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Author: Valk, Francina Cornelia

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3 ANTI-SEMITISM IN CULTURAL SPACES OF FRANZ KAFKA AND DAVID VOGEL

3.1 Introduction

The object of this study is, as shown by the Wassermann quote in the first chapter, to read the ambivalent logics of identity formation through the lens of Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection in the works of the Jewish writers under consideration in this study: Kafka's novella "The Metamorphosis" ("Die Verwandlung", 1912), and David Vogel's Hebrew novel *Married Life (החיי נישואים)*, 1929).

Keeping in mind Julia Kristeva's dictum that "the visibility of abjection (as a universal psychodynamics of identity-formation) takes different forms, in different cultures, and for different peoples", in this chapter I will draw a historical sketch of the specific anti-Semitic historical climate where the universal psychodynamics of abjection assumed artistic visibility in the works of Kafka and Vogel as writers and as Jews.

Of course, the modest scope of this single chapter only allows a restricted and thus incomplete view of what was in reality a complex social context producing ambivalent manifestations of hostility to Jews, sometimes disguised as love. Yet, being familiar with that specific historical climate helps to make Kafka's and Vogel's artistic dramatizations of abjection as a universal psychodynamics visible in their texts.

3.2 Perspectives of Anti-Semitism in Kafka's and Vogel's Cultures

As early as 1896, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), the father of Zionism, referred to the complexity of the concept of anti-Semitism:

I believe that I understand antisemitism, which is in reality a highly complex movement. I consider it from a Jewish standpoint, yet without fear or hatred. I believe that I can see what elements are in it, of vulgar sport, of common trade, of jealousy, of inherited prejudice, of religious intolerance, and of legitimate self-defense.³⁴

David Berger (1986), ninety years after Herzl, formulates it as follows:

We shall never fully understand antisemitism as it is: deep-rooted, complex, endlessly persistent, constantly changing yet remaining the same, it is a

Theodor Herzl. "A Solution of the Jewish Question" (1896). The Jewish Chronicle 17 January 1896. The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History. Eds. Paul Mendes Flohr and Yehuda Reinharz. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. 534.

phenomenon that stands at the intersection of history, sociology, economics, political science, religion, and psychology.³⁵

It is the very complexity of the concept of anti-Semitism that has informed a continuing stream of interpretations, each focusing on yet another of its many aspects: Walter H. Sokel (1987), for instance, proposes the term ontological anti-Semitism by which he means hostility towards Jews that concentrates on their being, rather than on their religious or economic practices or any single particular attribute. Ontological anti-Semitism does not offer conversion (to Christianity) to save the Jew since it presupposes that he is unable to change his nature. Where Christian hatred was directed against the Jewish religion, ontological anti-Semitism is directed against Jewish attempts at emancipation from Judaism.³⁶

Sander Gilman offers a shocking example of ontological anti-Semitism in his The Jew's Body (1991). Gilman's example is an 1893 short story named The Operated Jew: a fantasy of re-building into healthy sameness a supposedly unhealthy, because Jewish, body and its speech production, written by the German physician Oskar Panizza (1853-1921).³⁷ The text deals with the reconstruction of

(Today one is rightfully more sensitive, particularly in the German-language space, to anti-Semitism – after Hitler and six million Jews murderd brutally and in cold blood. It is posible to see this narrative – a kind of Pygmalion story – as anti-Semitic; yet, one should also consider at the same time that, at the time when Panizza wrote the story, fanatic Jewhatred was taboo in the intellectual circles he addressed. However, at the same time questions about the biological and racial origines of mankind were objects of heated discussions.

³⁵ David Berger, ed. History and Hate: The Dimensions of Anti-Semitism. Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society, 1986. 2.

Walter H. Sokel. "Dualistic Thinking and the Rise of Ontological Antisemitism in Nineteenth Century Germany: From Schiller's Franz Moor to Wilhelm Raabe's Moses Freudenstein". Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis. Eds. Sander L. Gilman and Steven T. Katz. New York: New York University Press, 1991. 154-72.

Oskar Panizza. Der operierte Jud. (The Operated Jew). Munich: Georg Müller Verlag, 1923. In his foreword to the 2007 e-book edition of the story, Peter M. Sporer writes: "Man ist heute zurecht, insbesondere im deutschsprachigen Raum, sensibler für Antisemitismus – nach Hitler und sechs Millionen brutal und kaltblütig ermordeten Juden. In dieser Erzählung – eine Art Pygmalion-Geschichte – kann man ein antisemitisches Machwerk sehen; doch muss man gleichzeitig bedenken, dass zu der Zeit, in der Panizza die Geschichte schrieb, fanatischer Judenhass in intellektuellen Kreisen, zu denen Panizza zählte, verpönt war, Fragen zur biologischen und rassischen Abkunft der Menschheit dort aber gleichzeitig heftig diskutiert wurden. Ähnliche Karikaturen finden sich auch im Simplicissimus. Ob man nun deshalb sagen kann, dass Panizza Antisemit war oder es als Grosteske aufzufassen ist, überlasse ich den Leser. Ich neige eindeutig zur Groteske, was vielleicht auch daran liegen mag, dass meine Wiege nicht in Deutschland stand und ich die Erzählung vielleicht unbefangener lesen kann, oder weil ich Panizza als Autor allgemein schätze, sei es hier in diesem Stück oder beispielsweise auch im Das Liebeskonzil bei der bewusst übersteigerten Kritik am Katholizismus, der Dreieinigkeit und Jungfrau Maria."

Itzig Feitel Stern, a Jew, into an Aryan. The story, according to Gilman, begins with a detailed description of Stern's physiognomy:

... his Jewish antelope's eye, his nose, his eyebrows, his fleshy and overtly creased lips, his violent fatty tongue, his bowlegs, his curly, thick black locks of hair.³⁸

But, according to Gilman quoting Panizza, it is not just his body which marks Stern as a Jew:

He mee-owed, rattled, bleated, and also likes to produce sneezing sounds... His language, whether it is French or High German, is 'warped' by his Palatine Yiddish.³⁹

The physical part of the operation is successful: even Stern's Palatine Yiddish is retrained into a pure High German.⁴⁰ However, it appears that Stern's Jewish soul, together with his circumcision ("the outward sign of the immutability of the Jew within"), has unfortunately escaped Panizza's medical zeal. In the end, all the changes brought about by Stern's operation turn out to have been useless. So the story powerfully celebrates/or satirizes (critics are not sure which is which) the anti-Semitic stereotype of the Jew as the inassimilable other, a stereotype effectively reinforced by the fact that even medical science was unable to blot out Stern's Jewishness in spite of the good Aryan doctor's scientific dedication and skills.

Any attempt to formulate a definition of anti-Semitism stumbles on the complexity of the concept and depends on the aspects of anti-Semitism one focuses on, on the historical period or cultural/geographical context and on the chosen line of argumentation. In post-Holocaust historiograp hy the victim/perpetrator axis has understandably been, and still is, a prominent discourse axis. In the same

Similar caricatures occur in *Simplissimus*. I leave it to the reader's discretion of the reader whether, on that ground, one could call Panizza an anti-Semite, or the story should be seen as a specimen of the grotesque. I myself definitely tend to the grotesque, which may be due to the fact that my cradle was not in Germany, which is perhaps the reason why I can read the story with a more open mind, or because I appreciate Panizza as an author anyway, whether in this piece or , for instance, also in *Das Liebeskonzil* with its consciously overdone criticism of Catholicism, the Holy Trinity and the Virgin Mary.) My translation. — *Nigiyaw* e-Books 2007 (ebooks@ngiyaw-ebooks.com).

³⁸ Sander Gilman. *The Jew's Body*. London: Routledge, 1991. 203.

³⁹ Ibid. 64 and 68.

Palatine refers to phonetics here, in the sense of relating to the palate. Hence, palatine sounds are sounds that are produced with the help of the palate, as opposed to guttural and labial sounds.

line of thought Moshe Zimmermann writes in his 1986 biography of Wilhelm Marr (the father of modern anti-Semitism) how curious it is that, although the post-Shoah stream of publications on anti-Semitism seems to have been endless – some even speak of a post-Holocaust industry – the role of anti-Semitism in the motivations of the perpetrators still needs further exploration. ⁴¹

Historians, psychologists, and publicists have invested a great deal of effort in the study and evaluation of the phenomenon of antisemitism, without paying much attention to the anti-Semites. ... And so it happened that the personality of Wilhelm Marr, the man who called himself "the patriarch of Anti-Semitism" was never given any biographical coverage.⁴²

In 1997-98, a group of American Jewish scholars from different disciplines, referring to themselves as The New Jewish Cultural Critics, expressed the wish to enter the growing field of postmodern and post-colonial cultural studies, as they felt that research and critique of Jewish culture had much to offer to the cultural studies community, especially on the issues of diaspora, exile and the cultural construction of racial categories (and thus anti-Semitism).

Inspired by the work on racism, ideology and difference in post-colonial discourse theory, they realised that they could no longer study anti-Semitic cultural constructions of Jewish difference in isolation, and produced a number of publications advocating this insight in *Modernity*, *Culture and The Jew* (1998)⁴³ and *Jews and Other Differences* (1997) where they proposed:

... to move toward the recognition of Jewish culture as part of the world of differences to be valued and enhanced by research in the university, together with the differences of other groups hanging onto cultural resources similarly at risk of being consumed by a liberal universalist ethos.⁴⁴

Inspired by post-colonial theorists and literary critics (e.g. Homi K. Bhabha), The New Jewish Cultural Critics began to restore Jewishness to texts where it had previously been ignored by "politically correct" mainstream literary critique. The

⁴¹ Moshe Zimmermann. Wilhelm Marr. The Patriarch of Anti-Semitism. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

⁴² From: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2003. CD-ROM. Lemma: Streicher, Julius.

⁴³ Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus, eds. *Modernity, Culture and the Jew.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. With an introductory essay by Homi Bhabha, "Joking Aside: The Idea of a Self-Critical Community". xv-xx. (The self-critical Witz is a common element of Jews and Parsis (Bhabha is a Parsi) and Bhabha associates it with Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque.)

⁴⁴ Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin, eds. *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. xi. My emphasis.

latter critically investigated anti-Semitic stereotyping Jews as "a strategy of European culture's dependence on the concept of fixity in the ideological construction of otherness".⁴⁵

3.3 Zygmunt Bauman: Back to History

Zygmunt Bauman is both sympathetic to and critical of the work of the New Jewish Cultural Critics and challenges their view of the Jew as part of a more generalised, a-historical category of difference. He believes Jews to be sui generis, or unlike others because of their historical relation to Christendom. Bauman also criticises the perpetrator/victim line of discourse, which essentializes Jews as eternal and thus timeless victims. This takes the history of anti-Semitism out of the social/political and historical conditions that gave rise to it in the first place.

Instead, Bauman aims to historicise anti-Semitism: not by exploring it against the background of the European history of modernity as is the case in mainstream historiography, but by analysing it as an integral aspect of the close interaction between Jewish and European history as separate but interdependent histories.

In his article "Allosemitism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern" (1998), Zygmunt Bauman proposes a new term for Anti-Semitism: *allosemitism*. He finds the

area delineated and separated by the notion of antisemitism the cutting criterion being hostility to the Jews too narrow to account fully for the phenomenon he intends to grasp; it leaves aside quite a few socio-psychological realities without which the understanding of antisemitism must remain inconclusive, if not faulty.

Instead, Bauman proposes the term *allosemitism*, borrowed from the Polish Jewish literary historian Arthur Sandauer who uses the Greek word for other, *allos*, when referring to the practice of representing the Jew as a radically different other. Bauman writes:

Allosemitism refers to the practice of setting Jews apart as people radically different from all the others, needing separate concepts to describe and comprehend them and special treatment in all or most social intercourse since the concepts and treatments usually deployed when facing or dealing with other people or peoples simply would not do.

"Allosemitism", writes Bauman, "... is, perhaps, already in place before anti, or philo-semitism are conceivable, itself not unambiguously determining either

⁴⁵ Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 2003. 66.

hatred or love, but containing the seeds of both, and whichever of the two appears is intense and extreme".46

This view makes *allosemitism* a radically ambivalent attitude. There is a sort of resonance between the intellectual and emotional ambivalence of *allosemitism* and the endemic ambivalence of the other: "the stranger, and consequently the Jew, as a most radical embodiment of the latter". (143-44). Bauman's *allosemitism* draws on the Jewish philosopher Levinas' philosophical perception of "radical otherness" by which Levinas does not mean the cultural other, but any other experienced as not me.

Contrary to the postmodernist idea of the other as socially constructed, Bauman conceptualises the other as precisely what eludes social construction. Like Levinas' other, it is structurally ambivalent on account of what does not appear. It is similar to Kristeva's abject (as I will show in the next chapter), not a category but disrupts Being and Presence. It eludes construction and raises ambivalence, the emotional stance from which, according to Bauman, Western Christian culture has traditionally responded to Jews. Bauman's following anecdote illustrates allosemitism as ambivalence (mirrored in Friedrich Rühs' ambivalent response to the Jew), this time appearing in its love (philosemitism) aspect:

In 1816, when all over western Europe the visible and invisible walls of Jewish ghettos were crumbling and Jews were shaving beards and hiring gentile tailors, Friedrich Rühs noted that whatever they do, the Jews possess their own, inimitable *Volkseigentümlichkeit* of such kind that 'they should be proud of their distinctions, and even wear a special ribbon to distinguish themselves – as a sign of honor'.⁴⁷

Was, asks Bauman, Friedrich Rühs a Jew hater or a Jew lover? Was his admiration of Jewish distinction genuine, or just a clever mask? Whichever was the case, continues Bauman, Rühs obviously could not bear the thought of Jews melting inconspicuously into the crowd, as they were about to do in those early years of emancipation so that the Jew-hater and the Jew lover alike could not tell

⁴⁶ Zygmunt Bauman. "Allosemitism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern". *Modernity, Culture and the Jew.* Eds. Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. 143-56; on "the Jew" as the radically different other, see page 19, note 15, Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus. "Introduction: Some Methodological Anxieties". *Modernity, Culture and the Jew.* 1-20; Arthur Sandauer. *Collected Works*, vol. 3. Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1985. 449-52. For a popular restatement of this argument see Alain Finkielkraut. *The Imaginary Jew.* Trans. David Suchoff, Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1994. 164.

⁴⁷ Zygmunt Bauman in *The Imaginary Jew*, page 155, note 2. Quoted after Michael A. Mayer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany*, 1749-1824. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979. 80-1.

them anymore from the next person. Anti-Semitism, according to Bauman, does not spring from *heterophobia* (as in the philosophies of difference), the resentment of the different, but from *proteophobia* (a term which, again, seems a sociological equivalent of Kristeva's perception of the abject), namely that which "disturbs identity, system, order, what does not respect borders, positions, and rules". For Bauman, *proteophobia* is the apprehension and vexation of something or someone that does not fit the structure of the orderly world and does not fall easily into any of the established categories. It therefore sends out contradictory signals regarding the proper conduct and as a result blurs the borderlines that ought to be kept watertight, and undermines the reassuringly monotonous, repetitive and predictable nature of the life-world.

Thus, writes Bauman, the cultural fantasy of the Jew shows the limits of ordering intentions or hopes (the law of the father) and reveals the feebleness of ordering efforts: the unfitting becomes a fissure in the world order through which the ultimately invincible chaos (the collapse of meaning) becomes, reluctantly and depressingly, visible. In short, from this perspective the Jew becomes a signifier of ambivalence, or even ambivalence incarnate and, as such, comes to mean the impossibility of order.

Based on an article by Yehuda Slutsky in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Israel: Keter Publishing House, 1997. CD-ROM. Version 1.0.

⁴⁸ Differences between Jewish and Western Enlightenment. Bauman refers here to the Jewish emancipation, or *Haskalah* (Hebrew term for the Enlightenment movement and ideology which began within Jewish society in the 1770s). An adherent of Haskalah became known as a maskil (pl. maskilim). The movement continued to be influential and spread, with fluctuations, until the early 1880s. Haskalah had its roots in the general Enlightenment movement in Europe of the 18th century but the specific conditions and problems of Jewish society in the period, and hence the objectives to which Haskalah aspired in particular, all largely differed from those of the general Enlightenment movement. Haskalah continued along new and more radical lines the old contention upheld by the Maimonidean party in the Maimonidean Controversy that secular studies should be recognized as a legitimate part of the curriculum in the education of a Jew. For Jewish society in Central Europe, and even more so in Eastern Europe, this demand conflicted with the deeply ingrained ideal of Torah study that left no place for other subjects. As in medieval times, secular studies were also rejected as tending to alienate youth from the observance of the precepts and even from loyalty to Judaism. The Haskalah movement contributed toward assimilation in language, dress, and manners by condemning Jewish feelings of alienation in the galut (diaspora, homelessness, exiled state) and fostering loyalty toward the modern centralized state. It regarded this assimilation as a precondition to and integral element in emancipation, which Haskalah upheld as an objective. The maskilim also advocated the productivization of Jewish occupation through entering crafts and agriculture. The emphasis placed on these common objectives naturally varied within Jewish society in different countries and with changing conditions. Greater emphasis was placed on assimilation and it became more widespread in Western and Central Europe than in Eastern Europe.

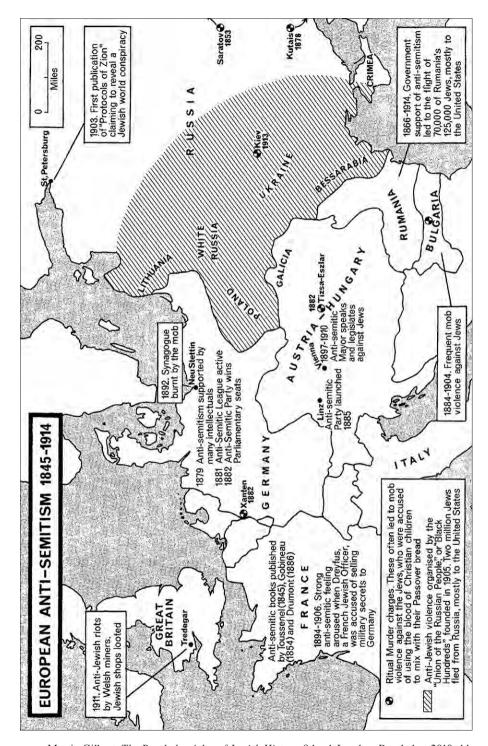
Apart from historicising anti-Semitism as a means to fight anti-Semitic essentializing Jewry, Bauman applies a multidisciplinary methodology, distinct from mainstream historiography, which involves sociology (his own discipline), history and Jewish philosophy: Emanuel Levinas' notion of the other as the one radically different from me.

3.4 Anti-Semitism in the Cultures of Kafka and Vogel

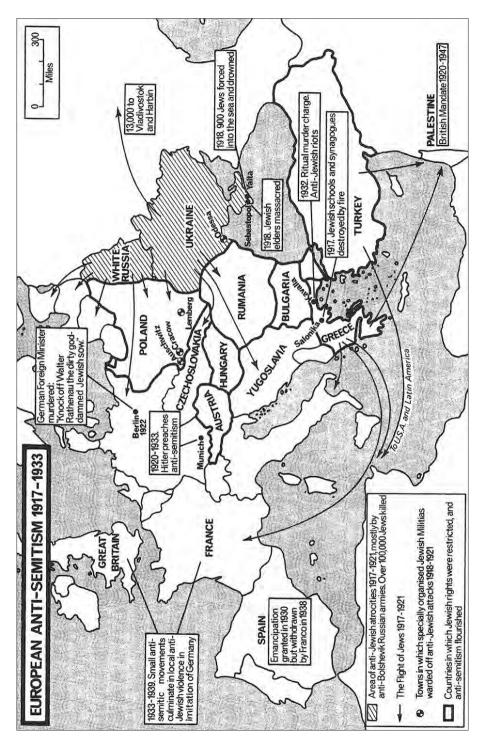
Broadly viewed two cultures are involved. On the one hand, there is the culture of 1912 fin-de-siècle Prague in which Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" was written and which at the time was part of Franz Joseph's already decaying Austro-Hungarian Empire, which ultimately disintegrated into different nation states after the First World War, with the Treaty of Saint Germain-en-Laye of 10 September 1919. (See maps *European Anti-Semitism 1845-1914* and *European Anti-Semitism 1917-1933*). As an artist and an intellectual Kafka identified with the Central European, German-oriented culture and language of the German Jewish minority in Prague in whose schools he had been educated.

On the other hand there is David Vogel, the Russian-Jewish exile who arrived that same year (1912) in Vienna, to stay there until 1925. He thus witnessed the convoluted transition of Franz Joseph's Austro-Hungarian Empire into separate nation states. Vogel came from the Jewish Pale of Settlement, a vast Jewish reservation within the Russian Empire founded by the Russian Tsars in 1835 and stretching from Western Ukraine to the German border until 1917, the year of the second Russian revolution. (See map: The Jewish Pale of Settlement in Russia, 1835-1917.) ⁴⁹

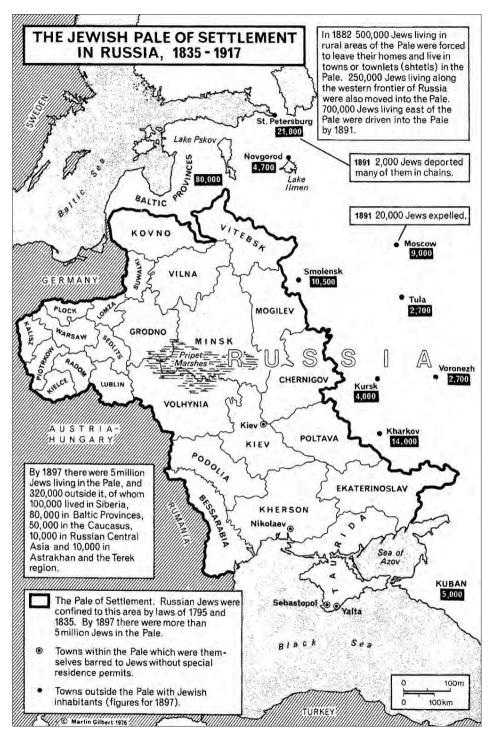
Martin Gilbert. The Jews of Russia: Their History in Maps and Photographs. Published privately by Martin Gilbert in Oxford, 1976. Dedicated to the memory of the Jewish historian Simon Dubnow, born in Msitslavl, Russia, 1860, murdered by the Nazis in Riga in 1941.



Martin Gilbert. The Routledge Atlas of Jewish History. 8th ed. London: Routledge, 2010. 44.



Martin Gilbert. The Routledge Atlas of Jewish History. 8th ed. London: Routledge, 2010. 210.



Martin Gilbert. The Routledge Atlas of Jewish History. 8th ed. London: Routledge, 2010. 64.

My research in this chapter involves anti-Semitism in Germany, Austria and the Jewish Pale of Settlement, which included Russian-occupied Poland. Vogel was born and bred in the Pale until the age of twenty-one (1912) when he fled to Franz Joseph's Austro-Hungarian Empire (Vienna) to escape the twenty-five years of conscription into the Russian army that the Russians had stipulated for Jews.

However, historicising anti-Semitism and hatred of Jews in the German/Austrian as well as the Russian contexts seems a task as vast as it is inevitable, as the hatred of Jews was the powerful other which allowed both authors to create their art and their dramatizations of abjection as a psychodynamics of identity-formation in that art.

Jews had been living in Prague from the twelfth century onward and formed, as in the whole of Eastern and Western Europe, a pariah group, excluded from civil rights, civil service, marriage, and from freely choosing a profession or trade. Although at the end of the nineteenth century the situation seemed somewhat improved, the threat for Jews had not lessened. Two main historical tendencies, the Industrial Revolution and the rise of Czech nationalism, constituted powerful influences on the Jewish population of Bohemia. On the one hand the Jews had greatly contributed to the economic growth of Bohemia, but on the other hand their newly acquired social position and wealth invoked fierce hatred of Jews amongst the Czech population and in the German elite within it, who refused to see Jews as their equals. No wonder, that – in that Jewish quandary – Zionism started to grow and flourish in Bohemia.

Kafka's friend Gustav Janouch recounts how, after the creation of the first Czech republic (after 1918), he intended to visit a clandestine Zionist meeting:

In a large corner house on the Bergstein I was looking for the meeting-room of the *Jewish Working Men's Association: The Poale Zion*. When I spoke to a group of people in the dark courtyard, instead of information I received several blows in the face, so that I took flight. The caretaker, whom I fetched, of course found no one left in the courtyard. In a bad temper he inquired: "What do you want from these Jews? After all you are not a Jew". I shook my head. "No, I am not a Jew".

"There you are" said the guardian of the law triumphantly. "What do you have to do with that rabble? Thank your stars that you only had a couple of punches on the nose, and go back home. Decent people don't mix with Jews." 50

Foole Zion (workers of Zion) was the name of the Jewish Workers Party within the Zionist Movement. It originated in Poland and Russia as an attempted synthesis of Zionism with social democracy. Gustav Janouch. Conversations with Kafka. Trans. Goronwy Rees. New York: New Directions Books, 1971. 108, note 52, 209.

A most incisive example of Kafka's experience of the fierce anti-Semitism in the Prague of his days is recorded in one of his letters to his friend, the Czech Milena Jesenská. The 1920 letter most poignantly reflects the scope and depth of the Jewish experience in Prague, and of the deep sense of insecurity it involved for Jews. The letter to Milena is an answer to a previous letter of hers in which she asks Kafka if he is Jewish (*Jste žid?*), and in which she subsequently expresses her astonishment at the typically Jewish anxiety (German: *Angst*). Note the ambivalence of Kafka's reply: he first blames her for generalising, and then justifies Jewish anxiety by pointing out the precarious, insecure position of all Jews:

You may reproach the Jews for their specific anxiety, although such a general reproach shows more theoretical than practical knowledge of human nature: more theoretical because first of all the reproach does not fit your husband [Milena is not Jewish, but her husband is] at all according to your former descriptions, nor, secondly, in my experience, does it fit most Jews, and thirdly it fits only isolated ones [acculturated: Jews, but not practising Jews], but these most poignantly, for instance myself. The insecure position of Jews, insecure within themselves, insecure among people, would make it above all comprehensible that they consider themselves to be allowed to own only what they hold in their hands, or between their teeth, that furthermore only palpable possessions give them the rights to live, and that they will never again acquire what they once have lost, but which instead, calmly swims away from them forever.⁵¹

In his biography of Kafka Ernst Pawel vividly pictures the Jews' experience of their position by the end of the First World War:

Caught between the lines, trapped in the shrinking no-man's land between crusading armies headed for the showdown but both equally committed to their Jew-baiting extremism, Bohemia's Jews found themselves in a unique quandary that was to shape the attitude of Kafka and his generation in fatally decisive ways. It spared them some of the illusions to which other Western Jews, notably in Germany and Austria proper, had avidly surrendered [the illusion of a German-Jewish symbiosis]. In Prague, unlike in Vienna, baptism was rare; Jews remained Jews, even if their Judaism amounted to little more than showing up four times a year at the synagogue to demonstrate their loyalty – to God on the three High Holidays, and to the house of Habsburg on the Emperor's birthday.⁵²

⁵¹ Willy Haas, ed. Franz Kafka: Letters to Milena. Trans. Tania and James Stern. London: Secker & Warburg, 1953. 49-52; Jürgen Born and Michael Müller, eds. Franz Kafka: Briefe an Milena. Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 1980. 24-7.

⁵² Ernst Pavel. The Nightmare of Reason: A Life of Franz Kafka. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1984. 31.

3.5 The German Cultural Context: Jewish Emancipation and Assimilation as Sources of Hatred of Jews

Jews had found hospitality in Germany from the Middle Ages onwards, but had always been viewed and treated as foreigners and, until the eighteenth century, kept themselves closely to themselves, living in ghettos.⁵³ They were subjected to additional taxes, barred from craft guilds and most professions, and they were only physically safe when carrying expensive letters of protection. Until the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, they lived in almost complete, self-imposed, ghetto isolation, advocated by the rabbis who were intent on protecting the group identity. Between 1500 and 1800 court Jews constituted a Jewish elite; they were wealthy Jews who managed to maintain economic relations with the German princes who depended on them for their money to wage war and keep expensive households, while in exchange the court Jews managed to procure a relative safety for themselves and the poorer Jews in the ghettos. However, the influence and wealth of the court Jews provoked resentment among the German population. The court Jews often formed the ghettos' only link with the outside world and it was through their contact with the outside world that the Enlightenment ideals eventually got access to the German ghettos.

Once the Jews, inspired by the general cultural Enlightenment, started their own Jewish Enlightenment or *Haskalah*, they began to leave the ghettos. However, the thought of Jews melting inconspicuously into the crowd caused great fear and suspicion within and outside German society. German fear of the Jewish

⁵³ Ghetto: urban section serving as compulsory (or voluntary) residential quarter for Jews. Generally surrounded by a wall shutting it off from the rest of the city, except for one or more gates, the ghetto remained bolted at night. The origin of this term has been the subject of much speculation. It was probably first used to describe a quarter of Venice situated near a foundry (getto, or ghetto) and which in 1516 was enclosed by walls and gates and declared to be the only part of the city to be open to Jewish settlement. Subsequently the term was extended to all Jewish quarters of the same type. Other theories are that the word derives from the Hebrew get indicating divorce or separation; from the Greek geitwn (neighbor); from the German geheckter (Ort), or fenced place; or from the Italian borghetto (a small section of the town). All can be excluded, except for get which was sometimes used in Rome to mean a separate section of the city. In any case the institution antedates the word, which is commonly used in several ways. It has come to indicate not only the legally established, coercive ghetto, but also the voluntary gathering of Jews in a secluded quarter, a process known in the Diaspora time before compulsion was exercised. By analogy the word is currently used to describe similar homogeneous quarters of non-Jewish groups, such as immigrant quarters, Black quarters in American cities, native quarters in South African cities, etc. In Muslim countries the Jewish quarter in its beginnings never had the character of a ghetto. It was always built on a voluntary basis, and it remained so in later times in the vast Ottoman Empire. From an article by Jozeph Michman (Melkman), in Encyclopaedia Judaica. Israel: Keter Publishing House, 1997. CD-ROM. Version 1.0.1997. Lemma: History.

Enlightenment was at least one of the catalysts of what Zygmunt Bauman, the sociologist, refers to as the ordering frenzy (involving the exclusion of Jews) that marked later German nationalism. Jewish Emancipation began in Holland (Spinoza) and Italy in the seventeenth century, but gained momentum in Germany in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Mainz 1798; Frankfurt 1811; Brunswick 1834; Prussia 1850; Baden 1862; Saxony 1868), and peaked in the second half of the nineteenth century when the Jews were granted civil rights throughout Germany (1871).

Besides, as early as the eighteenth century, opportunities had arisen in Germany for Jews to enter trade, and the development of capitalism gradually broadened the economic base of many professions: Jews integrated trade, banking, industry and various other professions and urban occupations. By the end of the nineteenth century the old time court Jews had become industrialists, bankers and important businessmen. A new social stratification emerged, based on new classes and professions. These processes also took place in other countries and were at the root of Jewish Emancipation culture.

These developments inspired considerable envy, resentment and fear of Jews in Europe. This in turn gave rise to the wildest fantasies about Jewish wealth and power, such as, for instance, the powerful fable of a Jewish plan for world domination – the Protocols of Zion, published by a Russian newspaper in 1903, which spread to all European capitals during the first half of the twentieth century. Even a quality newspaper like *The Times* (London) did not escape its spell when it wrote in 1920:

Have we been struggling these tragic years [of the First World War] to blow up and extirpate the secret organisation of German world domination only to find beneath it another, more dangerous, because more secret? Have we, by straining every fibre of our national body, escaped a *Pax Germanica*, only to fall into a *Pax Judaica*?

Writing about the so-called "complete Jewish domination" of Viennese economic and cultural life in the nineteenth century fin-de-siècle, Peter Pulzer (1988) points out this applied to

... only 10 to 15 per cent of the Austrian Jews and that the remainder of 90 to 85 per cent 'led an indescribably miserable existence in Galicia and Bukovina', and that it is estimated that toward the end of the century some 5000 to 6000 died of starvation annually. And, as the number of Galician Jews increased in Vienna, the Jewish haute bourgeoisie became less and less representative of Viennese Jewry as a whole, while the peddler, the old-clothes

dealer and the *Lumpen Proletarier*, scraping an irregular existence on the periphery of the economic system, became typical.⁵⁴

The fact that envy and fear of Jewish success could even lead to murder was exemplified by the life and death of Walter Rathenau, the son of a prominent Jewish business family, himself a leading industrialist during the German Empire. Rathenau's 1922 murder was inspired by the hatred and anti-Semitic fantasies evoked by the fear of Jewish emancipation and assimilation. Rathenau was German Foreign Minister and a fervent advocate of Jewish assimilation; he argued that Jews should oppose both Zionism and Socialism, and integrate into German society. He believed, like many Jews with him, that assimilation would solve anti-Semitism. The German radical right fiercely hated Rathenau and caricatured him as the prototype of the Jewish capitalist.

Albert S. Lindemann (1997) writes that during the First World War, when Rathenau held a senior post in the Raw Materials Department of the German War Ministry, he favoured a disproportionate number (10 percent of all industrialists, while only 1 percent of the population was Jewish) of Jewish industrialists many of whom had made extraordinary war profits. Nobody seemed to notice that 90 percent of the war profits went to non-Jewish German firms. Rathenau's favouritism of Jews was grist to the mill of right wing anti-Semites and made him many enemies. In spite of his extended service to his country and being one of the founders of the German Democratic Party, which was committed to maintaining a democratic, republican form of government, two right wing army officers assassinated Rathenau on 24 June 1922. Whilst driving one morning from his house to the Wilhelmstraße, as he used to every day, he was overtaken by another car with three armed young men. They simultaneously shot at the minister with revolvers and then quickly drove off. A memorial stone in the Königsallee in Berlin-Grünewald commemorates the murder.

The term anti-Semitism was coined in Germany in 1879, in the pamphlet *The Victory of Judaism over Germandom (Der Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanenthum*) by the German agitator Wilhelm Marr (1819-1904), a middle-brow journalist who formed the first Anti-Semitic League.⁵⁶ The term anti-

Peter Pulzer. The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988, 13-4. The Lumpenproletariat consisted mainly of poor Eastern European Jews living under the direct of circumstances in Leopoldstadt, the Jewish quarter of Vienna.

⁵⁵ Albert S. Lindemann. Esau's Tears: Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. 403-4.

Wilhelm Marr. Der Sieg des Judenthums ueber das Germanenthum vom nicht con-fessionellen Standpunkt ausbetrachtet. Bern: Rudolph Costenoble, 1879. Other historians give 1873 as the year of publication.

Semitism referred to the contemporary anti-Jewish campaigns in Europe. The term is actually a misnomer: Semite covers all Semites, including Arabs. Léon Poliakov, in the conclusion to Volume III of his *History of Antisemitism*, distinguishes between anti-Jewish, which is hostility to a belief, and anti-Semitic, which is hostile to a hypothetical Jewish essence, although the two terms often lead to confusion.

Marr's coining of the term signalled a landmark in the history of anti-Semitism in Europe: a shift from religious prejudice to a scientifically justified (by pseudoscientific racial theories), politically organised and society-sanctioned racism that would culminate eventually into Nazism.⁵⁷ Marr's pamphlet did not so much offer novel ideas about Judaism as it voiced prevailing racist ideas at the right time. In other words: the public consciousness seemed ripe for Marr's perception of Jews. Marr claimed that

when Jews were legitimately disliked, it was not because of groundless or metaphysical fantasies, but because of quite palpable Jewish traits, among them their abhorrence for real work and their proclivity to exploit the labour of others. These traits were in turn related to Jewish contempt for non-Jews and feelings of superiority towards them.

Marr's pamphlet, first denounced as mere demagogy, soon earned him the respect of intellectuals like Heinrich von Treitschke and Adolf Stoecker.⁵⁸ The latter, minister and chaplain to the court of the Kaiser (Emperor Franz Joseph) and founder of the Christian Social Workers Party, proclaimed Jews as out of control and therefore not fitting in a liberal environment. In addition, according to Stoecker, Jews were recklessly destructive in their mockery of German Christians. Marr's predilection for the term Semite, which he used to refer to Jews as a race,

⁵⁷ Léon Poliakov. *The History of Anti-Semitism. From Voltaire to Wagner*. 1968. Trans. Miriam Kochan. Vol. 3. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. 458-60.

Adolf Stoecker. The History of Anti-Semitism. Suicidal Europe, 1870-1933. By Léon Poliakov. 1977. Trans. George Klin. Vol. 4. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. 19. Heinrich von Treitschke (1834-96) was a widely respected historian and political writer whose advocacy of (Prussian) power politics was influential at home and contributed to distrust of Germany abroad. From 1871 to 1884 he was a member of the Reichstag, first as a National Liberal and then as a moderate conservative, but as a public figure he was handicapped by almost total deafness. Treitschke was a proponent of authoritarian power politics and a vociferous herald of the unity of Germany through Prussian might. Treitschke believed that the state should be the centre of the lives of its citizens and that it should be headed by authoritarian rulers without the check of a parliament. He held that Germany was the true heir of the Holy Roman Empire; thus he pressed for its rise to the status of a great imperialist power. He disparaged Western European liberalism and took an equally sceptical view of democracy in North America. From: Encyclopaedia Britannica 2003. Lemma: Support of Fascism: Heinrich von Treitschke.

must be viewed within the context of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientific interest in biological and linguistic differences between the various peoples in the world. Ultimately, this interest led to a view of humankind in terms of a hierarchy of races and languages. Soon the idea of the Aryan race (and its languages) as superior (to the Semitic races for instance) by virtue of physical, cultural and mental characteristics, took hold.⁵⁹ Initially this preoccupation with races, also referred to as racialism as opposed to racism, was a purely academic matter and thus had nothing to do with racism or politics. In France, for instance, Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau (1816-82), a well-kown French aristocrat, diplomat and novelist, had developed a theory of the Aryan master race in An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races (Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines, 1853-55), in which he claimed that the foundation of empires created racial mixture which led to the degeneration of races. He called this process Semiticisation, because of his belief that Semitic peoples were a product of a Middle Eastern mixture of otherwise distinct black, white and yellow races. Gobineau was not an anti-Semite, but his theories, like those of other racialists such as Julius Langbehn (1851-1907) and Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927), were put to use by Nazi ideologists, for instance by Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946).60 Ethnologists then realised that the only relation between the peoples in the Bible book Genesis designated as Semites was a geographical one. Subsequently phrenologists defined the term "Semite" in terms of certain measurements of the skull of the Jews, and Arabs having dolichocephalic skulls: curly

The discovery of the Indo-European language group not only enabled science to track the historical relations between many European and Asian languages. It was also once and for all the end of the idea that Hebrew was the original language of all human beings and also of the idea that all human beings are descendants of (one) Adam. As a result the western scholars searched for their own illustrious forefathers in Central Asia, Persia and India following the traces of Indian and Iranian traditions. Indo-European research started as early as in the first decades of the 19th century, and Max Müller and other Indo-Europeanists happened to use the word "Aryan" to describe the old Indo-Europeans. As a matter of cause, these early Aryans had to be members of the superior white race if they were to represent the ancestors of the modern Europeans. S. Scholz. "The Myth of the Aryan Tribe". *Das Ariosophieprojekt*. N.p. 1994. Trans. B. Kühne (2003). Web. 6 December 2014.

Julius Langbehn (1851-1907). Professor and Rembrandt scholar; wrote a popular racist attack on modern art and art museums. Langbehn studied art history and anthropology at the university of Kiel before obtaining his doctorate from the university of Munich. Among art historians who adopted Nietzschean values of art, perhaps the worst was Langbehn. Poorly educated and highly opinionated, Langbehn anonymously published a book in 1890 attacking modern art on racial grounds, a book which took the German art history world by storm. *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Rembrandt as Educator), deplored the state of contemporary art production, suggesting that, Rembrandt, an example of the southern German "race" was part of a pure *Volk* least defiled by racial intermixing. https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/langbehnj.htm

and abundant hair, slightly wavy or straight strong beard, predominantly black, prominent straight or aquiline nose and an oval face.⁶¹

Back to Germany in the interbellum. What did Germany look like when David Vogel visited Berlin in the 1930s and when Kafka lived there for a while in the twenties with Dora Diamant? After the First World War Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated and the German Empire founded by Bismarck ended. Germany turned into the Weimar Republic with democratic ideals: power to the people, a parliament (*Reichstag*), political representation for minorities and a president elected by the people. However, Germany was deeply humiliated by the Treaty of Versailles terms stipulating that it alone was forced to accept responsibility for causing the war and that it had to pay substantial war reparations for all the damage done. It also had to cede land to France and Poland. The German army was limited to 100,000 men and was barred from having submarines or military aircraft.

Moreover, the country was in great political and social turmoil as a result of the war: conflicts between right-wing nationalists, socialists and communists, hunger, unemployment, etc. Adolph Hitler, who joined the Workers' Party, cleverly manipulated the desire of many Germans to get rid of the shackles of the Versailles Treaty. After a number of setbacks, Adolf Hitler rose to leadership through his emotional and (pathologically) manipulative speeches and shrewd political machinations. He advocated nationalism, militarism, a commitment to the Volk (people) and a racially pure Germany, that is, a Germany free from Jews. Hitler condemned the Jews, cleverly exploiting and politicising the anti-Semitic feelings prevailing in Europe. He changed the name of the party into the National Socialist German Workers' Party, for short the Nazi Party (or NSDAP). By the end of 1920, the Nazi Party had about 3,000 members, and a year later Hitler became its official leader. In 1923 his attempt to seize power in Munich, which failed miserably, came to be known as the Beer Hall Putsch. Together with other Nazi Party members, he was charged with high treason and imprisoned. However, using the courtroom for propaganda purposes, he succeeded in winning over the sympathy of the conservative judges, and was sentenced to five years and released after one year. It was during that year that he wrote Mein Kampf (My Struggle, 1925) in which he expounded his ideas about German Nationalism, anti-Bolshevism and the Jews. Mein Kampf became the ideological foundation for the Nazi Party's racist beliefs and practices. After his release from prison, Hitler resurrected the Nazi Party and awaited the political opportunity to seize power while the con-

Olichocephalic means long-headed: applied to skulls of which the breadth is less than four-fifths (or, according to Broca, three-fourths) of the length; also (less commonly) to human populations having such skulls; as opposed to brachycephalic or short-headed: skulls whose breadth is at least four fifths of the length. Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. CD-ROM. Version 3.0.

servative Von Hindenburg was president. Hitler's Nazi Party initially failed to be successful in the cities and in the Reichstag elections of 1928. However, after shifting its programme to pleading for the expropriation of Jewish agricultural property and by condemning the large Jewish department stores, the Party became popular, mainly among the lower middle classes. By 1929 the Party had 108,000 members, a paramilitary unit (the SA) and, within the latter, an elite group, the SS, under Heinrich Himmler. By the late twenties, the Nazi Party set up further auxiliary groups. The Hitler Youth, the Student League and the Pupils' League were all open to young Germans. The National Socialist Women's League allowed women to get involved. Different professional groups, such as teachers, lawyers and doctors had their own auxiliary units.

The Weimar Republic collapsed after the American Wall Street Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression that followed. The Crash had a devastating impact on the American economy and by extension on the Weimar Republic, which had been financed with American capital. Companies throughout Germany, especially in the industrial Ruhr area, went bankrupt and workers were laid off by the thousands. Unemployment affected nearly every German family. Fathers could no longer provide for their families, which lacked money for the most basic items: food, heating, a home, clothes, etc. As the Weimar regime offered no solutions for this terrible situation, it is hardly surprising that they turned to the more extreme political parties in Germany: the Nazi Party and the Communist Party. In the 1930 Reichstag elections the Nazis gained 143 seats, a vast improvement on their previous result. In the July 1932 Reichstag elections, the Nazis obtained 230 seats, making them the largest party in the Reichstag. In 1933 Hitler became Chancellor. At that time there were 550,000 Jews in Germany: less than one percent of the German population.

After the Holocaust it was hard to understand the love of generations of Jews for a German culture that had so easily slipped into Nazism. Perhaps that love was rooted in the memory of the golden age of German Jewry, from 1850 to 1871, when German Jews were widely tolerated; even before the German Emancipation Law of 1861 removed all limitations on Jews, they had taken full advantage of newly found acceptance and opportunities to forge ahead. The Jewish community, writes Macmaster:

... with its highly literate culture achieved a remarkable degree of upward social mobility through educational achievement and entry into the professions particularly medicine, law, journalism, and finance. The dynamic rise of Jews led to an 'overrepresentation' in many sectors where they constituted a percentage that was much higher than their presence in the overall population. However, the industrial revolution, which - unlike France and Britain - affected Germany and Austria much later, affected those countries by an almost

unprecedented advance of new technologies backed by capitalist finance. The anti-Semitic political parties that began to appear from 1879 onwards were able to recruit among urban groups that were in crisis as a result of the stock market crash of 1873 and the following economic depression which lasted until 1896. Typical victims of change were the small shopkeepers of Berlin and Vienna who blamed their problems on Jewish owned department stores and retailers ...who could not compete with large-scale, industrial enterprise. 62

This may be true, but it does not explain why these people blamed the Jews instead of class relations for their misfortunes. In any event, subsequently the relations between Germans and Jews were thoroughly damaged, no matter how the Jews tried to restore them. Ritchie Robertson writes how Gershom Scholem, the German/Jewish historian of Jewish mysticism, thundered in 1964: "The Jews attempted a dialogue with the Germans, starting from all possible points of view and situations, demandingly, imploringly, and entreatingly, servile and defiant, with a dignity employing all manner of tones and a godforsaken lack of dignity".63 This behaviour was informed by a long-standing Jewish love of German culture that had characterised the attitude of assimilated German/Jewish bourgeoisie long before the industrial revolution as can be seen in Hannah Arendt's Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess (2000).64 Rahel Varnhagen, born Levin (1771-1833), adopted the values of the Enlightenment, presided over a salon of intellectuals and poets including Heinrich Heine, and was married to a gentile German aristocrat. Her deepest wish, to become truly German, was shattered by the rise of Prussian anti-Semitism. She died in 1833, feeling bitterly betrayed.

Martin Buber, before leaving Germany in 1939, testified to his love of German culture when he wrote: "The symbiosis of German and Jewish character (German *Wesen*), as I experienced it in the four decades I spent in Germany, was the first and only one since the Spanish Middle Ages, to have received the highest confirmation that history can confer: conformation by fruitfulness." ⁶⁵ However, to Scholem the Zionist, who left Germany for Palestine in 1923, Jewish attachment to Germany seemed a huge and fatal mistake. How terribly, terribly right he was!

⁶² Neil MacMaster. Racism in Europe: 1870-2000. Palgrave: New York, 2001. 98-9.

⁶³ Ritchie Robertson. *The 'Jewish Question' in German Literature*, 1749-1939: Emancipation and its Discontents. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 2-3.

⁶⁴ Hannah Arendt. *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*. Ed. Liliane Weissberg. Trans. Richard and Clara Winston. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Robertson. Ibid., 3, note 5: "Das Ende der Deutsch-Jűdische Symbiose". Jüdische Weltrundschau (10 Mar. 1939), repr. in Buber: Der Jude und sein Judentum. Cologne: Joseph Melzer, 1963. 645.

Back to Bauman. Bauman views the perception of the Jew as a signifier of ambivalence instilled into the believer by medieval Christianity and as subsequently assimilated into the Western cultural consciousness, to be given new life, by being politically utilised, during the ordering frenzy of modernity. Bauman's sociological model of ambivalence fuses sociology with (undefined, but obviously Freudian) psychology. His perception of ambivalence (love/hate) in the eye of the believer could be seen as a sociological perspective of what Julia Kristeva had formulated earlier as a universal psychodynamics of identity-processing in *Powers of Horror*.

3.6 Hatred of Jews in Vogel's Culture of Origin: The Jewish Pale of Settlement

The Central European ordering frenzy Bauman refers to as typical of modernity appeared as a rather different ordering principle in tsarist Russia, which included the once independent kingdom of Poland since the Polish partitions in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The Western ideals of the Enlightenment and the subsequent rise of modernity did not penetrate in tsarist Russia, and the Tsars' (Emperors) policy was one of divide and rule (by oppression) with regard to the many different ethnic groups and peoples living in the Russian Empire. Religious animosity against Jews, however, was not limited to Western and Central Europe.

⁶⁶ After the first partition of Poland in 1772, when masses of Jews living within the former country came under Russian rule, it was decided (1791) to allow the presence of the Jews not only in their former regions of residence, but also in the new areas which had been annexed from Turkey on the Black Sea shore, which the Russian government sought to colonise rapidly. On the other hand, Jewish merchants were barred from trading in the provinces of inner Russia. These decrees were intended to serve the national and economic interests of the state by preventing competition between Jewish and Russian merchants and encouraging settlement in the desolate steppes of southern Russia, which eventually became the provinces of Kherson, Dnepropetrovsk (Yekaterinoslav) and Taurida (Crimea). The Russian government also aimed to reduce in this way the excess of Jews in the branches of commerce and inn-keeping within the territory annexed from Poland. In 1794 the earlier decree was ratified and applied to the regions which had been annexed with the second partition of Poland (1793), to the provinces of Minsk, Volhynia, and Podolia as well as to the region to the east of the River Dnieper (the provinces of Chernigov and Poltava). With the third partition of Poland (1795), the law was also applied to the provinces of Vilna and Grodno. In 1799 Courland was added to the Pale of Settlement. In the "Jewish Statute" promulgated in 1804, the province of Astrakhan and the whole of the northern Caucasus were added to the regions open to Jews. In 1812, upon its annexation, Bessarabia was also included. The Kingdom of Poland was incorporated into Russia in 1815, which comprised ten provinces that later became known as the Vistula region but was not officially included within the Pale of Settlement, and until 1868 the transit of Jews through this area to the Lithuanian and Ukrainian provinces was prohibited by law. In practice, however, the provinces of the Vistula Region were generally included within the Pale of Settlement.

In the Russian Empire, the presence of Jews had not been tolerated since the fifteenth century. Russian Orthodox Christianity considered Jews as enemies of Christ and believed that their ultimate aim was to convert Christians to Judaism. The Tsars, as Protectors of the Faith, frequently refused permission to Jewish merchants even to enter Russia. As a result, the large numbers of Polish and Lithuanian Jews incorporated into Russia after its expansion to the west in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century constituted an enormous problem. Jews were not a Slavic people, and thus did not fit in with the Pan Slavic conceptualisation of the Russian Empire to form a single Slavic people embracing all nationalities with one language and one religion. Besides, there were resentments about the emerging economic role of the Jews in in Russian villages where they constituted a threat to the virtually unlimited power of the nobility who owned both the villages and the inhabitants (the serfs). The only solution to these problems was state-enforced assimilation and the confinement of Jews to one district: the Pale of Settlement. This meant mass deportations of Jews (on foot, and sometimes shackled) from all parts of the vast Russian Empire to the Pale of Settlement from 1835 until 1917 (with the second Russian Revolution) when the Jews were finally granted equal rights in Russia.



Martin Gilbert. *The Jews of Russia: their History in Maps and Photographs*. Imprint unknown. 1976. 23.

Why devote a relatively long section to Poland? Kafka had no associations with Poland at all during his life, which ended in 1924. However, during the Second World War, his favourite sister Ottla was deported by the Nazis to the Łódź ghetto where his other two sisters, Ellie and Valli, perished. On 7 October 1943, Ottla accompanied a group of children as a voluntary assistant to Auschwitz. She was murdered there shortly after.

Poland was the country where Vogel stayed for a while in the interim period between his flight from Podolia (in the Pale), Russia, to escape conscription in the Russian Army, and his settling in Vienna. In his diary (see Chapter 5) he extensively describes his stay there among the orthodox Polish Jews. He also travelled to Warsaw after a short stay in Tel Aviv (Palestine) in 1929-30, to lecture on modern Hebrew literature. Poland was thus the place of Vogel's entrance into Eastern Central Europe (Vienna), as well as that of his exit in Auschwitz, where he was murdered together with millions of other Jews in one of the five camps set up by the Nazis with the exclusive purpose to kill Jews (the others were: Maidanek, Belzec, Chelmo, Sobibor and Treblinka).⁶⁷

Compared to the relation between Jews and any other European peoples, the relation between Poles and Jews is most difficult to grasp on account of the contradictory picture one gets when one tries to gather information about the experience of Jews in Poland. On the one hand, there is the long history of Jewish settlement in Poland from the tenth century onwards, when Jews from Germany and Bohemia, the Byzantine Empire and Eastern Romania, invited by the Polish Kings, settled in Poland. At the time, it was a kingdom with a population consisting only of two classes: nobles and utterly poor and uneducated serfs, with the Jews forming a middle class. It is obvious that the Jews, with their diasporic tradition of surviving in the most difficult situations, their (religious) literacy and their long trading history of trading, were no partners for the Polish population who lived for the greater part in medieval conditions in isolated rural communities. The Jews, according to the historian Léon Poliakov, soon assumed the chief role in all activities relating to the circulation of merchandise and money. Poliakov insists that initially the Jews lived in excellent harmony with the Christians and that it was only much later, when the power of the kings waned and the Church became increasingly powerful, that the Christians started preaching hostility

⁶⁷ Serge Klarsfeld. Memorial to the Jews Deported from France 1942-44: Documentation of the Deportation of the Victims of the Final Solution in France. New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1983. There is an entry on David Vogel, on p. 525. It reads: "Convoy 69, February 10, 1944, Vogel, David, born 1891 Satanoff. When convoy 69 arrived at Auschwitz 110 men out of 812 were selected for work and received numbers 174904-175013. The rest was gassed upon arrival. Twenty of the men selected for work survived the camp. As Vogel suffered from tuberculosis and ill health it is highly likely that he was not selected for work."

against Jews and that hatred and resentment against them began to spread. Yet, one wonders about Poliakov's excellent harmony for, if Jews inspired hostile feelings, it would particularly have been the case in the closed communities of the Catholic Polish peasants. If anywhere the role as a signifier of ambivalence fell to the Jews, it must have been in that closed, feudal society of the poor, uneducated Polish peasant where anything strange, the not us, must have caused apprehension, vexation and fear. The Jews were the outsiders, others, blurring the us borderlines that ought to be kept watertight, while simultaneously undermining the reassuringly monotonous, repetitive and predictable nature of the feudal world. The Church may have canalised and manipulated those apprehensions, but it was not the architect: it preyed on resentments already there.

The relative wealth and literacy of the strangers in comparison to the general utter poverty and illiteracy of the Polish peasants must have caused resentment too, the more so as in the early settlement times in Poland Jews lived from moneylending, leasing property and trade. But Jews also ran taverns, and worked for tradesmen and merchants. They also gradually came to act as stewards for the Polish nobility (as the court Jews had done in the courts of the German princes) and had to collect the peasants' dues to their lords and masters. Furthermore memories, particularly of bad relational situations, have a long life in closed, primitive rural communities where they were bound to be transmitted from one generation to the next. The longevity of those resentments is therefore hardly surprising. From a psychological point of view, this is understandable but, from a post-Holocaust position of the historiography of anti-Semitism, it is extremely difficult to accept.

At the end of the First World War (1917), Poland finally became an independent Republic and faced the difficult task of having to integrate the three regions into a single country and nation. Poland had gained its independence on the condition (stipulated in the Treaty of Versailles) that it should give all its minorities equal rights. The Poles had to give in, but bitterly resented having been coerced into accepting the Treaty by the Allies and the Jews, who had sent their leaders to the Paris Peace Conference to plead their case. At that time, Poland then consisted of two-thirds Poles and one third minorities: Jews, Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Lithuanians. Whereas the Belorussians, Lithuanians, and to some extent also the Germans, lived in clearly defined areas, the Jews were scattered all over the country. Three factors determined the Polish struggle with the Jewish problem: (1) The size of the Jewish population (three million: 10 percent of the whole population and up to 30 percent of the urban population). (2) The key role of the Jews in the Polish economy: Jews accounted for an average of 52.7 percent of all those engaged in commerce with trade being the livelihood of 36.6 percent of the Jewish

population.⁶⁸ (3) Their administrative elusiveness as a group because of their dispersion among the Polish population.

As the leadership of the new Polish Republic was in the hands of an intelligentsia rooted in the old Polish nobility, and with a weak middle class, the Jews initially had an opportunity to engage in commerce and to penetrate into the free professions: medicine, journalism and publishing, while accounting for 10 percent of the country's schoolteachers and outside the state-school system even for 43.3 percent. Jews were however excluded from bureaucracy as the new state insisted on keeping its Polish national character.

From 1920 to mid-1923 the country seemed to recover economically from the damage of the war, but entered a period of financial crisis until the *coup d'état* by Marshall Pilsudski in 1926. Pilsudski set up a dictatorial regime that was meant to establish peace and order in the country. During Pilsudski's tenure Polish nationalism grew stronger, a tendency that reinforced itself after his death in 1935. Meanwhile Poland had been deeply affected by the economic depression that prevailed in Europe. The economic and political tensions found expression in overt anti-Semitism, which meant that the Jews suffered doubly: from the economic situation itself and from the way it worked as an incentive for a now openly expressed anti-Semitism. In addition, between the 1920s and 1930s, Nazi anti-Semitism had gradually started blowing over to Poland, especially when Hitler began to manifest himself politically in Germany. There were anti-Semitic riots, destruction of Jewish property and individuals of the German *Kristallnacht* type.

Ezra Mendelsohn's (1994) paraphrasing a section from Polin's *Pinkas Hakehilot* (1980), writes on the small Polish town of Drohobycz:

Antisemitic outbursts of varying proportions were the lot of the Jews of Drohobycz during the years 1918-39. At the end of the nineteen twenties Ukrainians attacked Jews, especially in the market. In 1930 the Endeks [right wing party] circulated antisemitic pamphlets. In 1936 several Jews were wounded by Ukrainian attacks. In the same year seven Jewish homes were attacked. In 1938 the Endeks broke the windows in the synagogue... The Polish authorities did nothing to calm things down.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Leny Yahl. The Hol ocaust: The Fate of European Jewry. Trans. Ina Friedman and Haya Galai. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. 187.

Antony Polonsky, Ezra Mendelsohn and Jerzy Tomaszewski, eds. *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry: Jews in Independent Poland*, 1918-1939. Vol. 8. London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994. 8.

At a meeting of the *Sejm* (the Polish Parliament) deputy Mincberg read into the record a passage from the Łódź newspaper *Republika* that had appeared on 10 October (1936):

Blood has been spilled and will continue to be spilled in the future. Much blood will be spilled for this is the only plank over which this debate on justice can be conducted. ...Today there is no way to confront the Jew, who wishes to take over Poland, other than to strike him with sword or bullet. These are correct and useful arguments. There can be no verbal arguments or attempts to persuade; we are at war, and we must wage a war that is continuous and all-encompassing. He who seeks to dissuade us from this war is a traitor.⁷⁰

Already before Hitler's rise to power, the Polish government had considered purging the economy from Jews. Jews were excluded from welfare allowances distributed to which unemployed Polish workers were entitled. Jewish access to the free professions was restricted, and in 1938 they were no longer allowed in the legal profession. Gradually the Jewish population sank into destitution and poverty, suffering also from an intensifying anti-Semitism that found expression in all layers of Polish society. No wonder that Zionism began to increasingly appeal to Jews as the situation became unbearable and there seemed to be no other way out. In his book Melzer provides a detailed survey of a stream of anti-Semitic incidents, supported by factual evidence of the sort I have noted before.

Jan T. Cross writes that during the German occupation some segments of the Polish population supported, took part in or even instigated anti-Jewish actions by the Germans. The Deep-seated religious hate of Jews played a role and led to incidental pogroms in Poland, which was a divided, predominantly Roman Catholic country. Only when Poland became an independent country again in 1917 as stipulated by the Versailles Treaty, Polish political nationalism/anti-Semitism began to play a more prominent role (especially after Marshall Pilsudski's death in the thirties) and the us/them distinction applied to the Jews, which had always been there, intensified and changed into the ideological type of anti-Semitism that spread from Germany from the 1920s onwards.

In summary, on the one hand the situation of the Jews in Poland between the wars might be viewed as a grim foreboding of the tragedy of Polish Jewry in the Second World War. Yet, on the other hand, it saw a period of tremendous internal

⁷⁰ Emanuel Melzer. No Way Out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935-39. Trans. Ronit Librozen. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997. 63.

A devastatingly sad example is, for instance, the brutal murder of 1,600 Jewish men, women and children by their Polish neighbours in the Polish town Jedwabne in 1941. See Jan T. Cross. *Neighbours: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001.

developments among the Jewish population: during the 1920s and 1930s, the Jewish political movements that I have discussed earlier flourished as they never had before. Zionism and Jewish socialism turned almost overnight into mass movements capable of undermining the control of Jewish orthodoxy, which had organised itself into the powerful traditionalist orthodox party *Agudat Yisrael*.

The Jewries of Poland, Bessarabia, Bukovina and Lithuania went through a period of politicisation and nationalisation not unlike the various nation-states in Central and Western Europe. Thus, the external situation of Eastern European Jews became increasingly similar to that of non-Jews. But, as in Central Europe, the process of acculturation did not improve the social relation between Jews and non-Jews. The accusation that anti-Semitism was a result of the cultural separateness of Eastern European Jewry proved untrue.

The post-Holocaust historiography on Eastern European anti-Semitism in interbellum Poland for instance is relatively young; most works I have consulted are from the last two decades of the twentieth century and have been written as part of Jewish history in Poland, seldom by non-Jewish authors, mostly by Israeli, Polish-born, or one generation removed Polish-born authors. The first work I have consulted is Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry: Jews in Independent Poland 1918-1939.72 The authors question if objectivity is possible in those works, on two grounds that can be traced back to conflicts between Orthodox and Secular Zionist Jewry in interbellum Poland about how to deal with the difficult situation of the Jews there. In a nutshell, Ezra Mendelsohn (clearly representing the orthodox view) expresses reservations (expressed in a chapter entitled "Jewish Historiography on Polish Jewry in the Interwar Period" (3-13)) about what he sees as the official or Establishment Jewish attitude towards that period in Poland. Although leaving the historical quality of those works intact Mendelsohn thinks that: a) their representation of the pre-interwar period is biased by a romantic and at times heroic view of the *shtetl* period of Jewish history in Poland, b) they think too much in terms of national categories and do not compare the suffering of Jews with the suffering of Polish peasants and other minorities, c) they are biased by Leftish moral indignation, and d) they do not devote enough time on the analysis of twentieth-century Polish politics and Polish social thought.

I will not go further into this problem as it falls outside the scope of this study. However, it is certainly relevant as it not only represents the differences between orthodox and Zionist perceptions of the relations between Poles and Jews, but also a much wider controversy as evidenced by the ongoing contradictory views on that subject matter. If you talk to Polish-born immigrants in the west today about the Polish-Jewish relations in the interbellum, passions will flare up, ranging from

⁷² Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry (1994).

deep indignation about the mere assumption of Polish anti-Semitism, to sad assent illustrated by stories about anti-Semitic discrimination and insult.

3.7 The West's Puzzling Lack of Interest in the History of the Jews in Eastern Europe and Russia

A relatively large portion of this chapter is devoted to Vogel's cultural background because, unlike the history of the Jews in Central and Western Europe, the history of the Jews of Russia and Poland/Galicia (where Vogel stayed on his way from Satanów to Vienna) has certainly not been of paramount interest to the average Western audience of *Married Life*. I even wonder if, except for the Israeli Russian refugees and their offspring, that history is the self-evident intellectual property of today's average Hebrew reader in Israel.

There are at least two obvious reasons for the West's lack of knowledge or interest in the history of the Jews of Russia and Eastern Europe: (1) The Holocaust: the vanishing of a whole culture with the murder by the Nazis of 4,565,000 Eastern European (Polish) and Russian Jews out of a total of 5,950,000. (2) Non-Jewish pre-Holocaust Western historiography has barely shown any interest in the history of the Jews of Poland and Russia, or for that matter in their trials and tribulations, or the flourishing Jewish literary, cultural, political, educational, journalistic, religious, and spiritual activity.

This lack of interest is curious to say the least, considering that during the decades before and after Vogel's birth (1891), the cities of Vienna, Paris, Berlin and New York were inundated with thousands of Eastern European and Russian Jewish refugees.

Public communication during the First World War (1914-18) was a case in point: public attention was focused on the Western Front and nobody wrote about the Eastern Front where, sanctioned by the Tsar, Russian troops marching to the west ransacked the Jewish Pale of Settlement on their own Russian territory as well as the Jewish regions of Southern and Eastern Poland. Glenda Abramson (2008) writes about this strange incongruity in communication:

We are fully aware of the crimes committed against the Jews in the Second World War, but while the persecution of the Jews in the Great War has not been ignored, it is surprising that it has not received more extensive attention. When the war broke out Jewish settlements along the Eastern front [the Jewish Pale of Settlement] were immediately targeted, particularly by the Russian army - with the eager help of the Russian Poles – seemed intent on annihilating the Jews and every vestige of their culture.⁷³

⁷³ Glenda Abramson. Hebrew Writing in the First World War. London: Valentine Mitchell, 2008. xiv.

To Russian eyes the Jews were responsible for all the ills of the war. This belief was at the root of the tsarist army's campaign of brutalisation of the Jews, including expulsion and massacres: almost 600,000 Jews were expelled from their homes and almost 250,000 Jewish civilians were slaughtered. Russian soldiers desecrated cemeteries, burned synagogues and Jewish *shtetls*, demolished Jewish businesses, banned Hebrew and Yiddish printing and destroyed books. Backed by local Poles, the Russians convinced themselves that every Jew was a spy and that Jewish homes harboured great wealth and treasure. Wherever the Russian army was located, the local population would violently turn against the Jews, who became scapegoats for German achievements. Russian soldiers were told that, had it not been for the *Yids* (traitors), the Prussian army would have been routed altogether. The fact that a quarter of a million Jews were serving in the Russian army did not help to combat these beliefs.⁷⁴

However, the West's lack of interest in Eastern European and Russian Jewry was not limited to the First World War. Jan Karski, secret courier between the Polish resistance and the Polish government in exile in London during the Second World War, writes in his devastatingly factual, historical account of that period (which reads like a film), *Story of a Secret State: My Report to the World* (1945), how he informed the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and the American President Roosevelt in 1942 and 1943 about what happened in the Warsaw ghetto and in the concentration camps, and how they both listened politely but sceptically, and did nothing at all. Eden, who did not allow Karski to meet Churchill and Roosevelt, spoke the unthinkable words: "Tell the Poles that we shall win the War".75

3.8 The Historical Sources for This Chapter

In view of the relative general lack of historical interest in Eastern European and Russian Jewry, I gleaned my sources for that research area from works of Jewish historiographers. Simon M. Dubnow's integral *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* (1918), written whilst Vogel was in Vienna, has lost nothing of its stylistic directness and keeps the reader enthralled, in spite of (or perhaps because of) its emotional presentation of historical facts.⁷⁶ Dubnow (1860-1941), a Russian Jew,

⁷⁴ Abramson. Ibid. xiv.

⁷⁵ Jan Karski. Story of a Secret State. My Report to the World. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1945.

⁷⁶ Simon M. Dubnow. History of the Jews in Russia and Poland. Trans. Israel Friedlander. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1918. For a current, integral history see: Antony Polonsky. The Jews in Poland and Russia. Vol. 2. London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012. For Vogel studies especially: Polonsky. Ibid. Vol. 2. This volume

born like Vogel in the Jewish Pale of Settlement and a contemporary of Vogel (though a generation older), shared the latter's fate, albeit differently. Whereas Vogel was secretly and namelessly killed in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, there were some witnesses to the crime committed against Simon Dubnow by a Nazi collaborator, obviously aware of the lack of interest in the fate of the Russian Jews. Dubnow, a Jewish historian until his last breath, insisted that his fellow Jewish prisoners record the atrocities committed against the Jews of Russia. Koppel Pinson, another historian, writes about this event in the section "Simon Dubnow" in *Nationalism and History: Essays on Old and New Judaism:*

In August 1933, when Hitler came to power, Dubnow moved from Berlin to Riga, Latvia. There he wrote his autobiographical Book of my Life. When the Russians came into Latvia, Dubnow was afraid that they would not spare him because of his well-known anti-Bolshevist record. But to his surprise they did not molest him. Perhaps it was because they did not remain long enough. In any case, when the Nazis entered Riga the fate of all the Jews there was sealed. We have several versions by refugees from Riga about Dubnow's last days. They vary in details. But the main course of events was apparently along the following lines. When the Nazis entered Riga they evicted Dubnow from his home and seized his entire library. They summoned him for questioning at Gestapo headquarters and then placed him in a home for the aged. After a short period of ghetto organization the Nazis liquidated the ghetto at the end of October 1941 and a month later they carried out their first "action" against the Riga Jews. Dubnow was seriously ill, but friends managed to conceal him for a while. On the night of December 7-8 the Nazis carried out their second "action." All the old and sick as well as the women in advanced pregnancy were herded together in buses. Dubnow was also taken outside to be squeezed into one of these over-loaded buses. He was in high fever at the time and was hardly able to move his feeble legs. A Latvian militiaman then advanced and fired a bullet in Dubnow's back and the sainted martyr fell dead on the spot. The next day several friends buried him in the old cemetery in the Riga ghetto. A story went round that the last words that Dubnow muttered as he was being led out to the bus were: "Brothers, Jews, don't forget! Recount what you hear and see! Brothers make a record of it all!" His sense of history and the spirit of Nahpesa v'nahkora did not forsake him even to his bitter end.77

considers the deterioration of the situation of the Jews in the period from 1881 to 1914 and the Jewish politics that led to the development of new movements: Zionism, socialism, autonomism, the emergence of modern Hebrew and Yiddish literature, Jewish urbanisation and the rise of Jewish mass culture. Galicia, Prussian Poland, the Kingdom of Poland and the tsarist empire are all dealt with individually, as are the main towns.

⁷⁷ Simon Dubnow. Nationalism and History: Essays on Old and New Judaism. Ed. Koppel Pinson. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1958. 39. The expression

Except for Polonsky, post-World War Two historiographers of Russian Jewry have restricted themselves to selected historical periods. An example is Salo W. Baron, in his informative study on The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets (1964), written almost half a century after Dubnow's integral study of Russian Jewry, and leaning on it. Baron's work has been crucial to this study as it expands on the history of Jews under the two Tsars that ruled during Vogel's life in the Russian Pale of Settlement (1891-1912) before he fled to the West: Tsar Alexander III and Tsar Nicholas II. Baron writes that, alongside the Tsars, the Russian Christian Orthodox Church exercised considerable spiritual and political power. It worked as a government agency and was used by the Tsars to various degrees as a tool during their imperial campaigns of russification and persecution of the Jews.⁷⁸ One of the reasons why Vogel's Russian Jewish background is particularly crucial to my analysis of his novel Married life (chapter 6) is that it helped me as a modern Western reader to avoid looking at Vogel's novel from a self-same, restricted Western perspective. Marcel Proust describes this expressively in his Remembrance of Things Past (1923):

... if we visited Mars or Venus keeping the same senses, they would clothe in the same aspect as the things of the earth everything that we should be capable of seeing. The only true voyage of discovery, the only fountain of Eternal Youth, would be not to visit if ... if we visited Mars or Venus keeping the same senses they would clothe in the same aspects as the things of the earth everything that we should be capable of seeing. The only true voyage of discovery the only fountain of eternal youth would he not to visit strange lands, but to possess other eyes, to behold the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to behold the hundred universes that each of them beholds, that each of them is.⁷⁹

3.9 Conclusion

A substantial part of this chapter has been devoted to Eastern European history for reasons I have expounded before. Compared to the sea of historical infor-

Nahpesa v'nahkora comes from Lamentations 3:40: "Let us sift through and investigate our ways".

⁷⁸ Tsar Alexander III (ruled 1881-1894), believed that all cultures and nationalities within the empire should become *Great Russians*. This was referred to as *russification*, which implied that all the ethnic groups that were concerned about their culture at the expense of Russia's as a whole had to become loyal to Russia and the Tsar, rather than to their ethnic leaders. For instance, they had to be Russians first, instead of a Kazak, or Cossack, or a Jew for that matter.

⁷⁹ Marcel Proust. Remembrance of Things Past. The Captive. Part Two. Trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff. New York: Chatto and Windus, 1941.

mation we have about Western and Central Europe (Kafka's cultural historical context), relatively little is known about the Eastern European cultural context in which David Vogel lived, travelled and studied before he came to Vienna, and in which he died. Chapter 5 will examine anti-Jewishness in Vogel's native country Russia, as an introduction to my analysis of his novel *Married Life* in chapter 6. If we want to make what Proust calls a "true voyage of discovery", we have to look at Vogel's work "with other eyes", to behold the "hundred universes" that I have sensed in every sentence of *Married Life*, but that I have missed in the reception of his novel.

