

CHAPTER 8

“WITH THE CHANGING OF HORIZONS COMES THE BROADENING OF THE HORIZON”

Multilingual Narrative Modes in
M. Y. Berdichevsky's *Miriam*

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Multilingualism and autotranslation are central issues in the historiography and theorization of modern Jewish literature and specifically of modern Hebrew literature, a corpus formed largely by nonnative authors.¹ An important consequence of multilingual authorship is that the first decision made by an author regards the language in which to write the text. For a Jewish author in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the choice was most likely made between three possibilities: Yiddish, Hebrew, and at least one vernacular, “non-Jewish” European language (e.g., Polish or German). But as Anita Norich argues, the concept of linguistic choice is highly problematic, because it tends to obfuscate the complex social and personal linguistic realities in which Jewish authors operated, by casting them as liberal subjects in some kind of linguistic free market.² Furthermore, the concept might imply that language choice is a discrete event that precedes the writing of the text, rather than giving us tools to think of multilingualism as a historical reality that multifariously shapes literary texts. As a way of grappling with these challenges, I propose a narratological approach that seeks to analyze the formal consequences of multilingualism; in other words, I am interested in the continuing presence of linguistic crossroads in the stories that emerge from them and in the preoccupation

of these texts with the very possibility of storytelling in the shadow of linguistic contingency.

I propose that multilingual subjectivity might be seen as a continual encounter or confrontation with contingency: not only is the multilingual speaker repeatedly faced with the decision or assessment of which language is appropriate for a particular context or content, but she or he is also always potentially aware of the contingency of the manner in which one language carves up the world or her or his experiences into concepts, names, and designations, in contrast with another language.³ To use a metaphor from the philosophical discourse of hermeneutics, the multilingual speaker does not simply operate in relation to a linguistic horizon but instead moves between multiple horizons, a reality that necessitates constant navigation and reorientation. This is, of course, a loaded metaphor, and I shall return to discuss it. As I show through the example of M. Y. Berdichevsky's novel *Miriam*, the multilinguistic preoccupation with contingency can create narrative modes that resist teleology and attempt to capture the multiplicity of possibilities. This model of multilingual authorship allows for a more refined sense of the conditions and the consequences of language choice and its relation to notions of freedom and contingency.

Miriam, Berdichevsky's only full-length novel, was composed during the last two years of his life and completed on his deathbed by dictation to his wife and son; it narrates the life of a young Eastern European woman from her birth through childhood and into young adulthood, focusing on her educational aspirations and her tentative and unhappy experiences in love. It has been read as the summation of an exceptionally varied career and probed for a "final message" from the author. But in relation to such tall—and totalizing—orders, the novel will inevitably be found lacking. *Miriam's* treatment of its two main protagonists, the young woman who gives it its title and the narrator, frustrates readers' expectations. *Miriam* turns out to be a rather flat character, failing to truly develop and depicted more through the reactions of others to her uncanny beauty and charm than through her own psychological and intellectual experiences. By contrast, the narrator is a challengingly fluid character, constantly shifting between degrees of omniscience and sophistication, as if trying to cover as much ground as possible within the scope of a single narrative. The narrator not only refuses to assume a single voice and a coherent identity but also seems too impatient to stick to a single story line, creating a collection of

anecdotes instead of the female bildungsroman that one might be led to expect from the title.⁴

Those scholars who have come to the novel's defense have not so much addressed these structural "deficiencies" as reclaimed the text as a fulfillment of larger intellectual projects that have defined Berdichevsky's career.⁵ In my reading, the novel's unusual handling of both protagonist and plot are seen as strategic choices that confront the reader with contingency, favoring it over the comforting coherence of cause and effect in a teleological narrative. These strategic choices are closely tied to Berdichevsky's experiences with and reflections on multilingual authorship. To make this argument, I combine a narratological reading of the novel with close attention to text-extrinsic materials, including Berdichevsky's theoretical writings on multilingualism as well as biographical information on the drafting process of the novel and on his multilingual career in Hebrew, Yiddish, and German.

Berdichevsky's late novel has often been judged an unfinished work, a product of the author's inability to commit to a single genre. Such a commitment, the argument goes, could only be achieved by transitioning into the epic mode of the novel, creating a realistic depiction of Jewish life in a small Eastern European town and the roads that lead away from it, and leaving the folk genres of fable and anecdote behind. Thus, instead of moving on with the task of leading his protagonist, Miriam, through the trials of her formation and to one of the conventional conclusions of the female bildungsroman (marriage and integration into society or a tragic death), the narrative seems to reflect a constant condition of distraction, repeatedly veering off to tell other stories, remember communal events, and quote Hassidic tales. An early example, from the exposition that precedes the narration of Miriam's birth, demonstrates this effectively.

The exposition begins conventionally enough, with a description of the unfortunate premarital love affair of Miriam's mother, Sar'l, and Dan, the shop assistant of Sar'l's father. Modeled on Emma Bovary, Sar'l is described as a vain and shallow consumer of Yiddish romantic novels, who longs to reenact their plots in a stormy liaison of her own. Instead of giving Sar'l her melodrama, however, the novel puts the youthful affair to a hasty, unremarkable end and sidetracks to another drama that is stirring the souls of the small town. This anecdote is tangentially related to the manner in which Sar'l's love letters to Dan are exposed, and at least as much space is devoted to the anecdote as to the love affair. The anecdote is the story of the es-

trangement between Reuben, a local kosher butcher, and his wife, who remains unnamed; when he leaves her, neither of the two is willing to care for their only son, a deaf and blind baby, and the mother ultimately leaves him at the doorstep of the home of her father-in-law, Nathanael, where he freezes to death. The community is appropriately scandalized but cannot reach an agreement when it comes to pinpointing the culprit and ostracizing him or her, a controversy that centers on whether Nathaniel should be allowed to participate in communal prayer.

The baby boy, a cocoon-like doppelgänger who is pitifully closed off from the world that will betray him, is a grim shadow of the girl that is about to be born and take her problematic place as the protagonist of the story. In other words, the anecdote seems to play an allegorical role, supplying us with a figurative key that indicates something important about the life of Miriam, which is about to begin. But as I shall argue in the final section of this essay, this is only part of the textual function of this episode and many other anecdotes like it that repeatedly interrupt the narrative. Structurally, they are the building blocks of what I will describe, following Gary Saul Morson and Michael André Bernstein, as a “sideshadowing” narrative. In my reading, the impulse toward sideshadowing is closely related to Berdichevsky’s experience as a multilingual author. I make this argument in four steps: first, I provide some information on the drafting process that led to the composition of *Miriam* and on the novel that emerged from this process; second, I discuss Berdichevsky’s theoretical writings on multilingualism and literature; third, I depict his own experiences as a multilingual author; finally, I return to the novel and read the episode of the frozen baby as well as the novel’s ending in light of this background.

From Draft to Novel

Berdichevsky prepared his first plan for *Miriam* in 1905. This was a return to his attempt, in the 1890s, to write an autobiographical bildungsroman that would also provide a broad ethnographic view of Jewish life in Eastern Europe, a project I will describe in more detail below. The first outline of what would become his female bildungsroman was closely followed by another draft for a first-person narrative, which he referred to as an *Ichroman*. All of these texts were prepared in German. It is difficult to ascertain when and how the process of translating the outline of *Miriam* to Hebrew began. But the transformation undergone by the text on its way from outline to

novel—or, more accurately, from the initial draft of the German bildungsroman, to the 1905 sketch, to another attempt at a biographically focalized first-person narrative, and finally to the Hebrew novel of 1921—illuminates the stakes and the consequences of the movement back and forth between the languages, especially in terms of the formation of the narrative.

In the sketch from 1905, the story of Berdichevsky's female protagonist, Miriam, is briefly prefaced with some information about her parents and grandparents and their unhappy lives in a "small and somewhat odd" town in Podolia. The narrative truly takes off, however, when the young and charming Miriam decides to run away from the town, arriving at the house of a rich and educated relative in the larger city of Balta. There, she continues her correspondence with Yoseph, the childhood sweetheart who had first exposed her to books and education and encouraged her to flee, while developing an infatuation with her new teacher, Barash. Torn between the two attractions, she finally flees further away to Odessa and eventually to study in Switzerland. There she continues to experience unhappiness in love and to be torn, this time between her attractions to science and to philosophy. In the initial plan, Miriam reaches her tragic end in suicide, when she finally encounters her great love, a doctor who has devoted his life to research and is married to her best friend.⁶ Already in 1905, then, Berdichevsky knew that he was not interested in telling the story of the formation of a wife and mother. However, this meant that the narrative had to end violently, with the protagonist's death; indeed, it ultimately meant that the narrative, as Berdichevsky first envisioned it, could not evolve into a novel. For that to happen, Berdichevsky had to come up with a far more radical alternative for his protagonist.

The Miriam who finally appears in the novel never makes it to Switzerland or even Odessa, and her education remains more or less limited to the reading of Russian novels. She is also not propelled toward a tragic end in suicide; in fact, rather than following the unfolding of the inevitable teleology of *Bildung* as the fall from grace of the young Jewish woman, the novel expends most of its energy sidetracking from the main plot. Time and again, often in rapid succession, the narrator begins to follow tangents to the narrative, stopping short with statements such as the following: "The reader should not demand that I lead him slowly through the whole road that this lad walked as he conquered a faithful basis in life. For this purpose, I would have to write a novel within a novel, and I can only wish to be sufficient for the work of one" (*M*, 100); "If I were to describe his features, his

beginning in life, the story of his first marriage and the one that followed it, I would have to once again write a whole chapter” (106).

Elsewhere, the narrator intimates that there is a story beyond—or on the horizons of—the story that he tells, one that even he himself does not know. For example, he cuts short his description of Miriam’s grandmother, Dvora’le, by saying, “Her riddle is not solved . . . I tell of Dvora’le because of Sar’l, her daughter. Sar’l is the mother of the heroine of my story, Miriam. But who will write Dvora’le’s story? But I have foreshadowed what comes later [*aval hine hikdamti et ha-meuchar*]” (*M*, 103). In this last statement, the narrator makes explicit reference to the narrative teleology that allows for foreshadowing, but he also questions that logic by indicating that the story could equally (and perhaps should) have expanded sideways to tell the tale of Dvora’le, rather than following the temporal progression that leads through Miriam’s birth and her life. These gestures and many others similar to them can be seen as forms of “sideshadowing,” a narratological term coined by Morson and Bernstein. The two literary theorists distinguish sideshadowing both from the familiar literary technique of foreshadowing and from “backshadowing” (also their neologism), which they define as “foreshadowing after the fact: the past is treated as if it had inevitably to lead to the present we know and as if signs of our present should have been visible to our predecessors.”⁷ Sideshadowing, by contrast, is the narrative representation of a present rich with multiple, contingent possibilities. As we will see, sideshadowing and a preoccupation with the contingency of both the shape that narratives take and the fates described in them are central issues in the drafting and redrafting of Berdichevsky’s novel.

The existence of the early outline has been consequential to the scholarly conversation about the novel, creating the widespread impression among Berdichevsky’s critics that *Miriam* is a deficient version of a longer story.⁸ As evidence of Berdichevsky’s failure to realize his ambitions to conquer the epic mode of the novel, critics of *Miriam* point to its meandering ways with plot; to the minor role ultimately played by the eponymous protagonist in relation to the numerous anecdotes, unrelated to her and her experience, that crowd the novel; and to the difficulty of pinpointing the identity of the narrator, who seems to shift back and forth between different degrees of omniscience and sophistication in the course of the novel. Dan Miron’s influential analysis of the novel exemplifies this view, taking it a step further by suggesting that the draft for an autobiographical *Ichroman*, which closely followed Berdichevsky’s first draft of *Miriam*, is the first indi-

cation of his inability "to overcome the deep rift in his creative work and arrive at a whole, integrated, multifaceted form of self-expression" in a novel "that would present both the complex psychological world of a single character and a broad picture of a variegated social world."⁹ For Miron, the shift from the autobiographical mode to a story centering on a female protagonist was supposed to achieve this purpose, allowing Berdichevsky the required distance with which to handle the perspective required by a novel. This distance had eluded Berdichevsky throughout his career and had been mastered by none of his Hebrew writing contemporaries. But according to Miron, in the return from the *Ichroman* to the story of the character Miriam, Berdichevsky loses this distance and the clarity of vision needed for the creation of a novel, which is how he ends up writing *Miriam*, a novel that falls short of the conventional models of both autobiography and bildungsroman. However, as Avner Holzman and Marcus Moseley have pointed out, these models are a problematic measuring stick that fails to account for the fascination experienced by many readers of the novel.¹⁰

The movement between the different drafts should be considered in all its different aspects: linguistic, formal, and thematic. Thus both Berdichevsky's key decision to write about a female protagonist and what some have read as structural deficiencies in the novel that follow from this decision, such as the narrator's hesitance when it comes to actually depicting Miriam and her inner thoughts and experiences and his preference for side-shadowing, are closely tied to the path that the novel took from German to Hebrew. Indeed, as the Hebrew novel shows, one thing that Berdichevsky gains by writing about a female protagonist is a critical perspective on the linguistic social map of Jewish Eastern Europe, which becomes a central theme of the novel. In the tradition of Y. L. Gordon, the novel laments the deficient education of women, especially in Hebrew, and tracks the careers of Miriam and others around her as students of Russian and Hebrew.

Berdichevsky's decision to change the gender of his protagonist and to write about a young woman, made already in the 1905 outline for *Miriam*, seems to hold the keys to the broadening of the horizons of the narrative and to open the way for a sustained reflection on the question of multilingualism, but there are important senses in which the early sketch is still far more teleological and conventional in nature than the narrative ultimately constructed in the Hebrew novel. In the outline, Miriam's suicide is the dramatic and virtually inevitable ending of a logical sequence that begins with her flight from her parents' home. The fulfillment of this narrative drama is

the sole purpose of the story as Berdichevsky sketched it, completely replacing the early attempts to write a tale that would encompass many different aspects of Jewish life in Eastern Europe and function as much as a work of ethnography as of fiction, attempts of which I will say more below. This is perhaps natural, since the 1905 sketch is only an outline and does not allow for any elaborate descriptions or tangents. But the almost complete lack of any reference to such “background” information beyond the descriptions of the towns in which Miriam lives is nevertheless striking; as mentioned above, the former is described as “small and somewhat odd,” and the characterization of the latter is also very brief and focuses mainly on its *not* being a traditional Jewish town. By contrast, the novel *Miriam* returns with great force to Berdichevsky’s initial plan, from the 1890s, to fuse the narrative of a single education with a collective portrait of a community in transformation, finally turning this seemingly impossible balancing act into a poetic principle that expresses the expanding horizons of Berdichevsky’s interlinguistic experiences. Berdichevsky’s theoretical reflections on multilingualism provide an important clue to how the novel achieves this, but only if they are read rhetorically rather than merely for the explicit claims put forward in them.

Metaphors of Multilingualism

One way to approach the status and the stakes of multilingualism for Berdichevsky and his contemporaries is by considering the metaphors they used to describe it. A prevalent metaphor that appears and reappears in different guises describes multilingualism as a physical condition. S. Y. Abramovich (Mendele Moykher Sforim) famously (and perhaps apocryphally) maintained that he wrote in both Yiddish and Hebrew because he wanted “to breathe in both his nostrils,”¹¹ a metaphor that implies that bilingualism is a natural condition by drawing the analogy to a body that functions with ease. When the Hebrew translation of *Tevye der milkhiker* first appeared (without the name of the translator, Y. D. Berkovich), Shalom Rabinovich (Sholem Aleykhem) added a preface in which he asks his readers to congratulate him, for he carries twins. Like Abramovich’s twin nostrils, Rabinovich’s image of the twin languages coinhabiting his womb/mind is apparently meant to bestow on his now bilingual authorship a sense of ease and naturalness.¹² In contrast, in his 1908 essay “Hevlei lashon” (Pangs of language), Bialik shifts the bodily metaphor to make an argument against bi-

lingual authorship. Most of the essay is devoted to examining whether and how Hebrew vocabulary can be extended as it becomes a modern spoken language; however, this discussion involves an impassioned diagnosis of the condition of writers using a language other than the one in which they live their daily lives, which was more or less the universal condition of contemporary Hebrew authors. Unlike the metaphoric body depicted by Abramovich, in which both nostrils, representing the two languages, are breathing in tandem and equilibrium, the image that Bialik evokes is of a crippled, unbalanced body: "A person wants his language to walk in tandem with him, a 'straight leg' and not dragging behind him or turning into a load on his shoulder."¹³ This crippling condition, the essay argues, will end when Hebrew becomes a spoken vernacular and is used by Hebrew authors to the exclusion of other languages.

Like Bialik, Berdichevsky used figurative language to grapple with bilingualism and to express his deep misgivings regarding bilingual authorship, though his convictions were not identical to Bialik's; moreover, it is important to keep in mind that his views changed over time, in tandem with the evolution of his own multilingual career, as I will discuss in further detail below. Reading Berdichevsky's essays on multilingualism opens a wider, more complex field of metaphors, beyond the bodily one. These metaphors are arguably doing important conceptual work for the author and can be useful to us as readers of his multilingual career and the literary work that grew from it.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Berdichevsky wrote a series of articles in which he articulated and rearticulated the position for which he is mostly remembered, namely, that languages are best kept separate and that authors are obliged to be explicit and clear in indicating whether a work is published in the language in which it was written or, rather, in the author's (or someone else's) translation. Strongly voicing this opinion, Berdichevsky addresses the question of multilingualism in Jewish literature in a lengthy essay written in 1909, originally titled "Shniut" (Duality) and later republished as "Ba-am u-va-sefer" (Among the people and its books). Reacting to the definition of Jewish literature as a single literature in two languages, Berdichevsky insists on the plural: "This should be not our literature but our literatures."¹⁴ He goes on to explain that an author "speaks differently in Hebrew, the language of past inheritance with all the creations of the past; differently in Yiddish, a subordinate, foundling of a language that has nothing in its world but the contours of its own exis-

tence.”¹⁵ To make this stark distinction, Berdichevsky does, to an extent, draw on the same semantic field to which some of his peers turned, explaining bilingualism as a natural, physical fact: “Here are male and female, a man and his wife,” he says in clarification of the differences between Hebrew and Yiddish; “a woman cannot wear the clothes of a man, and she cannot become a man” (PL, 128).¹⁶ But the shift in the second part of this extended metaphor is crucial, as Berdichevsky displaces his interest from the body itself to the clothes that cover it; indeed, here the body is not so much a functioning, natural object (breathing, birthing, or walking, as in the cases of Abramovich/Mendele, Rabinovich/Sholem Aleichem, and Bialik) but, rather, an object defined by how it is seen. The causal relation between the two statements—that a woman cannot wear the clothes of a man and that a woman cannot become a man—remains strategically ambiguous; raising the possibility that if she appears as a man, a woman in fact becomes one, the metaphor casts some doubt on the strict division that the essay purports to draw. That Berdichevsky’s language sometimes undermines the division only underscores the urgency of the project and the importance, for Berdichevsky, of exploring it rhetorically in the essays in order to better understand its stakes and possibilities.

Indeed, despite the evaluative contrast that Berdichevsky initially sets up between Hebrew and Yiddish, the main thrust of his argument is not to denigrate Yiddish in contrast with Hebrew but, rather, to argue that the borders between the two languages should be kept intact. The metaphor of the two languages as bordering territories plays a central role in this rhetorical exploration: “Yiddish literature, that is, the literature that toils to transmit all those murmurs and expressions of the crowd in their real form, as they live in the mouth of the people, is not scorched by Hebrew literature, nor does it encroach upon its borders . . . It deals with new ground, unseeded ground, and it conquers a new visionary and linguistic horizon” (PL, 128). I shall return shortly to Berdichevsky’s notion of a “visionary and linguistic horizon,” but I would first like to briefly point out that he had been building this metaphoric constellation, in which territory and horizon conceptually complement each other, in essays that he wrote throughout the first decade of the twentieth century.

The argument Berdichevsky presented in 1909 against bilingual authorship and for clearly delineated divisions goes back, in fact, to a polemical attack on the author Y. L. Peretz that Berdichevsky wrote in 1902 (published

in *Ha-tsifra*). There, Berdichevsky uses Peretz as an example of the perils of disregarding the divisions between languages, pointing out that Peretz's readers are often not informed whether his texts were written originally in Hebrew or in Yiddish. Valuable divisions, Berdichevsky maintains, are undone when it is impossible to know origin from translation: indeed, the authors themselves no longer know whether their texts are originals or translations, a state of affairs that contradicts Berdichevsky's fundamental understanding of poetry. Referring to Peretz, he states, "As a poet, he would have and should have known the value of language for poetry, and he came and made language into a mask [*plaster*] and no longer sovereign . . . We must know what has truly grown in our garden and what was merely planted in our midst later, and poetry that did not grow from its roots in Hebrew cannot be counted as a principal fund [*keren kayemet*] of Hebrew literature" (PL, 123). Elsewhere, Berdichevsky expands the topographic metaphor to depict Hebrew and Yiddish as separate worlds: "Each of the two languages, Yiddish and Hebrew, though they have seemingly grown in the same people, is a world to itself, and we can only open windows from one world to another but cannot make them into one world—if we can even understand what it is that divides the two worlds and what has made them two to begin with" (PL, 120).¹⁷

The underlying rhetorical logic of Berdichevsky's use of metaphors to describe Jewish multilingualism is visual: he is interested in the proper locations of words, in the garbs that they wear, the windows and frames that they impose on the world, and the horizons that they create. The notion of a linguistic horizon is arguably the central organizing metaphor against which the rest of these spatial and visual metaphors are ultimately assembled, situating Berdichevsky's speculations on language and literature within the intellectual lineage of hermeneutics that leads from Spinoza to Schleiermacher and through Dilthey to Heidegger and Gadamer.¹⁸ Like these thinkers, Berdichevsky is committed to a notion of linguistic and historical specificity instantiated most forcefully in language, defining a horizon of understanding and interpretation. Of course, the Nietzschean vision of a prison house of language and tradition, one that held enormous sway over Berdichevsky and his contemporaries, made this horizon threateningly constricting.¹⁹ Yet Berdichevsky's use of the metaphor of the horizon to discuss multilingualism seems to situate him closer to Gadamer's late twentieth-century reformulation of hermeneutics to account for multiple

horizons rather than a single one. This reformulation hinges on the multiplicity of languages in the world and on the specificity of the particular cultural and historical horizons created by different languages.²⁰

Indeed, it is through the notion of languages as horizons that the definitiveness and the gloom of Berdichevsky's argument finally ease up and unravel into uncertainty and even a sense of possibilities. Significantly, this occurs when he expands the discussion, in his 1909 essay, to insist on the fact that he and his peers are not merely bilingual but, in fact, at least trilingual authors.

Many of us are ruled not only by duality, for a third hand is also in us: the language of the land, which we also serve . . . The fact that our forces explode and divide within us, that rather than working and developing a whole literature, we have several, incomplete literatures, has not escaped us; we also do not cover up the losses created in the spirit of an author, who is a citizen of several authorities and forced, in his poverty, to use the different authorities. But we would go too far if we said that there is no light to be found among these shadows; for with the different pushes and pulls here and there is born also something multicolored, and *with the changing of horizons comes the broadening of the horizon*. (PL, 125; my emphasis)

Thus, instead of the constricting horizon of tradition that must be overcome through revolt, this image seems to suggest a progression wherein new horizons are fused with old ones (to continue to draw on Gadamer's terms), creating the broadened horizon. As I shall argue below, this aspect of Berdichevsky's use of the metaphor should be taken into account in assessing the role of multilingualism and autotranslation in his literary work. Berdichevsky's own broadened horizon stretched across Hebrew, Yiddish, and German, all of which played important roles in his career.

A History of Autotranslation

Berdichevsky is most widely remembered as a great Hebrew modernist, whose prose expanded both the style and the subject matter of Hebrew literature in the early twentieth century and gave voice to the experience of the "split in the heart" (*ha-kerá she-ba-lev*) that marked his generation. He was also (as the preceding brief discussion indicates) a prolific Hebrew essayist and polemicist, who publicly sparred with the likes of Asher Ginsberg

(Ahad Ha-am) and was seen as one of the leaders of the young generation of authors emerging in the first decade of the twentieth century. Berdichevsky's Yiddish authorship dates mostly to the period 1902–6 and represents the practical application of the positions on multilingualism argued in his essays; that is, his Yiddish texts are not translations of his contemporary Hebrew works but, rather, reworkings in a completely different style of related themes and concerns, having to do not only with Jewish life in the Russian Empire and the crises represented by pogroms and the 1905 revolution but also with the folklife and traditions of these communities. The dozens of his short stories and anecdotes that appeared in the popular Yiddish press early in the century were first published collectively in 1924 (three years after Berdichevsky's death), under the title *Yidishe ksovim fun a vaytn korev* (Yiddish works of a distant relative), a title that seems to summarize Berdichevsky's ambivalent attitude toward the language and his potential reading audience.²¹

The story of Berdichevsky's German authorship is more complicated and brings us back to the question of his changing positions regarding multilingual authorship. When Berdichevsky conceded, in 1909, that "with the changing of horizons comes the broadening of the horizon," he was returning to an intuition that had fueled his attempts to become a German author in the 1890s. German was by no means his native language. Rather Berdichevsky acquired it with great difficulty during his *hitmaskelut* (a Hebrew term that fuses education and enlightenment) at the famous yeshiva in Volozhyn in the late 1880s, when he began to aspire to study in the West. As Avner Holtzman has described, Berdichevsky spent the entire 1890s studying at universities in Breslau, Berlin, and Bern and struggling with his relationship to the German language and to German thought and letters.²²

From his earliest days in the West, Berdichevsky was attracted to the idea of becoming a German author. In his extensive correspondence from this period, he explains—in several ways, to himself and his friends—this attraction and its relation to his vocation as a Hebrew author. Some of the explanations he offers are practical in nature: as a German author, he could earn much more money and perhaps even thus sustain his Hebrew-language authorship; Hebrew readers would respect him a lot more if they knew that he was writing in the "living languages"; and by writing in German, he could spread knowledge of the trials and toils of Eastern European Jews beyond a Jewish readership. To make this last point, Berdichevsky reverses the rabbinic expression originating in Genesis 9 and popular with Haskalah

authors as a description of their project of bringing Western knowledge into Hebrew—"the beauty of Yeffet shall dwell in Shem's tents"—and claims that his mission is "to open the tents of Shem to the sons of Yeffet" (Holtzman, 105).²³ During this same period (starting in 1897), Berdichevsky also developed a conception of Jewish literature that transcended the particularities of language, favorably describing several German Jewish authors, such as Ludwig Jacobowski and Jakob Wasserman, as "Hebrew authors"; in other words, he took a position quite far from his later insistence on the division between languages and literatures.²⁴ This would recast his own linguistic transformation as an evolution from being a Hebrew author to being a German Hebrew author, rather than a dramatic break that calls for ideological justification.

Other instances of Berdichevsky's rationalizations of his need to write in German were more private, or internal, and hence more interesting in nature. As Holtzman describes it, Berdichevsky came to believe that "using a foreign language to describe traditional Jewish reality creates an aesthetic distance between the creation and the world described in it, a distance that amplifies the objectivity of the creator toward the autobiographical experiences at the basis of his stories" (106). By switching languages, Berdichevsky sought to neutralize his emotional involvement and gain a broader, epic view of the materials, a view more suitable for the creation of a novel. In Berdichevsky's words, "Only when I write from left to right, I see myself as the last Hebrew man . . . only then I sing the song of our great sorrow, our beautiful sorrow, our deep sorrow . . . In our language, I am a man who plays the piano, the keys are more numerous than my fingers, and I am forced to choose between them, and in the language of a foreign people, I am like a man who plucks the strings of a harp and holds a bow in his hands to turn it wherever he will" (Holtzman, 106).

As I read it, Berdichevsky's imagery in these letters is doing two things at once. On the one hand, he sets up a contrastive relationship between German and Hebrew (left and right, piano and harp); on the other hand, he underscores the fact that the force of German, for him, is inherent precisely in that contrastive relationship, in its being a reversal of his accustomed Hebrew perspective. In other words, he favors not the left-to-right movement in itself but, rather, the movement back and forth between orientations, which produces a perspective that is both ethically and aesthetically advantageous. This form of dual orientation would later be translated into Berdichevsky's image of the expanding horizon of multilingualism, as artic-

ulated in his essays, and would ultimately become an important core of the literary experiment that is his novel *Miriam*.

In fact, Berdichevsky's attempts to cross over completely or partially into German were continually counterbalanced by his allegiance to Hebrew. As he wrote in a letter from 1898 (using an image from the biblical story of Exodus), "I came here with the thought of becoming sufficiently germanized [*lehitashknez*], and the Hebrew in me prevailed with a strong hand and an outstretched arm" (Holtzman, 89). As his correspondence reveals, at the end of the century, Berdichevsky did finally complete a draft of a novel—a Jewish bildungsroman, based largely on his own experience of education and secularization, which also presented a broad panoramic portrait of Jewish life in Eastern Europe—and had high hopes for its publication by Samuel Fischer. The renowned Berlin publisher, however, rejected the novel, for reasons unknown. One possibility, assumed by Holtzman, is that Berdichevsky's German remained too stilted.²⁵ Another possibility is that the narrative itself remained too unruly, too bent on "sideshadowing," to return to Morson and Bernstein's terminology, even for a publisher with decidedly modernist leanings, such as Fischer, to absorb. Berdichevsky made a final attempt to improve his German and to work on the manuscript in Berlin in 1900, but only very brief fragments, some of which Berdichevsky published separately, remain from the novel. In conjunction with this disappointment, he dramatically reappeared on the Hebrew literary scene, publishing fifteen books and dozens of articles in the Hebrew and Yiddish press in the *anni mirabiles* of 1899–1902.

The failure of his attempt to publish his German novel was by no means the end of Berdichevsky's career as a German author. German remained an important language of writing and publication for him, through two main veins: his work as a scholar and an anthologist, on the one hand, and his diaries and personal chronicles, on the other. With his decision to abandon the path of a German novelist, Berdichevsky also decided to return to scholarship and to embark on a large project of anthologization, both of which he pursued primarily in German.²⁶ Rachel Ramberg (Bin-Gorion), who became his wife in 1902, was a close collaborator in these projects (bringing some of them to completion after Berdichevsky's death in 1921).²⁷ Ramberg also published German translations of Berdichevsky's fiction from Yiddish (*Vor dem Sturm: Ostjüdische Geschichten*, 1919) and Hebrew (*Aus einer Judenstadt*, 1936), in some sense realizing his plan to use literature to bring the experience of Jews in Eastern Europe to a non-Jewish

readership.²⁸ She was actively involved in Berdichevsky's private documentation of his life and work, which was carried out in German in three categories: *Chronik*, devoted mostly to private thoughts and experiences; *Notizen*, aphorisms and thoughts on philosophy, culture, literature, and politics; and *Wissenschaftliche Notizen*, documenting his scholarly ideas and achievements. As the couple's son, Immanuel Bin-Gorion, describes, the earliest extant diaries are from 1902 and are all in Ramberg's handwriting: "Sometimes he would dictate to her, sometimes he would write things down and she would copy them. The writing itself—in her hand—was the result of editing and final formulations done by him. There are no deletions or revisions in these diaries; everything is cleanly copied and meant to be kept."²⁹ The diaries also contain sketches and ideas for future literary works, only some of which were realized during Berdichevsky's life. Two of these sketches are mentioned above: the early outline for *Miriam* from 1905 and the outline for an uncompleted *Ichroman* or memoir.

Both sides of Berdichevsky's continuing German-language authorship, the public and the private, raise interesting questions related to both authorship and language choice. The anthologies (compilations from multiple sources, mostly by anonymous authors, whose work Berdichevsky and Ramberg translated from Hebrew and Aramaic) and the diaries (Berdichevsky's private account of the totality of his thoughts and experiences, for which it is impossible to say whether or to what extent translation from Hebrew or from Yiddish was involved) seem diametrically opposed. Indeed, in his correspondence, Berdichevsky often depicted his increasing devotion to scholarship during the 1910s in the same breath as he discussed his sense of isolation as a Hebrew author and his sense of despair with the entire project of a modern Hebrew literature, implying that the scholarship came to replace the literary work; this narrative has subsequently been reiterated in the scholarship on Berdichevsky's career.³⁰ Nevertheless, the diaries, on the one hand, and the anthologies and scholarly writings, on the other, could also be seen as two sides of the same project of coauthorship and cotranslation, constituting an extension of Berdichevsky's attempts to become a German author in the 1890s, in a new vein that became possible only after he married Ramberg. After Berdichevsky sought a form of artistic alienation by switching right-to-left movement for left-to-right movement in the 1890s and recalled, in 1909, that such a changing of the horizon broadens the horizon, the multilingual work he did together with Ramberg seems to have opened up the horizons of possibility in his authorship yet

further, transforming his persona as an author. This perhaps gives us a first hint as to the echoes that his early explorations of the bilingual horizon would have in his mature literary work.

Miriam's Horizons

I now return to the textual question raised in the beginning of my discussion of *Miriam*: why does the novel preface its introduction of the main protagonist, the birth of Miriam, by coupling the stories of Sar'l's unhappy youthful affair with Dan, the shop assistant, and of the crippled baby who was left by his mother to freeze to death? Of course, that the narrator chooses to delay his account of the birth of his main character in order to inform us of her parents' unhappy, loveless marriage and to raise questions regarding her paternity does not, in itself, constitute sideshadowing. After all, this could be seen as a foreshadowing of the malaise that will later afflict her, which might be described as a difficulty to form attachments. But in narrating the tale, Berdichevsky does several things to open his text to the horizontal perspective. For example, he contrasts it with other, far more formulaic forms of narrative, in which the inevitability of fate is an underlying assumption—in this case, the Yiddish romantic novels consumed by Sar'l. In the mold of Emma Bovary, Sar'l comes to confuse those novels' melodramatic narratives with life itself, copying their language for her love letters to Dan and fully expecting their affair to unfold in an equally sensational sequence of pain and exhilaration.

This confusion allows the narrator to produce two paraphrases of the formulaic plot structure of the Yiddish novels within his own text. He does so once in describing what Sar'l reads and once in describing what she imagines as her future. When the popular novels are repeated and refracted through Sar'l's imagination as a projection of her own future, the narratological deep structure of the Yiddish books is exposed as a straight arrow that propels their female protagonists directly toward their end in either downfall or redemption. However, we are soon informed that the type of narrative that we face in Berdichevsky's book is far more ambiguous, less deterministic, and more preoccupied with "sideshadows." An early and clear sign of this is that the text veers off from its main plot, forgetting Sar'l and her woes in order to tell the story of the crippled baby who dies on his grandfather's doorstep.

The analogy to the events of the main plot is seemingly clear: as Sar'l

and Israel, Miriam's parents, are about to enter their unhappy marriage, Reuben and his wife have ended theirs; and as Miriam is about to be born of this union and begin her life, another young life comes to a cruel end. But the allegorical chain does not stop with these two narratives. Rather, like the account of Sar'l's love affair with Dan, the episode of Reuben and his wife comes to an end on a minor key: "Three months later [after the death of the baby and the discovery of the love letters], Sar'l's wedding was celebrated. The controversy had ceased in the meantime, Nathanael had died" (*M*, 112). The narrator then pauses to tell the following short fable (which builds on an allusion to Isaiah 5):

A man sows a garden and digs it up and clears it of stones and builds a fence, he collects and removes the stones and the weeds from the cracks in the earth, he digs the surface of the plot, puts seeds under the earth, and waters them every morning if the heavens do not shower . . . When the garden wears its green cloak, when the roses open, when the fruit produce odor, the traveler will not know and will not notice how many times the entire vision in front of him was almost destroyed, he will not count the nights of horror and will not know of the wild beasts and the vipers who are poised to destroy what the lord of being creates every time anew. (112–13)

This fable is followed by a short, heartbreaking description of Sar'l and Israel's first, fumbling night together, and the brief chapter ends with the words "But I speak in allegories, and their moral will be learned from the following pages" (113).

The immediately subsequent pages, however, hardly seem to unravel the moral of the allegory; they discuss, at some length, the Russo-Turkish War, blended with accounts of Israel's growing suspicion that his wife does not love him. It would be pointless to try to tease out or reconstruct the allegorical relation among the different stories that the narrator places alongside each other: the two unhappy marital relationships, the child who dies and the child who lives, the garden that grows but may at any moment be destroyed, and the violent and destructive world events whose distant echoes are heard in the small Jewish community. The important point is that Berdichevsky chooses to add one parallel after another, accumulating elements horizontally, as he will continue to do throughout the novel.³¹ At this moment in the narrative—as it finally approaches the birth of Miriam—the horizontal accumulation bears particular philosophical and existential res-

onance, for unlike the heroines of Sar’l’s popular novels, Miriam is not born under a fated star, nor is her destiny sealed this way or that by virtue of her being the protagonist of the novel. In approaching her appearance in the world and in his novel, Berdichevsky tries to capture the open horizon of freedom that philosopher Hannah Arendt describes as the human condition of natality, a freedom rooted in “the fact that each birth represents a new beginning and the introduction of novelty in the world.”³² The project of Berdichevsky’s novel, then, is to capture this potential for novelty in the world as it continues to be realized throughout Miriam’s life.

This would have been impossible within the stricture of the bildungsroman as Berdichevsky had sketched it in 1905. Instead of sending Miriam to be educated in the West, the novel can only represent its protagonist hesitating on the verge of action, on the verge of decision, and it accumulates side stories as so many “sideshadows,” indicating other possibilities that are not realized in the life of its protagonist. Thus, as the novel approaches its end, the open horizons that existed at the moment of its protagonist’s birth are not represented as having been closed by the decisions and actions that have been accumulated in her life; rather, the novel seeks to continue to capture the contingencies that form the story as long as it is being told. Much like the beginning of her tale, the ending of Miriam is shadowed by a string of side plots that do not settle neatly into the position of allegories to her fate; instead, they represent foils that serve to question the very notion of fate.

Rather than entangling Miriam herself in a love story that follows the conventional line leading to a productive union in marriage, Berdichevsky does not allow her to overcome her ambivalence. He chooses instead to depict other couples—most prominently Yeruham and Ida, two of the figures who inhabit the larger city of Honirad, where Miriam escapes her family—as they find their difficult ways to each other and as their unions face the precariousness and contingency of human life. As in the case of the ill-fated son of Reuben and his wife, the narrative cuts these stories short with the brutality and suddenness of a guillotine, repeatedly representing death not as a fate that unfolds from the actions of its protagonists but, rather, as the abrupt interference of illogic and contingency that causes those who remain behind to doubt the very notion of fate or of divine providence.

Chapter 36 creates this effect of accumulation of repeated abrupt endings that become not allegories but “sideshadows” of one another and of the main plot, which seems almost to have become submerged under them.

The brief chapter begins by bringing to its close a subplot that has preoccupied the narrator for much of part 3 of the novel, the tale of Yeruham and Ida's unhappy love. This tale could be read as another parody of the Yiddish love stories consumed by Sar'l in the beginning of the book: despite the difference in background, the daughter of the cantor and the only son of a poor widow who subsists as a laundress are bound by a love that withstands all challenges, and they ultimately marry. But the obstacles they face are far more ambiguous and personal in nature than those faced by the heroes and heroines of Sar'l's novels: they must overcome not their parents or society but, rather, their own ambivalence and hesitance. The only thing the reader learns of their marriage, however, is that it is fast to end: "after six months, the wife bore a son, and the delivery was difficult, and she died" (*M*, 250). This brutal fact elicits from the narrator a leap sideways, to follow another narrative track.

There was once a man, the son of important people, in whom no fault was to be found and whose ways were all straight, and he had a wife who was innocent and pleasant and beloved by everyone around, and the couple lived in harmony and friendship; they gave of their bread to the poor, and everyone who came through their door blessed them. One day the woman rose on a bench to put a nail in the wall to hang a picture, and her legs faltered, and she fell and hit her head on a tool that was on the floor, and it was hurt. The sore became infected. A doctor came to treat the sore and failed in his work. The fire of fever took hold of her body, and she was consumed and died three days later. (250)

To reiterate, the function of this story, as I read it, is not allegorical. The text does not set up a parallel between this man—who goes on to wander from town to town and declare his disbelief in a protecting God—and Yeruham, to whom the chapter returns briefly, in conclusion, to state, "The aforementioned Yeruham also grieved for many days and could not find a solution to the entire vision" (251). Instead, it simply states that the two stories are contiguous (hence the connective must be the word *also*, Hebrew *af*, not, say, the word *likewise*, Hebrew *kamohu*), indicating that one might construct an endless string of such contiguities, disaster after disaster.

In relation to this string of contiguities, Miriam's ultimate refusal to enter into the conventional role of a beloved and a wife is positioned further horizontally, with one story sideshadowing the other rather than supplying

an antecedent that will explain it in any way. In the final pages of the novel, Miriam remains as indecisive as she has been throughout the narrative ("she has no direction [*megama*]," as the narrator puts it).³³ Under the influence of her reading of Tolstoy, she goes to the town doctor, Koch, and devotes herself to serving other people.

The old man rose from the labor of his day and stretched his hand to her with feelings of sympathy and compassion. And she lowered her eyes and said: "I am your maid, I will be of help to serve the sick and will work for you faithfully." He kissed her on the forehead and said: "You are my daughter, you are most kind to me."

Berdichevsky stages this last encounter as a reversal of biological teleology: rather than bearing the child of the doctor with whom she fell in love in the 1905 sketch, Miriam becomes a daughter to Koch, the doctor's reincarnation in the novel. It is also an encounter that involves translation, for the communication between Miriam and Koch centers on the substitution of one identification, "servant," for another, "daughter." With this nonending, then, Berdichevsky continues to follow a horizontal logic rather than a progressive one and continues to explore, through narrative, his early insight that the movement between languages produces a broadening of the horizon.

The purpose of my reading here of *Miriam* and of the multilingual explorations and the explorations of multilingualism that led up to the writing of the novel is to make an argument for the productive role of multilingualism in the work of modern Jewish novelists. For Berdichevsky, the struggle to find the right language for his writing was replaced by an embracing of the broadening horizon of a movement between languages and the experimental narrative form that captures this broadening horizon. Instead of choosing one identity—choosing (to use a metaphor from one of his early essays) whether to be man or woman, whether to wear the clothes of a man or a woman—the novelist Berdichevsky chose to imagine Miriam, a young woman who did not comfortably wear the traditional costume of a female protagonist. We can only speculate to what extent Berdichevsky's collaboration with Rachel Ramberg contributed to his ability to perform this narrative form of cross-dressing, so to speak. But their shared linguistic cross-dressing, their collaborative project of writing simultaneously in German and Hebrew, left indelible marks in the novel.

Notes

1. For central works in the field that have thematized this in different ways, see Itamar Even-Zohar, "Aspects of the Hebrew-Yiddish Polysystem," *Poetics Today* 11, no. 1 (1990): 121–30; Chana Kronfeld, *Margins of Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Naomi Seidman, *A Marriage Made in Heaven* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Benjamin Harshav, *Polyphony of Jewish Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Dan Miron, *From Continuity to Contiguity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

2. Anita Norich, "Language Choice," *Frankel Institute Annual*, 2011, 16–17.

3. These two dilemmas could be seen as paraphrases of the sociolinguistic and the psycholinguistic perspectives on bilingualism, respectively.

4. For surveys of the criticism of the novel, see Tsiporah Kagan, *Roman gamur: Miriam le-Mikha Yosef Berdichevsky* [A completed novel: *Miriam*, by Mikha Yosef Berdichevsky] (Haifa: University of Haifa Press, 1997); Ariel Levinson, *Olam al yad olam: Le-chidat Miriam shel Berdichevsky* [Adjacent world: On the riddle of Berdichevsky's *Miriam*] (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009). Probably the most thorough and most damning critique is in Dan Miron's *Kivun orot: Tachanot ba-siporet ha-ivrit ha-modernit* [Stations in Modern Hebrew fiction] (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1979) 36–105; I shall return to Miron's analysis of the novel below. All in-text citations of the novel refer to Kagan's edition (subsequently cited as *M*), and translations from Hebrew are mine throughout.

5. Kagan, *Roman gamur*; Avner Holtzman, *El ha-kera she-ba-lev: Mikha Yosef Berdichevsky, shnot ha-tsmicha* [Toward the rent in the heart: Mikha Yosef Berdichevsky, the years of growth] (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1995); Marcus Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone: Origins of Jewish Autobiography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Karin Neuburger, "Fiktion und Wirklichkeit—Micha Joseph Berdyczewskis Leben und Werk in Berlin (1912–1921)," in *Transit und Transformation Osteuropäisch-jüdische Migranten in Berlin 1918–1939*, ed. Verena Dohrn and Gertrud Pickhan (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010).

The sense of a summation associated with the text is, of course, rooted in Berdichevsky's own description of the novel, both within the text and in letters he wrote while he was working on it. The author's son, Immanuel Bin-Gorion, also forcefully describes the novel as "the key to Berdichevsky's personality, to his art, his assessment of Judaism in all its various traditions and teachings and to his world view" (quoted in Mosely, *Being for Myself*, 277).

6. M. Y. Berdichevsky, *Matkonet la-roman Miriam* [An outline for the novel *Miriam*] (1905), reprinted in Berdichevsky, *Miriam*, ed. Avner Holtzman (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz ha-meuchad, 2011).

7. Gary Saul Morson, *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 13.

8. Kagan, *Roman gamur*, 16–19.

9. Miron, *Kivun orot*, 46.

10. Moseley, *Being for Myself*, 276–85; Avner Holtzman, afterword to Berdichevsky, *Miriam*.

11. Miron, *From Continuity to Contiguity*, 496.

12. *Ibid.*, 423.

13. Haim Nahman Bialik, “Chevlei lashon,” in *Kol kitve Haim Nahman Bialik* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1984), 226.

14. A famous exposition of the view attacked by Berdichevsky is an essay by Isidor Eliashev (Ba’al-Makhshoves) in *Petrograder Tageblatt* (Petrograd, 1918), reprinted in *Geklibene verk* (New York: Cyco-Bicher Farlag, 1953). Hana Wirth-Nesher’s translation, “Ba’al Makhshoves’ ‘One Literature in Two Languages,’” appears in *What Is Jewish Literature*, ed. Hana Wirth-Nesher (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994): 69–77.

15. Y. H. Berdichevsky, *Shira ve-lashon: Mivchar masot ve-reshimot*, ed. Imanuel Bin-Gurion (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1987), 124–25. All in-text citations from the essay refer to this edition (subsequently cited as *PL*).

16. Of course, the association between linguistic divisions and gender divisions is pervasive in Jewish culture, and even though Berdichevsky does not state so explicitly, it seems clear that the female in this analogy represents Yiddish. See Seidman, *Marriage Made in Heaven*.

17. This quotation is from an article written in 1906–7 that deals primarily with Abramovich, a far more canonical figure than Peretz, who elicits a more restrained, less polemical tone. Nevertheless, Berdichevsky here repeats his view that texts are inexorably linked to the language in which they are written, and he hence dismisses the view that Abramovich could have written any of his stories in either of the two languages and that it does not matter which language is “original” and which is “translation.” This becomes an occasion for Berdichevsky to offer a disquisition on the nature of translation, which space does not allow me to paraphrase or discuss here.

18. “Hermeneutics,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/>. See also Enrique Lima; “Of Horizons and Epistemology: Problems in the Visuality of Knowledge,” *Diacritics* 33, nos. 3–4 (Winter–Spring 2003): 19–35.

19. On Berdichevsky’s Nietzscheanism, see Menachem Brinker, “Nietzsche’s Influence on Modern Hebrew Literature,” in *Nietzsche In Russia*, ed. Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Jacob Golomb, *Nietzsche and Zion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); David Ohana, “Zarathustra in Jerusalem: Nietzsche and the ‘New Hebrews,’” *Israel Affairs* 1, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 38–60; Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

20. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 402–6. For Gadamer, a second language is always a *foreign* language, which is not necessarily the term I would use, certainly not when speaking of the cultural multilingualism of Jewish communities, but also not when discussing Jewish authors who acquire a language (most often their third, at least) as adults (as in the case of Berdichevsky’s German, discussed below).

21. Shmuel Werses, introduction to M. Y. Berdichevsky, *Yidishe kesovim fun a vaytn korev* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1980).

22. For the discussion that follows, I have mostly relied on Holtzman's account in *El ha-kerā*, 85–109 (subsequently cited as Holtzman). I thank him for sharing with me materials from the Berdichevsky archive (which he currently directs) and for answering my questions.

23. In other words, rather than importing the beauty of Yeffet into the tents of Shem by translating the philosophy and literature of the West into Hebrew, as the Haskalah authors did, he would import into the tents of Yeffet knowledge culled from the experiences and traditions of the Jews, by writing literature about these things in German.

24. Indeed, during this period, he practiced precisely the form of autotranslation that he would later so vociferously attack in Peretz, though none of his translations of his own Hebrew fiction into German have survived (Holtzman, 110–12). Berdichevsky was not the only one to refer to German Jewish authors as “Hebrew” authors. For example, as I have described elsewhere, this occurs in several instances in reference to Heinrich Heine, whose Hebrew translations are sometimes depicted as returns to the original. See Naʿama Rokem, *Prosaic Conditions: Heinrich Heine and the Spaces of Zionist Literature* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013).

25. Holtzman bases this conclusion on the memoirs of Berdichevsky's friend Mordechai Ehrenpreis.

26. Berdichevsky's Bern dissertation, “Über den Zusammenhang zwischen Ethik und Aesthetik,” had been published in 1897. In the last decades of his life, he turned his attention to Jewish folklore: some of his anthologies are the five-volume *Die Sagen der Juden* (1913–27), the six-volume *Der Born Judas* (1916–23), *Eli* (1919), and *Die Geschichte von Tobia*, illustrated by Max Lieberman (1920). He also examined the relations between Judaism and other religions: see, for example, his *Sinai und Garizim: Über den Ursprung der israelitischen Religion* (1925–26).

27. For a moving portrait of Ramberg and her relationship with Berdichevsky, see Avner Holtzman, *Tmuna leneged enai* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2002), 17–59.

28. It seems likely, however, that by the time Berdichevsky and Ramberg were collaborating on the anthologies and by the time she published her translations, the emphasis had shifted from a non-Jewish readership to a German Jewish readership, under the influence of what Michael Brenner has described as “the renaissance of Jewish culture” in Germany. Brenner focuses mostly on the Weimar period, but Buber's anthologies of Hassidic tales, for example, were appearing in German during the first decade of the twentieth century, arguably speaking to the same German Jewish audience as Berdichevsky. See Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 140–41.

29. Immanuel Bin-Gorion, afterword to Berdichevsky, *Amal yom ve-haguto* [The labor of a day and its thoughts], trans. and ed. Rachel Bin-Gurion (Tel Aviv: Moreshet Mikha Yosef, 1974), 109.

30. E.g., Miron, *Kivun orot*, 49.

31. For a related argument against allegorical and metaphorical readings of the novel, see Adi Zemach, "Miriam, Part I," in *Mikha Yosef Berdichevsky: Studies and Documents*, ed. Avner Holtzman (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2000), 547–55. Zemach emphasizes the multiplicity of points of view in the narrative and implies that this technique is rooted in contemporary philosophical trends that questioned the existence of an objective world in favor of a multiplicity of points of view (the publication date of Ernst Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, e.g., was very close to that of *Miriam*).

32. "Hannah Arendt," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arendt/>.

33. In biblical Hebrew, the term *megama* literally refers to direction; in Modern Hebrew, it has been expanded to mean tendency, trend, or course of studies.