all the prophets
cannot persuade him
to pronounce the textual Chetiv.

--A quotation from John Milton's "Areopagitica" (John Milton, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose, New York, Random House Modern Library, 1950, p. 692). It is part of Milton's argument against the censorship of books. Using the Bible as an example he shows to what absurd conclusions banning books can lead. The holy book contains such obscene passages that the talmudic rabbis, impelled by modesty, emended the text. If censorship

were imposed, argues Milton, the Bible would have been banned.

Keri and Chetiv are details of the Talmud's rule that biblical texts must be emended with marginal readings to paraphrase obscene sexual terms. (See Talmud, Megillah 25b. Cf. Milton, "Apology Against a Pamphlet," Poetry and Prose, p. 575.) The emendations, however, change only the vocalization of the word, which is the Keri or marginal reading. The written word in the canonized text, the Chetiv, appears in its original unemended form. Milton dramatizes a personified Keri appealing to the Talmudist not to pronounce the obscene Chetiv for the sake of "modesty," while Moses and all the prophets vainly attempt to persuade him to read the original text as they have transmitted it. In a sharp pun on the two meanings of modesty Milton then observes that the Keri may display modesty in the sense of shame by replacing an obscene word, but in the sense of humility its modesty "ails" since it usurps the divine Chetiv. He rhetorically asks the Talmudist what is the cause of the Keri's ailing modesty (humility) that it takes upon itself to direct him to oppose "Moses and all the prophets" who unashamedly used the Chetiv. (Cf. Milton, "Apology," Poetry and Prose, p. 552, "For as in teaching, doubtlesse the Spirit of meeknesse is most powerful For how can they

admit teaching who have the condemnation of G-d already upon them for refusing instruction.")

Klein, the Talmudist, has emended or paraphrased the "original" scroll by his work. He then asks, through Milton's words, whether his modesty, too, is ailing, since he presents his novel to be read as "The Second Scroll."

(Rabbi P. Hirshprung, Chief Rabbi of Montreal, Klein's neighbour for many years, confirms that Klein knew Talmud. However, the reputation, mentioned by Desmond Pacey, "of being one of the leading Talmudists in Canada"--Ten Canadian Poets. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1958, p. 255--is perhaps exaggerated.)

The reply comes in the second opening quotation of the novel (p. vi, preceding Introduction / preceding Contents):

Rebono Shel Olam:

'Tis a Thou-song I will sing Thee--

Thou . . . Thou . . . Thou . . . Thou

Ayeh Emtzoeko, V'ayeh Lo Emtzoeko

O, where shall I find Thee?

And where art Thou not to be found? . . .

--This is Klein's translation of part of an old Yiddish folk song based on Psalms and attributed to one of the early Hassidic masters, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev. (See CP 146:6.) The two Hebrew phrases (lines 1, 4)

appear as such in the original Yiddish version as well. G-d may be found anywhere, says Rabbi Levi Yitzchak; even in contemporary events, Klein would add. Therefore the novel which portrays the spirit of the "original" scroll unfolding in modern history, can justifiedly be called The Second Scroll.

Cf. Prof. M. W. Steinberg's explanation of these quotations in his introduction to the McClelland and Stewart edition (xii-xiv). Usher Caplan ("Klein Introduction" p. 212) claims "part of the credit for this addition (Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's song) belongs to the book designer" who suggested filler material. Klein's selection of this particular song as the material is, however, sufficient ground for interpreting it as an integral esthetic element of the text. See Knopf correspondence letter to H. Weinstock April 18, 1951, University of Texas Library at Austin.

For the full song see Ausubel, Jewish Folklore, p. 771.

Genesis

The Genesis chapter introduces the narrator and his Uncle Melech, for whom he searches throughout the novel. The narrator's parents emigrated from Ratno, Russia, to escape oppression and pogroms. They bring up their son in the New World in a traditional manner, detailed in the chapter. Uncle Melech, a brother of

the narrator's mother, remains in Russia. He is a celebrated scholar of great piety, who is held up constantly as a model for the narrator to follow. From townsfolk the parents learn of a pogrom in Ratno. There are many atrocities. Uncle Melech is publicly flogged for defending an old Jew. Soon afterwards, to everyone's shock, he runs away to join the communists, rising quickly in the ranks of the Party. Outraged, the narrator's father forbids the mention of Melech's name in his house. However, the narrator's pride in his uncle's accomplishments--he has in the meantime become a great revolutionary leader and outstanding Marxian literary critic--creates a sense of identification with him as well as a desire to know him. Uncle Melech thus develops into a symbol of the narrator's own search for a weltanschauung. Indeed there is a subtle parallel in all the chapters between the undertakings and experiences of Uncle Melech and his nephew. (See Introduction.) The chapter therefore represents a "genesis" of character for the narrator as well as a "beginning" of the quest for Uncle Melech.

17/3 . . . may he dwell in a bright Eden . . .

--A direct translation of a Yiddish phrase used out of respect to the dead whenever their names are mentioned.

The term "bright Eden" derives from the Kabbalistic notion of the soul being a divine ray which returns to its source of full light in Paradise, or the Garden of Eden, at death, when it leaves the body. The standard Jewish memorial prayer refers to the souls of "the holy and pure, who shine as the brightness of the firmament" among whom all other souls eventually rest. (See Gershom G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, New York: Schocken Books, 1954, p. 239 et pass.)

With this phrase Klein creates a subtle parallel to the opening themes of light and Eden with which the biblical Book of Genesis begins. Uncle Melech's death is symbolically equated with light (92, 93/116, 118, 120) at the end of the novel to form a cyclical pattern connecting the end to the beginning. Thus, like the "original" scroll on the occasion of its conclusion at the end of the year (above, Title), The Second Scroll, too, has "the last verses of Deuteronomy joined [to] the first of Genesis, the eternal circle continued" (20/8). See Appendix B.

17/3 . . . refused to permit . . . mention of that
person's name . . .

--A figurative association of an evil person's name with that of the arch-enemy of the Jews, Amalek, concerning whom there is a commandment "thou shalt blot out the

remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens " (Deuteronomy 25:19).

On another level, ironically, it is an allusion to Uncle Melech as G-d symbol. See Appendix A. The tension between tradition and modern culture, a major theme of the novel, is metaphorically introduced. Tradition, represented by the narrator's family, is portrayed in symbolic conflict with an antagonistic modern culture, represented by Melech's Marxism.

17/3 stare Semitic

--Klein's deliberate use of awkward English to create the sense of a foreign language and its atmosphere. Miriam Waddington maintains that such phrases simulate the Hebrew in which the adjective follows the noun (Canadian Literature, 25 [1965] 28).

17/3 The tabu was recognized . . .

--"Tabu" is usually associated with the mystery of religion and strengthens the idea of Uncle Melech as G-d symbol. See Appendix A.

17/3 . . . as zealous for the Law as was the Bible's fanatic Phineas.

--Numbers 25. Phineas and Elijah (1 Kings 18, 19) are models of zealousness in Jewish tradition.

17/3 "the renegade," "that issuer to a bad end";

--English renditions of Hebrew terms used in Yiddish for apostates (meshumad, yoze letarbut ra'ah). They are hyperbolic in nature, as used in Yiddish, and have mild connotations of humour. Klein tries to capture this with his rather literal translation of the latter term, which is based upon the Talmud (Haggigah 16b).

18/4 the branch lopped from the tree;

--Cf. 41/39, "a cutter down of plants, an uprooter."
"A cutter-down of plants" is the literal translation of a talmudic idiom designating an apostate (Haggigah 14b). The metaphor, applied to the spirit, describes severance from a life-giving source. "Branch lopped from the tree" conveys the same meaning.

The father's refusal to permit the mention of Uncle Melech's name (17/3) is a similar declaration of Melech's isolation from the living tradition and symbolic death. In some families a ritual of mourning is observed when a member leaves the fold or becomes a "free-thinker."

18/4 hair errant . . . perruque

--Archaisms adding poetic nuances to the description of a Jewish mother of the old European immigrant type. Two physical characteristics distinguishing the devoutly pious are the beard (17/3) and the wig.

18/4 tea, in glasses,

--An East European shtetl custom never relinquished by Jewish immigrants and poignantly reminiscent of their way of life. Ah gleyzel teh ("glass" of tea) was an idiomatic expression for hospitality.

18/4 My uncle's name . . . a magic incantatory part,

--Another allusion to Uncle Melech as G-d symbol. See Appendix A. There is a succinct summation in the following pages of salient traditions of the shtetl and of the shtetl's influence on Canadian immigrant Jewry.

18/4 the vowel signs . . . beneath . . . beside . . .
on top

--The Hebrew alphabet consists of 22 consonants. Vowel sounds are indicated by signs surrounding the consonant.

18/4 mystic block

--A hidden pun. Hebrew letters are square and block-like in appearance. According to Jewish mystical doctrines G-d created the world with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet (Scholem, Mysticism, pp. 75-76). They are thus the building "blocks" of creation.

18/4 candy money

--Throwing sweets onto a child's first Hebrew textbook to encourage learning is an old shtetl custom (Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, Life is with People, New York: International Universities press, 1955, p. 92). It is also a symbolic act to associate sweetness and scholarship. In the more affluent North America, coins as "candy money" were used instead.

18/5 a scholar in Israel

--A Hebrew phrase of Talmudic origin used to express hopes of future scholarly fame for a child (Talmud Gittin 58a). Israel refers to the people and not necessarily to the land.

18/5 made a legend of his name.

--See Appendix A. Melech's mythic qualities are subtly introduced.

18/5 Avenue de l'Hotel de Ville,

--Mild irony in this impressive sounding street name, which like Layton's "de Bullion" and Richler's "St. Urbain," was in the heart of the Jewish ghetto at one time. It was more commonly known by its more prosaic English equivalent, City Hall Street.

18/5 the sevens wore collars--

--A European manner of writing sevens to distinguish them from twos (7).

18/5 twittering . . . clucking

--For the source of fowl imagery in relation to verbal reports see Job 12, 7. Klein's metaphors can be understood independent of their Judaic sources, however the allusive dimension adds depth.

18/5 the Ilui

--An Aramaic term used in Yiddish for prodigy, as Klein translates. Its root is talmudic (Berakot 36a).

18/5 Volhynia . . . Ratno

--The province and town, respectively, in Russia (sometimes it was Poland) where Klein's parents lived before they came to Canada (Palnick, "Klein," Cap. 1, p. 1; also Caplan, "Klein, Introduction," p. 24).

18/5 ocean of the Talmud

--A Hebrew expression, adopted by Yiddish, to express the vast range and depth of the Talmud. Klein extends it into a conceit.

19/5 thrice

--A deliberate archaism to convey the old-fashioned appreciation of erudition. The description of Melech's piety and learning render him almost superhumanly saintly and wise.

19/5 as full of Torah as is the pomegranate of seeds,

--Torah specifically, means the Pentateuch, but when used generally, as it is here, the meaning is scholarship in the Jewish classics. The simile is an ironic reversal of the Talmud's reference to the Jewish boor: "Even the illiterate among thee are full of precepts [good deeds and religious acts] like a pomegranate [is full of seeds]" (Berakot 57a).

19/5 concede him the crown,

--The obvious metaphor hides a subtle allusion to the "crown of the Torah," a well known Talmudic concept relating to piety and scholarship which has become a proverbial phrase (Abot 4, 13).

19/5 Melech, king.

--The Hebrew Melech, king, is a common Jewish praenomen.

19/5 subtle-scholarly

--In the east-European academies there was a tradition

that too subtle a study of the classics could lead to a reduction of piety. The character whose acute intelligence leads him astray is well represented by numerous examples in the Yiddish literature of the past generation.

19/6 six hundred and thirteen injunctions of Holy Writ,

--See also 41/39, 105/139. According to oral tradition there are a total of 613 positive and negative commandments in the Bible (Talmud, Makkot 23b). Many of the commandments, such as tithes, the sabbatical year, etc., however, apply only to the Land of Israel.

19/6 ritual ablutions

--Jewish law requires a ritual washing of the hands upon arising, before prayers and before meals. Many pious individuals immerse themselves daily in a ritual bath (mikveh).

19/6 a flame tonguing

--The dual connotations of "tonguing" to suit the images of fiery holiness and fervent prayer are obvious. In addition there is an indirect allusion to the legendary Jonathan ben Uzziel concerning whom it is said when he occupied himself with religious study his spiritual fervour was so great that "every bird that flew above him was immediately burnt" (Talmud, Sukkot 28a).

19/6 he knew not to identify the countenances on coins.

--An allusion to the talmudic Rabbi Menahem ben Simai who "did not look at the effigy of a coin" because of the prohibition against graven images (Pesahim 104a). Klein alters the idolatrous context to create an image of utter disregard for the material things in life.

19/6 not ashamed to wax rich selling pork.

--According to Jewish law one must not engage in the commercial vending of forbidden foods (Ganzfried, Code, Cap. 2, p. 40),

Klein's deliberate choice of the verb "wax" conceals a pun. In the east-European shtetl candles were made of tallow. This fat is forbidden to Jews (Leviticus 3:17). If the candle "wax" dripped on food, the food could not be eaten. Consequently there was a Yiddish expression "forbidden as candle wax (tallow)" ("treif vi helev, osur vi helev"). The play on words is extended in "fat of the jest."

19/6 Sura and Pumbeditha

--Two cities in Babylonia prominent in the talmudic era (220-800 C.E.) for their scholars and academies.
(See CP 112:17.)

19/7 the second commandment

--Exodus 20:3. Many pious Jews still do not permit themselves to be photographed.

20/7 twigs of myrtle . . . last remnants of the Succoth ritual,

--Willow branches are beaten on the floor of the synagogue during the holy day of Tabernacles (Sukkot) at the conclusion of prayers for rain. The beaten branches, which must not be discarded, are often used as book marks (Ganzfried, Code, Cap. 3, p. 107). To the narrator they present an image of the "last remnants" of traditions no longer observed by his generation.

20/8 almemar

--A raised platform, traditionally in the center of the synagogue, from which the Torah scroll, or Bible, is read.

20/8 Ark of the Covenant

--An ark, usually made of wood, at the front of the synagogue to house the Torah scrolls. Its name and symbolic character derive from the ark into which Moses was commanded to put the tablets of stone containing the ten commandments (Exodus 37:1-9; 40:3).

20/8 pockmarks hieratic like unleavened bread,

--Unleavened bread, or matzoh, used for Passover, is perforated before baking to prevent rising. Consequently the square wafers resemble ancient Egyptian clay tablets on which hieroglyphics have been inscribed. Hieratic also means of a sacred nature. Kuznetsov's ecstatic elevation of spirit by the holy day ceremony is figuratively compared to the elevation of ordinary unleavened bread into matzoh by the Passover holy day.

Again, tradition is associated with the elderly. In the end, however, Uncle Melech elevates tradition for the narrator to something more than a sentimental attachment to the past.

20/8 the last verses of Deuteronomy joined the first of Genesis,

--See above 17/3.

21/8 the rooster on the page of the prayer of Bnai Adam.

--Prior to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) there is a Jewish custom to take a chicken (a rooster for males and a hen for females), circle it about the head and recite a prayer of atonement taken from Psalm 108 and beginning with the words Bnai Adam. The chicken is then slaughtered, cooked and given to the poor. (See Klein's "Plumaged Proxy," CP 148.) This ceremony gives rise to

a comical Yiddish expression used when someone exhibits bewilderment or confusion due to an elementary ignorance of some aspect of his situation; he is compared to the circling rooster looking at the prayer of Bnai Adam trying to discern what is going on (Er kukt mir uhn vi a huhn oif bnei adam).

In context the phrase refers to the ignorant who display great enthusiasm in celebrating the festival of Jewish Law, or Torah. If they were confronted with the Law they would look on it as incomprehensively as "the rooster on the page of the prayer of Bnai Adam."

21/9 Simchas Torah

--Hebrew for "the Feast of the Rejoicing in the Law" (20/7).

21/9 And in our old age . . . forsake us not . . .

--A solemn prayer recited on the High Holy Days during which the Ark of the Covenant is open and the congregation stands. Derived from Psalms (71:9), it is taken in both a personal as well as a Jewish national sense by worshippers and still occasions overt weeping.

21/10 shochet

--A religious functionary who slaughters animals in accordance with Jewish ritual, using a special knife.

21/10 like ghosts

--The theme of the Jewish people as ghosts is echoed
71, 72/87, 88, 89.

22/10 quoted Jeremiah

--Jeremiah 12:1.

22/10 Gemara

--Aramaic for Talmud.

22/11 four cubits of . . . ambience,

--A talmudic expression (arb'a amot) referring to a
person's immediate surroundings legally and symboli-
cally (Berakot 8a).

22/11 Fonya Swine

--Fonya is a Yiddish word for Russia. The origin is
obscure. It probably is derived from Afonya, the old
Slav equivalent of John, or it is a corruption of Ivan.
Russian Jews, whenever they were critical of their
government, would protect themselves from charges of
sedition by never referring to their country by name.
Instead they spoke of Fonya Hazir (Fonya, the swine),
which could be construed as the first and last names
of a person.

22/11 Somehow . . .

--See Appendix B for the significance of the arrangement of the references to the Glosses on the pages of the novel.

22/11, 12 to win . . . through prayer a happy and prosperous New Year.

--According to Jewish tradition a man's ethical conduct during the past year is judged during the High Holy Days and his fate determined accordingly for the coming year; but prayers and repentance avert an evil decree (Rosh Hashanah 1:2).

23/12 Sanctification of the Name

--A talmudic term for martyrdom (Berakot 20a). "The Name" refers to G-d who reveals His Name to those He loves (Exodus 3:13-15; 6:3).

23/13 chutzpa

--Means impertinence. It is used here ironically.

23/13 My fallen crown

--In Yiddish "my crown" (mein croin) is a common expression of regard and endearment. The words are of symbolic significance here for they refer to Melech, "king." See above 19/5.

24/14 Jewish Daily Forward

--A Yiddish language daily with a sharp socialistic bias, featuring articles characterized by polemical skill and messianic utopianism.

24/14 Hegel-baigel

--Hegel's philosophy, the basis of much philosophical and historical discussion in the 30's, is compared to a baigel (a doughnut-shaped bread roll), i.e. circling about nothing. Klein captures the typical attitude of many immigrant Jews in his descriptions of the narrator's family and their friends.

24/15 kapora

--A Hebrew word meaning atonement. As used in Yiddish, the term is semi-humorous and refers to the ritual of circling a rooster mentioned on 21/8. The meaning in context is: May Czar Nicholas (whose antipathy to Jews was well known) become the rooster which, by being circled, slaughtered, cooked and given to the poor, would serve as an atonement for King George.

24/15 ferocious lions . . . the Decalogue

--A popular decoration for the Ark of the Covenant in old synagogues. See above 20/8.

24/15 Chevra Thilim

--The name of a synagogue. Literally translated the words mean "Society of Psalms [Reciters]."

25/16 tzizith

--Fringes attached to a four-cornered garment in accordance with Numbers 15:37-41. Even in his ridiculous patriotism Cohen does not forget his religion, and attaches fringes to the four-cornered Union Jack.

25/15 pilpul

--Idiomatic Hebrew-Yiddish for elaborate and intricate sophistry. Literally it means pepper. Cf. 26/17, 18.

25/15 a black end

--A literal rendering of a comical Yiddish expression meaning a deserved ignominy (a shvartzen sof).

25/16 festivals and funerals

--Portending the terrible mock festival and massacre in Kamenets (33/27, 28).

26/17 commodity transactions at a standstill

--Cf. Matthew 21:12, Mark 11:15. Klein borrows Christian imagery for Uncle Melech. See Morris Laub, "A. M. Klein: A Recollection," Congress Bi-weekly, 22 Dec., 1972, p. 21; also Appendix A.

26/18 cloud by day . . . pillar of fire by night.

--An ironic comparison with Exodus 13:21, 22. As the Jews left Egypt "The L-rd went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light." Cf. below 38/36.

Exodus

The narrator is assigned by his publisher to find the poets of the new state of Israel and prepare an anthology of their works. As he gets his passport he ironically undergoes, in symbolic microcosm, the suffering of the Holocaust described later by Uncle Melech in a letter. From this letter we learn Uncle Melech was trapped in Kamenets, Poland, by the war. There, together with the Polish Jews, he endured the horrors of Nazi occupation. He recounts them in ghastly detail. The extraordinary suffering of the Jews is too significant in Uncle Melech's eyes to be attributed to casual history and he concludes that a re-enactment of the biblical story of the Exodus is taking place. He therefore returns to the traditional fold. Uncle Melech's letter moves the narrator and he decides to visit Europe to seek his uncle before going to Israel on his assignment. In the meantime Uncle Melech waits in a displaced person camp to board a Haifa-bound refugee ship.

For a study of Uncle Melech as G-d symbol see Appendix A; for a study of the biblical parallels in this chapter see Appendix B.

27/19 Gog and Magog

--Nations with whom the people of Israel will war at the end of days. See Ezekiel 38, 39.

27/19 Hierosolyma

--The Roman name for Jerusalem.

28/20 fifth of Iyar

--The day Israel declared independence according to the Jewish calendar. Iyar corresponds approximately to May.

28/20 Bnai Brak

--A city in Israel with an ancient history (Joshua 19:45). Translated literally the name means "Children of Lightning," or "Children of the Dawn." Klein alludes to the story related in the Haggadah (CP 143:1) that one Passover Eve in Bnai Brak several rabbis sat up all night telling tales of the Exodus from Egypt. They were so absorbed in the tales that they almost missed the morning service the next day. Many commentators suggest, because of the circumstances of the incident, that the spirit of the uprising against Rome led by Bar Kochba and the following short-lived

independence (132-35 C.E.), was born then. Hence Klein's unusual syntax, using the name of the city (Children of Lightning, or Dawn) as a description of the group gathered there.

28/20 forty years earlier . . . neither being nor name,
 --Tel Aviv, Israel's largest city. It was built in 1908 on sand dunes, where no city ever stood before, by sixty pioneering families, former inhabitants of Jaffa.

28/20 L-rd turned . . . Zion . . . dreamed.

--From Psalms 126, which was presumably sung by the Jews as they returned from the Babylonian exile (538 B.C.E.).

28/20 Stablising

--Use of the archaic form gives subtle expression to the idea of an old nation restored, a basic theme of the novel.

28/21 ibns of the golden age of Spain

--Ibn is the common patronymic prefix of Jewish Spanish poets responsible for the medieval flourishing of Hebrew literature. Cf. CP 244:33.

28/21 Elisheva

--Pen name of Russian-born Elisheva Bikhowsky, née Elizaveta Zhirkova (1888-1949). She converted to Judaism and moved to Israel (Palestine) in 1925. Her poems and stories are pervaded by a deep love of everything Jewish.

28/21 One has to suffer to earn Jerusalem.

--An allusion to the Talmud's statement that the Land of Israel is among three divine gifts acquired only through suffering (Berakot 5a). The other two are the Law and the next world.

Note the symbolic parallel of the narrator's "suffering" to Uncle Melech's Holocaust experience (32/26). See Introduction.

29/21 not closed nor bound up nor mollified with ointment.

--Isaiah 1:6, "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, nor bound up, nor mollified with oil "--Isaiah's metaphor for the suffering of Israel.

29/21 "wild beasts that lie in wait"

--Quoted from versions of the "traveller's prayer" (tefilat haderek) found in old prayerbooks.

29/21 New York . . . Paris . . . Rome . . . Lydda

--The actual itinerary of the journey by Klein which inspired the novel (above, "title") was: Tel Aviv, Paris, Marseille, Casablanca, Tunis, Rome and Bari (Caplan, "Klein: Introduction," p. 203). The significance of the order in the novel is that the narrator symbolically travels backwards in time, approximating a reverse chronology of major Jewish settlements in exile. The historical order is: 1) North Africa (Casablanca); 2) Italy (Bari, Rome); 3) the rest of Europe (Paris); 4) the New World (Montreal). (Because of exceptional creativity and a flourishing culture, the Babylonian talmudic era (ca. 250-500 C.E.) and the Spanish "Golden Age" (900-1492) are not considered "exilic" by Klein. Babylonia and Spain are therefore not included in the symbolic geographical time sequence.) Its reversal in the narrator's search for Uncle Melech expresses in symbolic form the thesis of the novel, that an ancient covenant, lost in history, is being renewed. Cf. 42/41. See also Spiro, "The Second Gloss," pp. 122-146.

29/21 No. 9 . . . I was the first of the minyan.

--Minyan is the quorum of ten worshippers required for synagogue services. The Talmud states, "A man should always rise early to go to synagogue so that he may have the merit of being counted in the first ten, since if even a hundred come after him he receives . . . a reward equal to that of all of them " (Berakot 47b). The nephew is symbolically among the first group of Diaspora Jews who return to the Jewish Homeland seeking and attempting to describe the spirit of the ancient people of Israel, personified by Uncle Melech. Others would follow, but he would have the reward of being among the first. Indeed Klein, who in many respects resembles the narrator, was among the first to attempt to express the emotions of the Jew living through the creation of Israel and to define his new relationship to it in literary terms.

The letters of the Hebrew alphabet have numerical value and are therefore used as cardinal numbers too. The Kabbalah (Jewish Mysticism) has given many Hebrew words in the Bible additional meanings based upon their numerical value. This method of interpretation is called gematria. One of the many procedures involved in calculating the total numerical value of a word consists of adding only the significant digits and casting

out zeros. (See Caspar Levias, "Gematria," The Jewish Encyclopedia, V, 591.) The numerical value of the trilateral "MeLeCH" in Hebrew, according to this procedure, is: 40 (M) + 30 (L) + 20 (CH) = (casting out zeros) 4 + 3 + 2 = 9. The mystical bond between narrator-nephew and Uncle Melech, which assumes greater and greater significance as the novel progresses, is thus foreshadowed in the passport number.

29/22 Bari

--A city of great Jewish scholars in the Middle Ages.

29/22 from the beyond

--A significant phrase in the context of Uncle Melech as G-d symbol. See Appendix A.

29/22 prized above rubies

--Proverbs 31:10 "A woman of valor (virtue) who can find? For her price is far above rubies."

29/22 "keen blade . . . mighty hammer"

--Examples of deliberately euphuistic salutations found in Responsa literature and still commonly used by Talmudic scholars in correspondence.

29/23 the new moon of Tammuz, five thousand . . . nine.

--In the Jewish lunar calendar "new moon," a biblical term (hodesh), is the first of the month. The day is of religious significance because special prayers commemorating "new moon" sacrifices are recited. Tammuz corresponds approximately to July. The years (five thousand . . .) are reckoned by tradition from the birth of Adam. Use of this counting is a measure of a Jew's unquestioning loyalty to his faith.

31/25 the man before me bears the number 12165 . . .
gematria . . .

--Using corresponding Hebrew letters for these digits (see above, 29/21) and reading them from right to left like Hebrew we get the declaration, "He comes!"-- a subtle allusion to Zechariah 9:9, "Behold, thy King will come unto thee." "King" in the biblical passage refers ambiguously to G-d and Messiah. Uncle Melech (Melech means king) is a symbol of both. "The man before" represents the prophet Elijah who will herald the ultimate salvation (Malachi 3:23, "Behold I send unto you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the day of the L-rd.>").

The messianic allusion is extended still further in a Kabbalistic fashion by gematria. The numerical value of the quadriliteral Hebrew word for

for Messiah, according to the procedure described above (29/21), is: MoSHIaH, 40 (M) + 300 (SH) + 10 (I) + 8 (H). Casting out zeros and adding only significant digits we get $4 + 3 + 1 + 8 = 16$. The number of "the man before," when subjected to the same procedure, amounts to 15 ($1 + 2 + 1 + 6 + 5 = 15$), i.e. "one" before Messiah.

Klein hints at this numerological wit when his narrator "wonder[s] whether it is in gematria that there lies the secret of their engravure."

However, this play on numbers should not obscure the larger metaphor of the tattoos on the crematoria victims being symbolically transformed through mystical "gematria" into Hebrew letters which re-create the world (above, 18/4) and bring redemption, an image which sums up the chapter of Exodus and concludes it:

Or I let my soul gambol among the cumuli of Cabbala:
When the years were ripened, and the years fulfilled
then there was fashioned Aught from Naught. Out of
the furnace there issued smoke, out of the smoke a
people descended (38/36).

31/25 When the L-rd . . . dreamed.

--Psalms 126:1. Cf. above 28/20. The dream content here, in ironic contrast to the context of the biblical verse, involves destruction instead of redemption.

31/26 Rabbi Simon ben Yochai . . . best of serpents

--The source is a rabbinical commentary on the Bible (Mekilta, Beshalah, Cap. 1). Rabbi Simon, traditionally considered the author of the classical text of the Kabbalah, the Zohar, appears again, like an echo, at the end of the novel (92/120).

32/26 grace before poison.

--Cf. Gloss Hai, 137/190.

33/28 Ark of the Covenant

--See above 20/8.

33/28 Scroll of the Law . . . hagba . . . hakafof . . .
aliyoth

--The Scroll of the Law, or sefer, which gives the novel its name (above, "title"), is written on parchment sheets sewn together to form a continuous scroll. The two ends of the scroll are attached to wooden rods about which the parchment is wound. On the occasions when the scroll is read in the synagogue it is raised by means of the rods for the congregation to see and declare, "This is the Law which Moses gave to the people of Israel at G-d's command!" The ritual is called hagba (hagbaah).

Note the ironic symmetrical contrast of this ghastly ceremony with the one in the Genesis chapter

involving the narrator's family (20/8). See Introduction.

At the Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law (20/7, 8) the Scroll of the Law is carried about the reader's platform (almemar, 20/8) in circuits or hakafos (hakafot).

During the reading of the Scroll at synagogue services members of the congregation are called to the reader's platform to be honoured by pronouncing a benediction over portions of the Scroll that are read. The honours are called aliyoth (aliyot).

33/29 We dug . . . Sabbath afternoon.

--Digging is specifically forbidden on the Sabbath.

(See Dayan Dr. I. Grunfeld, The Sabbath, London: Sabbath League of Great Britain, 1956, p. 36.)

34/30 'He sleeps not . . . Custodian of Israel!'

--Psalms 121:4.

35/31 freilichs

--Gay Jewish melodies played at weddings.

35/31 shma-Yisroels

--The biblical declaration "Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4), traditionally the last words a Jew utters before he dies.

37/34 ben Bag Bag

--A talmudic sage, a proselyte, who used to say of the Divine Law, "Turn it over again and again for everything is contained therein, look deeply into it, grow grey and old over it for there is no better standard of conduct than it" (Abot 5:22).

37/34 palm leaf shaken . . . citron held and palmed and blessed.

--During Tabernacles a palm branch, a citron, a myrtle and a willow are shaken in all directions at synagogue services as a ritual gesture of thanksgiving for the harvest of the land and as a supplication for future blessings.

37/34 language Biblic:

--See above 17/3.

37/34 And it came to pass . . .

--A paraphrase of G-d's call to Abraham (Genesis 12:1), "Get thee out of thy country, and out of thy birth place and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee."

37/35 Mishna

--The basic and historically original element of the Talmud.

37/35 On the day . . .

--Klein's own composition in the style of the Talmud.

37/35 monarch,

--Characteristics of Messiah (Isaiah 11:1-5, Zechariah 9:9).

37/35 When the years . . .

--For the general metaphor, see above 31/25. Additional images and allusions are:

"Aught from Naught"--An allusion to chaos and subsequent creation (Genesis 1:2) which becomes a symbol of the Holocaust and the subsequent establishment of a Jewish homeland;

"furnace . . . smoke"--An allusion to the covenant between Abraham and G-d involving a prophecy of bondage and oppression followed by redemption and a return to the land, all of which is symbolized by a smoking furnace ("And it came to pass, when the sun had gone down, and it was dark, that behold a smoking furnace, and a burning flame," Genesis 15:17.); also an allusion to the smoke of the crematoria of Europe.

"capitals hissed"--An allusion to the fear engendered in the hearts of Israel's enemies at the crossing of the Red Sea. The supernatural crossing later became a symbol of G-d's protection and salvation

("Nations hear it and tremble; sorrow seizeth the inhabitants of Palestine. Then were troubled the dukes of Edom; the mighty men of Moab, trembling seizeth them; faint-hearted become all the inhabitants of Canaan," Exodus 15:14-15). There is also an allusion in this phrase to the nations which opposed the creation of Israel at the United Nations in 1948 and the Arab states which attacked Israel at the time.

37/35 Sambation

--A legendary river beyond which live the Ten Lost Tribes and hence a symbol of the restoration of ancient Israel. All week the raging river sends rocks into the air and is impassable, but on the Sabbath it ceases its turbulence and can be crossed. The six days of raging torrents represent the travail of the people of Israel during their exile; the peaceful Sabbath represents the rebirth of the nation and its entrance (crossing the river) into a new age, an age "sabbatical in universal peace" (45/46).

Leviticus

The events of the chapter are described in a context of religion and mystery. The narrator, now in Rome to seek his uncle, is told that a certain Cardinal Piersanti has befriended him. He visits the cardinal.

The prince of the church, whose name and symbolic role is suggestive of Saint Peter, admits trying to convert Uncle Melech but cannot tell the nephew where his uncle is. He does, however, hand him a letter written by Uncle Melech following a visit to the Sistine Chapel. The cardinal had urged the visit in an attempt to convert Uncle Melech to Christianity through an appreciation of Christian art. Before the narrator has an opportunity to read the letter it is confiscated by mysterious criminal elements. The letter is eventually returned. It contains a radically novel interpretation of Michelangelo's masterpiece and a triumphant affirmation of Uncle Melech's old faith. Still seeking his uncle, the narrator visits a displaced persons' camp near Rome. He is informed there that his uncle has gone to North Africa instead of directly to Israel as he originally planned. Uncle Melech emerges boldly in this chapter as a G-d symbol. The competition for his conversion is clearly symbolic of each religion's claim to represent the "true" G-d.

For a study of Uncle Melech as G-d symbol see Appendix A; for a study of the biblical parallels in this chapter see Appendix B.

39/37 spying out of the land

--Numbers 13:2, "And the L-rd spoke unto Moses saying, send thou out some men that they may spy out the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel."

39/37 "on the wings of eagles"

--A biblical metaphor for the Exodus--"Ye have yourselves seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles wings" (Exodus 19:4).

39/37 diminished tribe

--The tribe of Benjamin was massacred and the remnant ostracized because they refused to condemn an immoral act committed by one of their members. It was therefore said, "One tribe hath this day been cut down from Israel" (Judges 21:6, 17). The biblical allusion becomes a metaphor for the diminished number of Jews after the Holocaust and for the narrator's family in Europe.

39/37 an uncle never seen or known.

--A hidden allusion to Uncle Melech as G-d symbol. See Appendix A.

40/38 Immanuel . . . 'Tophet and Eden.'

--Immanuel of Rome, early Jewish poet of the Middle Ages (b. 1265). See Israel Zinberg, A History of Jewish

Literature, ed. and transl. Bernard Martin (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1972), II, 201-17.

40/38 Nachum Krongold

--Nachum, a common praenomen, means comforted or consoled (Isaiah 40:1), and Krongold means crown of gold. Both are "companion" images to Melech as Messiah and as G-d. See Appendix A.

40/38 Monsignor Piersanti . . . a fisher of men.

--Saint ("santi") Peter ("pier"), a "fisher of men" (Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:17), symbolically representing the Church.

40/39 of the four men who would gaze into paradise:

--A parable related in the Talmud (Haggigah 14b) of four rabbis who attempt a mystical union with the Divine. All except Rabbi Akiva suffer in some way. "That Other" refers to one of the four who becomes an apostate after this experience and, as far as the rabbis are concerned, entirely "another" person. Rabbi Akiva's call not to take "polished marble pure" for water is interpreted as a warning against taking illusion for reality, a basic caution for all mystics, but portentously directed to "That Other."

41/39 cut down the plant . . . a cutter down of plants
. . . an uprooter

--See above 18/4.

41/39 Thirty score inhibitions

See above 19/6.

41/39 for his sake and for our name's sake

--An ironic reversal of the biblical phrase "for His Name's sake " (Psalms 23:3) and therefore a subtle allusion to Melech as G-d symbol. See Appendix A.

42/31 road to Damascus

--Acts 9. Saul becomes Paul when he sees a vision on the road to Damascus.

42/41 relapses and backslidings . . . climbing ever
upward . . . the direction from which it came . . .
two paces forward one pace back That's
progress, of course, but it makes a very jagged
spiritual graph.

--The significance of these kinetic images must be considered in the context of the novel's philosophy of history. At the outset the narrator believes history moves in a straight line toward ultimate salvation. After the battle of Gog and Magog, at the end of days,

"Hierosolyma the golden" will descend from heaven "in an undulating sunlit landscape" (27/19). As he matures, and especially through his pursuit of Uncle Melech, he learns that, for the Jewish people at least, history moves forward in biblical cycles of suffering and redemption. In the Bible the Jews rebel and are punished, then they repent and are saved. In each cycle they acquire a deeper understanding of their relationship with G-d. Piersanti's derisive description of Uncle Melech's spiritual life ironically epitomizes the theme of the novel and the meaning of its title--a great biblical cycle is recurring in contemporary times for Uncle Melech and the people he symbolizes.

For a full discussion of the philosophy of history implied in the novel see Spiro, "The Second Gloss," pp. 85-105, 130.

43/43 The first page is missing.

--An allusion to the Talmud. All editions follow a peculiarity of the editio princeps and begin with page two. See Appendix A.

A secondary allusion involves a tradition, contained in a letter found in Rome, concerning the chronology of the Messianic age:

R. Hanan b. Tahlifa sent word to R. Joseph: I once met a man who possessed a scroll written in

Hebrew in Assyrian characters. I said to him:
 'Whence has this come to thee?' He replied, 'I
 hired myself as a mercenary in the Roman army, and
 found it amongst the Roman archives. In it it is
 stated that four thousand two hundred and thirty
 one years after the creation the world will be
 orphaned. As to the years following, some of them
 will be spent in the war of the great sea monsters,
 and some in the war of Gog and Magog, and the
 remaining will be the Messianic era' (Talmud,
Sanhedrin 97b).

43/44 epiphany

--One of many verbal clues to the interpretation of Uncle
 Melech as G-d symbol. See Appendix A.

44/44 Zolli

--Israel Zoller (Zolli, 1881-1956) became Chief Rabbi
 of Rome in 1943. While still in office he converted to
 Christianity in a gesture of gratitude to Pope Pius XII
 for saving him and a number of Roman Jews during World
 War II.

Klein inaccurately refers to Zolli's conversion
 as "but a year ago" (44/44). The narrator's journey
 was undertaken "after the first year of the Stablising"
 (28/20), or in 1949 (1948 + 1 = 1949); Zolli converted

in 1944. (See Morris Laub, "A. M. Klein, A Recollection" Congress Bi-weekly, 22 Dec. 1972, p. 20.) Klein, however, must be permitted this chronological license to dramatize the narrator's fear of Uncle Melech's apostasy.

44/45 Anacletus

--Anacletus II (Pietro Pierleoni), Antipope to Innocent II from 1130-1138, called by Voltaire "the Jewish Pope" because his ancestors were Jews.

47/50 to decode the name of Uncle Melech,

--See above 29/21 for Melech's "code" in the passport; also Appendix A.

49/53 head, level with the tray . . . and as lying upon
it.

--Cf. Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29. Herod kills John the Baptist and gives his head on a silver dish as a gift to the daughter of Herodias.

49/53 Settano

--On the struggle with Settano see Appendix A.

50/55 polyphonous evocation of Aramaic

--The combination of Hebrew and Aramaic is characteristic of talmudic language. Cf. above 43/43. See Appendix A.

50/55 Pumbeditha . . . Sura.

--See above 19/6.

51/55 The singing bird . . .

--Cf. above 18/5 where the same image is used for Melech.

51/56 Sistine lime pit of his own day,

--See below 106/140.

51/56 midrashic ingenuity

--The Midrash is a talmudic exegesis of the Bible with intricate and unusual interpretations. In the Genesis chapter Uncle Melech had applied his "Talmudic discipline" in the interests of Communism (26/17).

51/56 divinity of humanity

--Cf. Genesis 1:26, 27; 3:22, "And G-d said, 'Let us make man in our image' And the L-rd G-d said, 'Behold the man is become as one of us.'"

51/56 drunkenness of Noah

--Genesis 9:20-29, "And Noah, who was a husbandman . . . planted a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and became drunken. . . ."

51/57 'The Flood'

--Genesis 7:12-24, "And the rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights And all flesh perished"

51/57 'Noah's Sacrifice'

--Genesis 8:20, "And Noah built an altar unto the L-rd . . . and offered burnt-offerings on the altar."

51/57 'Expulsion from Eden'

--Genesis 3:23-24, "Therefore the L-rd G-d sent him forth from the Garden of Eden "

51/57 The Creation of Adam and Eve

--Genesis 26-27, "And G-d said, 'Let us make man in our image'"

51/57 Since Adam . . . the killing of man is decide.

--The concept is implied in a rabbinic parable used to explain the prohibition against leaving the corpse of an executed man hanging overnight (Deuteronomy 49:23):

R. Meir said: A parable was stated--to what is this matter comparable? To two twin brothers who lived in one city; one was appointed king and the other took to highway robbery. At the command of the king they hanged him. But all who saw him

exclaimed, "The king is hanged." Whereupon the king issued a command and he was taken down (Sanhedrin 46b).

The "king" in the parable is G-d in whose image man is created.

Historically it has been the Jews who have been accused of "deicide." With "midrashic ingenuity" Uncle Melech sees Michelangelo accusing Christians of "deicide" ironically through frescoes in one of Christianity's holiest shrines.

51/57 Since Eve . . . murder of the mortal is a murder of the immortal.

--Again a talmudic concept. The text reads:

For thus we find in the case of Cain, who killed his brother, that it is written, 'The bloods of thy brother cry unto me (Genesis 4:10), not the blood of thy brother, but the bloods of thy brother is said--i.e. his blood and the blood of his potential descendants (Sanhedrin 46b).

52/58 rainbow pledging cessation of flood

--Genesis 9:12-17, " . . . And it shall come to pass that when I bring a cloud over the earth and the bow

shall be seen in the cloud, I will remember my covenant . . . and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."

52/58 Creation of the Sun and Moon

--Genesis 1:14-19, ". . . And G-d made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night."

52/58 Separation of Light from Darkness

--Genesis 1:3-4, "And G-d saw the light that it was good, and G-d divided between the light and the darkness."

52/58 show (and not show) the face of G-d,

--Biblical metaphors for good and evil. Cf. Exodus 23:20. See also Appendix A.

52/58 the thirteen credos of Maimonides.

--See 111, 112/148, 149.

52/58 Uncle Melech was hidden, but not lost.

--Cf. Deuteronomy 31:13. See Appendix A.

52/58 American Joint Distribution Committee

--Commonly referred to by its acronym, JDC (below 62/72), is an American based voluntary agency engaged in the rescue and rehabilitation of refugees. It was especially active during World War II.

53/59, 60 "Der Yid" (Yiddish)

--"The Jew at the other (second) table is very likable."

"Mais" (French)

--"Yes, one speaks French in Quebec."

"In Detroit" (German)

--"I found an uncle in Detroit."

"Derveil" (Yiddish)

--"In the meantime he makes a living with the American dollars Meat and dairy (legal and illegal)."

"Az Amerikai" (Hungarian)

--"The American fashion magazine shows very good taste."

"Basta!" (Italian)

--"Enough!"

"Un restaurant" (Roumanian)

--"A small restaurant, where (here) it is possible to get a cocktail."

"Yehudai haglut" (Hebrew)

--"Jews of the Diaspora, who seek the Diaspora . . . we remember the onions and the garlic." A paraphrase of the complaints of the Jews as they travelled in the desert: "We remember the fish, which we could eat in Egypt for naught; the cucumbers, and the melons and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." (Numbers 11:5).

The different languages emphasize the diversity of Jews in exile.

53/60 Krongold

--Cf. 40/38; also Appendix A.

54/60 hearsay and blood ties

--A significant phrase in the context of Uncle Melech as G-d symbol. See Appendix A.

Numbers

The narrator is fascinated by the Arabian Nights atmosphere of Casablanca when he arrives. The next day,

as he is driven through the Jewish quarter, he sees ugly poverty everywhere. His perspective is an ironic contrasting parallel to the fascination of the previous day. (See Introduction.)

Uncle Melech, the narrator finds out, had been engaged by a Jewish relief organization to compile statistics on the Jewish community. The compilation revealed poverty and disease rampant among the Jews. Uncle Melech tried to get the information published in the local newspaper but was unsuccessful. In frustration he organized a march of the poor, the crippled and the ailing on the authorities. The police arrested Uncle Melech, but through the intervention of his employer he escaped incarceration. He then left for Israel. The chapter closes with the narrator following.

For a study of Uncle Melech as G-d symbol see Appendix A; for a study of the biblical parallels in this chapter see Appendix B.

61/72 his face

--Cf. 62/58. See Appendix A.

61, 62/72 Dauphin . . . Dalfen

--The change from Dalfen to Dauphin is ironic. Dauphin, a regal term (the eldest prince of a French king), is contrasted with Dalfen, a legitimate Jewish surname but

also a comical Yiddish term denoting "poor foolish beggar." The Yiddish term is itself derived from a pun on a name in the Book of Esther (9:60). On Dauphin's language see Appendix C.

68/83 Monsieur Davidson . . . the beggars etc.

--Being among beggars is a characteristic of the Messiah according to the Talmud:

R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai's tomb

He then asked him 'When will the Messiah come?'

-- 'Go and ask him himself,' was his reply.

'Where is he sitting?' 'At the entrance

[to the town].'

'And by what sign may I recognize him?' -- 'He is sitting among the poor lepers' (Sanhedrin 98z).

Deuteronomy

Uncle Melech is finally in Israel and the search for him is almost at an end. The narrator feels his uncle is tantalizingly close yet he cannot find him. There is a mood of mysticism in this chapter, enhanced by the constant references to the Kabbalah and Jewish mystical doctrines. The narrator runs after several elderly men thinking they are his uncle, only to find

out he is mistaken. Finally he discovers Melech resides in Safed, city of mystics, and goes there to meet him. In the meantime, Uncle Melech, returning from visits to outlying settlements, is killed by an Arab terrorist and his body is burned. The narrator never gets to see his uncle. An ambiguously mythical and contemporary multitude gathers for Uncle Melech's funeral. The narrator recites a prayer in their midst. He leaves Israel inspired and resolute in his faith. He does not discover the prototypical Israeli poet--the literature of Israel was in the streets, diffused in the everyday language of the people speaking a revived ancient Hebrew--nor does he find his uncle, but he is transformed by the search.

71-73/86-90 The miracle . . . in your thesis, to place

G-d:

--For an analysis of the passenger's "theory about contemporary events" see Appendix D. The passenger and Uncle Melech are symbolic representations of conflicting doubt and faith in the narrator's mind. The passenger personifies cynical . skepticism. Culturally sophisticated, like the narrator, he doubts Israel "would be of the same transcendence and glory as that of the past " (73/90). The elusive Uncle Melech, on the other hand, represents the promise of that "same transcendence and glory."

He is a symbol of G-d. The narrator, though, decides to follow his Uncle Melech, certain he will be found. See also Appendix A.

72/88 the mirror fogged at the seemingly breathless mouth.

--An old practice to determine if there was still life in a dead body was to hold a mirror to the nostrils (or mouth). If it fogged there was still breath and, consequently, life. Cf. King Lear 5:3.

73/90 'Baba Bathra'

--A tractate of the Talmud dealing with the laws of commercial transactions.

74/90 Carmel-crowning Haifa

--The residential area of Haifa is on the summit of biblical Mount Carmel.

74/90 flaming sword to prohibit access

--Cf. Genesis 3:24. After expelling Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, G-d "placed at the east of the Garden of Eden the Cherubim and the flaming sword which revolveth, to guard the way to the tree of life." The British Navy blocked access to Palestine to refugees fleeing

from Europe during and immediately after World War II.

75/92 to suspect him everywhere and to find him nowhere.

--Significant in the interpretation of Uncle Melech as G-d symbol. See Appendix A.

75/93 robed in white

--A sign of purity and spiritual satisfaction. Cf. Ecclesiastes 9:8, "At all times let thy garments be white, and let oil not be wanting on thy head."

75/93 a man riding a donkey

--Characteristic of the Messiah. See Zechariah 9:9, "Behold thy King will come . . . lowly and riding upon an ass."

75/93 'Tisha B'Av'

--The ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, the day on which the first and second Temples in Jerusalem were destroyed (586 B.C.E. and 70 C.E.). It is still observed by Jews as a day of mourning.

75/93,94 The splendour and riches . . .

--Klein's rendition of one of the Zionides of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, a medieval Hebrew poet and philosopher

(b. ca. 1080). It was originally published in The Canadian Jewish Chronicle, 20 August, 1948. See also CP 244:1.

76/94 almost female with pathos

--A common rabbinic metaphor. (See, for example, Talmud, Berakot 32a.)

76/94 my mother's voice

--Cf. 23/13. Verbal echoes of previous themes relate the end of the novel to the beginning to suggest the eternal cycle of biblical events. See Spiro, "The Second Gloss," pp. 122-31, 159 ff. for a full study of these and similar patterns in the novel.

76/94 'moshavim'. . . 'kibbutzim'

--Types of collective agricultural communities in Israel.

76/94 'chalutzim'

--Pioneers.

76/95 Lazarus Acharon . . . Jochanan Zefany--

--Most of these Hebrew and Yiddish names are metaphors, symbols and concealed puns alluding to Uncle Melech's roles as Suffering Servant, Messiah, people of Israel and G-d. Interpreted symbolically they describe past

Jewish poverty, oppression and suffering and imply a promise of future salvation. Some of the names are also famous Jewish personalities and friends of Klein. See comment on "Boris Trizachest."

Lazarus Acharon

--Literally "the latter (or last) Lazarus." Klein is not averse to using Christian images (Cf. 36/42, 49/53), and Uncle Melech, symbolic of the Jewish nation after the Holocaust, rises from the dead (36/32) as did the first Lazarus (John 11).

Israel Agathides

--The Greek suffix ides, which means son of, when translated into Hebrew, becomes bar. The Hebrew has the additional meaning, "follower of" (as in bar mitzvah, follower of the commandment). Agathism is the doctrine that all things tend toward good. Hence the meaning is: "Israel, the follower of the doctrine of Agathism!"

Yerachmiel Alkudsi

--The praenomen is Hebrew. "Al Kuds" (the holy) in Arabic refers to Jerusalem. "Alkudsi" would then mean "the Jerusalemite." The literal meaning of the Hebrew praenomen is "G-d will have mercy."

Moishe Anav

--"Moses the meek." Cf. Numbers 12:3, "But the man Moses was very meek, more so than any man who was upon the face of the earth." Melech in his capacity as a leader is a Moses figure.

Chatzkel Belfer

--"Ezekiel the helper." The belfer, or behelfer, a teacher's aide, was a stock character in shtetl life. His post, which involved a minimum of responsibility (and commensurate compensation), was usually filled by a ne'er do well. The tradition that the Messiah would be a beggar (Zechariah 9:9, Cf. 68/83) made every belfer, especially because of his association with a religious life, a possible Messiah in disguise. Israel Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the mystical movement known as Hassidism, was a belfer for many years before he was revealed as a saint and miracle worker. (See 141/196.)

Isaac Chamouche

--The French pronunciation of the surname is paronymically the Hebrew for "Isaac the Beadle." In Yiddish literature the beadle is usually a good-natured shlemiel and, because of his poverty and association with religion, a potential Messiah.

Ibrahim ibn Daoud

--Arabic for "Abraham the son of David." It is a name shared by a prominent medieval Jewish philosopher (d. ca. 1180) and a famous commentator on Maimonides' Code (ca. 1125-1198).

Shloime Evyan

--Hebrew for "Solomon the Pauper." The identification of the extravagant Solomon and the poor Messiah, both descendants of David, adds a measure of irony to the variety of Uncle Melech's symbolic roles.

Enoch Fried

--The praenomen in Hebrew is equivalent to the imperative form of the verb "inaugurate" (hanok), while the surname is Yiddish for "joy." The message of the names therefore is: "Inaugurate joy!"

Jonah Furchtiger

--"Fearful (Yiddish, furchtiger) Jonah" (the biblical prophet) or "fearful dove" (Hebrew, yonah). The dove is a traditional symbol of Israel (Talmud, Gittin 45a) and fear a conventional characteristic of Jacob (Genesis 32:8; Isaiah 44:2), also called Israel (Genesis 35:1).

Jacob Gottlieb

--"Jacob, lover of G-d" (Yiddish-German).

Samuel Galut

--"Samuel Exile" (Hebrew).

M. Hadom

--Hadam means "the silent one" (Hebrew). M is the conventional sound a worshipper makes to indicate to someone addressing him that he is in the midst of prayers and it is prohibited to converse.

Pinchas Hasdi

--"Pious Phineas" (Hebrew).

I. Iota

--The smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, yod, is commonly transliterated i. Iota is the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet. This name, therefore, a combination of the smallest letters of the Hebrew and Greek alphabets, becomes a double symbol of humility and self-effacement. See also below 98/127 regarding iota as Holocaust symbol.

Kalman Klain

--"Kalman the small." This name continues the theme of humility. Klain is the Yiddish pronunciation of the equivalent German, klein, the author's surname. Kalman Klein is the author's father.

Abraham Nistar

--"Abraham the hidden" (Hebrew). In Hebrew and Yiddish hagiology a nistar is one who conceals his saintly ways out of humility. The name is a descriptive alias of Uncle Melech but the author Abraham Moses, "coming after" his father Kalman (the previous name), also subtly hints he has hidden his own identity in the symbolism of Uncle Melech. See Spiro "The Second Gloss," pp. 47-59 for an interpretation of Uncle Melech as a personification of Klein's spirit.

Yidel Nebich

--"Pitiable little Jew" (Yiddish). Yidel, a diminutive of Judah, is also a folk term for the Jew in general and, by symbolic extension, the nation of Israel.

Elijah Razin

--"Elijah the mysterious" (Aramaic).

Simon Rachmin

--Simon the merciful" (Talmudic Aramaic-Hebrew).

Luis de Santangel

--A name borne by at least five different Marrano Jews prominent in fifteenth century Spain. One of them took an important part in the negotiations between Columbus

and the Spanish king and queen which led to the voyage that discovered the New World. He also lent 17,000 ducats of his personal funds, without interest, for the enterprise.

B. Schweig

--Bonche (a minutive of Benjamin) Schweig ("the silent one") is the main character in a classical short story by I. L. Peretz, one of the fathers of Yiddish literature. In heaven, after an earthly life of humble silence, Bonche is offered anything his heart desires. He meekly asks for a roll and butter!

I. I. Segal

--A prominent Yiddish literary figure of Montreal in Klein's day. Klein translated some of his works.

Immanuel Shemantov

--Immanuel, the Messiah (Isaiah 7, 14), who will be anointed with fine oil (shemantov, Hebrew).

Menachem Taimon

--"He will console Yemen" (Hebrew). Yemen stands for Sephardic Israel, "the lost half of Jewry" (55/63). Cf. Zechariah 9:14 (sa'arot taimon).

Hans Taub

--"Hans the good." The Hebrew for good (tob) is given a typical German Jewish accent (taub). The name may also mean "Hans the dove". (See above "Jonah Furchtiger.")

Boris Trizatchest

--"Boris [of the] thirty-six" (Russian, триацать or Polish, trzydzisci), referring to the talmudic tradition that for the sake of thirty-six pious men the world is sustained (Succah 45a). There are thirty-six names in the list. Cf. CP 216:5.

Leopold Untertahn

--"Leopold the submissive" (Yiddish).

Dov Vives, Alter Vital

--The surnames contain a Latin root meaning "life."

Noah Venod

--Pronounced together the names form a paronymic in Hebrew meaning "wanderer" (Genesis 4:12).

Aaron Wassertrager

--"Aaron the watercarrier." The occupation in Yiddish fiction is always portrayed as hard but honest work.

Saul Xenos

--"Saul the stranger or alien" (Greek). Jews were always strangers in the lands of their exile.

Ephraim Zacuta

--The surname is that of a fifteenth century Spanish-Jewish astronomer (Abraham ben Samuel) who discovered the astrolabe used by Vasco da Gama in his voyages, and a seventeenth century Kabbalist (Moses ben Mordecai). It means "merit."

Henri Zadoch

--"Henry the righteous" (Hebrew).

Jochanan Zefany

--"John the hopeful" (Hebrew).

76/95 reminiscent of the blessing of the Sabbath candles

--Sabbath candles are blessed by waving the hands over them after they are lit and pronouncing the benediction.

78/97 it was he . . . pursuing me.

--In the context of Uncle Melech as G-d symbol this alludes to the doctrine of "G-d in Search of Man."

See Appendix A.

78/98 Rahel's song

--Klein's English rendition of a Hebrew song. It was published in The Canadian Jewish Chronicle, 9 August, 1946.

79/99 Bialik

--Chaim Nachman Bialik, one of the most prominent poets of modern Hebrew literature (1873-1934).

79/99 bar-kochbic

--With revolutionary fervor. Simon bar Kochba (Kosba) led a revolt against Rome. See 28/20.

79/99 Uri Zvi

--Uri Zvi Greenberg, poet of national liberation (1894 -). Klein translated Greenberg's poem "Mother Jerusalem" and published it in The Canadian Jewish Chronicle, 4 October, 1950.

79/99 Irgun

--Irgun Zevai Le-umi, a somewhat radical Jewish resistance movement during the British occupation of Palestine. Members also fought as a unit in the War of Independence (1948).

79/99 sabra

--Native Israeli. Literally a species of cactus fruit.

79/100 'shlilath hagaluth'

--In addition to the definition given by Klein in the text, namely, "that Jewry abroad was doomed," the term carries the connotation of a philosophy which attempted to build the nation of Israel anew, without the burden of past traditions. Among its chief objectives was the eradication of an inherited victim mentality among Jews.

81/102 ghetto-gotten Rashi

--Isaacides (1040-1105), a most important commentator of the Bible. See CP 118:26, 231:23.) Medieval Hebrew, which he wrote, lacked the vocabulary of its modern counterpart, hence Rashi described biblical animals as "a kind of"

81/102 the fauna of Kamenets

--Cf. 36/33. Another verbal echo tying the end of the novel to the beginning.

81/102 adamic intimacy

--Genesis 2:19, 20, "And the L-rd G-d had formed out of the ground every beast of the field, and every fowl of the heaven, and he brought them unto the man to see what he would call them; and whatsoever the man would call every living creature, that should be its name."

The people-poets, who created modern Hebrew, renewed Adam's intimacy with the animals in the Garden of Eden by using the same biblical names.

81/102 paytanim

--Liturgical poets whose works are recited on the holy days at synagogue services. See below 136/189, Gloss Hai.

81/102 a table prepared, a 'Shulchan Aruch'

--Klein himself translates the Hebrew. Shulchan Aruch means "a table prepared." The themes and structures of liturgical poetry are rigidly conventional like "a table prepared." The poetry therefore needs no "program notes." Shulchan Aruch is also the Hebrew title of the Code of Jewish Law, and since liturgical poetry invariably alludes to many laws of the holy days, "a table prepared" is both a metaphor for the rigid form of liturgical poetry and a punning allusion to its contents.

81/103 the young and very wise Nathan

--Nathan Alterman (1910-1970) whose early verse consisted of satirical commentaries on the politics of the day. Klein also alludes to the hero of "Nathan the Wise" a drama by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1719-1781), which had a significant impact on the prevailing attitude

towards Jews. Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), father of the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment), was the inspiration for "Nathan."

82/104 daughter of Israel most unaccomodating

--The metaphor is used in 2 Kings 19:21 and other places.

82/104 Tiberias . . . punctators . . . vocalized our script

--Originally Hebrew script consisted entirely of consonants; the vowel sounds were supplied by oral tradition. About the eighth century (C.E.) Tiberian scholars devised the system of points used today to indicate the vowels. Cf. 18/4.

83/105, 106 Madness . . . Grow olives?

--For analysis and commentary see Appendix E.

84/107 'Sneh' . . . Moses' burning bush

--Exodus 3:2, "And the angel of the L-rd appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thorn bush, and he looked and behold, the thornbush was burning with fire, but the thornbush was not consumed."

84/107 'Bashan' . . . Og

--Deuteronomy 3:11. Og, King of Bashan, was a giant.

Cf. CP 92.

84/107 'Kisheth,' the rainbow, symbol of cessation
of floods!

--Genesis 9:8-17. See above 52/58.

84/107 House of Hillel . . . House of Shammai

--Two of the most prominent schools in Talmudic times,
named after their founders.

84/108 'taiku'

--A Talmudic technical term used to denote an unresolved
problem. It is supposed to be an acronym of the Hebrew
phrase, Tishbi yetaraitz kushioth v'abayoth, translated
by Klein, "The Tishbite would resolve all problems and
difficulties." The "Tishbite" is Elijah (1 Kings 17:1),
herald of the Messiah. However the interpretation is
homiletical.

Talmudic scholars may quibble that taiku is
never used in the particular disputes of the House of
Hillel and the House of Shammai; nevertheless Klein is
correct in describing the transference of the ancient
term to modern conditions.

85/108 'heard' a broken bone come together,

--From the vision of Ezekiel (37:7) in the "Valley of Dry Bones"--"Behold there was a rustling noise, the bones came together, bone to its bone."

85/109 Little David had slain Goliath?

--1 Samuel 17.

85/109 Jaffa had seen a whale regurgitate Jonah?

--Jonah 1:3; 2:11.

85/109 'They fought . . . Sisera'

--Judges 5:20. Part of Deborah's song of victory after the war against the Canaanites led by Sisera.

86/110 Titus . . . as reported by the rabbis . . . the insect . . . Titus tortured tick by tick . . .

--This tradition about Titus' retribution for destroying the Temple is found in the Talmud (Gittin 56b).

86/110 The two tablets . . . shattered.

--An allusion to Moses' shattering the tablets of stone at Mount Sinai (Exodus 32:19).

86/110 'shvarim', (the tragic triad)

--Meaning literally "shattered" in Hebrew. (Note the

continuity of the previous image.) The term refers to the three staccato blasts of the ram's horn sounded on the Jewish New Year during the prayer service. Resembling sighs of sorrow, the sounds symbolize the tragic condition of man in general and the Jew in particular.

86/111 'When the years . . . Aught from Naught.'

--Verbal echoes from the Exodus chapter (38/35, 36).

87/111 Jericho's miracle

--Joshua 6.

87/112 'Rebono shel Olam,' Master of Coincidences

--Literally, Master of the Universe, but translated by Klein homiletically, "Master of Coincidences."

87/112 'kaddish'

--Doxology recited by the reader at services and by mourners in memory of parents.

87/112 'Mishnaioth'

--Plural of mishna, basic element of the Talmud (37/35).

"Mishnaioth" are customarily recited to honour the memory of the departed. A slight re-arrangement of the Hebrew letters of mishna yeilds neshamah, Hebrew for soul.

87/112 Rabbi Isaac Luria

--Founder of the Safed school of Kabbalists (1534 - 72).

The many Kabbalistic references and terms in this chapter enhance the mood of mystery. Klein deliberately creates as the climax of the search for the mythic Uncle Melech approaches. They also presage the apotheosis of Uncle Melech.

88/113 'Baba Kama'

--A tractate of the Talmud dealing with torts and usually studied by beginners.

88/113 'Tosfoth'

--Medieval French commentary on the Talmud characterized by intricate logic.

88/113 'Pamalyah shel Malah.'

--Celestial agencies. The term has strong mystical connotations (Talmud, Hulin 7b; Sanhedrin 67b).

88/113 Erev Shabbos

--Eve of the Sabbath. In Jewish religious time reckoning a day commences with sundown of the previous day.

88/114 Messiah's days . . . all good . . . 'cholila,'
all evil.

--Talmud Sanhedrin 98a, "R. Johanan also said: The son of David will come only in a generation that is either altogether righteous or altogether wicked." Cholila - heaven forfend (Hebrew).

88/114 'kvitzath ha-derech,' the curtailment of the
route.

-- In Isaiah 11:11-16 G-d promises to shorten the road to Israel from all the places of exile. The miracle of kvitzath ha-derech is also ascribed to many saints in their travels.

88/114 'chevlai yemoth ha-moshiach,' the pain and
agony of the days of the Messiah.

--More properly "the labour pains of the Messiah"; the Messiah's advent is metaphorically the "birth" of a new era. See Sanhedrin 98a.

88/114 deeper pain and bitterer agony

--The Holocaust.

89/114, 115 'gilgul m'choloath' . . . roll through
subterranean passages.

--A talmudic tradition (Ketubot 111a).

89/115 maariv

--Evening prayers.

89/115 . . . and should be back for the Sabbath.

--Note the strongly implied association of Uncle Melech with Messiah in this whole section of the chapter, but particularly here. The era of the Messiah in traditional literature is referred to as "the day of universal Sabbath" (yom she-kulo shabbat). See, for example Tamid 7:4.

89/115 'Maaseh Breshith'

--The Work of Creation; usually connoting the mystical doctrines of the Kabbalah regarding creation. See Haggigah 2:1.

89/115 'Memra,' the Word made Will

--A term frequently used by the Kabbalah.

89/115 'Maaseh Merkabah'

--The Work of the Chariot, referring to the version of Ezekiel, Cap. I., an esoteric part of the Bible, reserved for the wise. See Haggigah 2:1.

89/116 Zohar and Bahir, brightness and light

--Klein translates and puns; Zohar (brightness) and

Bahir (light) are the titles of two classics of the Kabbalah.

90/116, 117 Rabbi Solomon Halevi Alkabez

--A sixteenth century Kabbalist and liturgical poet (exact date unknown).

90/117 'O site most kingly'

--Klein translates stanzas of Alkabez's poem "L'cho doidi."

91/118 . . . the fire attracted attention . . . saved from complete burning.

--A re-enactment of the revelation to Moses at the burning bush "which was not consumed" (Exodus 3:2).
See Appendix A.

91/118 Peace! Peace! There is no peace!

--Jeremiah's cry (6:14; 8:11).

91/118 Anointed, with gasoline! Anointed!

--Uncle Melech's death is described in a manner that merges the symbols he has become throughout the novel:
a) "saved from complete burning" (revelation to Moses at the burning bush, as above)--G-d symbol;
b) "Anointed!"--Messiah;

- c) burning of Melech's body (cremation)--Holocaust;
- d) "one with the soil of Israel," describing Melech's burial (92/120)--Land of Israel;
- e) "a national demonstration . . . Reuben of the Sardius . . . ," at Melech's funeral--spirit of the nation;
- f) "antechambers to new life"--messianic anticipation.

For the different interpretations of Uncle Melech in the novel see Spiro, "The Second Gloss," pp. 9-84.

91/118 . . . my Sabbath turned to mourning.

--Cf. Lamentations 5:15, "Ceased hath the joy of our heart; our dance is changed into mourning."

91/119 . . . not ever look upon his face.

--Exodus 33:23, "But My face shall not be seen."

See Appendix A.

91/119 It was a strange funeral.

--The funeral sequence may have been inspired by the coincidence of Klein's presence in Israel when the remains of Theodore Herzl, founder of modern Zionism (1860-1904), was brought from Vienna to Israel for reburial. Herzl's body lay in state in Tel Aviv and was visited by thousands before it was interred on Mt. Herzl.

Indeed there is a suggestion that Uncle Melech in the novel represents Theodore Herzl. See Caplan, "Klein: Introduction" pp. 203, 219.

92/119 . . . obsequies . . . devices and gems.

--On the relationship between death and heraldry see The New Science of Giambattista Vico, trans. and ed. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1961), pp. 158-60.

92/119 . . . tribes of Israel . . . travelling

--Numbers 10:11-29. The Bible describes the Israelites travelling through the desert, each tribe under its own banner.

92/119 Reuben of the sardius . . . and jaspered Benjamin.

--Klein combines the metaphoric animals of Jacob's blessing (Genesis 49) with the tribal stones on Aaron's breastplate (Exodus 28:15-21) to create this heraldry. For mandragora, see Genesis 30:14. The city of Shechem was sacked by Simon and Levi (Genesis 34:25).

92/120 a kind of mirror, an 'aspaklaria'

--Klein translates the Aramaic. Prophets gazed upon divinity through an aspaklaria (Talmud, Yebamot 49b).

92/120 out of its tombs come light

--Echoing previous themes of light and death. Cf. 17/3.

92/120 . . . out of the lion's fell sweetness.

--Samson's riddle to the Philistines (Judges 14:5-20).

He had killed a lion and bees built a honeycomb in the carcass.

92/121 kaddish

--See 87/112

93/121 flesh of my flesh

--Adam's remark when he first saw Eve (Genesis 2:23).

93/121 angel pennies

--See 18/4.

93/121 Safed . . . on whose hills once were kindled

. . . beacons . . . new moons.

--In ancient Israel the beginning of a month in the lunar calendar (new moon) was announed by signal fires on the hills. See Rosh Hashanah 2:3.

93/112 new moons, festivals, and set times.

--The novel ends as it began, with an image of light.

See above 17/3. Cf. Genesis 1:14; also themes of light in Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 60:3.

The Glosses

Even as they follow a carefully constructed biblical design, the Glosses, like variations on a musical theme, also augment, repeat and present in a different form the essence of each chapter. "Autobiographical" adds poetic embellishment to the "genesis" of the nephew's consciousness as a member of his religion and race. "Elegy" reviews the horrible events of the Holocaust. "Excerpt from Letter" elaborates upon the paradoxically Christian basis of Melech's confirmation in his faith after hesitation and doubt. Melech's appreciation of the degradation of his Sephardic brothers and their frustrating relationship with authority in dramatic form is presented in "The Three Judgments." "Gloss Hai" gives further fervent expression to the return of Melech to the bosom of his faith. The progressive movement in the Glosses parallels that of the novel, describing an individual consciousness enlarging from self ("Autobiographical") to embrace bereavement and national tragedy ("Elegy"), challenges to faith ("Excerpt from Letter") and finally transcendence and exultation ("Gloss Hai"). In this sense, despite their intimate link with the novel, the Glosses may be considered as an independent body of work as well. As Leon Edel avers "The poet, dissatisfied with his venture into prose, was compelled to pick up his lyre again and retell the

themes of his story in verse." (Klein Symposium, 23.)
 The last of Klein's published literary creations is his novel, but the novel's last words are poetry.

In "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape" (330-35) Klein concludes that the destiny of the poet is to shine "like phosphorus. / At the bottom of the sea." Beneath the "sea" of phenomena the light of the poet's insight shines for those who care to look for it. The literary design of the Glosses follows this metaphor. The text is a sea of sequences, representing life and nature, to which the Glosses bring poetic illumination. They focus upon central themes "with single camera view," calling the reader back, "the better to look" (CP 335:14). The poems, aptly called Glosses, suit the definition of poetry as commentary on life and nature. Their placement at the end, far from implying subordinate significance, symbolizes transcendence. The transition from prose to poetry reflects in symbolic literary form Uncle Melech's apotheosis. At the end of the novel he becomes a universal spirit of which poetry is one of the metaphors--"Nameless authorship flourished in the streets" (84/108)--and the image is given a more concrete expression through the concluding poetic Glosses. And in this regard the symbolic parallel between Uncle Melech ultimately becoming spirit in the novel and the poetry ending with a simple quotation of the biblical "Psalm

the Thirtieth" in the Glosses should be noted. See also 142/197.

The two distinct moods of the Glosses follow the symbolic design of The Second Scroll. Glosses Aleph and Beth, like the Genesis and Exodus chapters, are elegiac. Sounding "the sobbed Oriental note" (97/126), they mourn the passing away of innocence and human life. Glosses Gimel, Daled and Hai, on the other hand, like Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, are filled with passionate hope and a confident messianic optimism. Despite their preoccupation with tragedy and injustice the poems are permeated by the expectation of an imminent redemption to be brought about by art (Gloss Gimel), justice (Gloss Daled) and faith (Gloss Hai):

. . . they were rams' horns, sounding liberation
(113/150)

Let lightning enlighten! Let thunder thunder
understanding! Let . . . (135/188)

For the third time my body rises

And finds the good, the lasting shore! (141/197)

95/125: "AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL"

--The mood of this poem is redolent of Wordsworth's "Lines" and the theme has similarities to his "Intimations of Immortality." But there are important differences. Instead of the more universal "still sad music

of humanity" Klein evokes the more particular, and therefore perhaps more intense, "sadness sweet of synagogal hum" (95/123). And instead of the persistence of a pre-existent state as a basis of joy in life Klein proposes a messianic condition of which we are granted a fore-taste in the simple innocence of youth,

The years doff

Their innocence.

No other day is ever like that day.

. . . .

It is a fabled city that I seek;

It stands in Space's vapours and Time's haze. (97/126).

To further emphasize the differences Klein asserts he seeks "not tranquil recollection," a Wordsworthian notion, but "the strength and vividness of nonage days."

The poem opens with the typical self-conscious depreciation of the ghetto-dweller--"Jewboy," "Yiddish slums"--and thereby hints at the true conditions of poverty and deprivation among Montreal Jews during Klein's youth. Then, expressing Klein's major theme in his novel, the fashioning of good from evil, it quickly paints pictures of compensating joy experienced. The lost happiness of youth is recovered in later life through memory. The memories, tinged with the sadness of lost innocence, are bitter-sweet. They "rise . . . like sparrows rising from / The gutter-scattered oats,"

an apt simile which is itself a nostalgic memory of days long gone. The poem then goes on to describe the delights of those days magnified by the innocence of youth.

The progression is noteworthy. Starting with the street, the poem proceeds to the stores, then to the home and family, then to the country which becomes a pastoral heaven and concludes with "again the street." The street represents the reality "out of" which childhood creates joy. The memory of that joy is a metaphor for Klein's philosophy that good is created from evil. The messianic condition, waiting in "Space's vapours and Time's haze," has a connection with the "virgin joy" of childhood and the ability of youth to see and experience joy even in "ghetto streets" and "Yiddish slums." Without the memories of childhood we could not endure the harshness of the present or sustain our hopes for the future. The sweet sadness of the poem is an emotional hovering between joy that once was and present reality that is bereft of joy. All of the "memories" stanzas, it is to be noted, contain religious references: (i)--Bible, Torah, synagogue; (ii)--synagogue, maariv, counting holy words; (iii)--rabbi, blessing, Sabbath; (iv)--fields of heaven; (v)--synagogue, Haman-rattle, Simchas Torah. Klein obviously believes that the ultimate source of childhood's joy and of mankind's hope is faith.

95/123 Sabbath-goy

--Literally "Sabbath-Gentile." Not being permitted to light fires on the Sabbath (Exodus 35:3), Jewish families in coal burning days would hire an elderly non-Jew, who could use the extra few cents, to add coal to the stove during the long winter Friday nights.

95/123 Torah-escorting band

--When Torah scrolls are presented to a synagogue it is customary to exhibit them in a parade from the donor's house to the synagogue.

95/123 gutter-scattered oats

--Dropped from the provender of the horses which pulled the wagons. Cf. "Pastoral of the City Streets," CP 322:13.

95/123 Hebrew violins . . . Eastern notes.

--Characteristic of Jewish wedding music.

95/123 little bells, those doors

--Bells set into motion by the doors of the shops described by Klein to call the owner from the back, where he usually lived. See also Klein Symposium, p. 3.

95/124 widows' double-parloured candy-stores

--A peculiarity of old Montreal houses is a living room divided by an arch (from which a curtain usually hung). To sustain themselves and their families, enterprising widows converted the front part of their living rooms, which were invariably near the entrance of the house, into candy or grocery stores. See also Klein Symposium, p. 3.

96/124 maariv

--Evening prayers.

96/124 four-legged aleph

--Aleph, displayed at the beginning of the gloss, is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It means ox in Phoenician. Because it is written with four "legs" Klein calls it "running."

96/124 angel pennies

--"If I knew my lesson well, my father would, unseen drop a penny on my book, and then proclaim it the reward of angels for good study." (Klein's own commentary, Klein Symposium, p. 3). Cf. above 18/3.

96/125 Warsovian perruque

--Pious women wear wigs to cover their hair. See also CP 38.

96/125 Baal Shem Tov

--Israel Baal Shem Tov (1700-60), legendary saint and miracle-worker, founder of Hassidism. Klein, in his commentary, adds, "he placed good works above scholarship; he was a simple good man, a St. Francis of Assisi, without birds or flowers " (Klein Symposium, p. 4).

97/125 Hazel nut games, and games in the synagogue--

--Games using nuts instead of marbles were traditional on the Passover holiday.

97/125 The burrs

--Klein explains: The Ninth of Ab (a month of the Jewish calendar) commemorates the destruction of the Temple. It is a day of mourning and fasting. It is customary on that day for youngsters to gather burrs and thistles, bring them to the synagogue, and throw them--not always with impunity--into the beards of the mourning elders--so as to give a touch of realism to their historic weeping. For the kids this is a lot of fun (Klein Symposium, p. 4). See CP 119.

97/125 the Haman rattle

--On the holiday of Purim (Feast of Lots) the Book of Esther is read. When the name of Haman, villain of the

book and enemy of the Jews, is mentioned, children wielding rattles noisily drown out his name to symbolically "eradicate" the name of the wicked.

97/125 Torah dance on Simchas Torah night.

--See above "Title."

97/125 in memory I seek . . . a fabled city . . .
remembered joy.

--Life is sustained by hope and confidence in a Messianic future. They in turn are nurtured by the remembered dreams and joys of innocent childhood.

98/127 ELEGY

--This elegy for Uncle Melech, who symbolically represents the people, was written in the midst of the Holocaust. Little hope was held out for European Jewry; it was expected to die. The poem's various moods correspond with psychological precision to the five stages of human reaction to impending death identified and described by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (On Death and Dying, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969 [Page references are marked DD]). Though there is a certain degree of overlapping and telescoping, as in life, the lineaments of each stage are clearly discernible.

The first stage involved in encountering news of imminent death is an anxious denial of facts, accompanied by a feeling of isolation. After unexpected shocking news, Dr. Kubler-Ross explains, a person needs this stage psychologically as a buffer against reality until he can mobilize less radical defenses (DD 39). The nephew, in "Elegy" refuses to accept the death of his uncle/people, crying, "Where shall I seek you? On what wind shall I / Reach out to touch the ash that was your hand?" (98/127) Although Melech is already assumed to be crematorium ash, the nephew speaks to him as if he were still alive. The feeling of isolation is expressed in the mood of "the slow eternity of despair" which Uncle Melech's death brought to the nephew (99/128).

After the initial denial, says Dr. Kubler-Ross, even as part of the first stage, there is a partial acceptance. This furthers psychological adjustment to reality (DD 40). And in the poem, too, observing, "Death may be beautiful . . . ," the nephew accepts the tragic end of his uncle/people and recounts all that is lost in the Holocaust.

The second stage recorded by Kubler-Ross is anger. When denial can no longer be maintained anger takes its place. It is a raging against others, against G-d, and a resentment (DD 52). In the face of "nothing, nothing," (100/129) the nephew can no longer maintain

his denial and begins to rage against the Germans with bitter, vengeful imprecations (100, 101/130, 131). And his resentment of G-d's silence is implied in the repeated "Look down!" and the sarcastic description of "G-d's throne" as "abstracted."

The third stage is bargaining. Having denied reality, and having been angry at others and at G-d, the human personality attempts to enter "into some sort of agreement" with G-d, or destiny, by which he may be rewarded for good behaviour and granted his special wish for at least an extension of life (DD 82). As destruction of the entire nation threatens during the Holocaust, the nephew bargains for "a sign" (101/131) that G-d has not abandoned His people, that the life of the nation will be extended through the concentration camp survivors, "the scattered bone . . . next kin of death" (102/133).

In the poem the third stage of bargaining overlaps slightly the fourth stage, depression. The stoicism of anger and the bargaining give way in the fourth stage to "a sense of great loss" that leads in turn to "dismay and the deepest depression" (DD 85). A corresponding change in tone, from anger to depression, occurs in the eighth stanza--"Vengeance is thine, O L-rd," (Some of the previous bargaining, however, still appears in the second half of the stanza.) Realizing the great

tragedy of his people and dismayed that they are left
 "In a world wandering, amidst raised spears / Between
 wild waters, and against barred doors" with "no weapons,"
 the nephew calms his anger as he surrenders vengeance
 to the L-rd. In his "deepest depression" he is at one
 with "this people to its lowest brought" (102/133).

The fifth stage is acceptance. After having
 gone through previous stages and mourned the loss of
 "so many meaningful people and places" the human person-
 ality arrives at a "certain degree" of quiet acceptance
 (DD 112). This is the mood of the eighth stanza--
 "Vengeance is thine, O L-rd." The fourth stage has
 been telescoped in the poem into the fifth.

After the final stage, Dr. Kubler-Ross notes,
 only hope remains to sustain the individual (DD 138).
 "Elegy" too ends with hope, the hope that with Israel
 once more on its land biblical days will be renewed
 and messianic visions fulfilled.

98/127 Named for my father's father,

--According to Jewish custom children are named after
 nearest deceased relatives, especially grandparents, to
 perpetuate their memory. This is also an allusion to
 Melech as G-d symbol. See Appendix A.

98/127 ash that was your hand?

--Melech ultimately shares the fate of the Holocaust victims, cremation (91/118).

98/127 G-d's image made the iotas of G-d's name.

--In Hebrew prayerbooks G-d's name is abbreviated to two yods comparable to two "iotas"--yod is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet and resembles a dot or mote. In the Holocaust, G-d's image in man had been diminished metaphorically to the "iotas" of charred ash, "martyr-motes" of the victims. This is symbolically similar to the reduction of G-d's full name in abbreviation to two yods in the prayerbooks. Cf. above 51/56, 51/57, 76/95. See also CP 170:12.

98/127 through dust

--Cf. Genesis 18:27, "And Abraham answered and said, 'Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the L-rd, although I am dust and ashes.'"

98/127 Seraphical upon the dark winds borne;

--See Ezekiel 3:12-14, "Then a spirit (wind) took me up."

98/127 sieved white hosts . . . cousinry transgress,

--A symbolic allusion to Christianity (Judaism's cousin) which sinned in allowing the Holocaust. Cf. 52/57.

98/127 cinctured bone--

Young branch once wreathed in phylactery:-

--One of the phylacteries is worn on the arm, which is a branch of the body. Uncle Melech, too, is a branch of the tree of his nation. For the irony in these images see 18/4 "branch lopped from the tree" and 25/16 "phylacteries part of his horse's harness," describing Uncle Melech's communist period.

99/128 Now hafts the peasant's bladed kitchenware;

--Ironic contrast to "keen blade of jurisprudence" (29/22).

99/128 murdered for her hair . . . tattoo'd skin . . .
lampshade . . . for a gold tooth chosen . . . flesh
beneath the rod . . . This has been done to us,
L-rd

--Atrocities so well documented in Holocaust literature that they have become symbols of the tragedy. In listing them Klein follows the form of liturgical dirges recited on Tisha B'Av (above 75/93), the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple. "Rod" is ambiguously a sexual metaphor.

99/129 thought-lost G-d

--Aristotle's self-contemplating deity (Metaphysics Bk. 12, Cap. 9) is constantly compared by Jewish philosophers

with the biblical G-d who is concerned and involved with humanity.

99/129 And things still hidden,

--Cf. Deuteronomy 29:28, "The secret (hidden) things belong unto the L-rd our G-d."

99/129 There where . . . thunderclap.

--Exodus 19, 20. The Jews stood at the foot of Mount Sinai as G-d revealed himself on the summit in thunder and lightning.

99/129 angular ecstasy

--Jews, especially those of east European extraction, habitually sway back and forth from the hips during prayers, thus making "angles" with the rest of the body. This motion is traditionally considered an indication of the worshipper's intense concentration.

99/129 Talmud brow and musical / with song

--The Talmud, a profound and difficult work, is traditionally studied with a chant.

99/129 festive with Thy fruit-full calendar,

--Most biblical holidays are harvest festivals (Leviticus 23:10-22, 39-41; Deuteronomy 16:10, 13-15).

99/129 curled and caftan'd congregations

--Curled ear locks and long black caftans are typical Hassidic garb. The majority of East European communities, destroyed in the Holocaust, were Hassidic.

99/129 first days and the second star,

--The first days of biblical festivals are holy days (Leviticus 23:7, 35 et pass.), and the appearance of the new moon, or "second star" (Genesis 1:16), which begins a new lunar month, is also of special religious significance (Numbers 28:11). Both events are celebrated by special congregational prayers and ceremonies.

99/129 marketplaces loud and green

--Pious Jews bargaining for fruits and vegetables for Sabbath and holiday repasts.

99/129 Or through the nights . . . polemicalWith Rav and Shmuail

--Rav and Shmuail are two rabbis whose numerous disputes are argued in the Talmud. Study of the Talmud at night is considered especially meritorious (Talmud, Erubin 18b).

100/129 thirty-six--world's pillars!--

--See above 76/95 "Boris Trizatchest,"

100/129 tenfold Egypt's generation,

--A common talmudic hyperbole expressing a multitude (e.g. Gittin 57b). The number of Jews in Egypt at the exodus is recorded in the Bible as 600,000 (Exodus 12:37).

100/129 Thy abstracted throne!

--Cf. above 99/129, "thought-lost G-d."

100/130 Look down! Find out this Sodom to the sky

--Cf. Genesis 18:20-21, "And the L-rd said, 'Because the cry against Sodom and Gemorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see if they have done according to the cry against them, which is come unto me.'"

100/130 The architecture

--Gothic.

100/130 . . . pyramids / . . . Pass over, (A)

Greek marble . . . torture spurned-- (B)

The arch and triumph of subjection, (C)

. . . spires / . . . the screws turned / Inquisitorial (D)

The hollow monoliths. (E)

--Alluding to the oppressions of the Jews as a nation in chronological order: (A) Egypt (1400-1200 B.C.E.);

(B) Syrio-Greek (175-165 B.C.E.); (C) Roman (70 C.E.);

(D) Spain (1492); (E) Holocaust (1939-45). Note the concentration of architectural images emphasizing the ironically high degree of civilization of Israel's unmerciful oppressors.

100/130 loaves of sacrifice

--The solemn sacrificial bread of the Bible (Leviticus 7:13; 23:17018) is an ironic allusive element in the ghastly image of the crematorium as a huge baker's oven.

100/130 As Thou didst to Sodom

--Genesis 19:24-25, "And the L-rd rained upon Sodom and upon Gemorrah brimstone and fire from the L-rd out of heaven, and he overthrew those cities."

100/131 Condemn them double Deuteronomy!

--Deuteronomy 28:15-68 containing a prophecy of terrible punishment, hunger, disease and exile.

101/131 The paring of Thy little fingernail / Drop down:

--An ironic extension of the metaphoric "finger of G-d" acknowledged by the Egyptians during the plagues (Exodus 8:15). There is also an allusion to the Jewish tradition that evil spirits are attached to the fingernails.

(Cf. below 136/189.) G-d is asked to send his evil spirits upon the Germans.

101/131 . . . the just circuiting of flame,

And as Gemorrah's name,

--Genesis 19:24, above 100/130.

101/132 The pharoahs risen from the Red Sea sedge,

Profiled:

--See Exodus 14:17, "And the L-rd overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea." Pharoah, in Jewish tradition, is the prototype of all oppressors of the Jews.

101/132 . . . in alien blood and peonage / Hidalgos lost;

--Through forced conversion by the Church in 15th century Spain.

101/132 shadows of Shushan

--Alluding to Haman, villain of the Book of Esther, who attempted to destroy the Jews. There is, perhaps, a secondary allusion to Daniel's vision in Shushan (Daniel 8). This segment of the "Elegy" is also a "vision."

101/132 The Assyrian uncurling into sand;

Most untriumphant frieze!

--Alluding to victories celebrated on carvings, reliefs, and mosaics found in the sandy ruins of ancient Assyrian cities. See, for example, Gaalyah Cornfeld, Archaeology of the Bible: Book by Book (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) pp. 153, 155.

101/132 The shades Seleucid

--Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.E.) whose defeat at the hands of the Maccabees occasioned the Festival of Lights (CP 13:1).

From the following line, "The bearded ikon-bearing royalties," one gathers that Klein includes the Seleucids in the Assyrian "frieze." This would be an anachronism, unless Klein considers the Seleucids heirs of the Assyrians and projects their imagined features upon the "frieze."

101, 102/132 . . . and over the once blest lagoons

Mushroom new Sinais, . . .

--Fire and cloud accompanied the revelation of the moral law at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16, 18); atomic testing in the Pacific atolls now accompany the ironic revelation of a "new" law of mighty oppression.

102/132 The face turned east

--The majority of Jews face east, towards Jerusalem, when praying.

102/132, 133 . . . the scattered bone . . .

. . . Ezekiel's prophesying breath!

--Ezekiel 37:7. (Cf. above 85/108.) The Holocaust survivors, scattered and starved to the bone, become

metaphorically the "dry bones" of Ezekiel's prophecy.
They too are resurrected as they become a new nation--
Israel.

102/133 Isaiah's cry of solacing allow!

--Isaiah 40-66. The second half of Isaiah is filled
with consolations for Israel and prophecies of a glorious
future.

102/133 Mizraim

--Hebrew for Egypt.

102/133 Babylonian lair

--The animal image alludes to the prophecies of Daniel
regarding Babylonia (Daniel 4:20) and the incident of
the lion's den (6:17-22).

102/133 King whose banishments are not / Forever . . .

--Cf. Isaiah 57:16, "For not to eternity will I contend
neither will I be forever wroth." Psalms 103:9, "Nor
for all eternity will he contend; nor will he forever
retain his anger."

102/133 The winnowed spare!

--Cf. Isaiah 29:28 where Israel in its suffering is
compared to wheat being threshed.

102/133 . . . light orient / . . . Diaspora dark,

--Cf. Isaiah 9:1, "The people that walk in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death--a light shineth brightly over them." There is much light imagery in Isaiah.

102/134 . . . again renew our days . . . / Again renew them as they were of old.

--Lamentations 5:21, "Cause us to return, O L-rd, unto thee, and we will return; renew our days as of old."

102/134 sorrows salve with prophecies;

--Cf. Jeremiah 8:22, "Is there no more balm in Gilead? Or is there no physician there?"

102/134 And for all time cancel that ashen orbit
In which . . . are rolled.

--Cf. Isaiah 25:8, "He (G-d) will destroy death to eternity"

103/135 EXCERPT FROM LETTER

Harvey Swados, the novelist, in a review of The Second Scroll, describes this Gloss as "one of the greatest pieces of art appreciation of our time " (cited in Klein Symposium, p. 23). Klein's attempt to convert one art form into another is largely successful. The "high

rhetoric" (ibid.) of his words, movingly describing the "cosmic vault" of the Sistine Chapel and its "tremendous paeon to the human form divine" (103, 105/136, 138), evokes the majesty of Michelangelo's frescoed "world truer than sculpture" (103/136). Framing each scene in a moral perspective, Klein skillfully blends description with interpretation. With "midrashic ingenuity" (51/56) he adroitly avoids a dry description of a complex subject on the one hand, and an overly subjective record of feeling on the other.

The interpretation of the Sistine frescoes is of momentous seriousness to Uncle Melech in the novel. On its basis he will decide to commit himself to Judaism or Christianity. Using the deep emotions stirred by Michelangelo's art, Klein conveys that seriousness. Melech's personal dilemma is artistically constructed upon a moral and philosophical contradiction: Jewish sensibility seeking to appreciate the art of the world which has deep Christian roots and an overwhelmingly Christian development. (The contradiction is dramatically portrayed in novel form by Chaim Potok in My Name is Asher Lev, Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1972.) Heightening the emotional and intellectual tension of "Excerpt from Letter" is the added irony of a Jew, whose Sinaitic aversion to images extends even to photographs, ultimately being confirmed in his faith by Christian art.

Klein resolves Melech's dilemma through a moral interpretation of Michelangelo's masterpiece, the basis of which he carefully defines in a classical statement of criticism:

Such is the nature of art that though the artist entertain fixedly but one intention and meaning, that creation once accomplished beneath his hand, now no longer merely his own attribute, but Inspiration's very substance and entity, proliferates with significances by him not conceived nor imagined. Such art is eternal and to every generation speaks with fresh coeval timeliness.

The interpretation suggests that even though we may have a universal objective sense for the esthetic, ultimately our true appreciation of art is subjectively unique. (Cf. Emmanuel Kant, The Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, Britannica Great Books, Chicago: William Benton, 1952, XLII, 476-549 and Leo Tolstoy, What is Art? Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.) The reader participates in the anxiety of Melech's dilemma on both the emotional and philosophical planes and therefore shares in the concluding moods of relief, liberation and hope.

Uncle Melech faces his dilemma as an individual but his mythic qualities expand his circumstances to include mankind. After the Holocaust, the Leviticus chapter implies, it is at a moral crossroads. The Sistine

ceiling is a prophecy in the form of art that foretold man's unprecedented degradation and corruption. It was fulfilled, as Uncle Melech outlines, in the Holocaust. The personal message of hope, however, that Uncle Melech derives from Michelangelo's art, is a message for mankind as well: G-d has not abandoned His people!

103/135 . . . to the Sistine Chapel;

--The portions of the Sistine Chapel ceiling on which Uncle Melech comments are:

a) Scenes from the Book of Genesis--The Creation of the World, The Separation of Light from Darkness, The Creation of the Sun and Moon, (The Separation of Dry Land and Water), The Creation of Adam and Eve, The Expulsion from Eden, The Flood and Noah's Sacrifice. These form most of the central portion of the fresco.

b) Twenty nude, garland bearing youths in various attitudes of vigorous movement "throned" on short columns held up by pairs of putti, all of which encircle the central portion.

c) Eight medallions at the feet of the youths depicting mainly violent biblical scenes--Death of Joram, Joab killing Abner, Destruction of Baal's Image, Death of Urias, Massacre of Tribe of Ahab, Nathan and David, Death of Absalom, Elias on Chariot of Fire. All are painted yellow suffused with red.

d) Seven Prophets (Zechariah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Joel, Isaiah, Daniel, Jonah) and five Sibyls (Erythraean, Delphic, Cumaeae, Libyan, Persian) surrounding the central portion.

e) Four rounded triangles on its outer corners portraying David and Goliath, Judith and Holofernes, The Hanging of Haman and Moses' Brazen Serpent.

Eight spandrels and fourteen lunettes showing the ancestors of Jesus complete the ceiling masterpiece. However, " nowhere in his letter did Uncle Melech advert" to them (52/57).

103/135 ET LEVAVI . . .

--Zechariah 2:5 (free translation of the Latin text),
"And I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man--
and in his hand 'a surveyor's rope.'"

Klein intended the Latin quotations (and one English) to represent Michelangelo's prophets and sibyls. He sought to have them appear in the text as he describes various scenes in the same positions they occupy relative to those scenes on the ceiling. Klein's design could not be fully carried out for technical reasons and the quotations in the present text only approximate their places in the original plan (Knopf correspondence, letters of 10 April, 1951 and 13 April, 1951, Humanities Library, University of Texas at Austin).

Zechariah, quoted first, is the first prophet on the ceiling as one enters the Chapel; Jonah, quoted last, is on the far side, nearest the altar (below 112, 113/150), but the quotations of the rest of the prophets and sibyls could only be placed near and to one side of the relative portions of the ceiling described.

All of the Latin quotations are from the Vulgate--even the quotations of the sibyls! (It could not be otherwise for the traditionalist Klein!) Each prophet's words contain the popular image with which he is associated, and each sibyl's "oracle" features a biblical reference to her respective place of origin. And their words have a thematic relationship to Melech's interpretations of scenes on the ceiling. Zechariah's "man" is seen by Uncle Melech homiletically as Michelangelo whose mathematically proportioned art ("theorems made flesh" 104/136) is symbolized by "a surveyor's rope."

The use of Latin is another instance of Klein's attempt to create a mood of the past by introducing an ancient language into his text. Cf. above 75/93, 94. See also Spiro, "The Second Gloss," pp. 176-50.

There are some minor errors in Klein's sibylline geography. Perhaps because of its similarity to Eritrea Klein mistakenly assumes Erythraea to be Ethiopia, the biblical Cush. The Erythraean oracle was located in the Ionic city of Erythraea in Asia Minor. He also assumes

Cumaea to be Idumaea, an ancient nation occupying the desert area of southern Canaan. The Idumaeen oracle was located in the Italian city of Cumaea. In the latter instance, however, Klein may have had in mind the rabbinic tradition that descendants of Esau (Edom, Idumaea) sailed across the Mediterranean and founded Rome. See Milton S. Terry, The Sibylline Oracles (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1890), pp. 9-10; M. Seligson, "Edom," The Jewish Encyclopedia, V, 41.

103/136 walking on water

--Cf. Matthew 14:25-33; Mark 6:48-49. Jesus' disciples see him walking on the water.

104/137 adonaic

--Combining the Hebrew for L-rd and the Greek Adonis, Klein's neology synthesizes the idea of divine majesty and beauty.

105/139 (Twelve score and eight limbs . . . eighteen score and five its organs . . . 'curriculum taryag'!)

--See 19/6, 41/39. According to talmudic tradition, the sum of positive commandments of the Bible is 248, the conventional number of limbs, parts and members of the body; the sum of the negative commandments is 365, the conventional number of organs and sinews. The two sums

total 613 or, in the Hebrew alphabetical equivalent, TaRYaG. Uncle Melech is now using his "midrashic ingenuity" (51/56) to interpret Michelangelo.

106/139 zimzum

--The Kabbalistic notion of G-d contracting his infinite spirit in order to create the material world is used as an artistic metaphor. See Scholem, Kabbalah, p. 129-35.

106/140 ET EUM . . .

--Joel 2:20, (free translation of Latin text) "And him who is from the north I shall put at a distance from you, and I shall drive him into a pathless and deserted land; [I shall drive] his face toward the eastern sea; his stench will arise and his rottenness will arise, in as much as he has acted haughtily."

106/140 ET FILIOS . . .

--Joel 4:6, in the Vulgate 3:6, (free translation of the Latin text) "You have sold both the sons of Judah and the sons of Jerusalem to the sons of the Greeks." The two quotations relate to the theme of mankind's betrayal of its morality and the subsequent destruction it brings upon itself. Uncle Melech sees mangled human bodies in an ironic reversal of Michelangelo's twenty perfectly proportioned nude athletes (above 103/135).

106/140 sistine limepit

--Paronomasia. The basis of a fresco, the art form of the Sistine ceiling, is a lime wash which binds the pigments and gives white colouring where necessary; and limepits were used by the Nazis, before they developed crematoria, to dispose of their victims' corpses. (See Gerald Reitlinger, The Final Solution, New York: A. S. Barnes, 1961, pp. 204-211.) Uncle Melech sees the figures in the "Flood" scene of the Sistine ceiling as Holocaust victims in a "limepit." Cf. 51/56.

107/142 victims in their nudity . . . in nakedness

. . . one meets one's fate

--Holocaust victims were always ordered to undress before entering the gas chamber--their clothes were confiscated for use by Germans. (Lucy S. Dawidowicz, The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945, New York: Jewish Publication Society, Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1975, p. 148) Scenes from The Flood on the ceiling are identified by Melech as real-life incidents in his Holocaust experience. Michelangelo's paintings were prophetic (51/57).

107/142 she looking in terror back . . . turned to salt

--An allusion to Lot's wife who turned into a pillar of salt as she fled Sodom (Genesis 19:26).

108/142 ET TIMEBUNT . . .

--Isaiah 20:5, (free translation of Latin text) "And they will fear and they will be confounded from their Ethiopian hope."

108/142 QUO MIHI . . .

--Isaiah 1:11, 13, (free translation of Latin text)
 "For what purpose to me is the multitude of your victims (sacrifices), says the L-rd I am full of burnt offering I did not want [any]: [your] incense is an abomination to me." The quotations are thematically related to the scenes of Noah's sacrifice and babes of Moloch which represent the Holocaust to Uncle Melech.

108/143 the babes of Moloch

--There is no medallion depicting "babes of Moloch" and probably Klein misinterprets Elias on Chariot of Fire (2 Kings 2:11), the only medallion depicting fire.

Moloch was the deity of a cult in biblical times that demanded children as burnt offerings (Leviticus 20:2).

108/143 the innocent man made sacrifice

--Death of Urias; David sends Uriah to his death so that he could marry Uriah's wife, Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:14-17). The medallion interprets the true meaning of Noah's Sacrifice--the animals, symbolic of humans, are sent to

their deaths. They also represent the slaughtered and cremated victims of the Holocaust.

108/143 azazels

--Scapegoats (Leviticus 16:21-22).

108/143 the angel

--Michelangelo. Cf. 105/139 "Michael Angelo--say rather the Archangel Michael."

108, 109/143, 144 From flood and fire By an angel

--Uncle Melech sees Adam and Eve driven from Eden, not by an angel, but, due to a peculiar juxtaposition of scenes, by a human-like extension of the serpent.
Cf. 51/57.

;09/145 TU AUTEM . . .

--Ezekiel 39:1, (free translation of the Latin text)
"You, however, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and you will say: These things the L-rd G-d says: Behold I am above you, Gog." Cf. 51/56 "standing beneath the figure of Ezekiel."

109/145 IBI IDUMAEA . . .

--Ezekiel 32:29, (free translation of Latin text)

"There is Idumaea and its kings and all its leaders . . . who descend into the lake." The quotations reflect Uncle Melech's interpretative theme that man's cruelty to his fellow is an attempt to deny the divine in human beings and G-d will not tolerate it.

109/145 It is murder of the codes . . . a man's life.

--The meaning of this sentence is: The destruction of future generations by sterilization, "to snap the thread of a man's life," is tantamount to the murder itself which is counted a crime by all the codes of humanity. His "seed" is his immortality. Cf. above 51/57.

110/145, 146 the circles circling the tableau of the risen Eve --

--The medallions surrounding the scene of Eve rising portray Joab killing Abner (2 Samuel 3:12-27) and Nathan and David (2 Samuel 12). Joab was David's commander in chief. He treacherously killed Abner as the latter came to sue for peace. Nathan was the prophet who confronted David with the immorality of his taking Bathsheba.

110/145 'Thou art the Man'

--2 Samuel 12:7. Nathan's accusatory words to David.

110/145 deicide

--Cf. 51/57.

110/145 EGO OSTENDAM . . .

--Daniel 8:19, (free translation of Latin text), "I shall show you what things are going to be in the latest [time] of curse, in as much as time has its end . . . a ram . . . king of the Medes and Persians." In Daniel's vision he sees the destruction of the wicked kingdoms, which are represented by animals.

110/145 ECCE, EGO VIDI . . .

--Daniel 3:25 (free translation of Latin text), "Behold I saw four men released and walking in the midst of fire, and there is nothing of spoiling in them: and the appearance of the fourth is like the son of G-d." The vision is symbolic of the Jewish nation surviving the crematoria.

110/147 A covenant . . . G-d's seal,

--Genesis 9:11-17, "And I will establish my covenant with you, and all flesh shall not be cut off anymore by the waters of a flood" Here begins Melech's interpretation of "the sure promise of survival" (52/58).

111/147 ADAM PAJSYN ZAHAV YEREQ KOHL ISOTHYS ADAM-SAPIRI,

--The seven colours of the rainbow in transliterated

Hebrew (with some distortions in the vowels): red,
bronze (parzila or paliza--Talmud, Baba Kama 113b), gold,
green, blue, indigo, sapphire-red.

111/148 Upon the breath of little children. . . every
human soul is weighed . . .

--Images used by the rabbis to stress the fundamental
importance of education and moral training to mankind
(Sabbath 119b; Sanhedrin 100a).

111/148 ET REDUCAM . . .

--Jeremiah 50:19, (free translation of the Latin text),
"And I shall lead back Israel to its dwelling place,
and it feeds on Carmel and Bashan, and its spirit shall
be satisfied on the mountain of Ephraim and Galaad."

111/148 ASCENDITE EQUOS . . .

--Jeremiah 46:9, (free translation of the Latin text),
"Ascend [you] horses and exult [you] chariots, and from
Ethiopia let brave men go forth, and Libyans holding
[their] shield [s]." Jeremiah's prophecy of a glorious
future for Israel is seen reiterated by Uncle Melech
in the "Separation of Light from Darkness."

111, 112/148, 149 . . . to see the Author . . .
authorizing Days . . .

--The shapeless cloud of The Separation of Light and Darkness suggests to Melech an unsketched, unpainted formless spirit Michelangelo is subtly projecting beyond "his metaphor" of biblical scenes. It is "the true concept" of the divine. "Here . . . Michelangelo . . . dared to show (and not show) the face of G-d" (52/58). Uncle Melech describes this portion of the ceiling by a "single circular sentence, without beginning or end" in which he asserts "his adherence to the creed," and in which the nephew distinguishes " . . . all of the thirteen credos of Maimonides" (52/58). The Maimonidean credo and the parallels are:

1. Existence of G-d "Author of their Days"
2. His Unity "the One"
3. His Non-Corporeality "not in the image of
man made . . . not in
any manner image, not
body, nor the similitude
of body, but pure perva-
sive Spirit intelligential"
4. His Priority in Time "infinite, world quickening
and Existence..... anima . . . the First,
the Last"

5. He is to be Worshipped..... "Omnipotent, yes, and
All Compassionate, who
in the heavens resides
and in the heart's
small chambers"
6. He Communicates with Man) "fulfills His prophets'
through Prophecy.....) prophecies"
7. He Sent Moses as a)
Special Prophet.....)
8. He Revealed His Law..... "magnanimous with Law"
9. The Eternity of the Law..... "even to the latest
generation"
10. He is Aware of Man.....) "rebuking, rewarding,
11. He Rewards and Punishes.....) hastening for them who
12. He will Send the Messiah....) wait him who tarries,
merciful-munificent
with ascensions, aliyoth"
13. He will Resurrect the Dead.. "resurrections"

For a study of Maimonides' credo see A. Abelson,
"Maimonides on the Jewish Creed," Jewish Quarterly Review,
19 (1907), 24-57.

112/149 the young stripling

--David, as he went out to do battle with Goliath
(1 Samuel 17:38-54).

112/149 through a female, Judith

--Judith lured Holofernes, the general of the Assyrian army attacking Israel, into her tent and killed him. The Assyrians subsequently fled in disarray (Judith 13:8-10).

112/150 Mordecai . . . Esther

--Upon Mordechai's advice, Esther pleaded with the king to save the Jews from Haman's plot to destroy them (Esther 7).

112/150 a fiery serpent

--When the Jews were attacked by poisonous snakes Moses, at the command of G-d, made a bronze serpent and fixed it on a rod. Anyone who was bitten by a snake gazed upon the rod and was saved (Numbers 21:5-9).

112, 113/150 The waters compassed me about . . .

I have vowed.

--Jonah 2:6-10.

113/150 the series of rams' skulls

--In the Middle Ages horns were believed to typify the Crown of Thorns. See Ad de Vries, Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company, 1974), "ram," also "horn." See also Andre Grabar,

Christian Iconography (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 135-6.

113/150 . . . of which the poet had made a device

--Probably Dante, who imagines Jesus crossing heaven at the sign of Aries (Paradise 25:5-12). Dante also compares the poet bringing his celestial message to mankind to a lamb (Purgatory 4:79-87).

113/150 rams' horns sounding liberation

--The sounding of rams' horns signified the liberation of all slaves in biblical times (Leviticus 25:9-10, 40-41).

114/151 THE THREE JUDGMENTS

This Gloss is a type of morality play intended for Arabs. It argues for brotherhood among the descendants of Shem and pleads the cause of Israel as the Jew's homeland.

In the dialogue Klein uses a very ornamental vocabulary in imitation of Oriental speech and alludes frequently to Arabic folklore, but his usual ability to capture the rhythm of a foreign tongue in English is not evident here. The play, therefore, has an inauthenticity about it. Perhaps Klein's knowledge of Arabic was only derivative.

The main characters are uncomplicated. Their role is to move the elementary didactic plot. The Jew is at first a peripheral character not involved in the litigation before the court. Only afterwards, as he pleads his unusual case, does he assume a major role. The beggars are his foils. Their pleas are simple and direct; they seek alms. The Jew, though also penniless (117/155), seeks, not alms, but what is rightfully his. The arguments he puts forth are ingenious and imaginative, turning each of the judgments of the Cadi into a casuistic parable on the justice of his cause.

The first of "The Three Judgments" involves the case of a slave who ran off and was brought back to his master to be punished. The slave maintains he is the brother of his master. But he has no proof and is deemed an arrogant liar. As he is stripped to be flogged the master recognizes him as his brother by a "double-winged mole . . . birthmark of [his] tribe." The Jew considers the case a parable on his own fate. He is brother to the Arab. The birthmark is the common "wound of religion," circumcision. But there is no proper "judgment" yet by which his status is recognized.

The second "judgment" involves a young Arab who was promised the older daughter of a certain merchant. The merchant, now grown old, wishes to keep her at home and offers his younger, more beautiful daughter instead.

The young Arab insists on the older one. The two girls are asked to unveil and it is discovered the older one is the more beautiful. The Cadi decides the merchant must keep his promise and wedding preparations begin. The young Arab offers his prospective father-in-law a place in his home. The Jew interprets this judgment as a parable on the land of Israel. His nation remained faithful to the land despite the destruction and desolation. Now that he has returned, it has become beautiful and he wishes to have the world acknowledge his right to live in it.

The third "judgment" concerns the case of an "artist of lamps" who contracted with a merchant for the sale of his lamps exclusively. Now the "artist" claims the merchant is selling other lamps. The merchant claims his contract allowed him to buy the lamps through an agent. At first Mahmad was his agent, then Ibn Abraham and then Ibn Yussuf. None were satisfactory so he stopped selling the lamps. The Cadi tells the merchant that he must keep his contract. "It is immaterial who . . . the agent is. The light is . . . of the essence." The Jew, seizing upon the names and descriptions of the agents as suggestive of Mohammed, Moses and Jesus, interprets the judgment as a parable about religious intolerance. Each religion may have its own "agents" who are its "prophets and vicars" but there is only one G-d. The "light" each religion seeks is the same.

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The Jew's speeches have a touch of madness in them. The Cadi is amused and the beggars are enraged. But the madness is the madness of the prophet, whose misunderstood words are punctuated by the divine thunder of Sinai.

Judged by ordinary dramatic standards the play is weak. Though they assume a highly symbolic meaning the characters never come alive. In the perspective of the novel, however, the dramatic inferiority adds a subtle brushstroke of verisimilitude. One would expect the utterly philosophical and theological Melech to write a play that would sacrifice literary quality to didactic morality.

114/151 Ramadan

--A month-long fast (during daylight hours) in the Mohammedan calendar.

116/154 hamsin

--Heat wave caused by hot dry winds arising in the desert.

116/154 Kismet

--Fate or, literally in Arabic, allotted portion. It is also a feminine name.

116/155 With this cord that he kept forever limp / Like
a waterless vine.

--Klein's original version of the last line is "Like a diffident zabb" (Knopf correspondence, letter of 14 April, 1951, to H. Weinstock). A zabb (zab) is a male who contracts a venereal disease, as described in Leviticus 15:1-18, and is sent from the encampment until cured (Numbers 5:1-4). This confirms that "cord" is intended to be a sarcastic sexual metaphor.

117/156 Like the old coin of a broken emperor--

--An allusion to Bar Kochba (above 28/20, 89/99) whose coins, now found in Israel, are of significant archaeological value.

117/157 It is an affair between me and my slave.

--The case is based upon the Joseph story (Genesis 37-45). Joseph's brothers sell him as a slave to Egypt. He becomes a ruler there and when his brothers come many years later during a famine to purchase food, he reveals himself to them. See Appendix B.

119/159 the blessed coffin hung in the sky . . .

--A legend exists among the Arabs that Muhammad's grave hovers in the air, between heaven and earth (Zev Vilnay, Legends of Jerusalem, Philadelphia: Jewish

Publication Society, 1973, p. 24; W. C. Taylor, History of Mohammedism, London, 1839, p. 114).

119/159 khalabar

--A thick rug made in India. The word is not Arabic.

120/161 aleph and tau

--Intended as an Arabic equivalent of the expression "alpha and omega." Because tau is the final letter in Hebrew alphabet, Klein erroneously assumes it is the last letter in the Arabic. The Arabic alphabet ends in yā.

124/167 I cite the merchant Ahmed . . .

--This case is an ironic reversal of the Jacob-Laban story (Genesis 29:1-30). Laban has two daughters. Jacob falls in love with the beautiful younger daughter, Rachel, and agrees to work seven years for Laban for her hand. On the wedding night the crafty Laban switches his daughters : and the next morning Jacob finds he has married the older one, Leah. See Appendix B.

125/170 the demon Kashkash

--The name is of uncertain origin.

126/173 Hevah

--Eve.

127/174 houris

--Nymphs in Paradise and hence by extension a voluptuous woman.

129/177 souk

--marketplace.

130/179 Ibn Amram . . . a stutterer . . . the meekest.

--An allusion to Moses. He was the son of Amram (Exodus 6:20), was "heavy of speech and heavy of tongue" (Exodus 4:10), and "the meekest of men" (Numbers 12:3).

131/180 This you must not touch . . .

--An obvious allusion to the many prohibitions found in the Five Books of Moses.

131/180 Ibn Yussuf . . . is only golden . . . for hermits.

--An allusion to Jesus. He was the son of Joseph, or Yussuf (Matthew 1:16), and emphasized the spiritual (light) to the exclusion of the physical and material (only golden). See Appendix A.

133/184 the world's first fidelity.

--The covenant between G-d and Israel (Exodus 19 et pass.).

133/184 Shem

--Son of Noah and progenitor of the Semites (Genesis 11:10-32).

134/185 wound of religion

--Circumcision, common to Jew and Arab (Genesis 17).

134/186 the seventy diseases

--The traditional number of Gentile nations (Talmud, Sukkah 55b et pass.). "Diseases" is metaphorical.

134/186 No, not Euphratic song nor praise of Tigris

Can steal my heart . . .

--An allusion to Psalms 137, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat For there our captors demanded of us the words of song."

135/187 [The storm breaks; thunder and lightning accompany the Jew's peroration. The Cadi cowers beneath his canopy]

--Alluding to the thunder and lightning of Sinai and the subsequent terror of the people (Exodus 19:16-18).

135/187 His prophets and vicars

--The Jew interprets the third judgment as a parable on the symbolic meaning of "light." The "prophets and

vicars" are merely the agents of spiritual light; the light itself is common to all religions. Brotherhood is therefore a divine imperative.

GLOSS HAI

The poems in this Gloss are patterned after a series of benedictions (and prayers) which constitute the morning service in Jewish liturgy. Melech (Klein) is here a paytan, making "poetry for the Most Merciful of Readers" (81/102). He has paraphrased, varied and poetically expanded the original benedictions (and prayers), engendering moods of delight and wonder at G-d's creation and a sense of transcendence over personal suffering. The language is solemn and exalted.

Two of the poems in this Gloss were published by Klein as independent units; "Grace before Poison" as "Psalm 154, To the Chief Musician upon Shoshannim, A Song of Loves," Poetry (Chicago) 58(1941)6; "Of Remembrance" as "Psalm of the Bratslaver," Canadian Jewish Chronicle, 24 October, 1947. They have been renamed to form part of Melech's "drafts for a liturgy . . . his sole legacy" (91/119).

136/189 WHO HAST FASHIONED

--The poem takes the rather inelegant subject of bodily effluences and, based upon a Hebrew prayer, dignifies

it by describing the importance of body fluids to human health. The benediction in the prayerbook, upon which this poem is based, reads:

Blessed art thou, O L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who hast formed man in wisdom, and created in him many passages and vessels. It is well known before thy glorious throne, that if but one of these be opened, or one of those be closed, it would be impossible to exist and stand before thee. Blessed art thou O L-rd, who art the wondrous healer of all flesh (Authorized Daily Prayer Book With Commentary, Introductions and Notes by Dr. Joseph Hertz, New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1961, p. 10).

136/189 the demons are houseless.

--Alluding to the Jewish tradition that unclean spirits lurk about the fingernails (Talmud Niddah 17a, Sabbath 109a). Cf. above 101/131; CP 151:12.

136/189 eight great gates . . . dost diminish us . . .

--Effluences from the ears (2), nose (1), mouth (1), eyes (2) and lower orifices (2) to which the original benediction refers.

137/190 BENEDICTIONS

--Klein skillfully recreates the mood and music of the

original Hebrew despite the difficulties inherent in translation. From a group of fifteen benedictions Melech (Klein) has chosen five to paraphrase and emend. The literal English translations are:

Blessed art thou O L-rd our G-d, King of the universe who hast given to the mind (for "mind" some read "cock " Cf. CP 226) understanding to distinguish between day and night.

Blessed . . . who hast not made me a bondman (slave).

Blessed . . . who clothest the naked.

Blessed . . . who raisest up them that are bowed down.

Blessed . . . who removest sleep from mine eyes and slumber from mine eyelids (Daily Prayerbook, pp. 18-22).

137/190 GRACE BEFORE POISON

--A Jew recites individual benedictions for all foods except drugs because they are inherently poisonous (Talmud, Berakot 35b). Melech (Klein), noting with irony the many "poisons" which benefit mankind, composes his own benediction.

This poem, unlike the others in Gloss Hai, is not based upon the morning service. However, in most prayerbooks the benedictions recited over food are found following the morning service.

The essential theme of "Grace before Poison" is the mingling of good and evil in creation and the ultimate

emergence of good from evil. The poem opens with praise to G-d for the enjoyment of the usual foods we eat, "benison of meat . . . fish . . . fowl . . . fruit of the orchard." It then acknowledges the existence as well of "poisons . . . pollens venomous, the fatal gum." They are the "flowery codicils" of the "great fiat" that brought the world into existence. But at creation G-d said, "Let there be . . ." and always subsequently saw that "it was good" (Genesis 1:1-30)! The poisons, therefore, must be the Creator's "unuttered syllables." The poem concludes, however, with the thought that there is an element of good in poisons: "Those exhilarations of the brain / Cocaine; / Blood of the grape; and marrow of the grain . . . juice of the poppy" tame "this fretful world," bringing "limitless twilights, / Eternities of peace." The poisons, with their "banes that bless," are symbolic of all evil which contains within it elements of good that can become blessings for mankind.

The thematic movement of the poem parallels the nephew's spiritual evolution in The Second Scroll. He revels in the simple joys of childhood, then is forced to acknowledge the existence of evil in the Holocaust, and finally sees suffering as a prelude to redemption through his quest for Uncle Melech.

A secondary theme, the democratization of the imagination, of which Uncle Melech is the symbol in the

novel ("Nameless authorship flourished in the streets" 84/108), is also intimated. Entering a world different from ours and being "exhilarators of the brain" is generally the privilege of poets and visionaries, inhabitants of the realm of the imagination. But in nature G-d has provided this privileged ability to everyman as well, albeit in a different form.

137/191 sextet of Earth spoken, made!

--The six days of Creation wherein it is stated "And G-d said . . . and it was so." (Genesis 1)

138/191 OF REMEMBRANCE

--The benediction which forms the basis of this poem reads:

O my G-d, the soul which thou gavest me is pure:
 thou didst create it, thou didst form it, thou
 didst breathe it into me. Thou preservest it within
 me, and thou wilt take it from me, but wilt restore
 unto me hereafter. So long as the soul is within
 me, I will give thanks unto thee, O L-rd my G-d and
 G-d of my fathers, Sovereign of all works, L-rd of
 all souls! Blessed art thou, O L-rd who restorest
 souls unto the dead (Daily Prayerbook, p. 18).

Its recitation in the morning is predicated upon the

notion that the soul ascends to heaven during the night to refresh itself at its Infinite Source, sleep being a sixtieth of death (Talmud, Berakot 57b), and returns in the morning to animate the body. (Cf. above 17/3.)

Melech (Klein) expands the notion with the Platonic idea of Reminiscence and the Neo-Platonic doctrine of Emanations alluded to in a Hassidic tale by Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav. The tale involves seven beggars invited to the wedding of two destitute orphans. In lieu of gifts they entertain the bride and groom with stories. The first beggar is blind, but he sees into the mysteries of nature. He tells a story of men who recall primordial states of being:

He was a man as old as the seas who spoke with a voice that came out of the distance, "What shall I tell you? I remember the day when one broke the apple from the branch." Then the next oldest arose and said, "But still I think of the time when the light burned." And the third, who was still younger, cried, "I can recall the day when the fruit began to form." But my thoughts," joined in the fourth, "reach unto the hour when the seed fell into the flower-cup!" And to me is still present," said the fifth, "how the flavor of the fruit entered into the seed." "And to me," interjected the sixth, "how the fragrance of the fruit entered into the seed." "And I still have

within me," spoke the seventh, "how the shape of the fruit joined with the bud," "But I who at the time was still a boy," spoke the blind beggar further, "was also with them. And I said to them, 'I recollect all these occurrences and I recollect nothing at all.' They were greatly astonished that the youngest had the earliest memory and the child knew of the most ancient happening.

A "great eagle" then interprets the story. It is a parable on birth:

Can you remember how you were detached from the body of your mother, or how you grew in your mother's body? Can you recollect the hour when the seed fell into your mother's womb? Can you recall your spirit before it entered into the seed, or your soul, or your life before it entered into the seed? This lad is above you all, for there still stirs within his inward mind the shadow of the primordial beginning . . . he stands on the abyss of eternity as on native ground . . . (Martin Buber, Tales of Rabbi Nahman, New York: Horizon Press, 1946, pp. 154-56).

The tale itself is based upon a talmudic statement that an unborn foetus partakes of universal knowledge. The talmudic text reads:

R. Simlai delivered the following discourse: What does an embryo resemble when it is in the bowels of

its mother? Folded writing tablets . . . A light burns above its head and it looks and sees from one end of the world to the other, as it is said, "When His lamp shined above my head, and by His light I walked through darkness" (Job, 29:3) And there is no time in which a man enjoys greater happiness than in those days It is also taught all the Torah (the Law and all its mysteries) from beginning to end As soon as it sees light an angel approaches, slaps it on its mouth and causes it to forget all the Torah completely, as it is said (Genesis 4:7), "Sin coucheth at the door" (Niddah 30b).

139/193 STANCE OF THE AMIDAH

--Klein colours his translation of a daily prayer with the subjective mood of a faithful worshipper. Although oppressed with the sadness that life must bring, he gratefully thanks his Maker for providing physical and spiritual comforts daily: health, dawn and dusk and the hope of redemption. The poet thus adds emotional depth to the prayer's simple words.

The title is a play on words. Amidah means stance in Hebrew and refers to that portion of the morning service which is recited standing up. Translating the Hebrew, the title is "Stance of the Stance." Furthermore, there

are rules on how to stand during the Amidah. The physical "stance" of the Amidah, according to the Code of Jewish Law, requires the worshipper to face Jerusalem, where the Temple stood, to keep his feet together in imitation of the angels praising G-d described by Ezekiel (1:7), and to place his hands upon his heart as a sign of humility. In addition there are requirements for a psychological "stance" as well. The worshipper is called upon: to "be mindful of the fact that the Divine Presence is in front of him"; to "think of the majesty of G-d . . . and the low state of man"; to pray "in the manner of a poor man standing behind the door [begging alms]" (Ganzfried, Code, Cap. 1, pp. 56-59). The psychological "stance," especially, is reflected in the general tone of this poem.

139/193 O L-rd . . .

--Taken directly from the opening of the Amidah prayer. It is a quotation from Psalms (51:17).

139/193 G-d of Abraham . . . Thy radiance.

--The original prayer reads:

Blessed art thou . . . G-d of Abraham, G-d of Isaac, and G-d of Jacob, the great mighty and revered G-d, the most high G-d, who bestowest lovingkindnesses, and art Master of all things; who rememberest the

pious deeds of the patriarchs, and in love wilt bring
a redeemer to their children's children for thy
Name's sake.

Melech (Klein) universalizes the messianic element of
this portion of the Amidah (Daily Prayerbook, p. 131).

139/193 Who with a single . . . almost know Thee:

--The original prayer, which praises G-d, the Creator
of Nature, reads:

Thou sustainest the living with lovingkindness,
revivest the dead with great mercy, supportest the
falling, healest the sick, freest the bound, and
keepest thy faith to them that sleep in the dust.
Who is like unto thee, L-rd of mighty acts, and who
resembleth thee, O King, who orderest death and
restorest life, and causest salvation to spring
forth? (Daily Prayerbook, p. 135).

Melech (Klein) expands the prayer to thank Him for making
nature a metaphor of Divinity. As with a scroll and manu-
script, man may seek to interpret it and thus "almost
know" G-d. The earth, explored and mined, is an "old
manuscript," but the unknown heavens are "like an unrolled
scroll."

139/193 Whom only angels know . . . holiness not know.

--At this point in the Amidah, as Klein follows it

progressively, the "Sanctification" is recited by the reader and the congregation. It begins with the statement, "We will sanctify thy Name in the world even as they sanctify it in the highest heavens, as it is written . . . 'Holy, Holy, Holy etc.'" (Isaiah 6:3). Melech's prayer is a paraphrase of the "Sanctification."

139/194 Favour us, O L-rd . . . our doomsday good;

--This is an expansion of the benediction for understanding which reads:

Thou favourest man with knowledge, and teachest mortals understanding. O favour us with knowledge, understanding and discernment from thee. Blessed art thou, O L-rd gracious giver of Knowledge (Daily Prayerbook, pp. 137, 139).

"Joseph's prudence" refers to Joseph's prophetic foresight. He stored grain for Pharoah during seven "fat" years for use in the seven "lean" years he predicted would follow (Genesis 41:33-57).

139, 140/194 Oh give us . . . our every dish.

--The next few paragraphs paraphrase petitions and benedictions concerning forgiveness, health, sustenance and redemption in time of affliction. "Who settest the sun to labour for our evening dish," means ambiguously:

a) G-d has set (placed) the sun in the sky so that it

may work for us in growing our food and b) G-d causes the sun to set (go down) thus making man labour during the day to have what to eat in the evening. The periodicity of day and night serves as a goad for him. If it were continuously day he would never be prompted to complete his labours.

140/194 Thyself do utter the Shma! . . . Thine elect.

--"The Shma," as used by Melech (Klein), is part of the morning service. It consists of the passage "Hear, O Israel: The L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4) and three other Biblical quotations (Deuteronomy 6:5-9; 11:13-21; Numbers 15:37-41), the final one containing the commandment to attach fringes to the four corners of a garment as a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt (Daily Prayerbook, p. 125). During the morning service Jews wear a prayer shawl (tallit) with fringes attached to its four corners and as they read this final section of the Shma they gather the fringes together and kiss them as a gesture of devotion. (Cf. above 25/15.)

The original prayer represented by this segment of the poem reads:

Sound the great horn for our freedom (Isaiah 27:13);
raise the ensign to gather our exiles (18:3), and
gather us from the four corners of the earth.

Blessed . . . who gatherest the dispersed of thy
people Israel (Daily Prayerbook, p. 143).

Upon this benediction Melech (Klein) has imposed the image of G-d reciting the Shma Himself, remembering the Exodus, and gathering the dispersed Jews together like the fringes of the prayer shawl and kissing them, i.e. showing them His devotion.

140/194, 195 Restore Thy Face.

--The rest of the poem is a concise summary of prayers for the restoration of justice, the rewarding of the saintly, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the coming of the Messiah, the rebuilding of the sanctuary, the continuation of the miracles of nature and the granting of peace, which conclude the Amidah. The "shining and the turning of Thy Face" is based upon Numbers 6:24-26, "The L-rd make his face shine upon thee . . . The L-rd lift up his countenance unto thee. . . ."

141/195 AND IN THAT DROWNING INSTANT

--Following the Amidah, in the morning service, there is a confessional prayer. Psalm 6, with its sombre, "Save me . . . for in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" is recited to remind the worshipper of ever-present mortality. (The confessional prayer is recited in the attitude known as "falling on the face"--a gesture of symbolic dying. At one time this entailed prostration

of the whole body, but today the worshipper merely rests his brow on his arm, Talmud, Berakot 34b, Ta'anit 14b.) Melech (Klein) has taken this theme of death, or symbolic dying, embellished it with the talmudic idea that at the moment of death a man's past is instantaneously reviewed for him (Talmud Ta'anit 11a) and enlarged it to express a national past, a "preterite eternity."

Klein's particular choice of drowning as a symbol of dying accords with his predilection for water imagery. See Milton Wilson, "Klein's Drowned Poet: Canadian Variations on an Old Theme," Canadian Literature, 6(1960)5-17.

In the poem, the poet, a symbolic representation of modern Jew, remembers the glories of past history, "raptures of Baalshem Tov . . . old Amsterdam . . . Cordova . . . Jerusalem-gate and Temple-door." The memory provides national and religious inspiration to him. Previously restricted by society but lately living in a democracy he had been ambitiously "intent upon several freedoms." Through assimilation and acculturation these "freedoms" began to destroy his distinct ethnic and religious identity. He was in danger of disappearing in anonymity. Fortunately "In that Drowning Instant"--a metaphorically apt description of his condition, inundated by contemporary culture--he remembers the glory of his past ("the good, the lasting shore") and is saved. However, it occurs at the last moment ("the third time my

body rises"). Klein no doubt considers the recently established State of Israel a large part of "the good, the lasting shore" that his poet "finds" and which inspires him to preserve his heritage.

The poem's theme is parallel to the theme of "Autobiographical" (95/123) in which memory--in that case a personal memory of innocence and happiness in childhood--provides solace and strength.

141/196 Baalshem Tov

--Israel Baal Shem Tov, founder of the mystical movement known as Hassidism, miracle-worker and teller of tales (above 96/125, CP 178:2).

141/196 Cordova where an Abraham / faces inquisitors.

--Abraham Athias, father of a prominent printer (Joseph Athias) was martyred in Cordova in 1665.

141/196 . . . the arch . . . / whose Latin script . . .

--The Arch of Titus.

142/197 FOR THE DAY, PSALM THE THIRTIETH

--At the conclusion of the morning service a "Psalm for the Day" is recited. Each day of the week has a special Psalm. According to tradition these were the Psalms chanted by the Levites during the Temple service (Talmud, Tamid 7:4). Though the thirtieth Psalm is not one of

those in the weekly cycle, Melech (Klein) selects it to conclude his written legacy because its theme, the emergence of joy out of tragedy, is the philosophy of his life (and of the novel).

This Psalm, in contrast to the other liturgical poems of this Gloss, is deliberately a simple translation, without artistic embellishment, quoted directly from the King James Bible. There may be several meanings to that.

1) Another expression, in form, of the cyclical design of the novel (above, Title). The Second Scroll leads back into the "First Scroll," or the Bible.

2) A symbolic review of major themes of the novel;

a) a return to the past--the Glosses end with one of the most ancient books of human history-- b) the fashioning of good out of evil--the Psalm's theme is, "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness."

3) A symbol of the transcendence of literature. The novel and its Glosses in the end merge with holy canon.

4) A symbolic answering of Klein's prayer in "Psalm II" (CP 210:17). Unable to reply to the scoffers who ridicule his return to tradition Klein asks G-d, "Do Thou the deed, say Thou the word" (211:22). After concluding this tradition-laden work his "lips" are "smitten dumb" (211:11) and biblical words, divinely inspired, now speak

for him.

5) The classical biblical commentator Ibn Ezra (CP 245:4) explains that the thirtieth Psalm was composed by David at the dedication of his palace, the "house of cedar" (2 Samuel 7:2). At the time the king also celebrated his recovery from a grave illness ("house," with the soul as resident, being a metaphor for the human body). Perhaps poetic intuition prompted Klein to conclude with this Psalm as a prayer for recovery from an anticipated silencing illness. Klein did not publish anything after The Second Scroll. Perhaps it could be said of Klein, as it was said of the narrator of his novel, "premonition there had been" (29/22).

APPENDIX A

Uncle Melech as G-d Symbol

The rich suggestiveness of the mythic Uncle Melech has given rise to many interpretations of his role.¹ Klein, too, revealed the symbolic role he intended for Uncle Melech.² But this should not impugn the validity of other interpretations, for, as Uncle Melech himself states, "though the artist entertain fixedly but one intention and one meaning, that creation once accomplished . . . proliferates with significances by him not conceived nor imagined" (106/139). Furthermore, it is frequently what lies in the poet's subconscious, of which he is not aware, that forms the most fertile ground for interpretation.³

The following interprets Uncle Melech as a G-d symbol. Analyzing the origin of his character and the meaning of his role in the novel, it takes into account Klein's rather extensive knowledge of and pre-occupation with the talmudic and folkloric sources of his people's traditions.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Jewish religion is the intimacy with which the Deity is addressed, related to and spoken of. Solomon Schechter observes:

There is not a single endearing epithet in the language, such as brother, sister, bride, mother, lamb, or eye, which is not, according to the Rabbis, applied by the Scriptures to express this intimate relation between G-d and his people.⁴

Walter Kaufmann, analysing the matter from a different point of view, states, "The best word for the characteristically Jewish type of faith is . . . intimacy," and traces the prominence of this attitude in the Bible, Talmud and Hassidic lore.⁵ Rabbi Levi Yizhak of Berditchev (1740-1809) popularized this notion by his folkloric "arguments" with G-d, and his little song appears as a prefatory comment to the novel. Klein created Uncle Melech as G-d symbol on the basis of Judaism's theology of intimacy with the Divine.

The name, "Uncle Melech," derives from a combination of an intimate yet reverent form of addressing G-d in many prayers --Abinu Malkenu, Our Father, our King-- and a Yiddish common epithet of friendliness addressed to anyone--feter, uncle. Klein exchanged Abinu, Our Father, for feter, Uncle, and created the name "Uncle Melech," or "Uncle King." The exchange assumes added significance when one considers that among shtetl Jews often an avuncular relationship was less formal than a parental one.⁶ Additionally, the Hebrew, dod, a versatile term meaning uncle, friend, lover, refers to G-d

in the traditional interpretation of Song of Songs as an allegory on the love of Israel and G-d. As Uncle Melech is the symbol of G-d, so is his nephew a symbol of the people of Israel following their G-d once more, through contemporary history, to the Holy Land.

There are numerous pointed references in the novel suggesting Uncle Melech as G-d symbol. Melech is expert in Maaseh Merkabah--literally "The Work of the Divine Chariot" described in Ezekiel (1:1-28)--and Maaseh Bereshit--literally "The Work of Creation" (89/115).

Both are analogously "characteristics" of G-d. The sentence, "I never saw my Uncle Melech, but reports of his Talmudic exploits kept sounding in our house and there made a legend of his name" (18/5), refers to the talmudic legends of G-d's exploits and conversations. The rabbis conceived of an imitatio hominis on G-d's part in their legends.⁷ (From these legends derives the Jewish attitude of intimacy with G-d.) The theological concept of imitatio Dei and its imaginative converse, imitatio hominis by G-d, are represented in the novel by a subtly designed symmetry in the roles of uncle and nephew.⁸ Uncle Melech's letters, which guide the nephew, are the ^{Torah, that is} Books of the Bible, considered by Jews "epistles" written by G-d to guide them, ^{but especially the Talmud, considered a prime example of G-d's continuing revelation of His will through Jewish Law} The questing "plots" of the novel and the Bible become, according to this interpretation, remarkably congruent. The nephew is "related" to Melech

through "hearsay and blood ties" (54/60) and so is the nation of Israel by virtue of the covenant at Sinai.⁹ As the nephew searches for him, Melech is "tantalizingly familiar, yet forever elusive" (76/95); so is Israel's G-d as His people seek Him.

The discussion of Uncle Melech's character by Krongold, the JDC director in Rome, is delicately ambiguous. The subject may be Melech or, ironically, G-d:

G-d knows. He's supposed to be looking after future immigrants to Israel. But whether he's doing his job or implementing some design of his own, I wouldn't undertake to say Through silence carry on our conversation An idea passes before him, it finds favour in his eyes . . . (54/61).

"G-d knows" refers to G-d's omniscience. Krongold is stating a theological belief about which there are volumes of discussions in Jewish philosophy.¹⁰ The phrase has consequently become a Yiddish folk expression.¹¹ Also speaking about what G-d is supposed to be doing in contrast to what He does is in the Jewish tradition. When Abraham remonstrates with G-d concerning the destruction of Sodom and Gemorrah (Genesis 18:17-33) the rabbis imagine G-d saying to Abraham, "If you think I acted unworthily, teach me, and I will do so."¹² G-d's silence is a theological term for the mystery of G-d permitting evil.¹³ "Passing before him" and "finds

favour in his eyes" are both biblical expressions used in relation to G-d (Exodus 33:13-23).

Compare further Moses' longing desire to see G-d and the L-rd's statement " . . . but my face shall not be seen" (Exodus 33:23), as well as "I will hide my face from them" (Deuteronomy 31:17), with the nephew's remarks about Uncle Melech: "never seen or known" (39/37), "hidden, but not lost" (52/58), "I would not ever look upon his face" (91/119).

Several Jewish theological doctrines concerning G-d are also alluded to through Uncle Melech. The "multiple exposure" of Melech's photograph (61/72) easily suggests the doctrine of the attributes of G-d which give "views" but never a precise picture.¹⁴ The pursuit (78/97) of the nephew by an uncle suspected everywhere and found nowhere (75/92) suggests the idea of "G-d in Search of Man."¹⁵

All of these expressions and their underlying ideas reflect what Layton describes in another of Klein's works, "this peculiarly intimate sultry and difficult relationship between the Jews and their G-d."¹⁶

There are more subtle allusions to Uncle Melech as G-d symbol which, however, require a knowledge of Jewish law and lore to discern. They are concealed in the weave of erudition and extensive metaphor. Ironically they make the literary form wittily accord with

the symbol of a "hidden G-d."¹⁷

Jewish law prohibits the pronunciation of G-d's name in the form of the written Tetragrammaton even in prayers or in the reading of the Scroll. This is in keeping with the concept of the "hidden G-d." Only in the Temple in Jerusalem, where the presence of G-d was considered to be more manifest than elsewhere, was the Tetragrammaton pronounced as it is written. Even then, it was drowned out ("hidden") by song. After the destruction of the Temple, which was a sign of the eclipse ("hiding") of G-d, it was never again pronounced.¹⁸

The opening lines of The Second Scroll are a precise metaphorical rendering of this practice and concept:

For many years (since the destruction of the Temple)
my father (Jewish law) . . . refused to permit in
his presence even the mention of that person's
(Uncle Melech's or G-d's) name (17/3).

That the father is the symbolic representation of Jewish law is suggested in the very next paragraph by the phrase,
" . . . my father was . . . as zealous for the Law, as was the Bible's fanatic Phineas." In the same context Klein refers again to the restriction on the pronunciation of G-d's name: "the tabu was recognized." The mood is appropriately religious. Continuing his allusion to Temple times, Klein gives his conceit meticulous accuracy:

My uncle's name had not always been so unwelcome beneath my father's roof. I remember well how important a part, a magic incantatory part, his name played in the early days of my childhood (18/4). "Early days of my childhood" alludes to the childhood of the Jewish people, historically speaking, i.e. Temple times. (The metaphor is biblical, Jeremiah 2:2; Ezekiel 16:60; Hosea 11:1.) In Temple times, when G-d's name was pronounced fully, it played "an important part, a magic incantatory part" in the ritual.

The confrontation between the nephew and Settano (45-50/46-55) may be interpreted simply as a symbolic struggle with the forces of evil. Settano in deed and name resembles Satan. The incident parallels the symbolism Uncle Melech sees in his interpretation of the Sistine Chapel ceiling in the same chapter (51-52/56-58) and in Gloss Gimel. However, in the context of Uncle Melech as G-d symbol there is added an allusion to a talmudic legend in which Satan attempts at Sinai to deprive the people of Israel of their newly given Torah (Law).¹⁹ Settano's theft of Melech's letters (which were interpreted above as the ^{Torah} ~~Bible~~) is now a precise and erudite metaphoric detail. And Settano's enigmatic obsession with Melech's name, "If I knew . . . how to decode the name Uncle Melech . . ." (47/50), is explained; it is Satan's obsession with the "hidden" Name of G-d.

When "revealed," the Name of G-d renders him powerless.

The theme of Uncle Melech as G-d, and indeed the characterization of Uncle Melech, is taken from an incident related by one of the rabbis in the Talmud:

Rabbi Tarfon said: 'I once ascended the dais (where the priests stood in the Temple when they blessed the people) after my mother's brother, and inclined my ear to the High Priest, and heard him swallowing (pronouncing quickly) the Name during the chanting of his brother priests.²⁰

When Rabbi Tarfon was a child the Temple still stood and he heard the Tetragrammaton pronounced as written. Later, when he grew older, the Temple was destroyed and he no longer could hear it because of the Law's prohibition. The similarity to Uncle Melech's nephew in his youth hearing his uncle's name then later being prohibited from mentioning it, is obvious. Klein created Uncle Melech and his nephew by combining several images connected with the Rabbi Tarfon incident: childhood and Temple times, a prominent uncle who is a mother's brother, G-d's Name being pronounced and then prohibited. It is interesting to note that Rabbi Tarfon's relationship to his uncle--his mother's brother--is the precise relationship of the nephew-narrator to Uncle Melech. The tantalizing mystery of G-d's concealing and revealing nature, theological metaphors for tragedy and joy

respectively, is the mystery associated with the mythic Uncle Melech. G-d's name is prohibited from being mentioned as He "conceals" Himself from the Jewish people at the destruction of the Temple, and Uncle Melech's name is "tabu" as he "conceals" himself from his people by Marxist ideology and conduct. Conversely the rebirth of Israel is an occasion of joy for Melech and his nephew and it is there, at the end of the novel, that Melech comes closest to being "revealed" or known. Indeed the nephew comes away from Israel as if he did meet his uncle.

The Bible records that the Jews have always had a problem with images. In a world of idol worship they struggled to introduce and maintain the concept of one G-d who is invisible and beyond human understanding.²¹ The second of the Ten Commandments is therefore rigidly interpreted. Maimonides states that one who believes G-d is corporeal, or a form, or a force, is a heretic.²² That is why the nephew "carried . . . the image of Uncle Melech" in his mind "illegally" (20/7), that is, against Jewish Law, and "Uncle Melech wouldn't think of going to a photographer"--"that's the second commandment" (19/7). But the philosophers point out, man must have some ideas "to direct the mind to the truths which we must believe concerning G-d."²³ These are "conjured images" and alluded to by the nephew at the death of

Uncle Melech: "Forever would I have to bear in my mind my own conjured image of Uncle Melech" (91/119). Martin Buber, in more theological language, puts the matter thus: "For the idea of G-d, that masterpiece of man's construction, is only the image of images, the most lofty of all images by which man imagines the imageless G-d."²⁴ Paradoxically, at his death, after his nephew "had found him," Uncle Melech enters a new dimension of conception by the nephew. He now becomes "Anointed!" (91/119) Buber describes this theologically too, "when man learns to love G-d, he senses an actuality which rises above the idea."²⁵ Once G-d "has been found" our concepts and images are of no consequence. The nephew, realizing it, states, "and now that I had found him--I would not ever look upon his face" (91/119). In this philosophical sense Uncle Melech, as G-d symbol, also comes closest to being "revealed" or known at the end of the novel.

The strongest suggestion of Uncle Melech as G-d symbol emerges in a critical incident in the last chapter which sums up the major thesis of the novel. At the beginning of "Deuteronomy" the plane passenger discusses his secular theories of the birth of the State of Israel with the narrator. The state is an aspect of casual history. The argument runs "counterpoint" to the narrator's own "reflections" which involve a "private Messianic search" (73/90). Klein creates a parallelism of contrasts

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between the narrator and the plane passenger which confirms Uncle Melech as G-d symbol. Unlike the passenger, who is merely visiting Israel, the narrator is looking for his Uncle Melech, and, unlike the passenger, he believes the birth of Israel is a manifestation of G-d's providence. As the plane lands the narrator sums up his disagreement with the plane passenger by asserting "you have forgotten, in your thesis, to place G-d." The passenger is then portrayed satirically "in front of the [customs] officer declaring . . . his G-d," while the narrator goes searching for his--Uncle Melech.

There are some difficulties connected with this interpretation, but as we shall see Klein anticipates them and deliberately emphasizes those elements of the symbol that resolve the difficulties.

The first problem in viewing Uncle Melech as G-d symbol is his humanity. The simplest solution is to say that it is a borrowed Christian image.²⁶ But, as mentioned, the doctrine of intimacy in Judaism allows for human intercourse, at least symbolically, with the Deity. Even so, Klein carefully associates the three individuals who make specific reference to conversations with Melech with the spiritual and the divine by name and image: 1) Piersanti, or Saint Peter, preaching "the immanence of Sin," "palpating" and "percussing" souls (41/40); 2) Krongold, or "Crown of Gold" (for King

Melech) expounding on G-d's suffering "the yoke of exile" like a prophet or Kabbalist seer (54, 55/61, 62); and 3) the "old venerable sage" who "seemed . . . not of this world . . . seeking to peer behind the mysteries of Pamalyah shel Malah ("celestial agencies," above 88/113). All three are barely human.

The death of Uncle Melech is a second problem. How can G-d die? Again, Klein may have borrowed a Christian image. But Uncle Melech's death, too, as a symbol, can be accommodated to Jewish theology. It alludes to the doctrine of Martin Buber referred to above. The old "idea" of G-d as an image or concept "died," i.e. has been replaced by an existential relationship "which rises above the idea." Melech's death, therefore, is transfigured by various exalting moods (the essence of religious existentialism): a) hope in the face of tragedy--"these were not really tombs . . . deaths invested in life Magnificat which does not mention death (92/120); b) rebirth--"it was as if the tribes of Israel had come to life again and were travelling as in olden times" (92/120); c) sense of pride and identification--"for it was flesh of my flesh that was here being exalted" (93/121); d) holiness--"holy city on whose hills once were kindled, as now again, the beacons announcing new moons, festivals, and set times" (93/121).

Uncle Melech's "temptation" to convert and his sexual "love" (42, 43, 54/42, 43, 61), pose a third problem. In this regard it should be noted that Klein extricates Uncle Melech from too great an explicitness by treating these subjects in the context of abstract philosophical themes. Uncle Melech has a passion for ideas "substituting for the woman he never married" (54/42). It is the ideal passion that is poetically given an earthy metaphor. Moreover Uncle Melech is called "unique" (54/61) and he is unmarried, or "one." These terms allude to Judaism's fundamental conception of G-d as "one" and "unique."²⁷ However, says Klein, G-d's oneness does not mean that He does not welcome a multiplicity in the realm of theological ideas among His creatures. While Uncle Melech does not change his status, i.e. His essence, he does "cast his eyes" after ideas, "court" and "love" them. That is the meaning of the third parable in the drama of Gloss Dalid, as M. W. Steinberg points out, "It is immaterial whether the agent of the lamp manufacturer (the Creator of light) is Mahmad (Mohammed) or Ibn Amram (Moses) or Ibn Yousuf (Jesus)."²⁸

Klein extends the allusion even further, but again because of the G-d symbolism, carefully elevates Melech's sexual love to the ideal. Christianity is commonly referred to as the "daughter" religion of Judaism. It is, in Klein's metaphoric language, the "offspring"

of one of the "flirtations" of ideas in the "mind" of G-d. Islam may be considered another. The "little joke" of Krongold regarding Melech and the Koran (55/63) thus takes on added meaning. Also his ambiguous compliment to Melech, that while he is "a philanderer of ideas . . . to the basic one he remains faithful: loyalty," becomes more significant. Jews believe that no matter how successful other religions are in any terms, G-d will remain loyal to them even as they remain loyal to Him.²⁹ Uncle Melech, therefore, will "under no circumstances . . . go over to a majority. In fact, the idea most appealing to him is . . . to join the minority" (54/61). In the realm of ideas the daughter religions of Judaism have formulated expansions on the concept of G-d, but for the Jews, essentially He remains One and faithful to them.

Uncle Melech's suffering and his efforts to rid himself of "the Diaspora infection" present the fourth problem. Klein solves it by invoking an old doctrine in Jewish tradition that G-d, so to speak, suffers with His people in their dispersion. There are many Talmudic references to it. S. Rappaport states:

The Rabbis never wearied of stressing that, as a loving father who reluctantly metes out punishment to a recalcitrant son, G-d Himself, while inflicting

pain on His children, suffered with their sufferings and wept over their afflictions.³⁰

The ambivalence of "a loving father who reluctantly metes out punishment" is reflected in Krongold's description of Uncle Melech's attitude towards suffering and the Holocaust, "He hates it, he loves it" (54, 55/62, 63).

Finally, there is the problem of Uncle Melech's Marxism and membership in the Communist party. Would G-d be with the Communists, the "Society of G-dlessness" (25/16)? Melech then repents; does G-d repent? But here too Klein's subtle use of biblical metaphor resolves the difficulty and renders to this aspect of the G-d symbol the positive emphasis intended in the early description of Uncle Melech's Communism "conspiring a world's future . . . Comrade Krul, the international authority upon the decadence of European literature" (25-26/16-17).

When the Bible speaks of G-d being "with someone" it means to express material success. Joseph's success in the house of the Egyptian Potiphar, for example, is described, "And the L-rd was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man . . . his master saw that the L-rd was with him . . . and caused all that he did to prosper" (Genesis 39:2, 3). On the other hand, failure, both moral and material, is indicated by the phrase "G-d repented," as if He changed His mind. Thus, when mankind was created the Bible says, "And G-d saw every thing

that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31); but when it became wicked, failing in its original purpose of bringing delight to the Creator and destroying itself, the Bible says, "And it repented the L-rd that He had made man on the earth" (Genesis 6:6). (Both of these expressions are rooted in the profound belief that everything proceeds from G-d. Philosophical questions of G-d's Omnipotence or Omniscience restricting man's freedom, according to this belief, and the problem of good and evil came only later.³¹)

If we were to translate the condition of the major ideological struggle of the 20's and 30's into biblical language we could say that "G-d was with the Communists." They were very successful in capturing the imagination of the intellectuals as well as the masses, inspiring both to believe that the millenium was at hand. Andre Gide wrote:

The unique appeal of the Bolshevik revolution was its universality. It did not propose merely to introduce a certain number of drastic changes in Russia. It envisaged the world-wide abolition of war, poverty and suffering. In all countries, therefore, the little men, labourer and intellectual, felt that something important had taken place in their lives when revolution took root in Russia.³²

Their success would have perhaps been complete but for their own moral weakness, betrayed by the German-Russian pact of 1939. Arthur Koestler's reaction to this signal failure of Communism is typical of the universal disillusionment:

I professed my belief that the foundations of the Workers' and Peasants' State had remained unshaken, that the nationalization of the means of production was a guarantee for its eventual return to the road of Socialism; and that, in spite of everything, the Soviet Union still represented our last and only hope on a planet in rapid decay . . . until the day when the swastika was hoisted on Moscow airport, in honour of Ribbentrop's arrival, and the Red Army band broke into the Horst Wessel Lied. That was the end³³

Uncle Melech also refers to this turning point:

It was late '39 and when the enemy swarmed over Poland. I found myself in Kamenets, still abashed by the treachery of the pact that the Soviets had made with the sons of Belial. In the midst of our anguish we were regaled with a dialectic which proved that fascism was but a matter of taste. The taste was bitter unto death (31/26).³⁴

By biblical metaphor "G-d had been with" the Communists in their success and, as with the generation

of the Flood, "had repented" because of their subsequent wickedness. Transferring the expression to Uncle Melech as G-d symbol we can readily understand why "Uncle Melech, it was stated, was with the Russian cavalry" (25/15) at the beginning of the revolution. But when "with a stroke of the pen, a dart of the tongue, they had handed over to perdition . . . three and a half million souls," he repented--"Is it not written that in the place where the repentant one stands, not even the complete saint may stand?" (31, 32/26, 27)

One final detail remains to fit into this interpretation, the assumed enduring worth of Uncle Melech's literary criticism.

In 1952 Whittaker Chambers asked, "Why is it that thirty years after the greatest revolution in history, the Communists have not produced one single inspired work of the mind?"³⁵ George Steiner gives the answer:

In the Soviet Union itself, orthodoxy assumed the dour and turgid guise of Zhadanovism and Stalinist aesthetics. To it we owe the most consequent and tragically successful campaign ever waged by a political regime to enlist or destroy the shaping powers of the literary imagination.³⁶

Despite all this, Steiner admits there are some positive results. As "a strategy of insight" Marxism contributed to the resources of the literary critic.

Steiner catalogues the contributions:

a) The concept of dissociation--Often a writer's "prior intent goes against the grain of the actual narrative," as in Don Quixote and Anna Karenina. "There is a dialectical conflict between a poet's thesis and his actual vision of things."

b) The distinction between "realism" and "naturalism"--Realism means achieving "an organic relationship between objective reality and the life of the imagination." Naturalism, on the other hand, looks on the world "as on a warehouse" the contents of which is inventoried. "That is why Madame Bovary, for all its virtues, is a slighter thing than Anna Karenina."

c) A sharpened sense of time and place--"The Marxist sensibility has contributed a sociological awareness to the best of modern criticism." Because of this perspective, critics have been led to study the audience of a work of art and its relationship to the artist and his work. They sought to answer questions such as, "In what respect was the Dickensian novel a calculated response to the evolution of a new reading public?"

d) "Marxist-Leninism, and the political regimes enacted in its name, take literature seriously, indeed desperately so."--If a society regards its poets as a potential threat or element of danger it must have a

high regard for art. It is a "sinister tribute to the supremacy of ideas in human affairs--but a tribute nevertheless."

The contributions are major ones, and literary criticism has felt their influence sufficiently to have changed as a result.

Extending Klein's biblical metaphor, one might say G-d's brief "being with" the Communists produced an enduring positive result in critical theory even as all else was a moral failure. The nephew is, therefore, more interested in Uncle Melech's essay on literature than in his interruption of transactions on the Warsaw Bourse (26/17). The pean of praise for Uncle Melech's critical talents now takes on added significance (26/17, 18). We also see why Uncle Melech repents of his Communism but not of his literary views.

Notes Appendix A

1. See Caplan "Klein: Introduction" p. 219; Fischer, In Search of Jerusalem, pp. 163-66; Spiro, "The Second Gloss," pp. 47-84; M. W. Steinberg, "A Twentieth Century Pentateuch," Canadian Literature, 2(1959) 37-46; Miriam Waddington, "Signs on a White Field," Canadian Literature, 25(1965)21-35.
2. Laub, "A Recollection," also Leon Edel, "Marginal Keri and Textual Chetiv: The Mystic Novel of A. M. Klein," Klein Symposium, pp. 25-26.
3. Cf. Edward A. Armstrong, Shakespeare's Imagination (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 174-197. It is interesting to note that Plato has a low opinion of poets' interpretations of their own works. (Apology, Britannica Great Books, VII, 202)
4. Aspects of Rabbinic Theology (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), p. 46.
5. Critique of Religion and Philosophy (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1961), p. 279.

6. See Zborowski and Herzog, Life is with People, p. 332. The phenomenon has universal anthropological roots; see Howard Gardner, The Quest for Mind (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1972) pp. 121-22, citing Lévi-Strauss. Among Jews it is reinforced by the onerous duty placed upon a child in respecting his parents. One rabbi praised G-d that his parents died at his birth for he felt he could never have honoured them as much as Jewish law required (Jerusalem Talmud, Peah, 1:3).
7. Schechter, Rabbinic Theology, pp. 37-38.
8. For a study of the symmetry see Spiro, "The Second Gloss," pp. 131-139.
9. Cf. Exodus 24:8, "And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the L-rd hath made with you concerning all these words."
10. See Julius Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1964), pass.
11. G-tt vaiss!

12. Midrash Tanhuma cited by Schechter, Rabbinic Theology, p. 37.
13. See Martin Buber, Eclipse of G-d (New York: Harper Publishing Co., 1952) pp. 66 ff.
14. See Isaac Huslik, A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society) 1958, pass. All classical Jewish philosophers were concerned with the subject.
15. See Abraham J. Heschel, G-d in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism (New York: Meridian Books, 1961).
16. Irving Layton, First Statement, 2(1945)36.
17. Cf. Isaiah 45:15, "Verily Thou art a G-d that hidest Thyself." See also Spiro, "The Second Gloss," p. 123.
18. Maimonides, Code of Law, Book of Adoration, Laws of Prayer and of the Priestly Blessing, Cap. XIV, Sec. 10 (Hyamson edition, p. 117b) codifies the matter as follows:

The name of G-d was pronounced as written; that is the name which the utterance is according to the letters Yod He Vav He. This is the Ineffable Name (literally the Proper Name, also called the Tetragrammaton) wherever it is so referred to. Outside the Temple the usual pronunciation is used, as if it were written A D N I (my L-rd); for the Proper Name of G-d as written is pronounced nowhere but in the Temple.

For a full discussion see G. F. Moore, Judaism in the First Century of the Christian Era (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1960) I, 424-430. The rabbinic references are: Sotah 37b, Sanhedrin Cap. XI, Kohellet Rabbah, Cap. III. See also below on the source of concealing the Name in song.

19. See Talmud, Sabbath 89a; Sanhedrin 26b.
20. Kiddushin 71a.
21. See Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed, Prt. I, Cap. 59 (Friedlander ed. p. 85).
22. Maimonides, Code, Book of Knowledge, Laws of Repentance, Cap. 3, Sec. 7 (Hyamson, p. 84b).

23. Maimonides, Guide, Prt. I, Cap. 58 (Friedlander p. 82).

24. Eclipse of G-d, 62.

25. Ibid.

26. Other Christian images borrowed by Klein in the novel are the Warsaw Bourse incident (26/17), Melech arising out of the grave (36/32), the narrator's head on a tray (49/53), Melech's "unction," being "anointed with gasoline" (91/118). Cf. Laub, "Recollection"; Klein's letter to Edel, Klein Symposium, pp. 25, 26; Marya Fiamengo, "Catholic Resonances in the Poetry of A. M. Klein," Klein Symposium pp. 65-71.

27. See Maimonides, Code, Book of Knowledge, Laws Concerning the Basic Principles of the Torah, Cap. I, Sec. 7 (Hyamson, p. 34b):

This G-d is One . . . so that none of the things existing in the universe to which the term one is applied is like unto His Unity; . . . His Unity is such that there is no other Unity like it in the world.

This concept has become known as the Uniqueness of G-d.

28. The Second Scroll, Introduction, McClelland and Stewart edition, xv. See also above 103/151.

29. See S. Rappaport, Jewish Horizons (Johannesburg: Bnai Brith, 1959) p. 55:

Against these theories (that Israel's lack of success indicates its rejection) . . . the teachers and sages of Israel steadfastly maintained their historic position . . . that G-d had not forsaken Israel G-d was and remained Israel's father, and though the Jews might be full of blemishes yet they remained His children.

The talmudic sources, among many, are Pesahim 87b, Megillah 29b.

30. Rappaport, Jewish Horizons, p. 54.

31. See U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Exodus, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1959), pp.55-56; also Yehezkel Kaufman, The Religion of Israel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 74-76.

32. The God that Failed: Six Studies in Communism (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1950) p. 202.

33. Ibid. 81.

34. Cf. Koestler, The God that Failed, p. 82, "The addition of the Soviety myth . . . is . . . difficult to cure . . . there is always a supply of new labels on the cominform's black market of ideals."

35. Witness, New York: Random House, 1952, p. 82.

36. Language and Silence (New York: Athenium, 1967) p. 308.

APPENDIX B

Allusions of Content and Form in
the Text and the Glosses

The exterior form of The Second Scroll parallels the "first scroll," the Pentateuch, in chapter divisions and glosses. In sub-surface design it is masterfully similar to Joyce's Ulysses.¹ The Second Scroll, however, assumes a greater familiarity with Hebrew traditions and scholarship, especially the Talmud, than does Ulysses with Irish history and custom. Ezra Pound said that any blockhead can trace the Homeric parallels in Ulysses, but a much more genial cranial characteristic is required to detect the biblical parallels in The Second Scroll. Many of the Hebrew references are obscure and not well known.²

GENESIS

Adam is described in the Book of Genesis as a perfect being, lord of the world, who rebels by tasting the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge (Genesis 3). The Rabbis imaginately conceive of him as a saintly scholar who turns away from G-d through alien knowledge.³ Uncle Melech, the prodigy of Ratno, who "excels sages twice and thrice and four times his age," and who "was indeed as his name indicated, Melech, king" (18/5, 19/5), is similarly depicted. The terms used are from talmudic sketches of

the most pious and knowledgeable students of the Law.⁴ And Melech, like the rabbinical Adam, also rebels, turning away from G-d to embrace Marxist ideology-- "Bolshevism meant the denial of the Name" (24/14). Furthermore, as Uncle Melech extends his Marxism in an intellectual dimension, to become an expert in literary criticism, he epitomizes a well accepted interpretation of the Garden of Eden episode in the Bible--the election of culture, as opposed to religion, as a way of life.⁵

Behind the Adam symbol, the figure of Abraham, the patriarch, is discernible in the character of Melech. Abraham is the progenitor of the Jewish people (Genesis 12), and Uncle Melech begets the first stirrings of ancestral faith in the heart of the young narrator-- "I remember well how important a part, a magic incantatory part, his name played in the early days of my childhood" (18/5).

Other biblical personalities are present as well in Melech's multiple symbolic identities. Isaac's blessing is directed to Jacob by Rebecca (Genesis 27:1-29) and Uncle Melech is the symbol of blessing invoked upon the narrator by his mother--"Oh that he might be like his Uncle Melech, a scholar in Israel" (18/5). Just as Esau and Jacob quarrel over an ancestral heritage (Genesis 27:41), so do the narrator's father and Uncle Melech quarrel over ancestral faith. The narrator's father

forbids the mention of Melech's name in his house. And as Joseph serves the Egyptians, future enemies of his people, with wisdom and intelligence (Genesis 41:39-57), so does Melech serve the Communists with "talents, both linguistic and polemical" (26/17).

The biblical Genesis ends with the death of Jacob (49, 50). Klein's Genesis chapter ends with the religious or spiritual death of Uncle Melech as he leaves the fold to become "especially active with the zealots of the Society of G-dlessness" (25/16). "Woe is me, and bitter," and "my fallen crown," Yiddish expressions of grief and bereavement, are the cries of Uncle Melech's sister as she hears of his deeds (23/13). As if to confirm this religious or spiritual death, after learning of Melech's defection the narrator's father declares him non-existent--"We never again spoke of him in our house" (25/16).

The foremost biblical commentator among Jews is the medieval Isaacides (1040-1102), known as Rashi (a contraction of the Hebrew Rabbi Shlomo Yizhaki).⁶ His commentary is studied by young and old, students and scholars.⁷ Klein's "biblical" Glosses are modelled upon those of Isaacides. The commentator's method is to select a biblical passage and explain it with 1) an original thought, 2) a talmudic quotation or 3) a paraphrase of the words of the rabbis. Klein does the same.

Glosses Aleph and Beth, "Autobiographical" and "Elegy," which elaborate, in poetic form, upon the novel's passages concerning childhood and grief, are 1) the narrator's original compositions. Glosses Gimel and Daled, "Excerpt from Letter" and "The Three Judgments," are 2) "quotations" of Uncle Melech's "writings". Gloss Hai is a series of 3) paraphrases of rabbinically composed prayers.

The contents of the Glosses parallel Isaacides' Pentateuchal commentary as well, particularly the well-remembered portions. One of the lengthier glosses of Isaacides in Genesis is found on the passage 48:7. Joseph is already a ruler in Egypt. He is informed that his father, Jacob, whom he had brought from Canaan, is ill and about to die. Joseph takes his two sons and hurries to the dying patriarch to receive a final blessing. On his death-bed Jacob reviews some of his personal history with Joseph, giving special attention to the sudden death of his wife Rachel, Joseph's mother:

And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan on the way, when yet there was some distance to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way of Ephrath, the same is Beth-lehem.

Isaacides comments that because Jacob had demanded of his son burial in the ancestral sepulchre in Hebron

(47:29-30) he now apologizes to Joseph, in this passage, for not burying his mother in Hebron. The commentary, which was memorized by young Bible students, elaborates with unusual sentimentality on the confrontation between the old alien father and his modern "Egyptian" son. Jacob's emotional words must have evoked nostalgic memories in Joseph's mind of a childhood with a beautiful mother from whom he was snatched at an early age to be sold into slavery. Poignantly sad memories of childhood are similarly raised in the mind of the young narrator by two strangers from Ratno as they describe a pogrom in the city "with a great and bitter intensity." Moreover he comments, in a note, "Somehow my entire childhood is evoked through this incident" (22/11), and refers the reader to the nostalgic Gloss Aleph, "Autobiographical," a sentimental elaboration on the incident.

As if this were not sufficient Klein eruditely parallels Isaacides further by alluding to some imaginative details added by the commentator to Jacob's dialogue. Based on rabbinic sources Isaacides composes an apology for Jacob for denying Rachel burial in Hebron. What seems a lapse of love is really a prophetic gesture. Divine Providence has reserved a special destiny for her in Beth-lehem:

When her sons will be exiled through Nebuzaradan
(an Assyrian general, 586 B.C.E.), they will pass

through there (Beth-lehem), and Rachel will leave her tomb and weep and pray for mercy for them, as it is written (Jeremiah 31:14) 'A voice is heard in Ramah, groaning, weeping and bitter lamentation; Rachel is weeping for her children.'

In Gloss Aleph the two strangers are depicted as exiles coming from their tragedy-stricken land--"And the two strangers come / Fiery from Volhynia's murderous hordes" (96/124). The "murderous hordes" allude to Nebuzaradan and his guards who murdered and pillaged as they destroyed Jerusalem (Jeremiah 52). And the journalist's mother, a Rachel-figure, weeps, " . . . my poor brother! My fallen crown." (23/13).

It is of significance to note that Klein preserves a topological parallel to standard printed editions of the Pentateuch, the "original scroll." In these editions the commentary of Isaacides appears underneath the biblical text. In the novel, before referring the reader to the Glosses at the end, Klein meticulously gives a short Isaacides-like comment at the bottom of the page.

EXODUS

The biblical Exodus begins with the sufferings of the people of Israel at the hand of the Egyptians, and in a parallel manner the early parts of Klein's

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Exodus chapter recount the agonies of Uncle Melech and his fellow Jews. Other parallels to the biblical Exodus are not so obvious. In the Bible the Children of Israel are rescued from physical extinction in the land of their affliction by divine intervention. They proclaim "by strength of hand the L-rd brought us forth out of Egypt" (Exodus 13:16). Uncle Melech, speaking for his brother Jews, also affirms that the "hand of G-d" brought about his miraculous escape--". . . and even here at the critical connectives it is only the hand of G-d that can explain" (31/25). When the Jewish people finally leave Egypt they cross the Red Sea to begin their journey to the Promised Land. Moses, their leader, parts the waters and shepherds them across (Exodus 14). Uncle Melech, too, watches Moses-like as before him "extend the waters of the Mediterranean," and the remnants of European Jewry leave with "the rescuing ships of the Israeli navy" (36/33).

The strange verses which Uncle Melech composes at the end of the chapter, the "sacred play," parallel the Jewish classics--the Bible, the Talmud and the Kabbalah (37/34, 35). The first of the verses, in "language Biblic," is patterned after the first words of G-d to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). In a double symbol Klein takes us back to the beginning of Jewish history, to Abraham the first Jew, and simultaneously to the

giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, which took place right after the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 19). According to Jewish tradition, not only was the Decalogue given on Mount Sinai but also the entire Law, with its explanations as incorporated in the Mishna and Talmud.⁸ Both Mishna and Talmud are added to Uncle Melech's rendering of the Law in "language Biblic."

Allusively, the words of the "Song of Moses" sung by the Jews as they crossed the Red Sea resound in Uncle Melech's final words in the chapter. Compare Moses' "And with the breath of Thy nostrils the waters were heaped up together, the floods stood upright as a wall" (Exodus 15:8), and Melech's, "The desert swirled, the capitals hissed: Sambation raged, but Sambation was crossed . . ." (38/36).

There is an additional symbolic theme attached to this allusion. Through an ingenious exegesis the Talmud interprets a passage in the "Song of Moses" as a biblical source for the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead, a cardinal principle of Judaism.⁹ Uncle Melech's rising from the grave in Kamenets is a fitting symbol of the doctrine as well as of the resurrection of the Jewish people from the ashes of Europe. The contemporary fulfillment of the prophecy exegetically alluded to Moses is celebrated by Melech in his verses.

Other matters of the biblical Exodus appear in this chapter folded underneath the symbols and references mentioned. The first census of the Jewish people is commanded in the Book of Exodus:

When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, of those who are to be numbered of them, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the L-rd (30:12).

The words of this passage echo in phrases Uncle Melech uses referring to European Jewry: "the numbered dead"; "Whose was the blood that was his ransom?"; "I keep counting over and over again"; "the number 12165" (30, 31/24, 25).

When Moses descends from Mount Sinai, after having received the two tablets of the Law, he is overwhelmed at the betrayal of the covenant when the people worship the golden calf (Exodus 32:15-19). The betrayal is alluded to in the Exodus chapter in "the treachery of the pact that the Soviets had made with the sons of Belial" (31/25). Uncle Melech at the time had made a covenant with Marxism, "conspiring a world's future," (26/17) and like Moses he "found himself . . . abashed by . . . treachery" (31/26)--Stalin's pact with Hitler in 1939. In his anger Moses breaks the tablets of the Law (Exodus 32:19), and in Kamenets, where Uncle Melech is trapped when the Nazi "sons of Belial" invade Poland,

"the Scroll of the Law was polluted" (33/28).

The first mention of holy days in the Bible occurs in the Book of Exodus (12:14-20; 23:14-17). Correspondingly, throughout the novel's Exodus there are many verbal and thematic allusions to the cycle of major Jewish holy days. Describing his emotions at finding himself alive after many others perished during the years of torture in Europe, Uncle Melch says, "I end up exculpating myself into a kind of guilt" (31/24). Exculpation into guilt is a precise description of the emotion induced by the special prayers of the Jewish new year, Rosh Hashanah.¹⁰ Being spared is a theme associated with the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, which occurs ten days after the new year. On the day prior to Yom Kippur there is a custom of circling a live fowl about the head as prayers of atonement are recited. The fowl is later slaughtered and given to the poor. The ceremony emphasizes that an individual deserves the fate of the fowl because of his sins, but G-d in his mercy spares him.¹¹ Uncle Melech pointedly calls himself "the spared one" (30/24). Finally, on Yom Kippur the subject of all the prayers is "Forgive!"¹² This expression is pointedly prominent in Uncle Melech's letter (30/24).

The next holy day in the Jewish calendar is the Feast of Tabernacles, Sukkot. During the festival a

"palm leaf" is "shaken to the four winds" and a "citron" is "held and palmed and blessed" (37/34). Uncle Melech enacts the ceremony in his mind as he toys with the hope of reaching the Holy Land. Immediately after Sukkot, Simhat Torah (the Feast of the Rejoicing in the Law) occurs. As described by Klein (20, 21/78), the ritual of the holy day consists of hakkafof (circles), a ceremony in which Pentateuchal scrolls are carried around the reader's desk to the accompaniment of song and dance. A macabre parody of hakkafof is ordered by the Nazi "specialist in Semitic affairs" as a humiliating sport before he massacres the Jews of Kamenets--"Our women were made to strip and circle the room--hakafof, explained the specialist" (33/28).

Writing about the attempts of some of his dialectical comrades to persuade him that the Soviet pact with the Nazis was not after all a betrayal of Marxist principles, that "Fascism was but a matter of taste," Uncle Melech caustically remarks, "The taste was bitter unto death" (31/26). His expression is a direct reference to the biblical phrase describing the Egyptian oppression of the Jews: "and they made their lives bitter" (Exodus 1:14). On Passover night, the anniversary of the Exodus, Jews observe a special ritual of eating bitter herbs at a feast called Seder to relive and commemorate the bitterness of the oppression.

The accusations of kidnapping and murdering the Nazi commandant of Kamenets brought against the Jews of the city, which ultimately proved to be a ruse for rounding them up for massacre, alludes to a tragic concomitant of Passover observance by Jews. From the Middle Ages to modern times Jews have been accused of kidnapping Christians and using their blood for Passover rituals. As late as the twentieth century pogroms in Russia openly used vengeance for this blood as a rallying cry, often with government sanction.¹³

Pentecost, which concludes the cycle of Jewish holy days, is described by the Bible as a harvest festival (Exodus 23:16), but tradition has emphasized it as the anniversary of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. Allusions to it, therefore, are included in all references in the Exodus chapter to "Ark of the Covenant" and "the Holy Scroll" (33/28).

Gloss Beth parallels a well known comment of Isaacides in which the commentator notes people often say words which are perfectly in context yet have an additional oracular meaning relating to an unrevealed truth or a future destiny. Pharoah's daughter, in the Book of Exodus (2:9), comes down to bathe in the Nile and finds a little basket with Moses in it. She recognizes him as a Hebrew baby. Miriam, Moses' sister, who

had been watching nearby, steps forward and suggests to the princess that she can fetch a Hebrew nurse for the foundling. The princess agrees and Miriam brings her mother to act as nurse. "Take away this child and nurse him for me!" says Pharoah's daughter, not knowing the nurse is the child's mother. The Hebrew expression "Take away this child!" may also be rendered "Here is your own!" (he leki) notes Isaacides. The words are prophetic, for at the time the princess does not know that Miriam is the baby's sister and the suggested nurse his mother. Her rescue of the baby also ironically "gave" Moses to his people! "She prophesied but did not know what she prophesied," says Isaacides.¹⁴

Gloss Beth is an elegy for Uncle Melech written on the assumption he died in the Holocaust. Unexpectedly hearing from his uncle after a long silence, the nephew remarks, "It was like a voice from the beyond," an ironically prophetic remark relating to Uncle Melech's fate and destiny. Uncle Melech dies, but his voice, symbol of Israel's poetry, "archetypical, all-embracing," having been "given" to the people "in the streets, in the shops, everywhere" (84/106), extends beyond his life.

LEVITICUS

The concentration of cultic matters in the biblical Book of Leviticus is paralleled by the theological

"dialogue" between Uncle Melech and the Catholic Church represented by Piersanti and Michelangelo's art. The refugee camp manager considers Melech's willingness to enter into the dialogue foolhardy and dangerous. His illustrative parable "of the four men who would gaze into paradise" (40/39), taken from the Talmud, is a homiletical interpretation of the story in Leviticus of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, who bring an alien fire upon the altar. (See notes on 40/39.) As a consequence of their folly, "there went out a fire from before the L-rd, and consumed them" (Leviticus 10:2). Though Uncle Melech does not actually commit the transgression of Aaron's sons or of That Other, in the suspecting mind of his nephew he does so symbolically, becoming "a cutter down of plants, an uprooter, a convert." He also fulfills the symbolical role of the Israelite, described in the Book of Leviticus (24:10-16), who blasphemes. A significant portion of the biblical Leviticus is devoted to sexual prohibitions and these are reflected in the corresponding suspicion of "Uncle Melech in a brothel!" (48/51). Similarly, prohibitions against unethical conduct in money matters, also found in Leviticus (19), are alluded to in the thought of "Uncle Melech [as] a black marketeer!"

Among the final sections of the Book of Leviticus are stern warnings by G-d to Israel to obey the

commandments. There follows a vivid portrayal of the terrible punishment that would be visited upon the Jews if they do not (Leviticus 26). This section has a special name in Hebrew, tokahah (words of chastisement) and is read in the congregation in an undertone to symbolically mitigate the severity of the commination. Klein follows the tokahah in the prophecies of horror that Uncle Melech sees expressed by the sublime art of Michelangelo (51/56, 57):

The scene depicting the drunkenness of Noah he takes as a parable of murder, which is an intoxication with blood; The Flood he considers a general allusion to his own time; in Noah's Sacrifice he discovers a veiled illustration of the slaughter of his generation's innocents; and The Expulsion from Eden he ingeniously regards as having proleptic reference to the world's refugees, set in flight, not by an angel, but by a double-headed serpent

.

Klein uses Isaacides as his guide in the Gloss on this chapter as well. Isaacides elaborates upon the general descriptions of doom in the tokahah text and Klein does the same in his Gloss Gimel, elaborating in the form of a letter, on Uncle Melech's prophetic interpretation of the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

A subtle point, suggested by Isaacides, is made by Klein thematically in the letter. In several of his glosses on the tokahah Isaacides interprets the dire curses of G-d as blessings in disguise, a paradoxical mixture of blessing and curse (e.g. Leviticus 26:32). Uncle Melech speaks of a sybilline intuition on the part of Michelangelo foretelling "furnaces and holocausts." It is not made explicit because "its very horror would have shrivelled his palette" (108/143). Yet this very terrifying vision Uncle Melech sees in the Sistine Chapel rescues him from apostasy. It inspires the "underlined" answer to Monsignor Piersanti (52/57). Piersanti's faith sorrowfully did not bring a better world, a world in which these atrocities are impossible. The strength to resist conversion, celebrated in gladness by the nephew (50/55), is gathered from sorrow. The poetic tone of the letter follows this theme and is bitter-sweet, an admixture of grief and exultation.

Jewish tradition regards the dispersion of the Jewish people--"And you will I scatter among the nations," (Leviticus 26:33)--as the severest of the tokahah forecasts. Klein therefore reserves a special symbol for it in this chapter: the polyglot sentences heard at the refugee offices (53/59, 60). This inclusion of foreign phrases in the next of the novel, a Joycean device, expresses the unsettled, rootless atmosphere of the

refugee milieu and the acute anxieties of the wandering, homeless Jew. And it is in this chapter that Uncle Melech plans his voluntary exile among "his Sephardic brothers, the lost half of Jewry" (55/63).

NUMBERS

Uncle Melech's sojourn in Casablanca, which constitutes the entire chapter of Numbers, corresponds to a tragically significant episode in the history of ancient Israel. In the biblical Book of Numbers, Moses sends spies to scout the land of Canaan promised to them by G-d. The spies return acknowledging the goodness of the land, as the L-rd said--"truly doth it flow with milk and honey"--but warning that the inhabitants are strong and the cities mightily fortified. The people, hearing this, become discouraged and lose faith in G-d's promise and in themselves. Weepingly they beg Moses to return to Egypt. The L-rd becomes angry with them. The timid generation of slaves which left Egypt are not fit to inherit the land; they must die wandering in the wilderness. Only their children, born in freedom, will inherit the Land of Promise. And so Israel lingers in the wilderness for forty years before entering the Holy Land (Numbers 13-14).

Just as his biblical ancestors were forced to postpone their entry to the Holy Land because of their

unreadiness to accept freedom in the land of Israel, so, too, Uncle Melech, unable to get "rid of the Diaspora infection" (55/63), obsessively delays his pilgrimage to Israel. In Casablanca he joins the generation of mellah-wilderness Jews. Born in slavery, they are unwilling to help themselves. They mournfully proclaim "Katoob! It is written" and predestined (66/80). They die out, as their statistics indicate--"the death rate was among males fifty percent" (67/81).

After this symbolic sojourn paralleling the biblical episode, Uncle Melech, reborn by suffering with "his Sephardic brother" (55/63), proceeds to Israel.

Other biblical correspondences in this chapter are subtle and various. Descriptions of the encampment of the tribes of Israel and statistics on each tribal family (Numbers 1-5; 26) are prominent in the Book of Numbers; and descriptions and statistics are the two main themes of Klein's Numbers chapter. In the biblical Numbers Korah and his "congregation" rebel against authority, with Korah in the end descending into the pit (Numbers 16); Melech correspondingly organizes a beggars march against Moroccan authorities and comes within a hair's breadth of confinement in the "pond" as punishment (68, 69/83, 84). Only the intervention of his employer, the "JDC," saves him from

descent into that "pit." The dialectics of the dispute between Korah and the authorities against whom he rebelled are absent from the biblical text, but Isaacides supplies them, in a rather lengthy gloss, in the form of dramatic dialogues (Numbers 16:1). Klein's Gloss Dalid matches Isaacides gloss in theme and in form. Melech supplies a "dialogue" of his dispute with the authorities through a play "for the special edification of the worthies of the metropole" (68/82).

At the end of the chapter Klein carefully inserts some sexual terms to provide an obscene overtone to the last paragraph--"I was eager to leave the city where the word Jew was a term of pornography . . . this city of the teated domes and the phalloi of minarets" (69/84, emphasis added). They allude to the censorious reference in the Book of Numbers to the fertility rites of the god Baal Peor introduced to the Israelites by the daughters of Moab (Numbers 25:1-3):

And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit incest with the daughters of Moab . . .

And Israel joined themselves unto Baal Peor; and the anger of the L-rd was kindled against Israel.

In this connection it is significant to note that the only female characters encountered by either Melech or his nephew in the novel, other than the nephew's mother, are the secretaries of the "JDC" in the Numbers chapter.

DEUTERONOMY

The biblical Deuteronomy begins with a series of orations in which Moses cautions Israel against pursuing false gods; the peoples' existence and destiny are totally dependent upon G-d. This theme appears allusively in the presentation of a theory of Jewish history by a plane passenger sitting next to the narrator as both wing their way to Israel (71-73/86-90). The narrator, significantly summarizing Moses, refutes the passenger with the words, "You have forgotten, in your thesis, to place G-d" (73/90). The "Song of Moses" (Deuteronomy 22) is the biblical archetype for the poetry and songs sought and quoted by the narrator (75ff/98ff). The three biblical characters mentioned in this chapter, David, Jonah and Deborah (85/109), it is to be noted in this respect, all composed songs, i.e. biblical poetry; David the Psalms, Jonah a song of prayer in the belly of the whale (Jonah 2:3-10) and Deborah a song of victory (Judges 5:2-31).

Uncle Melech's funeral has a loose correspondence to the biblical account of the last days of Moses. Before his demise, Moses blesses the assembled tribes of Israel (Deuteronomy 33:7-25); at Uncle Melech's funeral, similarly, there is a "convocation of mourning" with prominent banners of the twelve tribes. Klein describes them emphatically in heraldic language

(91, 92/119). The young nephew-journalist is transformed at Melech's funeral by the spirit of his uncle as was Joshua at the death of Moses--"And Joshua . . . was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses laid his hands upon him" (Deuteronomy 34:9).

The final words of the novel liken the lights of Safed to "the beacons announcing new moons, festivals and set times" (93/121). Though the image refers to a specific historical tradition,¹⁵ the words are a paraphrase of a passage in Genesis concerning the creation of the luminaries--"and let them be for signs and for seasons (set times, in Hebrew moadim) and for days and years" (Genesis 1:14). Klein thus brings back the end of his novel to "The Beginning," Genesis, and to the theme of light with which The Second Scroll begins, "a bright Eden" (17/3). "The last verses of Deuteronomy join(ed) the first of Genesis, the eternal circle continue(d)s" (20/8).

The correspondence to Isaacides' commentary in Gloss Hai is somewhat indirect. In the biblical book G-d decrees that Moses is not to enter the Holy Land (Numbers 20:12). Moses nevertheless prays that this privilege be granted (Deuteronomy 3:23)--"And I besought the L-rd at the time saying . . . Let me go over, I pray Thee, that I may see the good land which is on the other side of the Jordan." Upon this passage

Isaacides comments, citing a Rabbinic source,¹⁶ that Moses uses a special form of prayer in his petition to enter the Holy Land. Klein's *Gloss Hai* is a collection of poems patterned after well known forms of prayer in Jewish liturgy.

Thus we see that, like Joyce in *Ulysses*, Klein meticulously follows the patterns of the classic after which he names his work. Through literary design, a skillfully crafted plot, and prose-poetry, Klein, too, retells an ancient myth in a contemporary idiom.

Notes Appendix B

1. See Spiro, "The Second Gloss," pp. 55 ff, 85 ff, 122-155.
2. Klein comments on this fact in correspondence with S. Niger. See Caplan, "Klein: Introduction," pp. 86-89; also above, Introduction.
3. Sanhedrin 38b; Bereshit Rabbah Cap. 25.
4. Pesahim 104a.
5. See U. Cassuto, Commentary on Genesis (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1959), Prt. 1, p. 113.
6. Cf. Klein's "Psalm XXXIV" (CP 231:24).
7. Cf. Zborowski and Herzog, Life is with People, p. 96.
It is not enough for the young student to understand and translate the text of the Pentateuch . . . in addition there must be comment and interpretation . . . in order to understand . . . truly it is necessary to pore over the commentary of Rashi.

8. Talmud, Berakot 5a:

Rabbi Levi b. Hama says further in the name of Rabbi Simeon b. Lakish: What is the meaning of the verse 'And I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandments, which I have written that thou mayest teach them?' (Exodus 24:12) 'Tables of stone,' these are the ten commandments; 'the law,' this is the Pentateuch; 'the commandments,' this is the Mishna; 'which I have written,' these are the Prophets and the Hagiographa; 'that thou mayest teach them,' this is the Gemara (Talmud). It teaches us that all these things were given to Moses on Sinai.

9. Sanhedrin 91b. Cf. above 52/58 and 111, 112/148, 149.

10. See Morris Joseph, Judaism as Creed and Life (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), pp. 247-254; also Birnbaum, High Holy Day Prayer Book, pp. 261, 361, 367 et. pass.

11. See above 21/8; also CP "Plumaged Proxy" 148:1.

12. Birnbaum, High Holy Day Prayer Book, pp. 531, 533, et. pass.

13. See Maurice Samuel, Blood Accusation: The Strange History of the Beiliss Case (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1966).

14. Isaacides' source is Sotah 12b.

15. See Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 22b-23a; also 93/121.

The Mishna Rosh Hashanah 2:3 reads;

How did they light the beacons [to announce the the beginning of a new lunar month]? They used to bring long poles of cedar and reeds and olive wood and flax fluff which they tied to the poles with a string, and someone used to go up to the top of a mountain and set fire to them and wave them to and fro and up and down until he saw the next one doing the same thing on the top of the second mountain; and so on the top of the third mountain. . . . until he saw the whole of the Diaspora before him like one bonfire.

16. Sifre ad. loc.

APPENDIX C

Dauphin's Dialogue

The carefully distorted syntax and occasional unidiomatic English of Dauphin's sentences adds a great measure of verisimilitude to his character. One is constantly reminded that the speaker, whose mother tongue is not English, is translating as he speaks. For the reader who recognizes the original French there is a kind of "high-fidelity" to the dialogue. Dauphin speaks English but the rhythm and melody of his words are French. The French accent can almost be heard! A comparison between the English and original French will help explain why:

62/73 With a car it is impossible to traverse. Too strait. -- Here the choice of words strongly suggests Dauphin's direct, deliberate translation of his native French. (Original French: Avec une voiture il est impossible de traverser. Trop etroites.)

65/79 one for the metropole where live the French Functionaries. -- The word order and terms come from the original French (l'une pour la metropole ou demeurent les fonctionnaires francais).

67/80 he came from arriving to Casa -- An awkward but literal translation of the idiomatic French (il vient d'arriver a Casa).

68/83 for in all our efforts the Government is very helpful -- An inversion more common to French (parce que dans tous nos efforts, le gouvernement nous aide beaucoup).

69/84 the accusation broken -- A French legal phrase (casser l'accusation). One of the courts in France is the Cour de Cassation.

69/84 demissioned from his post -- in French the terms are idiomatic (demissioné de sa position).

Dauphin's employer, an American rescue organization known by its initials JDC (see above 52/58) is referred to as Zhay day say, as the French would pronounce it. The secretary of the organization also speaks to the narrator in "gaulicized" English. She apologetically says to the narrator-nephew, as she hands him a photograph of Uncle Melech, "to solace your disappointment . . . to atone for our reticence . . . something so that from our office you go not away empty-handed" (61/72). The words solace and atone are correct translations of the French verbs but are unidiomatic English. The syntax of the sentence that follows is also appropriate only in French (pour soulager votre disappointement . . . racheter nos reticences . . . quelques choses pour que de notre bureau vous ne partez les mains vides).

There is also a psychological element that insinuates itself subtly into the foreground. Dauphin is an educated young Jew who is striving hard to rise above his ghetto origins. "Through a series of fortunate events" he "had lifted himself in the social scale" (62/72) and was working for the prestigious "Zhay day say." Because of the "connotation of penury" associated with his original Jewish family name, Dalfen, he had changed it to a more French and princely one. As part of this phenomenon of desperate acculturation, a familiar one among Jews of the Diaspora, Dauphin attempts to display an emphatic elegance in his English to impress the Canadian visitor to the "Zhay day say." But he ends up being over-precise in translating from French and, consequently, ironically, a little comical.

APPENDIX D

The passenger's Theory

The main ideas of the passenger's theory, expounded to the narrator-nephew in the Deuteronomy chapter (71-73/86-89), are based upon Leon Pinsker's essay Auto-Emancipation. Published anonymously in pamphlet form in 1882, this provocative essay analyzes the conditions of Diaspora Jewry and recommends a process of self-emancipation leading to the re-creation of a national homeland. By his efforts and thoughts Pinsker, a physician by profession, laid the ideological and organizational foundations upon which Herzl later built the World Zionist movement.¹ He did not, however, live to see the State of Israel, having died in 1891. The passenger takes Pinsker's basic analysis and extends it to explain the historical causes of the creation of Israel. Some medieval concepts, employed by Maimonides in defining the notion of Divine attributes, are mixed into the argument for scholarly embellishment.

Pinsker summarizes the condition of the Jews thus:

Among the living nations of the earth the Jews occupy the position of a nation long since dead. With the loss of their fatherland, the Jewish people lost their independence, and fell into a decay which is

not compatible with existence as a whole vital organism. The state was crushed before the eyes of the nations. But after the Jewish people had yielded up their existence as an actual state, as a political entity, they could nevertheless not submit to total destruction--they did not cease to exist spiritually as a nation.²

And in another place Pinsker attributes the spiritual endurance of the Jewish nation to "the most sacred possessions which we have saved from the shipwreck of our former fatherland, the G-d-idea and the Bible."³

The passenger follows Pinsker's argument and enhances it somewhat. When the Jewish nation lived on its own land it existed with the idea that Israel was "the dwelling-place of the Immanence of the Deity." This "Judaic Idea" was "concretized in the customs and thoughtways of the Hebrews, garbed, as it were, in the vesture of chosen Israel." When the Jews, however, were driven from their land, the nation ceased as "Existence," though not entirely. Its members were condemned to a partial existence as a "spectre people." But the "Judaic Idea," taken up by other nations, continued "through its early influence upon the civilizations and religions of the world." It "echoed in all speech" and was "the inspiration and basis of all social contract."

The passenger's "Judaic-Idea" is Pinsker's "G-d idea and Bible" universalized. The dissemination of the "Idea" among the nations of the world caused it to be "discarnated," i.e. reduced from its prominence as the "Essence" of the Jewish nation.

Pinsker blames the lack of Jewish creativity in the Diaspora on a severance from homeland and, hence, spirit:

In the wide, wide world there was no place for us. We prayed only for a little place anywhere, to lay our weary head to rest; and so, by lessening our claims, we gradually lessened our dignity as well, which was diminished in our own and others' eyes until it became unrecognizable Under such circumstances, how could there be any question of national self-determination, of a free, active development of our national force or of our native genius.⁴

The passenger says the same thing. "Jewry, leading in the lands of the Diaspora but a vistingial part-existence, moved of necessity between banality and suffering."

So far the argument has followed Pinsker quite closely. The passenger's original contribution appears as the answer to the question "What had impelled the leap . . . back into Time and Reality" by the Jewish

nation when they created a homeland again? He says, "It was . . . an awareness that the spectre-people was immune to death." The idea of the Jews as a spectre-people is also Pinsker's. Of the exiled Jews he says, "The world saw in this people the uncanny form of one of the dead walking among the living . . . the ghost-like apparition of a people . . . without land."⁵

But it is for Pinsker a source of opprobrium and degradation. He even finds in it, most originally, the root of anti-semitism; "If the fear of ghosts is something inborn . . . what wonder that it asserted itself powerfully at the sight of this dead and yet living nation?"⁶ For the passenger, on the other hand, the spectre-people idea is the very cause of the Jewish nation's ability to come out of its "non-existence":

This knowledge, moreover, had been more than a mere consolation; it had turned into a path of life. In the light of this truth, the chance involved in seeking a Return to Time could now be taken, since it did not at all involve taking a chance; nothing could be lost. Hence the leap.

Spectres (or ghosts), because they do not have concrete existence, cannot die. The Jews, then, had nothing to lose by attempting to regain their homeland. Even if they failed they still would remain no worse than they were--spectres. This is an extension of Pinsker's idea

which Pinsker could not have foreseen. He looked forward to a gradual regeneration of national spirit among the Jews which would ultimately lead to a shedding of spectre characteristics and the acquisition of a homeland. It did not occur that way, according to the plane passenger. "Israel, in one single saltation leap from the marginalia of Europe," gained its homeland and returned "to the centre and body of its past and future." What remained to be seen was whether "the same transcendence and glory . . . of the past" could be regained as well.

There are three main objections set forth by the narrator to the argument of the plane passenger:

- 1) There is no room in the thesis for a "private Messianic search." Some kind of personal salvation, symbolized by his search for a kinsman, is imperative.
- 2) There is much that the theory "gallantly ignored," such as the tragedy of the Holocaust and the suffering of the long exile.
- 3) There is no role for Providence or G-d in the thesis. All of these objections illustrate, by contrast, the underlying theme of the novel: redemption from tragedy can be gained only through a personal quest for G-d. The quest itself is a redemptive act which brings understanding and renewal, as it did for Uncle Melech and his nephew. This concept is summed up in the song of

Rabbi Yitschak of Berdichev which begins The Second Scroll;

REBONO SHEL OLAM:

'Tis a Thou-song I will sing Thee--

Thou . . . Thou . . . Thou . . . Thou

AYEH EMTZOEKO? V'AYEH LO EMTZOEKO

O, where shall I find Thee?

And where art Thou not to be found?

Wherever I fare--Thou!

Or here, or there--Thou!

Only Thou! None but Thou!

Again, Thou! And still, Thou!

Klein grafts onto the plane passenger's largely "Pinskerian" argument the philosophical notions of essence and existence debated at length by the Scholastics. The subject is wittily in place because it plays an important role in the development of Jewish theology. In order to understand its ironic significance in that context it is necessary to review some medieval philosophy.

The essence of something is that which defines it, the elements which make it what it is. For example, man is defined as a rational animal. Rationality and animality are the essence of man. Man's colour, stature or temperament are accidental or adventitious attributes superimposed upon his essence by some cause. Man's existence may be understood in the same way. Like colour, stature or temperament, whether he exists or not is an

accident due to some cause and is not part of his essence as is rationality and animality. In other words, existence is an accidental attribute added to essence. This argument, however, does not apply to G-d. He is a Necessary Existent, meaning that His existence is not due to a cause. It is part of His nature and therefore identical with His essence. Unlike man who can exist or not, dependent upon a cause, G-d must exist. There can be no G-d unless He exists.

This view of essence and existence is held by Avicenna, a medieval Arabic commentator on Aristotle (980-1037).⁷ Maimonides, the foremost Jewish philosopher and theologian of the Middle Ages (1135-1204), maintains Avicenna's view and extends it to formulate an original doctrine concerning the attributes of G-d. Since G-d's existence is identical with His essence, argues Maimonides, and His essence is beyond our comprehension, then His existence, which is identical with His essence, is also beyond our comprehension. In other words, according to Maimonides, we cannot say that G-d exists; only that He cannot not exist:

It has been established by proof that some being must exist besides those things which can be perceived by the senses, or apprehended by the mind; when we say of this being that it exists, we mean that its non-existence is impossible.⁸

One cannot speak positively of G-d; one can only negate the negative.

This "via negativa" was followed by theologians after Maimonides and is a basic element in Jewish theology today.⁹

The plane passenger expounds Avicenna's and Maimonides' views of G-d, mixes them with Pinsker's ideas, and applies them metaphorically to the Jewish people. The "Judaic Idea" is the essence of the Jewish people. It became existent through "the customs and thoughtways of the Hebrews." Thus existence and essence were joined in the Jewish people as they are in G-d, according to Avicenna. When the Jews were exiled from their land, they suffered a "separation of Essence from its typical Existence." The world incorporated the "Judaic Idea" into fundamental elements of its institutions so "it continued as Essence." However, since the nation, whose essence it was, had almost ceased to exist, the essence was a reduced one, sustained only by "the miracle of Discarnation." The existence of the Jews became "a vestigial part-existence" and "an extra-temporal non-existence." They were a "spectre-people," turned inward to a "secular pedestrianism . . . mediocrity and wandering." Like a spectre, they hovered between existence and non-existence. One could not say they existed,

yet one could not say they did not exist. The passenger's point is that, ironically, this condition parallels Maimonides' "via negativa" concerning G-d's existence. This likeness to G-d, oddly negative, is precisely the basis of Israel's leap "back into Time and Reality." The "spectre-people," because they did not really exist, "was immune to death." On the one hand, through the separation of essence from existence, the Jews were reduced from a G-d-like category where the two were joined to a category of ordinary things; on the other, by the reduction of the existence to minimal dimensions, they became a spectre people immune to death and, by Maimonides' formulation, yet G-d-like.

It is significant to note that Klein capitalizes Essence and Existence in the plane passenger's argument, intimating that they allude to G-d.

The philosophical and theological background of these terms aids in solving some apparent inconsistencies in the text. At first the passenger states that at the exile "Jewry ceased as Existence," which means the Jewish people died as a nation. He then contradicts himself by insisting that "the spectre-people was immune to death." In the context of the philosophical discussion outlined the solution is obvious. What he really means by "Jewry ceased as Existence" is that existence for the Jews in the sense of being joined to essence ceased.

When he later calls the return of Israel to its homeland "the leap from mere Existence back to Essence," mere Existence means existence without essence as at the exile, and Essence means essence joined to existence as it was before the exile, G-d-like. Similarly in the question "whether the essence now before us would be of the same transcendence and glory as that of the past," Essence must be interpreted as essence joined to existence in the land of Israel. Otherwise it could not be said of the Essence that it is "now before us"--meaning in Israel, as the context indicates--for it had been disseminated among the nations of the world as the "Judaic Idea."

To construct his argument the passenger appropriates a nineteenth century Jewish intellectual's thought, deftly combines it with a medieval philosophical concept and conjures up a bizarre explanation of the historical phenomenon of Israel's rebirth. It is glib, as the nephew claims. Its logic is questionable--essence joined to existence can apply only to G-d, not a people. But as a metaphoric conceit it is unusual, witty and full of allusions to its hidden foundations in Jewish philosophical thought.

Notes Appendix D

1. See Leon Pinsker, Road to Freedom, Writings and Addresses, ed. B. Natanyahu (New York: Scopus, 1944), p. 69. All quotations from Auto-Emancipation are taken from this edition.
Asher Ginzberg, called Ahad Ha'am, elaborated upon Pinsker's Zionist ideas and popularized them. See Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic, Basic Writings of Ahad Ha'am (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), pp. 90-124.
2. Auto-Emancipation, p. 77. The germ of this idea can be found in The Kuzari, (Prt 2, Sec. 30 ff; Hirschfeld edition New York, Schocken Books, 1964, pp. 106 ff) by the medieval poet-philosopher Judah Halevi (1080-1142).
3. Auto-Emancipation, p. 95.
4. Ibid. pp. 85-86.
5. Ibid. p. 77.
6. Ibid. p. 78.

7. Avicenna's view is disputed by Averroes, another medieval Arabic commentator on Aristotle (1126-1198). For a full and lucid discussion of this subject see Harry Austryn Wolfson, The Philosophy of Spinoza (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), pp. 121-157; also Wilhelm Windelband, A History of Philosophy (New York: Harper Books, 1958), I, 237, 288 ff.

8. Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed, Prt. I, Cap. 58 (Friedlander edition, New York: Dover Publications Inc. 1956, p. 82).

9. See Steven S. Schwarzchild, "The Lure of Immanence--The Crisis in Contemporary Religious Thought," Tradition 9(1967)70-99; also Louis Jacobs, The Via Negativa in Jewish Religious Thought, Allan Bronfman Lectureship at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, (New York: Judaica Press, 1966).

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Appendix E

The Poet of Tiberias (82-83/104-106)

In his analysis of the literature of Israel the nephew-narrator alludes to numerous individual poets and poetic schools (79-81/99-104). They all can be identified, except the iconoclastic Poet of Tiberias. This poet and his concentrated poetry may, therefore, be a projection of some of Klein's own experimental thinking onto a character in the novel. The mild satiric treatment of the man and his poetry may be a means of forestalling hasty criticism in advance, protecting the experiment from ridicule by a camouflage of comedy. More likely, however, Klein is burlesquing here some of the principles of poetry set forth by the Imagist school. A suggestive clue to this interpretation is the satiric "He handed me two sheets. 'The complete works of,' he said" (83/105). This likely parodies Ezra Pound's Introduction of Des Imagistes to the literary world. In his Ripostes he published an appendix with five poems entitled, "The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme."¹

The Imagists canonized Pound's rule for poets "a concision, or style, or saying what you mean in the fewest and clearest words." They declared, "Most of us believe that concentration is of the very essence of

poetry."² The Poet of Tiberias takes this canon to an absurd extreme with "an austere economy of words" and a reduction of "derivativeness to a minimum" so that if he must extend a poem "to a line and half or even two lines" it is "a prolixity" which leaves him "discontent."

The concept of a poem as merely "a point of departure," the "destination" being "determined by the reader," is also an outgrowth of one of the techniques of modern poetry initiated by the Imagist school. It is a derivative of the principles of discontinuous composition. "The discontinuous poem," as defined by Perkins, "does not evolve gradually from part to part, but places separate, often disparate, units of meaning one immediately after the other." T. E. Hulme, one of the founders of the Imagist school, considered discontinuous composition "an urgent necessity of the present" because "continuity" was suspected to be an illusion. "There is transition from one unit of meaning to the next, but between the discrete units of meaning there are multiple interrelations. Perceiving these, the reader obtains a complex total impression."³ Thus the reader's role in a poem is acknowledged.

Two other "essentials of all great poetry, indeed of all great literature," according to the Imagists, are the use of "the language of common speech"

and, in the words of Pound, "images of concrete things." On the latter Aldington elaborates that a poet "should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities" He should "produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite."⁴ A satiric element in all the poems of the Tiberias poet is the ironic contrast between the prosaic, often comic, concreteness of the image and the broadness and complexity of the concepts alluded to or represented.

Through his Poet of Tiberias Klein ridicules the idea of rules for poetry and the rules themselves.

Madness! said the deafman watching the man
On the podium.

The basic theme of this poem is the existential problem of communication. The uniqueness of every person, the element of his life which contributes to his infinite value as a person, paradoxically sets him apart from his fellow human beings and curtails his ability to communicate fully. Though there is a broad general consensus of meaning, words and gestures of another are interpreted in an exclusively individual and peculiar way. Everyone is a little "mad" to our mind since we do not understand him completely, and we are a little "deaf" to everyone's mind since they cannot communicate with us fully. This paradox of sharing and

isolation is part of the enigma of language and meaning.

There is no doubt an allusion here, as well, to Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement. During his lifetime he was continually frustrated by skeptics who were "deaf" to the pleas he addressed to co-religionists from podia in different countries and considered his ideas "madness." It was only after his death that Zionism gained acceptance by the majority of Jews.⁵

There is also a secondary allusion to the impossible task undertaken by Zionists to plead the cause of nascent Israel on the podium of an unsympathetic United Nation. The prevailing mood at the time was that the Jews were "mad" to proclaim their state, and the major powers were "deaf" to the pleas of Zionist representatives for a Jewish homeland.⁶

As a parody of Imagist doctrines the satire lies largely in the contrast between a farcical, but nevertheless "concrete," image of a deafman bewildered by the gestures of a public speaker--with a subtle quibble on the Imagist requirement of "common language"--and the profound philosophical issue of communication.

Pity emetic and the enema, Terror.

The poet attempts to produce an elementary image of terror, some of the physical effects of which are

vomiting and diarrhea. Terror, then, is the emetic and the enema. Witnessing terror evokes pity.

Another interpretation may be invocation of pity for a child's terror of hospital procedures which to an adult are commonplace. It is a pity that a child can be terrorized by them to such an extent.

In a satiric vein, the poem burlesques Pound's Imagist recipe of "enough images of concrete things arranged to stir the reader."⁷ The burlesque lies primarily in the egregious choice of images and secondly their ridiculously intense concentration. In the same vein it could well be describing Aristotle's abstract definition of tragedy, reducing it absurdly to a concrete image. Aristotle defines tragedy as "the imitation of an action . . . with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish it's catharsis of such emotions."⁸ In accordance with Imagist principles the poem renders a concentrated image of fear (terror) through a description of the concrete manifestation of fear in the human body, and subsequent pity is implied. The same image also satirically expresses catharsis!

Survival:

Said the seeing-eye dog with the hearing device:

The poem describes symbolically the condition of Diaspora Jewry before the birth of Israel. Because of

its exile and great suffering the Jewish nation, as the plane passenger in Deuteronomy describes, led "a vestigial part-existence." It "ceased to consider life as reality to be experienced but as a guantlet to be run." The Jews as a result "turned inward," removing themselves from history and ceasing "to be of time." In their ghettos they became absessed with self-absorpting abstractions ("contemplation of the One," 72/88). This condition of being removed from reality is expressed symbolically by the Tiberias poet in the image of a blind man being led by a seeing-eye dog with a hearing device. With second-hand sight and second-hand sound the sightless are twice removed from reality!

The Jewish nation continued to exist despite exile and dispersion. It did so paradoxically because of its capacity to remove itself from history and turn inward. In isolation it found the sources of strength to survive. Hence the title of the poem.

The handicapped seeing-eye dog may also symbolize the various countries which were hosts to the Jews during their exile. Jews entrusted their survival to the rulers of these countries and consequently placed themselves in the absurd condition of a blind man being led hazardously by a dog with a hearing device.

The poem ends with a colon, suggesting that the words of the "seeing-eye dog" should follow. The poet

deletes them in accordance with his theory that a poem is merely "a point of departure" (82/105). Now that Israel exists and claims their loyalty, Diaspora Jews the world over have the complex and vexing problem of defining a new relationship with their host countries, and so the words of the highly symbolic "seeing-eye dog," representing those countries, are left unsaid.

Modern poetry utilizes space as part of a poem. Charles Olson writes:

If a contemporary poet leaves a space as long as the phrase before it, he means that space to be held, by the breath, an equal length of time. If he suspends a word or syllable at the end of a line (this was most Cummings' addition) he means that time to pass that it takes the eye--that hair of time suspended--to pick up the next line.⁹

The topology of his text has meaning for the Tiberias poet too. His poems have "large spaces between them." They represent the contribution of the reader as he "determines" the "destination" of each poem's "point of departure." Survival is preceded by "a wide significant space" with "three lines, two of them scratched out." The "wide space" is the nothingness of Jewish Diaspora existence, and the three lines, of which two are scratched out, are the massacres and pogroms which decimated Jewish ranks--more specifically the Holocaust which destroyed

two thirds of European Jewry.¹⁰

If the Tiberias poetry is satiric, then Klein is parodying the undue emphasis on spacing in modern verse. And here too, as mentioned above, the irony of the ridiculous image of a "seeing-eye dog with a hearing device" contrasted with the weighty subject of tragedy and survival.

Oh to be a midge on a leaf of Zohar!

The Zohar is an esoteric, profound Kabbalistic work which contains illumination on the mysteries of existence. To be a midge on one of its leaves would mean the opportunity to live in intimacy with revealing doctrines of the Kabbala. But the metaphor is pastoral as well as academic. Allegorically, the Zohar is a tree of life and the midge is the human being who nourishes himself spiritually by its leaves, the mysteries of the Kabbala.

If indeed the previous poems are parodies, then in this poem and in the next three the satiric element has been moved into the background. It consists only of the ironic contrast between concrete and respective abstract concept. The midge boring into the pages of the Zohar is an ironic metaphor for plumbing universal mysteries.

LiteratureOut of that chambered pyramid the triliteral verb,The mummies rise . . .

All Hebrew words derive from three-lettered verbal roots, most of which are found in the Bible. The vocabulary of modern Hebrew expands by inflection of these ancient roots. In the poem the triliteral root is symbolically represented by the simplest geometric pyramid of "one on two" which can be expanded endlessly. The Egyptians expected the "chambered" mummies of their Pharaohs to rise and live again. This extension of the pyramid image becomes a further metaphor for the ancient triliteral Hebrew root preserved ("chambered") in the Bible rising and living again in the endless creation of new words in modern Hebrew literature.

The poet seems amused by the irony of an image of death portraying the concept of living Hebrew, and that that image, furthermore, is associated with Pharaoh, the traditional enemy of the Jews.

The poem has no ending, and the final three dots symbolize the unending process of forming new words and creating new literature.

On clearing the swamps of Esdraelon:The little arros pierced, we fevered, we pissed black,

Anopheles his hosts.

The greatest fear of the early pioneers who sought to colonize and cultivate the holy land was malaria. It was one of the chief impediments to settlement. The poem expresses this with concrete images. "Anopheles, his hosts" has the cadence of a biblical phrase relating to armies and war!¹¹ The malaria carrying mosquitoes in that martial image are compared metaphorically to the marauding armies against whom the Jews fought in biblical times.

Transitional?

The olive wreath about the sword: will the sword
Grow olives?

"The olive wreath (or branch) of peace about a sword is the insignia of the Israel Defense Forces. It symbolizes the hope for Isaiah's universal peace when men will "beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks" (Isaiah 2:4). But the peace of Isaiah has proved elusive. After many wars in which survival depended upon a strong army the insignia came to mean a strong deterring sword, with the olive wreath (or branch) of peace signifying only a distant hope. The meaning is only transitional, between the present and the prophesied Messianic era. And the olive wreath (or branch) too is transitional, peace holding only from

one war to the next.

The poet's question is two-fold:

- 1) Can even the most powerful deterring sword ever bring peace?
- 2) And more despairingly, will Isaiah's vision of universal peace ever be realized in a world that has cultivated the sword?

The Imagist school has had a great and lasting impact on American poetry and Klein's veiled criticism of its principles, if indeed he intended to criticize them, seems a tilting at windmills. But Klein, whose poetic visions were ever mythological, no doubt considered the heavy concentration on the concrete demanded by the principles of Imagism a constraint on the free reign of creative imagination.¹²

Notes Appendix F

1. See Stanley K. Coffman Jr., Imagism: A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), p. 4.
2. Richard Aldington in The Egoist, June, 1914, cited in David Perkins' A History of Modern Poetry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 334. See also Coffman, Imagism, p. 149 et. pass.
3. Perkins, Modern Poetry, pp. 308, 309. "Above all," adds Perkins, "discontinuous form was sometimes felt to be mimetic of the ultimate character of reality itself." Cf. T. E. Hulme, "Bergson's Theory of Art," Critical Theory Since Plato, ed. Hazard Adams, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), pp. 774-82; also Coffman, Imagism, pp. 55-73.
4. Perkins, Modern Poetry, pp. 333, 334; also Coffman, Imagism, pp. 65 ff.
5. Alex Bein, Theodore Herzl, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1946); also Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1976).

6. See Eliahu Elath, Zionism at the UN, A Diary of the First Days, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1976).
7. Perkins, Modern Poetry, p. 333.
8. On Poetics Cap. 6 (Britannica Great Books IX, 684).
9. Charles Olson, Selected Writings of Charles Olson, ed. Robert Creeley (New York: New Direction, 1966), p. 22.
10. Dawidowicz, War Against Jews, p. 403. The estimate is 67%.
11. Cf. for example Judges 4:2; 1 Samuel 14:50. The Hebrew is zabah, translated as army or host.
12. Cf. "Cantabile: A Review of the Cantos of Ezra Pound," (CP 338:14). Klein calls Pound "a compiler of several don'ts."

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