

BETWEEN 'THE HOUSE OF STUDY' AND THE COFFEEHOUSE

The Central European Café as a Site for
Hebrew and Yiddish Modernism



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Fin-de-siècle Vienna remains fixed in our imagination as an outstanding example of urban modernism and it is still common practice to regard the Vienna of this period as 'the focal point' of European modernism.¹ No account of fin-de-siècle Vienna can avoid discussing the Jewish aspect of this 'golden-age' of modernism. In his seminal study *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, Carl Schorske tends to both emphasise and downplay the role of Jews in Viennese modernist culture. He writes that 'the failure to acquire a monopoly of power left the bourgeois always something of an outsider, seeking integration with the aristocracy. The numerous and prosperous Jewish element in Vienna, with its strong assimilationist thrust, only strengthened this trend.'² Other scholars developed the insider/outsider paradigm articulated by Schorske in order to equate Viennese modernism with Jewish culture. Architectural historian Peter Hall writes: 'the Viennese golden age in its ultimate florescence was peculiarly a creation of that Jewish society: a society of outsiders, who, for all too brief a time, had become insiders.'³ Steven Beller emphasises Vienna's highly acculturated Jewish population which had attained unprecedented cultural prominence by the turn of the century, and claims that this was especially apparent in literary circles of Viennese modernism.⁴

The role of the urban cafés in the creation of European modernism has been recognised (either in passing or in more detail) by many. In the introduction

to their influential collection, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane write: 'city living fostered the formation of literary centres and coteries; literary cafés, journals and publishing houses encouraged the development of new styles of writing to meet new realities and needs.'⁵ 'Literary cafés' were indispensable for the creation of several modernist traditions in major urban European centres, and we are more or less well acquainted with the pivotal role of institutions like Café Griensteidl and Café Central in Viennese modernism, Café des Westens and the Romanisches Café in Berlin, the numerous cafés of the Left Bank and Montparnasse in Paris, as well as cafés in cities like Rome, Zurich, Lisbon, Prague, St Petersburg, Budapest, Odessa, Warsaw, and numerous others.⁶

Considering the pivotal role of the institution of the café in European modernism in general, and *Literarische Kaffeehäuser* of fin-de-siècle Vienna, it is hardly surprising to discover a certain conflation between literary modernism, Jewishness and Viennese café culture. This conflation is no doubt a product of well-known memoirs of the 'world of yesterday' by the likes of Stefan Zweig, Friedrich Torberg, Joseph Roth and Alfred Polgar, but it is also alive and well in many contemporary scholarly accounts.⁷ Both Steven Beller and Harold Segal have stressed the predominant presence of Jewish writers and intellectuals in Vienna. Beller claims that 'the two institutions which provided the main milieu for liberal cultural life in Vienna at the turn of the century were the salon and the coffeehouse ... and both of them had very high Jewish presence. The coffeehouse was seen by the Viennese as "a Jewish space".⁸ Harold Segal maintains that what distinguished the fin-de-siècle Viennese literary café from similar institutions in Europe is 'its heavily Jewish character.'⁹

There are social and economical dimensions to the historical link between Jews, coffee and cafés in Europe and beyond. In the eighteenth century, coffee (and other exotic imports like tea, cocoa, and sugar) was a new commodity that had not been explicitly prohibited for Jews to trade in, and they were quick to take up this commerce.¹⁰ When coffeehouses were founded in Europe – some of them by Sephardic Jews who brought the commodity and the institution from the Middle East – Jews embraced them as well.¹¹ As has been noted in Beller's chapter, Jews were not always welcomed in more exclusive meeting places, in clubs and pubs where alcohol was at the centre; therefore, the new institute of the café emerged as an attractive alternative, first as a site for informal business and commodity exchange, and later as a site of political, cultural and literary exchange. In many European cities Jews were enthusiastic participants, and sometimes initiators of café culture.¹²

What was, then, the 'Jewish character' of the Viennese café of this period? Is it possible to define and identify its Jewishness? These are questions with which some of the Viennese writers themselves (Jews and non-Jews) wrestled. Since it is clear that the Viennese café was not a 'Jewish space' in any traditional or conventional way, these questions actually cut through some of the most

profound dilemmas of Jewish cultural identity in modernity, especially in the period of 1880–1938, which Benjamin Harshav has called the time of ‘modern Jewish revolution.’¹³

A key text in relation to the Jewishness of the Viennese café, already noted by Beller, is *Die Tante Jolesch oder Der Untergang des Abendlandes in Anekdoten* (Aunt Jolesch or the Decline of the West in Anecdotes, 1975). The work evokes the world of fin-de-siècle Viennese cafés and Friedrich Torberg makes clear that the ‘Jewishness’ of the café was very significant, and very much part of a world that was being destroyed:

that the coffeehouse has taken on something from Tante Jolesch, that she is the missing link between the Talmudic tradition of the ghetto and emancipated café culture, that she was, as it were, the female ancestor of all those people who found in the coffeehouse the catalyst and central focus of their existence, and she was their primal mother whether or not they realized it, whether or not they wanted it to be so.¹⁴

The link which Torberg makes between the ‘Talmudic tradition’ of what he calls the traditional ‘Jewish ghetto’ and the secularised, bourgeois Viennese world of the café is oblique but fascinating. Torberg seems to suggest that there was a missing, hidden link – embodied, interestingly, in the female figure of the old aunt from the Jewish *shtetl* – between the traditional Jewish ‘house of study’ (*Beis Midrash* in Hebrew and Yiddish) where Jews studied Talmud for centuries and Vienna’s café culture. Perhaps what Torberg had in mind is the intriguing idea that there is a strong link between the café and Talmudic culture of intellectual debate and (all-male) camaraderie that characterised the ‘house of study.’¹⁵ In this, Torberg is close to the Habermasian ‘public sphere.’¹⁶

Interestingly, the ‘Jewishness’ of the Viennese cafés has also been seen as something very negative by emancipated liberal Jews. In Max Nordau’s oft-quoted address to the Second Zionist Congress, *Muskeldjudentum* (Muscular Judaism, 1898), he called for Jews to become ‘men of muscle’ instead of remaining ‘slaves to their nerves.’ Unlike the ‘coffeehouse Jews’ of the Diaspora, the ‘New Jews,’ said Nordau, should ‘rise early ... and not be weary before sunset ... have clear heads, solid stomachs and hard muscles.’¹⁷ When Nordau’s colleague, Theodor Herzl, the journalist of *Neue Freie Presse* who became the leader of the Zionist movement, wanted to portray what seemed to him to be the dire situation of Viennese Jews – and Jews in Western and Central Europe in general – he chose Dr Friedrich Loewenberg, a quintessential ‘coffeehouse Jew’ to be one of the main protagonists of his Zionist utopian novel *Altneuland* (1902). Indeed, the scene that opens this novel takes place in a fictional Viennese coffeehouse:

Sunk in deep melancholy, Dr. Friedrich Loewenberg sat at a round marble table in his café on the Alsergrund. It was one of the most charming of Viennese cafés. Ever since his student days he had been coming there, appearing every afternoon at five o’clock

with bureaucratic punctuality. The sickly, pale waiter greeted him submissively, and he would bow with formality to the equally pale girl cashier to whom he never spoke. After that, he would seat himself at the round reading table, drink his coffee, and read the papers with which the waiter plied him. And when he had finished with the dailies and the weeklies, the comic sheets and the professional magazines ... there were chats with friends or solitary musings.¹⁸

Joseph Roth, the modernist Jewish-Austrian writer who immigrated to Vienna from Brody in Galicia, gives us a parallel yet totally different portrait of the 'coffeehouse Jew' during the inter-war period. In his novel *Zipper und Sein Vater* (Zipper and his Father, 1928), we find the following description:

After Arnold began working in the Finance Ministry, his visits to the cafés became a passion rather than habit ... he had found it difficult to spend an evening alone, he was now possessed by a real horror of solitude. Not that he wished to be part of a community. He just wanted to sit in a coffeehouse, nowhere else but his coffeehouse ... Arnold didn't play, but he was glad to look on. After a time he became for many of the players an indispensable spectator ... Only on entering this coffeehouse was Arnold free of his day. Here began his freedom, for although the revolving doors never ceased moving, Arnold could be certain that inside this coffeehouse he would never encounter anyone who reminded him of his work or indeed any work whatsoever.¹⁹

Acculturated Jews like Roth, Torberg and Stefan Zweig, who were *Stammgäste* (habitues, 'regulars') of Viennese cafés and have written about them, are well-known figures in Austrian and international modernism. However, the following pages focus on the less familiar and visible Hebrew and Yiddish modernist writers – those writers who grew up in the Talmudic 'houses of study' and experienced them first hand. In the first decades of the twentieth century, these writers immigrated from the Russian Pale of Settlement and Galicia and were equally attracted to the Viennese and Central European café for similar and different reasons. For them the café was, as it was for the fictional Arnold Zipper, a place to find a substitute of 'community' and a space in which they could meet, write and be what Roth has called 'effective spectators.'

My intention here is not to challenge the historical fact that the habitués in the coffeehouses were Jews or of Jewish decent, or even the more oblique link between café culture, modernism and Jewishness in fin-de-siècle Vienna. I would like to note, however, that these accounts produce a perception that Jewish modernist creativity in Vienna was idiosyncratic, and consisted of a relatively short period in which highly assimilated Jewish writers, artists and thinkers functioned as the primary promoters of modernism. Thus, these accounts tend to ignore the fact that Vienna – alongside other Central European cities like Lemberg and Berlin – has also been an important site of a different, and more marginal Jewish modernist creativity, namely Hebrew and Yiddish modernist literature produced between 1900 and 1930.²⁰ This literary and

cultural production was another aspect of the ‘modern Jewish revolution’, part of a larger movement of Jewish immigration from Eastern to Central Europe in the period preceding and following the First World War. In what follows, I would like to discuss the crucial yet unexplored role of the coffeehouse in the emergence of Hebrew and Yiddish modernism in Vienna and in other cities and urban centres of Central Europe.

Lemberg: Uncertain Boundaries and Café Culture

At the beginning of *Tmol-Shilshom* (Only Yesterday, 1945), the celebrated novel by the Hebrew Nobel Laureate Shmuel Yosef Agnon, we are introduced to the main protagonist, Itzhak Kumer. Kumer is a young man who travels from his *shtetl* in Galicia to the cities and urban centres of Central Europe. He arrives in the train station of the city of Lemberg²¹ – the capital of Habsburg Galicia – and immediately rushes to one of the local cafés about which he heard a great deal before embarking on the journey. Why is Kumer so attracted to the café, and why does Agnon devote such attention to the coffeehouses of Lemberg? The narrator of the novel supplies the readers with the following explanation:

A big city is not like a small town. In a small town, a person goes out of his house and immediately finds his friend; in a big city days and weeks and months may go by until they see one another, and so they set a special place in the café where they drop in at appointed times. Yitzhak had pictured that café ... as the most exquisite place, and he envied those students who could go there any time, any hour. Now that he had arrived in Lemberg, he himself went to see them.

Indeed, a few hours later Kumer finds himself,

... standing in a splendid temple with gilded chandeliers suspended from the ceiling and lamps shining from every single wall, and electric lights turned on in the daytime, and marble tables gleaming, and people of stately mien wearing distinguished clothes sitting on plush chairs, reading newspapers. And above them, waiters dressed like dignitaries ... holding silver pitchers and porcelain cups that smelled of coffee and all kinds of pastry.²²

This explanation of the significance of the café in the big city is simple yet quite accurate. In contrast to the intimate and thoroughly familiar small town, the modern urban environment creates a sense of anonymity and alienation. At the same time, however, the city offers its inhabitants (locals, immigrants and even visitors) easy and immediate access to sites of mass consumption (where they can purchase coffee, pastries, etc.). These venues, such as the urban cafés, are also institutions of the public sphere where people can meet, converse and debate for the price of a cup of coffee, which even Kumer can afford. Kumer’s experience

as a slightly naïve, wide-eyed immigrant who sees the Viennese style café as a ‘splendid temple’, is more or less based on the biography of the young Agnon. He is also a good example of the path taken by many Hebrew and Yiddish modernist writers during the early years of the twentieth century.

Most of these writers were born and raised in *shtetls* and received traditional religious education in Talmudic ‘houses of study,’ which gave them access to and knowledge of religious Jewish texts, necessary for their ability to create literature in Hebrew and Yiddish. But this was the period of the disintegration of the *shtetl*, and most Hebrew and Yiddish writers and intellectuals found themselves at very early age as restless (and usually penniless) immigrants in one of the metropolitan centres of Eastern and Central Europe.²³ To a large extent, modernist Hebrew and Yiddish literature was a result of immigration and an intense process of urbanisation. The encounter with the big city and with the disorienting pulse of metropolitan life was an overwhelming experience. The café fulfilled a decisive role in this encounter even in East European cities like Odessa, Warsaw and Kiev, but it was absolutely crucial in Central European cities like Lemberg, Berlin and Vienna.²⁴

The example of Lemberg, the frontier city which Agnon described so vividly, and Joseph Roth aptly called ‘a city of uncertain boundaries,’ is intriguing.²⁵ Until the First World War the city was Polish-Jewish-Ukrainian in terms of its ethnic make-up but considered ‘Central-European’ according to the mental cartography of its citizens.²⁶ Many young Hebrew and Yiddish intellectuals were attracted to the city. Some were native-born Galicians who came to study in the University of Lemberg; others immigrated to the city from the Russian Empire during the crisis years of 1904–1907 because it was the closest Austrian city to the Russian border.

There was a certain tension between ‘Russian’ and ‘Galician’ Jewish immigrants in Lemberg but it proved to be a creative one, and soon the city boasted an active Jewish press and publishing in German, Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew. As Agnon reminds us, the natural place for students, writers, intellectuals and political activists who came from very different backgrounds to Lemberg was the local coffeehouse. In memoirs and literary texts, Lemberg emerges as the place in which Jewish writers and intellectuals thrived in cafés, and various literary coteries were created in these establishments. Zvi Scharfstein describes the Lemberg of these years as ‘the little Paris’ of Galicia, with numerous cafés lining its streets.²⁷ Melekh Ravitch, a young Yiddish modernist poet from Galicia, wrote about Café Abatzya, an institution not far from the local Yiddish theatre, as the place where the entire Yiddish and Hebrew artistic and literary community was to be found: ‘Like pigeons, who can only live in company, and who immediately begin pecking at one another as soon as they come across a grain of food – this is the conduct of the *Stammgäste* in Café Abatzya: the artists, the actors, and also we, the writers.’²⁸ The journalist and writer Moshe

Kleinman, who came to Lemberg from Russia, writes that when he was looking for the editor of *Tagenblat* (the local Yiddish paper) he was sent to Café Abatzya, ‘where the writers and journalists would gather in a specific time.’²⁹

Gershon Shofman, another Russian immigrant who was fleeing the Russian army during the war between Russia and Japan, testifies that the café culture in Lemberg was so robust that Jewish exiles and refugees from Russia also had their own cafés, restaurants and meeting places. In a short essay/feuilleton, Shofman evoked the cafés and restaurants of Lemberg with affection, but with the awareness of a certain critical distance and sense of alienation of the Russian émigrés from the local ‘Austrian’ bohemian life. He writes about Bacchus, a simple café and restaurant on Bozhnitsa Lane:

Were it not for ‘Bacchus,’ the owner of the restaurant in Bozhnitsa Lane, who liked to joke and laugh, the Russian immigrants, who were traumatized by the riots of 1905, would not have been able to go on living at all ... Famished, the young refugee eats for now, not knowing how things will work out in the end. To his delight, he suddenly feels someone tickling him with a piece of straw behind his ear, and he knows that it’s Bacchus who’s doing it.³⁰

During the years in which he lived and worked in Lemberg, Shofman became one of the leaders of Hebrew modernism, publishing a number of short-lived but important journals and collections. He also became a *Stammgast* and developed a strong liking for cafés. He evoked the space of the café in a number of stories and essays. It was here that he began to experiment with what scholars of Austrian and German modernism call *Kurzprosa* or *Kleinkunst*, the miniature ‘literary snapshots’ (‘sketches’ as they are called in Hebrew and Yiddish) that capture different urban spaces, chief of them being the urban café.³¹

The story *Me-idach gisa* (On the Other Side, 1909) is a good example of the way in which Shofman gives a fictional representation to the cityscape and its cafés, and it contains some distinctively modernist accounts of the encounter of Russian Jewish immigrants with Lemberg.³² The story focuses on a group of young Jewish socialist revolutionaries, most of them Russians and a few local Galicians. The group’s story is interspersed with another plot focusing on the harsh life of Brunia, a young Jewish immigrant girl who falls in love with the non-Jewish Romanenko, a revolutionary messenger from Russia. The immigrants find some solace in ‘the place to which their feet lead them.’ This is Café Vladivostok, the ‘Russian café’:

As if they had a will of their own, their legs take them to Vladivostok, the restaurant with the Russian sign outside – the only stronghold of the émigrés. Here the air is entirely theirs. It consists of two rooms at the end of the courtyard, windowless, where the gas is lit even during the day, so that it seems as if the night never ends here. The ground is damp and full of refuse and cigar butts. The conversation, which

is always both stupefying and soporific, like the rough faces with unshorn hair, can only be made out through a haze of blue smoke.³³

The café is the place where there is a commune, where the female protagonist Brunia arrives, and where acrobats, revolutionary messengers from Russia and various characters appear. In the stories Shofman wrote in Lemberg these kinds of places and institutions become the spaces that fuse the private and public sphere, the real and the imaginary space, the individual artist and the mass, the masculine spectator and the feminine object of desire. In another story from the same year, *Glida* (Ice Cream, 1909), we find the following description:

Exhausted from the heat, we sat, I and my compatriot, my young and pleasant acquaintance Sokolin, in one of the cafés that the great cities of Galicia are full of. We sat at a smooth, cold, round marble-topped table near a window, through which we could see the young women of this land walking by. Tanned, dark, in shiny, shimmering white dresses, they looked so beautiful to us through the clear glass, and their eyes, gray in the heat of the day, looked like glowing, rosy embers with rivers of fire flashing under them.³⁴

Here, the café is the paradigmatic urban space, a place from which one can watch the urban spectacle of the crowd passing by, and it is primarily the women that catch the narrator's and the protagonist's attention. Shofman's narrator makes the liminal space of the café (both inside and outside, or 'through the looking glass') an occasion for impressionistic description of subjective reality. Thus he emphasises the contrasts between the heat and the coolness of the marble table, and between the women's white dresses and their gray, ember eyes.

Stammgäste and a 'Strangers' in the Viennese Café

In 1912, Shofman moved from Lemberg to Vienna. He arrived at the Nordbahnhof, the train station that brought immigrants from Eastern Europe to the capital of the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy, and settled in Vienna's second district, Leopoldstadt. This area, also known as *Mazzesinsel* (Matzo Island), had the highest proportion of Jews in Vienna, particularly newcomers from Eastern Europe.³⁵ With its many synagogues, Jewish shops, markets, and crowded apartment buildings, the area looked and felt like an East European Jewish enclave, but the presence of many cafés let no one forget that this was very much part of Vienna.

Shofman was not alone in Leopoldstadt or in Vienna. In the years before and during the First World War, an extraordinary group of Hebrew and Yiddish immigrant writers and thinkers congregated in the city. Beside Shofman, the list includes David Fogel, Avraham Ben-Yitzhak (Dr Sonne), Zvi Disendrook,

Ya'akov Horovitz, Ravitch, Melekh Chmelnicki, Meir Wiener and many others. The Viennese coffeehouse proved once again to be the place to bring these immigrant writers together and open new paths for them. They certainly spent much time in local cafés in Leopoldstadt, but they also ventured beyond. In the years before the First World War, the Arkaden Café, located opposite the Votivkirche near the University of Vienna, emerged as the chief gathering place.³⁶ The memoirs of Meir Henish, Michael Weichart, Daniel Charney and Ravich portray the Arkaden Café as the meeting place of 'students, writers, journalists, publishers, artists and bohemians from Austria and from all around the world,' but especially the place in which Jewish immigrants from Galicia felt at home.³⁷ Henish wrote that Hebrew and Yiddish newspapers were available, and the Yiddish poet Chmelnitzky even wrote a sonnet about the Votivkirche as he looks at it from that café.³⁸

The war years were challenging for the Jewish immigrant writers in Vienna. Some of them served in the Habsburg army and others found themselves 'behind enemy lines.' This was a time when the Hebrew and Yiddish centres in Eastern Europe (and the nascent centre in Palestine) were in effect defunct. Soon after the war, however, the Hebrew enclave in the city began to be very active in terms of publication. Shofman and Disendrook edited and published a short-lived but highly important journal aptly titled *Gevulot* (Borders, 1918–1920) and later *Peret* (1922–1924), which published innovative modernist works. This Hebrew activity coincided with the peak of Yiddish publishing activity in Vienna, with the journal *Kritik* and the publishing house *Kval*.³⁹ The importance of these publishing ventures transcended their small size and short life, because they appeared at a time of changing poetic modes and were edited and published by writers who absorbed and participated in Viennese modernist movements.

Vienna of this period proved to be a fertile ground for 'minor' Jewish modernism. The city fostered close collaboration between Hebrew and Yiddish writers at a time when these two literatures were gradually separating from each other.⁴⁰ Vienna also became a site of much contact between Hebrew and Yiddish writers and modernist figures working in German and other languages. Many of these encounters occurred in coffeehouses. Shofman, who met Peter Altenberg in Café Central during the war, came to know him quite well. He translated Altenberg's short stories into Hebrew, and this had a strong impact on Shofman's modernist style, which became more inclined to the Viennese *Kleinkunst*.⁴¹ Elias Canetti, who met Ben-Yitzhak in the Café Museum, admired the modernist Hebrew poet. In his well-known memoir, *Das Augenspiel* (The Play of the Eyes, 1985) he writes:

At the Café Museum, where I went every day after moving back to town, there was a man whom I noticed because he was always sitting alone and never spoke to anyone. That in itself was not so unusual, lots of people went to cafés to be alone among many ... Only superficially did I bury myself in the paper. I peeked out constantly in the

direction of the door. He always came, a tall figure, thin, with a rigid, awkward way of walking, almost arrogant, as if he did not want to meet anyone, and so keep these garrulous creatures at a distance.⁴²

Canetti recorded the connections between Ben-Yitzhak and figures like Musil, Hofmannsthal, Beer-Hofmann, Broch and Joyce.⁴³ The Hebrew and Yiddish writers Fogel and Wiener were acquainted with Viennese modernists of the post-war period, and these connections are clearly demonstrated in their poetry and prose fiction.

All this rich literary and cultural activity occurred both in spite of and because of the marginality of Hebrew and Yiddish in Vienna, a marginality that was not only linguistic but also spatial. Hebrew and Yiddish writers lived and worked on the visible and invisible borderlines between Vienna's cultural centres of modernism, and the geographically bounded sections of the city. Even in the 1920s and early 1930s, when Wiener, Fogel, Ben-Yitzhak and other Hebrew and Yiddish writers spent much time with intellectual friends who met regularly in central locations like the Café Herrenhof and the Café Museum, Leopoldstadt was still the tentative and provisional 'home' for them, and the base from which the writers and their fictional protagonists go to explore the cityscape, and the place to which they return.

The flowering of the enclave of Hebrew and Yiddish modernism in Vienna gave us many literary representations of the cityscape and its cafés. One of the most accomplished Viennese stories by Shofman, *Ba-matzor u'va-matzok* (In Siege and Distress, 1922),⁴⁴ is set in Vienna during and after the war, and follows the fate of a group of East European Jewish writers, artists and intellectuals.⁴⁵ This story builds on the familiar theme of the young Jewish male protagonist searching for cultural and intellectual self-fulfilment in the big city, as well as his disillusionment in the face of a disappointing reality. These two elements – aspiration and failure, hope and despair – are present from the group's very first encounter with the urban life of Vienna.

In *Ba-matzor u'va-matzok*, the Viennese coffeehouse, in which so much literary and cultural activity has occurred, and which serves so often as metonymy or metaphor for the city itself, is the space where these Jewish young men look for some sense of social belonging. It is of course also the place where they try to assimilate into the local and international bohemian and intellectual life. But the advent of the First World War shakes the relatively calm capital of the empire, and suddenly reveals the same café as a space that can also be dangerous, especially for émigrés and exiles from Eastern Europe:

Never had there been as much smoke in the café as in these new, onerous days. People sucked on their cigarettes with all their might as if they intended to hide in their own smoke. But the police agents with the bristle moustaches peered through the windows with their sharp, crushing eyes, cutting through the clouds.⁴⁶

Here, the public sphere of the café, which served as a replacement of sorts for home, community and the old ‘house of study,’ reveals another, unfamiliar face. The same café, with its elusive promise of social engagement and sense of belonging, actually comes to prevent real human connection and communication. It is filled with thick cigarette smoke which masks people’s faces. At the same time as it brings people together it also alienates them from one another. The café does not provide protection against the policemen searching for army defectors. Moreover, the young protagonists in the story quickly realise that the urban space of Vienna is comprised of many locations in which the public and private overlap, and that the desired ‘outside’ can actually become a series of closed and restricting spaces (the café can be similar to army prison, soup kitchen and sanatorium). On the other hand, the protagonists learn that the ‘inside,’ the closed space in which they try to create a protective, homey environment, is itself permeated by the ‘outside’ world. Thus, two contradicting desires intersect in the city and its cafés: the desire for the outside, for the Viennese, Central European society, and the desire for an intimate protective place. This yearning is so strong in the story that the poet David Gol (who may be a fictional representation of Fogel) is indifferent to the prospects of sitting in an army prison, and the painter Mando gives himself to the police, and ends up in a sanatorium.⁴⁷

The paradox of contradicting desires cannot be resolved. At the story’s conclusion, the First World War ends and the borders are opened. ‘The English, the Italians and the Serbs,’ Shofman’s narrator writes, are mixing with the Viennese. At the same time, the end of the war brings no real change, and the sense of ‘siege and distress’ is revealed as a kind of permanent existential condition. The end of the story casts into relief many social, historical and artistic questions about the life of the Jewish émigré writer in European cities like Vienna, questions that have been heightened by the violence of the war. The collapse of the Jewish ‘old world,’ and the crisis of Jewish existence in unbearably shaky European cities, both parallel the collapse of the traditional experiences of time and space in the metropolis, and changing paradigms of how to represent time and space in modernist literature. The insane artist literally disturbs the legibility of our world; the promise of a portrait – its linguistic/artistic transparency – is denied in the story’s complex texture of ekphrasis, metonymy, metaphor, and abstraction.⁴⁸ Like Mando the insane painter, the modernist urban (Jewish) writer can offer only a fleeting portrait, a fragmentary sketch of urban Jewish characters and of the city itself.

In literary works written by Hebrew and Yiddish writers during the inter-war period in Vienna – a period in which Jewish modernism entered a new expressionist stage – cafés also play a central and important role. Perhaps the most fascinating are Wiener’s unpublished Yiddish novel *Der Groyser Roman* (The Big Novel),⁴⁹ and Fogel’s Hebrew novel *Chaye Nisu'im* (Married Life, 1929–1930).⁵⁰ *Married Life* was not received very well by the Hebrew readers of

the time, but is recognised today as a masterpiece, the urban Hebrew modernist novel par excellence. Its protagonist, Rudolf Gurdweill, is the ultimate Jewish *flâneur*, a man who wanders around the streets and boulevards of Vienna.

Gurdweill and his friends spend much time in the Café Herrenhof during the period in which it was the favourite place of figures like Hermann Broch, Robert Musil, Alfred Polgar and Joseph Roth.⁵¹ In Fogel's novel, however, Café Herrenhof is not described necessarily as a 'literary café.' Rather, it clearly becomes a metonymy of the city of Vienna itself: a substitute for a 'real' home, a space that fuses the public and the private, the inside and the outside, the culture of the bourgeoisie and the bohemian. The café brings the city inside, but also shields its regulars from the 'crowd' and the 'masses.' On one of the numerous occasions when Gurdweill and his friends meet at the Café Herrenhof, a female protagonist, Lotte Budenheim, asks the group: 'How long can you people go on sitting in cafés? Don't you ever get tired of it?' to which one of Gurdweill's friends, Ulrich, responds:

Sitting in cafés is a barrier against the enforced activity which makes our lives miserable ... People like us always have the mistaken feeling that they are wasting time, missing something irretrievable ... As if a man had a set amount of things to get done in a set amount of time ... The harmful influence of our materialistic generation, a generation of physical labour and advanced technology ... But the minute you enter a café, you're in a holiday – the yoke is lifted from your shoulders, snapped in half.⁵²

Ulrich's philosophy of the café, one which brings to mind Polgar's famous *Theorie des Café Central* (Theory of Café Central, 1926) and Roth's Arnold Zipper, is half ironic and half serious. It emphasised the contradictory features of the café: on the one hand, a place of leisure and sociability, a literary market and information source exempt from the pressure to consume; and on the other, a place of consumption and of non-commitment, time-killing, gossip, a refuge for drop-outs and failures who can only find their place in the café.⁵³ Thus, Fogel's narrator is far from idealising the café, and if camaraderie is presented as a key element of Viennese *Kaffeehäuser* like the Café Herrenhof, the other side of the coin is the acrimony that is borne of the too-close, at times alienating, experience of the social space of the café. This ambivalent attitude towards the café captures much of the urban experience in *Married Life*.

In spite of the centrality of the Café Herrenhof in Fogel's novel, it must be noted that much narrative activity takes place in small and simple local cafés in Leopoldstadt and in Josefstadt. Here is how the narrator describes one of these small cafés:

It was nine at night. One by one the Stammgäste of the little café near the university assembled: students and minor officials who sat in the same chairs night after night,

and ordered their ‘Turkish’ coffee as if they were finishing off their evening meal at home. These customers were as much a part of the café and its particular atmosphere as the ragged, threadbare velvet sofas around the walls and the dark, dirty, marble tables. It was rare for a ‘stranger’ to appear here.⁵⁴

In this café, Gurdweill meets Thea Von-Tackow for the first time. Of course, it is exactly the fact that she is a ‘stranger’ who rarely appears in the café that first catches Gurdweill’s attention and constitutes his uncontrollable desire for the ‘other,’ who is in this case the gentile woman Gurdweill is unable to ‘take his eyes off.’ This charged encounter between Gurdweill and Thea sets in motion the entire sadomasochist plot of the novel. But much of the irony and the power of this scene, and the novel in general, stems from this position of Gurdweill as an immigrant East European Jew who lives in Leopoldstadt. Gurdweill is simultaneously an insider and an outsider, a *Stammgast* and a ‘stranger’ in the café and in Vienna. The same is true of Fogel and other Hebrew and Yiddish modernist writers who lived in Vienna during the most productive period of their lives.

Berlin: Between the Scheunenviertel and the Romanisches Café

Vienna, it should be noted, was not the only large Central European city to which Hebrew and Yiddish modernist writers migrated. In more or less the same period, Hebrew and Yiddish modernist literature was created in Berlin, and the urban cafés of the city played an equally important role in modernist activity. This can be attested in *Michtavim mi-nesi’a meduma* (Letters from an Imaginary Journey, 1937), the epistolary novel of the Hebrew poet and prose writer Leah Goldberg. Ruth, the thinly disguised autobiographical narrator of the novel, writes about wandering around various Berlin cafés:

Because those who sit now at the Romanisches Café are Jews looking for sensational news in foreign press, and because Café Lunte doesn’t exist anymore, and because the disciples of Jesus who worshipped Else Lasker-Schüler left the temple of Café des Westens a long time ago and found their Mt. of Olives in Le Dome and La Coupole cafés in Paris ... and because Mentzel who used to sit in café Josty had died before I was even born ... because of this and other reasons, I’m sitting in ‘Quick,’ a small café which our Jewish friends still frequent.⁵⁵

Goldberg is clearly aware of the fact that the early 1930s, the time when she arrived in the city as a student and a young writer, was a time of ‘twilight’ in Berlin and that the ‘golden age’ of its cafés has passed: ‘They say that the lions of the art and literature used to sit in the Romanisches café ... for anyone interested in Jewish literature there was a rare opportunity to encounter there some of their wild manes.’⁵⁶

The period depicted by Goldberg, with its cafés and the ‘lions’ of art and Jewish literature, is the early decades of the twentieth century. Several cafés emerged during this period as important places for the creation and development of modernism in Berlin.⁵⁷ At Café Monopol near Freidrichstrasse in Berlin Mitte (not far from the Scheunenviertel) the Jung Wien writer Hermann Bahr and anarchist writers such as Gustav Landauer and Erich Mühsam mingled with young theatre artists, including Max Reinhardt and his circle. Several other Berlin cafés attracted writers who were critical to the formation and development of expressionist art and literature. Public recitals and cabarets of *Der Neue Club* appeared at Café Austria, Café Sezession and Café Josty, and the editorial activity of expressionist journals took place around their tables.

As is evident from Goldeberg’s novel and from numerous accounts of café culture in Berlin, the most important institution in this period was Café des Westens on the Kurfürstendamm. By 1910 it had established itself not only as the chief gathering place for all of the expressionist circles centred in Berlin, but also as a magnetic pole attracting modernist writers and artists from all over Europe. It was famous for the extravagant dressing and eccentric behaviour of its habitués, such as the Jewish German poet Else Lasker-Schüler (who evoked it in her writings) as well as for its artistic and literary activity. Poets, painters, critics, philosophers, actors and directors packed the café in the evening. Periodicals such as *Der Sturm* and *Die Aktion* were founded and planned in the café, making it an indispensable ingredient of daily literary life for German modernists in Berlin before the end of the First World War.⁵⁸

After the First World War and throughout the Weimar period, the huge and rather shabby Romanisches Café became the new headquarters for the expressionists, as well as the so-called *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, and in fact of all writers, artists and many other intellectuals and bohemians. The Romanisches Café performed many of the roles of the Café des Westens in the 1910s, even inheriting the dubious name ‘Café Megalomania.’ Among many well-known figures who frequented the café were Lasker-Schüler, Franz Werfel, Kurt Tucholsky, Stefan Zweig, Alfred Döblin, Ludwig Meydner, Gottfried Benn, Joseph Roth, Berthold Brecht and Walter Benjamin, and many of them wrote in and about the café. They described it as a second home for writers during the daytime; a place where heated debates on various subjects lasted long into the night and where collective activities, such as the founding and editing of periodicals, were pursued.⁵⁹ What can be called the ‘thirdspace’ of the Romanisches Café reflected Weimar culture in many ways, including the fact that it was far from being the exclusive location of a small group of German expressionists, but rather a place in which ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders,’ locals and strangers, bohemians and bourgeoisie, politics and art, avant-garde and mass culture (both ‘high’ and ‘low’) coexisted in an elusive mixture.⁶⁰

Although these well-known Berlin cafés have been described and their role in the various stages of Berlin modernism has been clearly demonstrated, these accounts rarely recognise the presence of Hebrew and Yiddish writers, intellectuals and artists who immigrated to Berlin from Eastern Europe. Like in Vienna, many of the East European Jewish writers and intellectuals settled in recognisably Jewish neighbourhoods like the Scheunenviertel, but they were attracted to places like the Café Monopol, the Café des Westens and the Romanisches Café.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Hebraists of Berlin had a *Stammtisch* at the Café Monopol. Aharon Hermoni and Itamar Ben-Avi (Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's son who came to Berlin from Palestine as a student) wrote in their memoirs that around 1908 even the waiter, Eduard, knew some Hebrew in order to accommodate the 'Hebrew' or 'Eretz-Israeli' table. This 'Hebrew Table' included Shay Ish Hurwitz, Reuven Breinin, Horodetzky, Itamar Ben-Avi, Aharon Hermoni and many other Zionist activists and Hebrew writers.⁶¹ Y.D. Berkovitz wrote that plans for Hebrew publishing ventures were laid out on the black marble tops of this plush café, with its oriental-like appearance in the heart of Berlin.⁶² Journals like *Ha-olam* and *He-atid* were edited in the café. The Hebraists in the Café Monopol were far from isolated. Next to their Hebrew table were many 'German tables' with which they interacted. There was also a 'Yiddish table' that enjoyed visits by luminaries such as Sholem Asch, whose play *El nekomes* (God of Revenge) was performed by Reinhardt's theatre, and Sholem Aleichem, who came to Berlin with a dream to have his plays translated into German and produced by Reinhardt's theatre as well.⁶³ There is less evidence of the presence of Hebrew and Yiddish writers in the famous Café des Westens during the 1910s, but it is known that Berdichevsky, Shay Ish Hurwitz and other Hebrew, Yiddish and German writers used to meet every Thursday evening first in the Café Monopol and then in the Café des Westens.⁶⁴

However, the rather modest activity prior to the First World War was just a prelude to an expanded presence of Hebrew and Yiddish émigré writers in Berlin throughout the Weimar period, especially the first half of the 1920s when Berlin became, de facto, the most important enclave of Jewish modernism in Europe. Almost everybody who joined the Hebrew and Yiddish 'colony' in Weimar Berlin attested to the allure of the Romanisches Café. Uri Zvi Greenberg, Ya'acov Shteinberg, Yeshurun Keshet, Avrom Nochem Stencl, Dovid Bergelson, Nahum Goldman, Henrik Berlewi and numerous others mention the café. In fact, some accounts create the erroneous impression that the Romanisches Café was a kind of a pan-Jewish urban space. Thus, Nahum Goldman writes that 'each [Jewish] group had its own table; there were the "Yiddishist," "Zionists," "Bundists" and so on, all arguing among themselves from table to table.'⁶⁵ The Yiddish author Avrom Noach Stencl describes

the scene at the Romanische Café from the angle of East-European Jewish intellectuals:

From those fleeing the pogroms in the Ukrainian shtetls, from the famine in the Russian cities, and from the Revolution, a kind of Jewish colony formed itself in the west of Berlin, and the Romanische Cafe was its parliament. It was buzzing with famous Jewish intellectuals and activists, well-known Jewish lawyers from Moscow and Petersburg, Yiddish writers from Kiev and Odessa, with flying party-leaders from the extreme left to the extreme right wing – it buzzed like a beehive.⁶⁶

In his characteristically fragmentary expressionist style, with expansive grammar and outrageous images, Greenberg writes in his essay on Lasker-Schüler that they ‘drank together dark coffee in the Romanisches Café, and until midnight this bitter drink was dripping in our hearts, and sipping through even deeper to the “inner existence,” around the heart and beyond it like dark blood.’⁶⁷

The poet and critic Yeshurun Keshet described his encounters with the Hebrew and Yiddish writer Ya’acov Shteinberg who spent most of days in the Romanisches Café. In Keshet’s memoir the café emerges both as a kind of ‘Jewish urban space’ but also as a place whose regulars are a ‘cultural elite full of decadence, smoke and the syncopated rhythm of the metropolis.’⁶⁸ Shteinberg, who was attracted to this mixture of urban decadence and syncopated rhythms, and to the modernist literary activity in which he participated with a critical distance, devoted an entire cycle of sonnets to the Romanisches Café – *Sonnets from the Café* (1922) – which is surely one of the great achievements of modernist Hebrew poetry.⁶⁹

While many Hebrew and Yiddish writers used to sit in the Romanisches Café and mention it in their writing, Shteinberg’s cycle employs the urban space of the café in an unprecedented way. The cycle creates a tightly knit narrative that occurs solely in the café. The speaker-poet in the cycle is a lonely character who interacts with others only by the act of gazing at the regular and casual guests as well as at the habitual and uncommon incidents that occur in the space of the café. His participation in the world is one of an outsider, a witness and spectator whose only capacity is one of observation and introspection. In the beginning of the cycle the character of the speaker appears only by intimation and in the third person, as in ‘then a man sits and watches in front of the lampshade.’⁷⁰ Towards the end of the cycle, he speaks to us directly, but only momentarily, before he disappears again, ‘hiding in a screen of smoke.’⁷¹ In the rest of the cycle the reader does not see him or hear about him at all. He exists only in the way in which he looks at the objects, events and characters that fill the café over a period of a few days and nights.

Hebrew and Yiddish writers’ descriptions of the Romanisches Café, also known in Yiddish as *Café Rakhmonishes* (The Café of Pity), testify to the tensions between their ‘bohemian’ existence and a certain sense of marginality,

both physical and spiritual, in the café and, by extension, in Weimar Berlin. A.N. Stencl, U.Z. Greenberg and Shteinberg met Lasker-Schüler and other important figures of Berlin modernism in the Romanisches Café and the encounter strongly marked their literary and intellectual development. Their experience of the café, which became a metonymy for the urban space of Berlin in this period, emphasised both their participation in modernist Berlin culture and their marginality, the energy of the metropolis as well as its decadence, corruption, and sense of deep despair. East European Jewish Berlin was essentially no more than an ephemeral environment. Like the Romanisches Café, it was a kind of ‘thirdspace’ which turned into a hybrid urban culture, existing only on the margins where it intersected with majority society.

Conclusion

Hebrew and Yiddish modernist literature constitutes an important but overlooked aspect of the link between modernism, Jewishness and the urban café, especially in Central Europe. In this context, Vienna was certainly important but far from unique. The Viennese coffeehouse served perhaps as a paradigm, but it was also, like the East European Jewish migrants and like modernism, a transnational phenomenon that moved from one city to another. Moreover, what Viennese acculturated Jews like Torberg identified as an essential element of Jewishness of the café that belongs to the ‘Jewish ghetto’ was in fact not frozen in memory as a relic of a world that has passed, but alive and well in Jewish migrants who experienced the ‘modern Jewish revolution.’

For the Hebrew and Yiddish modernist writers in Vienna, Berlin and Lemberg (and this was also true, but in a different way, in places like Odessa, Warsaw, New York City and Tel Aviv), cafés were often a substitute for a home and a community. During the first three decades of the twentieth century Hebrew and Yiddish modernist groups and movements were created in cafés, with journals, periodicals and other publishing activities taking place there. Cafés were often the spaces where Hebrew and Yiddish writers could interact with each other and with others working in German (or Polish and Russian). Last but not least, the café was the space where much of their literature was created, and was the very object of modernist literary representations of urban space. Some of the most distinctive representations of the cityscape focus on the café as a site of negotiation between inside and outside, public and private, real and imaginary, men and women, Jews and Gentiles, ‘the local’ and the immigrant.

Notes

1. Jürgen Nautz and Richard Vahrenkamp (eds), *Die Wiener Jahrhundertwende Einflüsse, Umwelt, Wirkungen*, Vienna 1993.
2. Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, New York 1981, 7.
3. Peter Hall, *Cities in Civilization: Culture, Innovation, and Urban Order*, London 1998, 5.
4. Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938: A Cultural History*, Cambridge 1989, 22. See also Beller's contribution to this volume.
5. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (eds), *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890–1930*, London and New York 1991, 96.
6. Apart from studies of the role of these cafés in the context of 'national' modernism, and a number of 'coffee-table books,' the only comparative study of the 'literary cafés' that I am aware of is Michael Rössner (ed), *Literarische Kaffehäuser*, Vienna 1999. An important departure from this tendency is Edward Timms' mapping of several circles of Viennese modernism through various cafés in the city. See Edward Timms, *Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist*, New Haven 1986. Another recent study that makes an insightful use of cafés and teashops in English (but also in German and Czech) modernism is Scott McCracken, *Masculinities, Modernist Fiction and Urban Public Sphere*, Manchester 2007.
7. Many of these accounts can be found in the anthology, Kurt-Jürgen Heering, *Das Wiener Kaffeehaus: mit Zahlreichen Abbildungen und Hinweisen auf Wiener Kaffeehäuser*, Frankfurt 1991.
8. Beller, *Vienna and the Jews*, 40–41; See also Steven Beller, 'The Jew Belongs in the Coffeehouse': Jews, Central Europe and Modernity' in this volume.
9. Harold B. Segal, *The Vienna Coffeehouse Wits 1890–1938*, West Lafayette 1993, 12.
10. Robert Liberles, 'Les Juifs, le Café et le Négoce du Café au XVIIIe Siècle', *Les Cahiers du Judaïsme*, 26, 2009, 4–14.
11. Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee*, New Haven and London 2005, 25.
12. See Sarah Wobick, 'Interdits de Café: L'influence de la Révolution de Juillet sur la Condition des Juifs de Hambourg', and Scott Ury, 'Juste un café? Le rôle des cafés juifs à Varsovie au tournant du XXe siècle', *Les Cahiers du Judaïsme*, 26, 2009, 14–23 and 26–30.
13. On the 'modern Jewish revolution,' see Benjamin Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution*, Berkeley 1991.
14. Friedrich Torberg, *Die Tante Jolesch oder Der Untergang des Abendlandes in Anekdoten*, Munich 1975, 136.
15. On these aspects of the Talmudic culture and the masculine ideal of the 'house of study,' see Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Berkeley 1997.
16. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, (1962) trans. Thomas Burger et al. Cambridge 1989.
17. Max Nordau, 'Muskeljudentum', *Judische Turnzeitung*, June 1900, 10–11. For further comment on Nordau's characterisation of the café as degenerate, see Charlotte Ashby's contribution to this volume.
18. Theodor Herzl, *Altneuland*, Leipzig 1902; Theodor Herzl, *Old-New Land*, tr. Lotta Levensohn, New York 1960, 3.
19. Joseph Roth, 'Zipper und Sein Vater', in Hermann Kesten (ed.), *Werke*, Cologne 1956. While the novel does not state explicitly that Arnold Zipper and his family are Jewish, there is a clear sense that Roth depicted the largely Jewish milieu of the Viennese family and the coffeehouse. Moreover, *Zipper und Sein Vater* is a good example of the ways in which 'Roth's Jewishness is an influence on early texts not overtly concerned with religion...' Jon Hughes,

- Facing Modernity Fragmentation, Culture and Identity in Joseph Roth's Writing in the 1920s*, Leeds 2006, 8–9. See also Kati Tonkin, *Joseph Roth's March into History: From the Early Novels to Radetzky March and Die Kapuzinergruft*, New York 2008.
20. For a discussion of the 'marginality' of Hebrew and Yiddish see Chana Kronfeld, *On the Margins of Modernism: Decentering Literary Dynamics*, Berkeley 1996.
 21. We have taken the decision to use the German name for the city, in use by the administration of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary in the early 1900s. It was known as Lvov and Lwów to the large Russian and Polish populations that inhabited the city during that period and is now called Lviv and is a city in western Ukraine. The Hebrew and Yiddish writers who are the subject of this chapter referred to the city as both Lemberg and Lvov.
 22. Shmuel Y. Agnon, *Tmol Shilshom*, Tel Aviv 1945, 13. See the English translation of the novel by Barbara Harshav, *Only Yesterday*, Princeton 2000, 9.
 23. There was also mass immigration to America and in small numbers to Palestine. However, at least until the 1920s most Hebrew and Yiddish writers immigrated to large cities in Eastern or Central Europe.
 24. See Shachar Pinsker, *Literary Passports: The Making of Modernist Hebrew Fiction in Europe*, Stanford, 2011.
 25. Joseph Roth, 'Lemberg, die Stadt', in *Werke 2: Das journalistische Werk 1924–1928*, Cologne 1990, 289.
 26. Delphine Bechtel, 'Lemberg/Lwów/Lvov/Lviv: Identities of a City of Uncertain Boundaries', *Diogenes*, 53(2), 2006, 62–71.
 27. Quoted in Norman Tarnor, *The Many Worlds of Gershon Shofman*, New York 1989, 23.
 28. Melekh Ravitch, *Dos mayse-bukh fun mayn lebn*, vol. 2, Buenos Aires 1962–1964, 115–116.
 29. Moshe Kleinman, 'Galitzia lifney shloshim ve-chamesh shanim', *Moznayim*, 11, 1940, 227.
 30. Gershon Shofman, 'Lvov', in *Kol-Kitvei G. Shofman* vol. 3, Tel Aviv 1948, 321–322.
 31. On modernist *Kleinkunst*, see Andreas Huyssen, 'Modernist Miniatures: Literary Snapshots of Urban Spaces', *PMLA*, 122(1), 2007, 27–43.
 32. Gershon Shofman, *Me-idach gisa*, Lvov 1909, 3–14. Reprinted in *Kol Kitvei*, vol. 1, 162–173.
 33. *Ibid.*, 160–161.
 34. Gershon Shofman, *Glida* (1909). Reprinted in *Kol Kitvei*, vol. 1, 195.
 35. See Ruth Beckermann and Teifer Hermann, *Die Mazzesinsel Juden in der Wiener Leopoldstadt 1918–1938*, Vienna 1984.
 36. The Arkaden Café is not as well known today as Café Griensteidl or Café Central, but it was patronised by Wittgenstein and members of the philosophical Vienna Circle, as well as many students and musicians. See Allan Janik and Hans Veigl, *Wittgenstein in Vienna: A Biographical Excursion Through the City and Its History*, Vienna 1998, 188–189.
 37. Ravitch, *Dos mayse-bukh fun mayn lebn*, 209–211; Daniel Charney, *Di Velt iz Kaylekhdik*, Tel Aviv 1963, 160–165; Michael Weichart, *Zikbraynes*, vol.1, Tel Aviv 1960, 229–248.
 38. Meir Henish, *Mi-bayit u mi-chuts: pirke zikhronot*, Tel Aviv 1961, 145–147; Melekh Chmelnitzky, *Ruh un Imru*, New York 1948, 31.
 39. Ravitch, *Dos mayse-bukh fun mayn lebn*, 363–369.
 40. These ideological differences became strong after the 1908 Yiddish Language Conference, convened in Czernowitz. See Emanuel S. Goldsmith, *Modern Yiddish Culture: The Story of the Yiddish Language Movement*, New York 2000.
 41. Peter Altenberg, *Ktavim nivcharim*, trans. Gershon Shofman, New York 1921.
 42. Elias Canetti, *The Play of the Eye*, New York 1999, 112.
 43. *Ibid.*, 132–162; Hannan Hever, 'Acharit Davar', in Avraham Ben-Yitzhak, *Kol-hashirim*, Tel Aviv 1992, 107.
 44. Shofman, 'Ba-matzor u'va-matzok', *Ha-tekufa*, vol. 16, 1922, 101–109. Reprinted in *Kol-Kitvei*, vol. 2, 125–137.

45. According to Nurit Govrin, the story is a kind of *roman à clef* and all the characters are based directly on the Hebrew colony – the group of Hebrew writers and artists in Vienna. Nurit Govrin, *Me-ofek el ofek*, vol. 2, Tel Aviv, 1983, 345–349.
46. Shofman, *Kol-Kitvei*, vol. 1, 101.
47. *Ibid.*, 125–126.
48. In this sense, what Shofman attempts in his short stories is the same project of modernist urban writing seen in Austrian writers such as Altenberg, Rilke, Hofmannsthal and Musil. See Huyssen, ‘Modernist Miniatures’, 30–32.
49. On Wiener’s novel see Mikhail Krutikov, ‘Yiddish Author as Cultural Mediator: Meir Wiener’s Unpublished Novel’, in Joseph Sherman and Ritchie Robertson, *The Yiddish Presence in European Literature: Inspiration and Interaction*, Oxford 2005, 73–86.
50. David Fogel, *Chaye Nisu'im*, Tel Aviv 1929–1930; David Fogel, *Married Life*, trans. Dalya Bilu, New York 1989.
51. Segal, *The Vienna Coffeehouse Wits*, 27.
52. Fogel, *Married Life*, 181–182.
53. See the fine analysis of Gilbert Carr, ‘Time and Space in the Café Griensteidl and the Café Central’, in this volume.
54. Fogel, *Married Life*, 21.
55. Leah Goldberg, *Michtavim me-nesi'a meduma*, Tel Aviv 1982, 15–16.
56. *Ibid.*, 16.
57. For an overview of Berlin cafés and their role in modernist literature and culture, see Roy F. Allen, *Literary Life in German Expressionism and the Berlin Circles*, Ann Arbor 1983; Alfred Rath, ‘Berliner Caféhäuser (1890–1933)’, in Rössner (ed.), *Literarische Kaffehäuser*, 108–125.
58. Allen, *Literary Life in German Expressionism*, 67–73; Sigrid Bauschinger, ‘The Berlin Moderns: Else Lasker-Schüler and Café Culture’, in Emily Bilski (ed.), *Berlin Metropolis: Jews and the New Culture, 1890–1918*, Berkeley 1999, 58–101.
59. See Joseph Roth, *What I Saw*, 136–138; Walter Benjamin, *Berliner Chronik*, Frankfurt am Main 1972; Walter Benjamin, ‘A Berlin Chronicle’, in Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith (eds), *Selected Writings Volume II*, Cambridge 1999, 595–637.
60. On the concept of the ‘thirdspace’, see Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, Oxford 1996. For an analysis of the European urban café as thirdspace, see Shachar Pinsker, ‘The Urban European Café and the Geography of Hebrew and Yiddish Modernism’, in Mark Wollaeger (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, Oxford, 2012, 443–.
61. Itamar Ben-Avi, *Im shachar atzma'utenu*, Tel Aviv 1961, 146–156; Aharon Hermoni, *Be-ikvot ha-bilu'im*, Jerusalem 1951, 145–158.
62. Kitvei Y.D. Berkovitz, *Ha-rishonim ki-vnei adam*, Tel Aviv 1959, 209–210; Hermoni, *Be-ikvot Ha-bilu'im*, 151.
63. Berkovitz, *Ha-rishonim*, 210; Stanley Nash, *In Search of Hebraism: Shai Hurwitz and His Polemics in the Hebrew Press*, Leiden 1980, 172.
64. Immanuel Ben-Gurion, *Reshut ha-yachid*, Tel Aviv 1980, 64–72. See also Berdichevsky’s German diary of these years, published in *Ginzey Micha Yosef*, 7, 1997, 90–113.
65. Nahum Goldmann, *The Jewish Paradox*, New York 1978, 21.
66. Avrom Nokhem Stencl, *Loshn un lebn*, 10–11, 1968, 25.
67. Uri Z. Greenberg, ‘Dvorah be-shivya’, in Uri Z. Greenberg, *Kol-Ktavav*, vol. 15, Jerusalem 2004, 127.
68. Yeshurun Keshet, *Maskiyot*, Tel Aviv 1953, 138.
69. Ya'acov Shteinberg, *Kol Kitvei Y'acov Shteinberg*, Tel Aviv 1957, 67–68.
70. *Ibid.*, 67.
71. *Ibid.*, 68.