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5 DAVID VOGEL (1891-1944) BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

5.1 Introduction

Chapters 5 and 6 of this study are dedicated to the Russian-Jewish- Hebrew writer David Vogel (born in Satanów, Podolia, in 1891 and died in 1944 in Auschwitz), and his Hebrew novel *Married Life* (*Hayei Nisu'im*, חיי נישואים, 1929-30).¹⁵⁶ Chapters 5 and 6 are complementary in the sense that chapter 5 focuses on the cultural historical Jewish context in which Vogel wrote and lived before his exile; in chapter 6 I have tried to make the logics of abjection visible in Vogel's text, *Married Life*, particularly in its focus on the protagonist's subjective experience of Vienna as a Russian Jewish exile.

The preceding methodology aims to do justice to Vogel's stubborn and courageous efforts to forge – as he writes in his diary – an identity from the (Hebrew) word, as a writer and a Russian Jewish exile. Thus, like most Eastern European and Russian Jews in Central and Western Europe, Vogel rejects assimilation into a nasty, anti-Semitic European culture, although he admires that culture's philosophy, literature and art. I will show in the next chapter that this ambivalence is at the same time Vogel's and other Eastern European and Russian Jewish exiles' dilemma and an underlying literary theme. Vogel also rejected Zionism as the only political possibility for a Jewish identity in an anti-Semitic world, although he sympathised with the movement. Critics who blamed him for being anti-Zionist are wrong: Vogel went to Tel Aviv (Palestine) in 1929 in an attempt to get *Married Life* published as he could not find a Jewish publisher in Europe. Once in Tel Aviv, his novel was published and he was offered a teaching job, which he refused. The reason for that was in all likelihood not political but simply physical: both Vogel and his wife suffered from tuberculosis and could not stand the exacting heat of

¹⁵⁶ *Married Life* (חיי נישואים) 1929-30. Tel Aviv: Mitzpeh, 1929. Jerusalem: Hakibbutz Hameuchad/Siman Kriah/Keter, 1986, 2000. Trans. Dalya Bilu. British edition: London: Peter Halban, 1988. Quotations in English and page numbers refer to this edition as *Married Life*.

Bilu's translation is based on the 1986 Hebrew edition by Menakhem Perry. In 2010, Lilach Netanel, a young scholar from Bar-Ilan University, discovered in Genazim, the archive of the Hebrew Writers' Association in Tel Aviv, a sheaf of papers covered with Vogel's dense, cramped handwriting, which appeared to be the manuscript of an as yet unknown, and now recently published, Viennese Hebrew novel by Vogel, *Viennese Romance*. Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 2012. Translations in English and Dutch, the latter by Kees Meiling, Amsterdam: Atheneum, 2014.

the Palestinian climate. That is why Vogel, back in Europe, eventually chose the healthy mountain climate of Hauteville (France) to live in and cure his illness.

When Vogel wrote *Married Life* in Paris (1929-30), and even long before that, it was more than obvious that full assimilation was no longer an option for Jews in Europe: assimilated or not, converted to Roman Catholicism or not, a Jew remained a Jew in the eyes of his non-Jewish Others. Besides, Eastern European and Russian Jews, coming from orthodox environments, seldom chose full assimilation, let alone conversion to Catholicism, which was not uncommon in Vienna. It is telling, in this connection, and satirical, that in *Married Life* Thea, the Catholic Austrian wife, converts to Judaism before her marriage to the Galician Jewish Gurdweill, instead of him converting to her religion, Roman Catholicism.

Chapter 5 does not introduce new historical facts. Rather it brings together dispersed, historical and literary historical facts, in an attempt to reconstruct Vogel's position as a Jewish exile on the geographical-cultural border of two cultures: his orthodox, Yiddish-Russian culture of origin, and its Western other, the Central and Western European, German-oriented culture that is the literary *mise en scène* in which abjection becomes visible. Drawing a sketch of that *mise en scène* as the décor of the protagonist's struggle for identity is the object of this chapter.

5.2 Vogel's Cultural Historical Contexts: Russia and Vienna

I have already given a very broad overview of Vogel's Russian Jewish historical and geographical background, the Russian Pale of Settlement, in chapter 3 of this study. This fifth chapter, however, has been tailored to the historical and literary historical specifics relating to David Vogel's identity as a Russian Jew and a modern Hebrew writer in Vienna. *Not* the elitist Vienna of assimilated Jewry, its music, art, architecture and literature, as evoked in Schorske's *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* and Stefan Zweig's Austrian memoir *The World of Yesterday*, with their evocation of a bygone world of security.¹⁵⁷ Rather, I will try to conjure Vogel's view of Vienna as the view of an outsider, a Russian-Jewish refugee faced with a Jewish intellectual community torn between orthodoxy, Zionism and the impossibility of social assimilation on account of an inextricable, political anti-Semitism. To try and capture that outsider's view I will first explore aspects of Vogel's experience as a Jew in Russia.

¹⁵⁷ Stefan Zweig. *Die Welt von Gestern: Erinnerungen eines Europäers (1944)*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1992; Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*. New York: Knopf, 1980.

David Vogel was born in 1891, in Satanów (also spelled Satanoff) in the province of Podolia in Russia, then under the regime of Tsar Alexander Romanov III, Tsar of Russia, King of Poland and Grand Prince of Finland from 1881-1894. Podolia was situated in the Jewish Pale of Settlement, the area - as I have pointed out in chapter 3 - to which Jewish life was restricted under the Tsars, and which covered White Russia north of the river Neman, Western Ukraine: the district between the rivers Dnieper and Dniester and part of Moldavia. The history of the Jews under the Christian Tsars was marked by cruelty and arbitrariness: pogroms, deportations, forced emigration, etc. The differences and analogies with the history of the Jews in Central and Western Europe invite further investigation.

Actually, the history of the Jews in Russia should be studied together with that of the Slavic peoples, who lived in poverty, illiteracy and serfdom under the rule of the Tsars and the Russian Orthodox Church, unimaginable in the eyes of a Westerner. Yet, a comparative study of Russian and Russian-Jewish history would transgress the boundaries of my research field in this study. For my purposes, suffice it to say that Russia, in Vogel's days, was a powerful, unintelligibly vast and, for the Tsar as a ruler, unwieldy Empire, larger than the whole of Europe. It was inhabited by many different ethnic peoples, ruled by one, absolute ruler and had seen no cultural movements comparable with the Western Enlightenment. Revolutionary movements in Russia came much later than in Europe, where the French Revolution took place in 1789. The Russian revolutions took place in 1905 (Vogel was fourteen) and 1917 (Vogel was twenty-six and lived in Vienna). In Russia, before the 1917 revolution, the Christian Orthodox Church was a spiritually and politically powerful institution that hated Jews, not because they were Jews, but because they were others: not Christians and Slavs, and thus different, "not us".

Historically speaking, the term anti-Semitism to qualify Russian hatred of Jews is out of context and incorrect. As the German-Jewish writer Jakob Wasserman observed in his diary (see chapter 1), anti-Semitism as political hatred of the Jews was something typically German. The term anti-Semitism was coined by the German political agitator Wilhelm Marr (1819-1904), founder of the first Anti-Semitic League.¹⁵⁸ Simon Dubnow, the Jewish historian from Belarus (see chapter 3), calls fear of the Jews *Judeophobia*. The social effects of *Judeophobia* for Jews in Russia were similar to those anywhere else in Europe: pogroms (violent mass attacks), murder and violence. Pogroms, in some Russian districts and towns more frequent than in others, were continuously experienced by Russian Jews, in particular in the Pale of Settlement, but also - as far as there were any Jews outside

¹⁵⁸ Wilhelm Marr. *Der Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanenthum vom nicht confessionellen Standpunkt aus betrachtet*. Bern: Rudolph Costenoble, 1879.

the Pale - in the closed, agrarian communities of Russia as well as in the big cities. Jews, who had no territory of their own, except the one they had been deported to, *The Pale*, and did not belong to the Christian Slavic peoples, were viewed as aliens, and triggered in the Russian mind the fear of difference, of the Other, manifest in Russian parlance in the distinction between our own (*svoi*) and aliens (*chuzie*).

To the Christian Russian Tsars, the otherness of Jews presented a political problem. They were concerned by the possible threat posed by Jews to Tsarist absolute power. Through their religious studies, Jews were literate, at least compared to the vast majority of their Russian neighbours, and therefore potential rebels. Moreover, Jewish autonomy was felt to be a threat to the feudal state on account of the Jews' commercial entrepreneurship, and their traditional autonomy through a vast network of communal institutions of their own, which provided not only for their religious needs but also took care of such semi-secular requirements as education, the judiciary and social welfare.¹⁵⁹

Tsarist policy regarding the Jews was marked from the eighteenth century onwards by (1) attempts to extinguish the Jews' otherness through (compulsive) conversion to Christianity, (2) restrictions to the Jews' socio-economical influence by excluding them from an array of professions and occupations, and (3) geographical isolation by empaling Jews, which started under the reign of the Russian Empress Catherine the Great (1729-96, reigned 1762-96), to the Pale of Settlement in order to be able to better keep them under tsarist control. What had provoked the empress Catharina's sweeping removal of the Jews to the Pale was Russia's annexation of the Eastern provinces of Poland and Lithuania. At a loss what to do about the vast numbers of Jews in those provinces, Catherine came back on her earlier promise to give the Jews in those countries the same rights as the original population. She decided that it was wiser to let the Jews of the newly acquired provinces spread out into the Empire's interior provinces, which marked the beginnings of the transportations to the Jewish Pale of Settlement (from 1792 onward) whose borders the Jews were not allowed to cross. Jews were also deported to the Pale from other regions of Russia and Eastern Europe and were subsequently forbidden to live or travel outside the Pale - and even in some towns within the Pale, for which they needed a special permit.

The deportation of Jews to the Pale remained a recurring feature of Tsarist politics up to Vogel's birth in 1891 and after. In 1891, under Tsar Alexander III (1881-94), 20,000 Jews were expelled from Moscow and deported to the Pale, many of them in chains. The census of 1897, under Tsar Nicholas II (1868-1918),

¹⁵⁹ Salo W. Baron. *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets* (1964). Rev. ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1987. 17.

when Vogel was six years old, indicated that most of the Jews had remained confined to the Pale: almost 5,000,000 Jews lived in the Pale, and only 200,000 lived elsewhere in Western Russia. Jews had access to only a restricted number of professions and occupations and were not allowed to work in public or governmental service.

In addition to the harsh rules imposed on the Jews by Tsar Alexander III, writes Baron, the Industrial Revolution blown over from the West caused a dramatic change in Russia for the whole population, including the Jews. The rapid urban and industrial growth and the rise of a Jewish/non-Jewish workers' proletariat as a result of industrialisation began to change the feudal face of Russia. The professional lives of Jews who used to work as artisans (shoemakers, tailors, tinkers, saddlers, bakers, carpenters, etc.) were disrupted by rapid urbanisation and industrial mass production, which forced them to look at the new mills for employment. Here they also faced what had *not* changed: discrimination from Christian employers and workers alike. Many employers considered Jews ill-suited for the work and many Christian workers were simply unwilling to accept them as co-workers. Collisions inevitably took place between the workers of the two communities, although not on a large scale. However, industrialisation also opened up possibilities for Jewish emancipation; Jews joined upcoming Russian socialist movements and also created one of their own, in 1897 (Vogel was six). It was named the *Yiddish Bund* (*Yiddischer Arbeter Bund in Lite, Poyln, un Rusland*) or in English: *The General Union of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland and Russia*, which was founded by a number of socialist Jews led by Alexander Kremer (1865-1935) in Vilnius, thirteen years before Vogel visited that city to study there at the *yeshiva*, or Jewish college.

This brings me to another very important aspect of the universe of Vogel's mind: Jewish education as it functioned in Polish Galicia (where Gurdweill, the protagonist of *Married Life*, came from) and in Russia until the years before the First World War when Vogel fled to Vienna (1912). Education, for those Jews, had quite different connotations than in the West: it was concerned with religion/emotion/identity, personal and religious, a way of life rather than a section of it, in short, the German word *Bildung* seems more suitable. I will try to give an impression of Jewish education in Russia and Poland.

Elementary Education: *The Heder*

The *heder* (Hebrew *heder*; Yiddish *kheyder*; English: room) was the widely accepted elementary educational framework among Eastern European Jewry since the Middle Ages. Study in the *heder* was restricted to religious subjects and considered an integral part in the process of raising and socializing a Jewish child, including the inculcation of Jewish religious and cultural values through imparting basic knowledge of the canonical sources Torah, Mishnah, Talmud- and of the liturgy.¹⁶⁰



Alter Kacyzne. *Poyln, Jewish Life in the Old Country*.
Ed. Marek Web. New York: Henry Holt, 1999.

Education for Jews in Russia and Poland was a purely private matter: the responsibility of the parents - that is, until the age of thirteen. Then, after their Bar Mitzvah and thus reaching religious adulthood, boys were responsible for their own education. The Jewish community saw to it that no male Jewish child between the ages of four and thirteen should be deprived from at least a good elementary Jewish education at the *heder*. The result, writes Baron, was a sharp contrast between the Jews and their Christian-Russian neighbours who were often illiterate.¹⁶¹ The *heder* curriculum consisted exclusively of Jewish subjects and the mas-

¹⁶⁰ Mordechai Zalkin. *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, 2008. Trans. Barry Walfish. Ed. Gershon David Hundert. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. Volume I. 708-10. Lemma: Heder.

¹⁶¹ Baron. *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*. 116-17.

tering of the Hebrew *Aleph-Beth*. The teachers, or *melameds* – apart from gifted ones who gave their pupils excellent instruction – were often either untrained for their jobs, or had taken on their profession only because they had failed in other jobs. The school system was subject to fierce criticism, both from enlightened Jews as from outsiders, yet, writes Baron, in general it gave good elementary training in Jewish subjects preparing boys under the age of thirteen for advanced religious education. Girls did not have to study, but most of them were taught how to recite prayers and read Yiddish translations of the Bible.¹⁶²

Yekhiel Shtern's article "A Kheyder in Tyszowce (Yiddish: *Tishevits*)", a reminiscence of his own *heder* in Poland, gives a lively picture of that school type, what it looked like, inside and out, and its teaching methods:

The inside [of the *heder*] consisted of a large square room divided in two by a screen. Behind the screen was the teacher's bedroom and kitchen. We used to call it 'the teacher's alcove'. Over the opening of the alcove hung a red sheet covered with countless white dots. We would wrap ourselves in that sheet and play hide-and-seek. During the winter, at twilight, when the teacher and his helpers were in the synagogue, and the schoolboys who studied at night were alone, this sheet was converted into a *tales* (praying shawl), and 'would-be' magicians wrapped themselves around in it and imitated the cantor in the synagogue.¹⁶³

In the following section Shtern recounts how a Jewish boy's life became bound up with the *heder* and its *melamed* from the day:

The *Shir hamaalot* amulets which were pasted up in the room of a mother in child-birth, were purchased from the teacher of the kheyder. On the seventh day after birth the [teacher's] helper would bring the school-children, after class to the home of the new-born and there read the *Shema* with them.¹⁶⁴ For the ritual of circumcision, a special kind of honey-cake, called *reshete*, was prepared. This *reshete* was brought to the teacher before baking and the teacher would mark out on the dough the form of a little fish and the words *Mazl tov*. He also would make a lot of little holes over the whole cake. That is why it was called *reshete*, which means a sort of iron sieve. The little fish was supposed to indicate that Jews were to multiply like fish.

When a boy became three years old, his parents would wrap him in a *tales* (prayer shawl) and bring him to the kheyder. The children in the kheyder

¹⁶² For instance, the *Tsene-rene*, composed by Yankev ben Yitskhok Ashkenazi of Janów, which took its name from *tse'edah u-re'edah benot Tsiyon* ("Go forth and look, daughters of Zion"), a phrase from verse 3:11 of the Song of Songs.

¹⁶³ Yekhiel Shtern. "A Kheyder in Tyszowice (Yiddish: *Tishevits*)". *East European Jews in two Worlds. Studies from the YIVO Annual*. Ed. Deborah Dashe Moore. Evanstone: North Western University Press and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 1989. 53.

¹⁶⁴ "I lift my eyes to the mountains - from where my help will come." Psalm 121:1.

would stand around, look at him and wait for candy and cookies that the parents would distribute. The teacher's wife would come in and wished the parent of the child "that he should be eager to learn".

The teacher would then take the child to the table and show him the alphabet printed in large letters on the first page of the prayer book. He would point out the letters tet, mem, alef, jod, dalet, shin, and then combine them into the Hebrew for "the Lord is Truth" and the child would repeat it after the teacher. After class the teacher would let a coin drop on the table from on high. The sound of the coin on the table would startle the new pupil and the teacher would say: "An angel threw this down for you so that you should be eager to learn."¹⁶⁵

Another less romantic *kheyder* image in the following correspondence from Vitebsk (1894) is recounted in Baron's *The Russian Jews under the Tsars and Soviets*:

Our Talmud Torahs are filthy rooms crowded from nine in the morning until nine in the evening, with pale, starved children. These remain in this contaminated atmosphere for twelve hours at a time and see only their bent, exhausted teachers. ... Most of them are clad in rags; some of them are almost naked... Their faces are pale and sickly, and their bodies are evidently not strong. In parties of twenty or thirty, and at times more, they all repeat some lesson aloud after their instructor. He who has not listened to the almost absurd commentaries of the ignorant melamed (teacher) cannot even imagine how little the children gain from such instruction.¹⁶⁶

Institutions for advanced Jewish education, *yeshivas*, dedicated to Talmud studies, were far and between compared to *heders*. From the age of thirteen when, religiously speaking, Jewish boys reach adulthood after their Bar Mitzvah, many left home and travelled around in search of a *yeshiva* that would accept them as a student. *Yeshivas* were run by distinguished rabbis and owed their prestige to the number of students that attended their schools, ranging from adolescent boys to married young men. The subject of study at the *yeshiva* was exclusively the Babylonian Talmud, a vast corpus of texts written in a mix of Hebrew and its cognate language, Aramaic. The language spoken in the *yeshivas* was Yiddish.

Small *yeshivas* were financed locally, and students were assigned to Jewish families for their daily meals. Larger, national *yeshivas* sent messengers out to collect donations from Jewish communities all over the Pale. This money provided the students with a small stipend. They were also assigned to Jewish families for meals but only on Sabbaths and holidays. Those financing methods, however,

¹⁶⁵ Shtern. "A Kheyder in Tyszowice". 55.

¹⁶⁶ Baron. *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*. 118.

were highly inadequate and entailed great hardship for teachers and students. Yet the majority of both accepted these difficulties without demurring. They were proud of their academies' intellectual achievements whilst considering their own work as the fulfilment of Judaism's supreme commandment. Some *yeshivas* in Vogel's days also taught secular subjects. It was the *yeshivas*' outstanding achievement to inspire their students with an often lifelong dedication to self-study. This may baffle the twenty-first century reader living in a market culture tuned to instant gratification. Robert Alter writes:

The yeshiva population was the intellectual elite of Central and Eastern European pre-modern Jewry. The Hebrew writers produced by the yeshivas were elite within elite. In part, I mean simply that they were the equivalent of the A+ students in the system, and certainly the evidence many of them offer of retentive memory and (to a lesser degree) of dialectic subtlety, of beqi'ut and harifut, is formidable. But I am also referring to a rather special mental aptitude which was not necessarily given special value within the system but which would have abundant uses outside the system, something that the Germans call 'Sprachgefühl', an innate sense, like perfect pitch in music, for how language should properly sound, joined with a relish for the sonorities and the semantic colorations of Hebrew words in their classical idiomatic combinations.¹⁶⁷

Baron gives a telling example of that dedication, quoted from the Pauline Wengeroff's *Memoirs*, reminiscing how her father, a busy and wealthy (building) contractor, used to get up at four o'clock every morning so that he could devote several hours to Talmudic studies before attending synagogue services, and then going about his business.¹⁶⁸

During the three years preceding his flight to Vienna in 1912, Vogel had travelled to and lived in Odessa, Lvov and Vilnius, all well-known Eastern European-Russian centres of Jewish learning and culture whose traditions of Jewish orthodoxy/assimilation, Zionism, Socialism (the *Bund*) and other forms of Jewish emancipation shaped his mind whilst studying there.¹⁶⁹ Vogel often lovingly

¹⁶⁷ Robert Alter. *The Invention of Hebrew Prose: Modern Fiction and the Language of Realism*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988. 8.

¹⁶⁸ Baron. *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*. 119, note 372; Pauline Wengeroff. *Memoiren einer Grossmutter: Bilder aus der Kulturgeschichte der Juden Russlands im 19. Jahrhundert*. 2nd ed. Vol. I. Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1913-1919. 5, 9, 143 ff.

¹⁶⁹ Vilnius: a town in Lithuania. Referred to as Vilna (Russian), Wilno (Polish) and Vilne (Yiddish). Vogel, a Russian Jew, uses the Russian name Vilna in his diary. From the 15th century onwards the city became a centre of rabbinical study, called the "Lithuanian Jerusalem" and "The citadel of Culture". Its best-known scholar was Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, universally known as the Vilna Gaon. Vilna was one of the three major cities of Jewish education, the others were:

remembers Vilnius in his diary, yet there are no particulars as to the curricula he took part in, except that they appeared to have instilled in him a deep love of, and dedication to the study of Hebrew (he speaks of “my Hebrew” in his diary), his constant preoccupation.

5.3 Vogel's Personal Hebrew Diary

Vogel's diary *The End of the Days* (*Ketsot Hayamim*), written in Vienna between 20 September 1912 and 2 August 1922, is one of the few sources from which to draw biographical information about Vogel, not only about his arrival in Vienna but also about his experiences in his home country, the Jewish Pale of Settlement.

Ketsot Hayamim was written in Hebrew and published together with the originally Yiddish *Kulam Yatseu La'krav*¹⁷⁰ (*They All Went Into Battle*, 1941-42) in one single Hebrew volume *Tachanot Kavot* (*Extinguished Stations*, 1990).¹⁷¹ In this chapter I use the only German translation of *Tachanot Kavot*, which is confusingly named after one of the diaries in which it appears.¹⁷²

Das Ende der Tage (*The End of the Days*), which covers pages 23-113 of the German translation, gives the impression that Vogel is talking to himself. If ever meant for publication, which seems doubtful, it would have reached a very limited Jewish audience because of its very Hebrew language. Such audience would have to be able to read Hebrew and be familiar with Vogel's historical contexts, its references to historical facts being both scant and often no more than allusions assuming that the reader shares the author's cultural-religious frame of reference.

- Lvov (Polish: Lwów, German and Yiddish: Lemberg), capital of Galicia, was a cultural and political focus of Galician Jewry between 1880 and the First World War and a centre of the Zionist movement from 1880 until 1939.

- Odessa, in the Ukraine, was a centre of Russian Jewish assimilation and at the same time a focus of Jewish literary and nationalist life. The first secular school for Russian Jews (1824), the first Russian Jewish newspaper *Rasviet* (1860) and the pioneer Hebrew newspaper in Russia *HaMelitz* were founded in Odessa. Many of the great figures of modern Hebrew literature, such as Mendele Mocher Seforim, Bialik, Klausner (historian and professor of Hebrew literature), Ahad Ha'am (advocate of cultural Zionism) and Asher Ginsberg (a leading Eastern European Jewish essayist), were active in Odessa.

¹⁷⁰ The originally Yiddish *Kulam Yatseu La'krav* was translated into Hebrew by Menakhem Perry, who in an editorial note, expressed doubt as to whether it was a diary or a novel.

¹⁷¹ *Tachanot Kavot*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad/Siman Kriach, 1990.

¹⁷² David Vogel. *Das Ende der Tage: Tagebücher und autobiographische Aufzeichnungen 1912-22 und 1941/42*. Trans. Ruth Achlama. Munich: Paul List Verlag, 1995. 23-113. The translation was carried out under the auspices of *The Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature*. Foreword by Amir Eschel. German translation of David Vogel. *Tachanot Kavot*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad/Siman Kriach, 1990. In this study I focus on Vogel's diary in the German edition of the same name as the translation: David Vogel. *Das Ende der Tage: Tagebücher und autobiographische Aufzeichnungen 1912-22 und 1941/42*.

Allusions, as far as Vogel's diary is concerned, are the only clues in *Ketsot Hayamim* to his historical background. The diary, however, has been invaluable in my attempt to place Vogel's life and work into some historical frame of reference, even if the historical facts are often only hinted at or mentioned in passing. As I have noted before, unlike Kafka's life, which has been the subject of several excellent biographies, in Vogel's case the Western reader has not much to go on. For instance, his flight to the west to evade the Russian conscription of young Jews (the *rekruchina*) and the significance of his stay in Vilnius whose praises he sings repeatedly in the diary, have not been documented.¹⁷³ First, however, I will discuss the reason for Vogel's flight to Vienna and explore Jewish life in Vienna at the time he arrived there in 1912.

Married Life would perhaps never have been written and Vogel would probably have remained in his beloved Vilnius, had he not been forced, like all young Russian Jews in his days, to cross the Austrian-Russian border to evade the twenty-five years' conscription of Jews into the Russian army: the *rekruchina*. The first diary entry recounts Vogel's return to Satanów, his native town in Podolia (Russia) in the Jewish Pale of Settlement on Friday 20 September 1912.¹⁷⁴ In this entry (Vogel is twenty-one then) he writes that he is not yet certain as to what to do: join the Russian army, or escape that ordeal by crossing the Russian-Austrian border. He obviously chose the latter, since he had returned to his birthplace Satanów, very close to the Russian-Austrian border.

Most young Russian Jews who crossed the border went to Galicia, then Austrian, which had a large Orthodox Jewish community, or elsewhere in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose emperor Franz Joseph was widely known among the Eastern European Jewry for his (relative) tolerance towards the Jewish people.¹⁷⁵ The Russian secret police were watching the border to prevent Jewish boys from shirking the *rekruchina* and arrested him. He was jailed and subsequently returned to Satanów, where he started a new diary as the previous one had been stolen. The entry touches on a powerful historical issue affecting the lives of young Jews living in the Pale of Settlement. Jewish men, aged eighteen onwards, were obliged by law to serve twenty-five years in the Russian army, as decreed by Tsar Nicholas

¹⁷³ The young Vogel spent some time in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, which was nicknamed "The Jerusalem of the North", on account of being an important centre of Jewish learning. The city was renowned for its *yeshivas*, or higher Talmud schools, which Vogel clearly visited whilst in Vilnius, in the years before he fled to Vienna.

¹⁷⁴ David Vogel. *Das Ende der Tage: Tagebücher und autobiographische Aufzeichnungen 1912-22 und 1941/42*. 23.

¹⁷⁵ Galicia, the cradle of Orthodox Jewry, was a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under Franz Joseph I between 1848 and 1918. It bordered on north-west Poland and Western Ukraine.

I in 1827. Until then, Jews had fulfilled their military duty by paying a special tax. In 1827 Tsar Nicholas I abolished this option, stating in a special memorandum that “the chief benefit to be derived from the drafting of Jews is the certainty that it will move them most effectively to change their religion”.

This meant that young Jews not only had to serve in the Russian army for twenty-five years but also that they were constantly pressurised to convert to (Russian Orthodox) Christianity. “Get yourselves baptised, scoundrels, or else I will flog you to death”, one commander roared. Soon the age of eighteen was no longer a hard and fast limit and much younger Jewish boys were rounded up and made to join the army. Estranged from their communities, living as outcasts among hostile comrades, removed at a tender age (sometimes as young as eight if there were not enough Jews for the army) from their families and friends, a great many *cantonists*, as they were called, sooner or later submitted to baptism. A few resisted and survived all tribulations. Others preferred suicide to conversion. “Since most Jewish families knew what to expect, including forced baptism, many youngsters of draft-age fled to forests, mutilated their bodies so as to become ineligible for service, and resorted to all sorts of subterfuges to evade the draft.” Salo Baron, quoting from Dubnow, recounts how Alexander Herzen witnessed what he called “one of the most awful sights I have ever seen” in a small village of the province of Vyatka:

Pale, worn out, with frightened faces, they stood in thick, clumsy soldiers’ overcoats, with stand up collars, fixing helpless, pitiful eyes on the garrison soldiers, who were roughly getting them into ranks. The white lips, the blue rings under the eyes, looked like fever, or chill. And these sick children, without care or kindness, exposed to the icy wind that blows straight from the Arctic Ocean, were going to their graves.... Boys of twelve or thirteen might somehow have survived, but little fellows of eight or ten ... No painting could reproduce the horror of that scene.¹⁷⁶

5.4 *Vienna at the Time of Vogel’s Arrival: the Political Situation for Jews and the Jewish Identity Crisis*

What was Vienna like between 1912 and 1925, when Vogel lived there? Bruce Pauley (1987) gives a succinct and factual account of the post-First World War situation after the disintegration of Franz Joseph’s Austro-Hungarian Empire.

¹⁷⁶ Baron. *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*. 29-31. The quote is from Alexander Ivanovitch Herzen’s (1812–1870) autobiography *Byloye I dumy* (Reminiscences and Meditations) in Constance Garnett’s English translation entitled *Alexander Herzen. My Past and Thoughts*. 6 vols. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1924-26, I. 270 ff. Herzen, himself not Jewish, was a Russian dissident thinker/writer, and founder of Russian populism.

[A]ntisemitism was probably more intense in Austria than anywhere else in western or central Europe including Pre-Nazi Germany, though it was in all likelihood less extreme than in Poland, Hungary, Rumania, or Lithuania. Both Austrian antisemitism and Jewish migration into Vienna drastically increased as a result of the Great War of 1914-18. Now, for the first time in the modern era, antisemitism became far more *salonfähig* and no longer the monopoly of a lunatic fringe.¹⁷⁷

Habsburg Austria had the largest Jewish community on the European continent outside tsarist Russia where Vogel had lived until 1912. The Western, Austrian half of Franz Joseph's monarchy, counted almost 1.3 million Jews, who were never officially recognised as constituting a nationality, although they represented 4.7 percent of the population, more than the Slovenes, Serbs, Croats or Italians. In Austria, Jews mainly identified with the ten million Germans to whom they owed their emancipation and who, with the Hungarians, were the two dominant nationalities in the Habsburg Empire.¹⁷⁸ In the early decades of the twentieth century, writes Wistrich, *Deutschtum* (Germanness) appeared in a new guise: not as a liberating banner of enlightened reason and Jewish emancipation, but as its very antithesis, *Volksdeutschtum* (the people's Germanness), which demanded the exclusion of Jews from German student fraternities, literary clubs and societies, school associations and all forms of political activities.¹⁷⁹ What it felt for *Ostjuden* like Vogel to live in the political climate of interbellum Vienna was concisely formulated by the Jewish writer Joseph Roth in *Juden auf Wanderschaft* (1927), published two years before Vogel's *Married Life*:

The [Great] war caused a lot of Jewish refugees to come to Vienna. For, as long as their homelands were occupied, they were entitled to "support". Not that money was sent to them where they were. They had to stand in line for it on the coldest winter days, and into the night. All of them: old people, invalids, women and children... When the war was over, they were repatriated, sometimes forcibly. A Social Democratic Provincial Governor had them thrown out. To Christian Socialists they are Jews. To German Nationalists, they are Semitic. To Social Democrats they are unproductive elements.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Bruce F. Pauley. "Political Antisemitism in Interwar Vienna". *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture in Vienna*, Eds. Ivar Oxaal, Michael Pollak and Gerhard Botz. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987. 152-53.

¹⁷⁸ Robert S Wistrich. *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*. New York, Schocken Books, 1994. 31-3.

¹⁷⁹ Wistrich. *Ibid.*, 34-5. *Volksdeutschtum*, with its ideals of body culture and physical health, emerged in Austria in the 1880s, and was the popular counterpart of the *Deutschtum* of the German and German-Jewish elite whose ideals were *Bildung*, art and culture.

¹⁸⁰ Joseph Roth. *The Wandering Jews*. Trans. Michael Hofmann. New York: Norton, 2001. 67.

This is the only reference I found to the way the *Ostjuden* regarded the West. With what frame of mind did they look at the West, particularly at their fellow Jews? What exactly did they expect to find in the West? This is relevant in view of Vogel's satiric tone in *Married Life*. Again, this has best been expressed, not by a historian but by Joseph Roth, an *Ostjude* from Russia and refugee in Germany (at some time living in Berlin), a writer and travelling journalist. In *Juden auf Wanderschaft*, Joseph Roth says:

The Eastern Jew in his homeland knows nothing of the social injustice of the west; nothing of the habitual bias that governs the actions, decisions, and opinions of the average Western European; nothing of the narrowness of the Western perspective, jagged with factory smokestacks and framed by power plants; nothing of the sheer hatred, that, like a life-prolonging (though lethal) drug, is so powerful that it is tended like some Eternal Flame, at which these selfish peoples and nations warm themselves. The Eastern Jew looks to the west with a longing that it does not merit. To the Eastern Jew, the west signifies freedom, justice, civilisation, and the possibility to work and develop his talents. ... To the Eastern Jew, Germany, for example, remains the land of Goethe and Schiller, of the German poets, with whom every keen Jewish youth is far more conversant than our own swastika'd secondary school pupils... the Eastern Jew sees none of the advantages of his homeland. He sees nothing of the boundless horizon, nothing of the quality of the people, in whom simplicity can produce holy men and murderers, melodies of melancholy, grandeur and obsessive passion. He fails to see the goodness of the Slav people whose coarseness remains more decent than the house-trained animality of the Western European, his secretive perversions, his cringing before the Law, with his well-bred hat in his apprehensive hand...¹⁸¹

5.5 Vogel's Disillusionment with Vienna as an *Ostjude*

Vogel's exile period in Vienna was representative of the lives of exiles from the east for a number of reasons. From his homeland status of yeshiva student in Russia, belonging to the intellectual Jewish "elite of the elite" (as Robert Alter formulated it), he turned into an intellectual outcast in the eyes of assimilated Western Jews, as he had neither a gymnasium nor an academic education. This was probably one of the reasons why, once in Vienna, Vogel aspired to a classical (gymnasium) education, as he wrote in his diary. Why he had not done so in Russia becomes clear from Dubnow's work: back in Russia Jewish boys, even from well-to-do-families, were hardly allowed to the Russian state gymnasia following the imperial resolution of 1887 (four years before Vogel was born) which limited admission of Jewish boys to Russian state universities and secondary schools. The

¹⁸¹ Roth. *Ibid.* 5-6.

number of Jews admitted to the state gymnasias in the Russian Pale of Settlement amounted to ten percent of the Christian school population. Outside the Pale the norm was five percent and in St Petersburg and Moscow three percent. Thus the majority of young Jewish men barred from the Russian gymnasias and colleges were compelled to leave home in search of higher secular education and, as they were generally without means, they suffered untold hardships.¹⁸²

In Vienna, the gymnasium was not only the gateway to university but also the breeding ground for a German-Jewish elite. As a poverty-stricken *Ostjude* (who reminded that elite of the very reason for their assimilation) with a restricted, because religious, education Vogel did not stand the most remote chance to be admitted.¹⁸³ This leads to the bitter conclusion that for Vogel, as a Jew, a gymnasium education in Russia was impossible because of tsarist restrictions, while in Vienna it was thwarted by class distinctions among Jews. Vogel, like other gifted young Russian Jewish exiles, had to resort to a variety of odd jobs, for instance teaching beginner level Hebrew to the children of rich Western Jewish families in order to keep alive.

In view of Vogel's love of and intense dedication to Hebrew (he speaks about "my Hebrew" in his diary), it was very painful that academically educated fellow modernist Hebrew writers in Vienna, and later in Berlin, criticised him for his lean (primitive) Hebrew. The critic Glenda Abramson, in an attempt to make this harsh judgment more understandable in the light of Vogel's inapproachability as a person whilst not condoning it, writes about this matter in her most enlightening essay "Two Telushim of Vienna: Gershon Shofman and David Vogel" (2008):

Vogel appears to have been a constant thorn in the flesh of the early guardians of the developing [Hebrew] literature. In fairness to them, however, this may partly have been due to his personality, by all accounts a very difficult one. Vogel made few friends and not only his behaviour but also his circumstances tended to estrange him from his contemporaries. In the café in which they met the Hebrew writers would engage in conversation and debate, while Vogel remained silent. In a photograph of 1923, a group of people which include Bialik, are rendered in strong, clear, black and white. Vogel stands to

¹⁸² Simon M. Dubnow. *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland: From the Earliest Times until the Present Day*. Trans. Israel Friedlander. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1918. Vol. 2. 350-51.

¹⁸³ For an extensive overview of the German Gymnasium as the stronghold of classical education in Vienna see Steven Beller. *Vienna and the Jews: 1867-1938: A Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. 49-70. Beller relates that Sigmund Freud, Arthur Schnitzler, Stephan Zweig, Karl Kraus and many other German Jewish intellectuals attended the Gymnasium.

one side, and, through an accident of lighting, his figure is faded, almost ghostlike, and pale-grey.¹⁸⁴

Yeshurun Kesset, who took pity on Vogel at the time, describes an encounter with him in interbellum Paris in 1926.¹⁸⁵

The evening I met David Vogel I found him sitting in the company of Schneour, Sholem Asch, Moshe Nadir, and others. He and his (second) wife sat there somewhat on the outside and took almost no part in the conversation. They both looked weak and tired and seemingly bewildered. Sholem Asch surely had never met Vogel, and had no idea of the identity of the small, pale man sitting hunched over into himself. ... I ... moved my chair to where Vogel and his wife were sitting and I began a conversation with them. I did this deliberately: I simply could not bear the sense of isolation and sadness that enveloped them like a kind of fine mist, like a sort of transparent vague imprint.¹⁸⁶

Keshet goes on to say, somewhat impatiently, that Vogel seemed not to want to help himself. “His useless stubbornness could not hide the negative and sad softness of soul, a lack of spine.”¹⁸⁷ Abramson adds: “The truth of this notwithstanding, their neglect of Vogel, a man who was clearly unable to fend for himself, is shameful.”¹⁸⁸

Steven Beller (1989) writes about the failure of Jewish assimilation in Vienna and recounts how even the most renowned assimilated Jews in Vienna were constantly kept on the threshold of Austrian culture, despite being major contributors to that culture. Arthur Schnitzler complained that, in spite of his position as a successful novelist and playwright in Vienna, he felt excluded as a Jew from “Austria as Vaterland”. Gustav Mahler, notwithstanding his prestigious post as *Hofoperndirektor* in Vienna and being married to the very Austrian Alma Maria Schindler, and even having converted to Roman Catholicism, felt:

¹⁸⁴ Glenda Abramson. “Two Telushim of Vienna: Gershon Shofman and David Vogel”. *Hebrew Writing in the First World War*. London: Valentine Mitchell, 2008. 251-52 and 213-58.

¹⁸⁵ Yeshurun Keshet (Jacob Koplewitz, 1893–1977): Hebrew poet, literary critic and translator. Born in Minsk Mazowiecki, near Warsaw, he first went to Palestine in 1911. He left in 1920 to study in Europe, and also taught in Marijampole, Lithuania. In 1926 he returned to Palestine and, after a short period of teaching, devoted himself to writing and translation work. His first poems were published in *Ha-Ahdut* and *Revivim* (1913), after which he contributed poetry, essays and literary criticism to most Hebrew newspapers and periodicals.

¹⁸⁶ Yeshurun Keshet. “Bizekhorit et David Vogel” *Moznayim* (July 1972), 165. See also “Rishmei masa be-eropa” *Hadoar* (13 October 1967), 739. Abramson. “Two Telushim of Vienna”. Note 63, 258.

¹⁸⁷ Abramson. *Ibid.*, Note 64, 258; Keshet. *Ibid.* 165-6.

¹⁸⁸ Abramson. *Ibid.* 252.

... dreifach heimatlos: als Böhme unter den Österreichern, als Österreicher unter den Deutschen, und als Jude in der ganzen Welt. Überall bin ich Eindringling, nirgends erwünscht.¹⁸⁹

Steven Beller writes:

Socially, the situation of acculturated/assimilated Jewry in Vienna and elsewhere in German culture (where identity was *national* identity and determined one's identity as 'being and belonging') was an anomalous one: they had left their identity as Jews to develop an elaborate structure of *Bildung* to what they saw as the society and culture of a new, just, and free world, and had then been rejected precisely by what they had taken to be that society. In that situation the world of Viennese culture, art, literature, was the one thing that could still give them any sense of identity. This was why Jews dominated Viennese high culture: the coffee houses where they met became a 'surrogate totality' to replace a social world which they did not have.¹⁹⁰

Although the Viennese coffeehouse was not an exclusively Jewish institution, being a Jewish *Kaffeehaus literat* was a common Jewish occurrence when Vogel arrived in Vienna: to be a non-Jewish *Kaffeehaus literat* had become increasingly uncommon. Gurdweill, the protagonist in David Vogel's *Married Life*, when not roaming the city, practically lives in the coffee houses that appear under their historical names in the novel: Griensteidl, Herrenhof and Central.¹⁹¹

Norman Tarnor, in his account of the Russian-Jewish refugee writer Gershon Shofman's (1989) arrival from Lemberg (Galicia) in Vienna in 1913, a year after Vogel, provides an appealing picture of the Viennese café as Shofman found it at his arrival in Vienna, as a home for Russian-Jewish writers like Shofman and Vogel.

One of the Viennese institutions which eased the [Shofman's] adjustment [to Viennese cosmopolitan experience] was the ubiquitous *Kafé*, or *Kaffeehaus*. Other countries had their pubs, or clubs, or bars, or "joints". Vienna had the *Kaffeehaus*. You sat at one of the many small tables, drank your coffee, read newspapers. In the wintertime you looked out on the frozen street through the window. In the summer, you sat at your table on the white, shaded sidewalk, and wrote letters, or stared absent-mindedly at the passing parade. Everything is transient, but the coffee cup persists. After all the strolling about in the gardens, streets and boulevards, the fruitless quests, the big and little disap-

¹⁸⁹ Beller. *Vienna and the Jews*. 207 ff. "... three times homeless: like Böhme amongst Austrians, like an Austrian amongst Germans and as a Jew in the whole world. I am an intruder everywhere, welcome nowhere." My translation.

¹⁹⁰ Beller. *Ibid.* 214-15.

¹⁹¹ The café *Griensteidl* was demolished in 1897 and its clientele moved to the nearby café *Central*.

pointments, what endures is that little cup of liquid, “black gold” which stimulates and calms at one and the same time in some coffee house corner. Old age may devastate, but one thing it cannot deprive us of is that leisurely, warm cup of fragrant coffee, spreading through the body, warming, comforting, reassuring.They are pathetic as they bunch together in their favourite *Kaffeehaus*, like chickens huddling on a perch with rain beating down on the roof above. Actors, artists, sculptors, poets, they joke with one another, good-naturedly, but the tension within is great. They laugh outwards, but weep inside.¹⁹²

In the *Café Arcade* in Vienna, which Vogel frequented in the 1920s, when he had already achieved a name as a lyric poet, he became part of the circle of contemporary Jewish writers who debated on subjects such as the situation of contemporary literature in Hebrew, Art, and Zionism.¹⁹³

During those intellectual debates, Vogel must have been confronted with what he had already recognised with the perceptive gaze of the (Russian) refugee-outsider during his wanderings through Vienna: that Jewish social (not economic) assimilation had failed and that the so-called German-Jewish cultural symbiosis, in which the German-Jewish intelligentsia believed, was a myth revealed as such by the Viennese reality. This realisation, which Vogel shared with many other outsiders and a few insiders (as noted earlier in the chapter about Kafka), was one of the reasons for Jews to join national or cultural Zionism or socialism (although not in Vogel’s case). Zionism, as one tends to forget nowadays, was born in Europe.

5.6 *The Jewish Identity Crisis: Two Manifestations in the Works of German and Eastern German Jewish Writers*

In 1914, at the start of World War I, Vogel was arrested by the Austrians as a Russian enemy-alien and spent time in internment camps. In 1925 Vogel left Vienna where he had conceived the idea for *Married Life*. Later, whilst in Paris (1925-1929) and looking back on the situation of Eastern European and Russian Jewry in Vienna with the advantage of retrospect, he artistically-satirically dramatized his experience of that city in his novel *Married Life*, which also dramatizes his love for the city as well as his conviction that, for him as an Eastern European Jew, a symbiosis with anti-Semitic Austro-German culture was impossible.

¹⁹² Norman Tarnor. *The Many Worlds of Gershon Shofman*. New Jersey: Behrman House, 1989. 45-6.

¹⁹³ Amir Eschel. Foreword. *Das Ende der Tage: Tagebücher und autobiographische Aufzeichnungen 1912-22 und 1941/42*. By David Vogel. Trans. Ruth Achlama. Munich: Paul List Verlag, 1993. 9. For an overview of Vogel’s poetry see the Vogel bibliography.

Vogel lived in Paris for about three years, devoting part of his time to writing Hebrew prose fiction, including the beginning of *Chai Nissuim* which was finished and subsequently published in Tel Aviv (Palestine) in 1930, during his one-year stay there. During Vogel's sojourn in Paris in 1925, the Russian Jewish writer Joseph Roth (1894-1939) also lived in Paris but there are no records that they ever met. In 1929 Vogel left Paris for Tel Aviv, but returned a year later to Europe. After travelling to Warsaw, Vienna and Berlin he returned to his beloved Paris in 1932. There he published his novellas "Beveit Ha-Marpeh" ("In the Sanatorium", 1927) and "Nochach Ha-Yam" ("Facing the Sea", 1934), and prepared a second volume of poems which he did not live to publish. After the outbreak of World War II, the French imprisoned him as an Austrian enemy of the French nation. His experiences in this period are fictionalised in *Tachanot Kavot (Extinguished Stations, 1990)*. The manuscript of *Tachanot Kavot* partly contains Vogel's diary which, according to Robert Alter, conveys a feeling of the "fashioning of a living language, a language that, though not the writer's actual vernacular, is able to trace the twisting contours of his inner life, to body forth a thoroughly modern and European sense of self and other, motive and identity".¹⁹⁴ In 1941, after the capitulation of France, Vogel was released and settled in Hauteville (near Lyon) where the Nazis arrested him in 1944 for being a Jew. In Serge Klarsfeld's *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France*, there is an entry about David Vogel which records his transport from the transit camp Drancy (France) to Auschwitz in February 1944 where he was probably killed on 10 March 1944.¹⁹⁵ Before his arrest he had buried his writings in a wooden box in his landlady's garden at Hauteville. Vogel's friend, the painter Awraham Goldberg, dug up the box after the war and sent it to Simon Halkin in the United States. The latter took Vogel's literary heritage to Asher Barash in Tel Aviv in 1949. The manuscripts were sent first to the United States, and afterwards to Israel (Tel Aviv) where they still are. David Vogel's name has been recorded on a monument commemorating Hauteville residents killed during the Second World War.

5.7 Vogel's Preoccupation with Literary Modernism and Identity Crisis

In the chapter about Kafka I pointed out how, on the eve of the First World War, when Kafka wrote "The Metamorphosis" and Vogel set foot on Austrian soil,

¹⁹⁴ Robert Alter. "Fogel and the Forging of a Hebrew Self". *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*. 13.1 (1993): 3.

¹⁹⁵ Serge Klarsfeld. *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France, 1942-44: Documentation of the Deportation of Victims of the Final Solution in France*. New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1983. Entry about David Vogel: "Convoy 69, March, 1944, Vogel, David, born 15-5-1891, Satanow". 525.

the notion of the I or self as unitary had made place for a sense of displacement and alienation of the self, which found expression in literary modernism. Vogel, however, also faced a Jewish identity crisis in his host land Austria where Jews, whether assimilated or not, wrestled with the rise of a vicious political anti-Semitism.

The works of a number of assimilated German Jewish writers clearly shows an identity crisis. Having abandoned the Jewish religion of their parents and grandparents, they dwelled in the no man's land between identities: no longer observant Jews, yet not German by a long shot, even though they contributed profusely to German art, trade and culture in many ways. Their non-choices for social acceptance were reducing Jewish identity to zero by complete assimilation, which was impossible on account of the political turn of common (non-political) anti-Semitism into a nasty political anti-Semitism; returning to Jewish orthodoxy, which would still mean being subjected to anti-Semitism; or a political way out, namely Zionism and, later, Socialism/Marxism.

Arthur Schnitzler, a Viennese by birth (1862-1931) and a successful novelist and playwright, is a tragic example. Egon Schwartz (1997) writes:

Schnitzler was a thoroughly assimilated citizen, outwardly indistinguishable from the Austrian upper bourgeoisie. As a result of the re-kindled anti-semitism, however, he was treated more and more as an outsider, often a disgusting intruder, despite the undeniable successes he also had. As a scientifically trained Liberal, he was a rationalist, an individualist, and an agnostic. Zionism he regarded as one of the eccentricities into which the Jews were pushed, and he believed sycophancy [servile flattery] and baptism to be indignities. This did not leave much leeway. His great contribution was that he observed *The Jewish Question* in all its intricacy with the diagnostic skills of the trained physician that he was and the psychological acumen that became his trademark as a writer... As a human being with a poetic nature he suffered from the *malheur d'être juif* (the misfortune of being Jewish), not only outwardly because of the incessant vilifications, and the obstacles that were piled in the path of his artistic progress, but also because of the inner damage that was inflicted on his most intimate, creative impulses. But he was spared the worst. He died in time. Only a few years later he would have been driven into exile or into the gas chambers by those he had seen through, regardless of his age or his deep-rootedness in the culture of his native city (Vienna).¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Egon Schwartz. "The Staging of Arthur Schnitzler's Play *Reigen* in Vienna Creates a Public Uproar That Draws Involvement by the Press, the Police, the Viennese City Administration, and the Austrian Parliament." *The Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture, 1096-1996*. Eds. Sander L. Gilman and Jack Zipes. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1997. 412-19. Another play by Schnitzler that caused great tumult was *Professor Bernhardt* (1912) in which, as in the novel *Der Weg ins Freie* (*The Road to the Open*, 1908),

Vogel belonged to a group of Russian Eastern European Jewish exiled writers referred to by Pinsker (2011) as the European Hebrew modernists:

A loosely linked group of Hebrew writers like Shofman, Brenner, Gnessin and Fogel [who] belonged to a loosely linked group of Hebrew writers who had no state, or territory to call home, and no clear national affiliation in the modern, western sense of the word... These men and women were linked, however, by their restlessness, and by what we will come to see as their literary passports: de facto certifications of affiliation in a community of Hebrew writers that enabled them to travel through multiple geographical spaces as “resident aliens,” and to participate in multiple cultural contexts, while maintaining a sense of belonging to something approximating a coherent group.¹⁹⁷

As Jewish exiles in an anti-Semitic world, these writers aimed to forge a Jewish literary identity from the Hebrew language in which they wrote: from “the word”, as Vogel wrote in his diary. They refused to assimilate into European culture and its fashions whilst also being attracted to those fashions. In their European exile these writers literally wrung a Jewish identity out of their Hebrew or Yiddish language and texts, as a result of exposure to, in Dubnow’s terminology, a Judeophobia-infected European culture as other. I will return more extensively to these European Hebrew modernists in the next chapter. At the heart of the matter lies the authenticity of their struggle for a Jewish self in and through their Hebrew and Yiddish literary art rather than assimilation into the cultures of their exile, which they admired. That much is apparent in Vogel’s *Married Life*. This authenticity, which is not lost in translation, attracted me to Vogel’s novel and challenged me to analyse his artistic dramatization of the struggle for identity through the lens of Julia Kristeva’s notion of abjection as a universal psychodynamics of identity formation. Vogel’s interest in Western culture turned him into an acculturated Jew, that is to say, one interested in Western culture but without being prepared, unlike assimilated German Jewish writers, to give up his Russian-Jewish soul or *Bildung* for a culture that hated Jews.

he analyses the position of the Jews in Austria. The play, along with Schnitzler’s other works, was banned in Central Europe and subsequently copies of the play were burned by the Nazis.

¹⁹⁷ Shachar M. Pinsker. *The Making of Modernist Hebrew Fiction in Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011.



David Vogel. Vienna, 2 April 1914

The Dark Gate: Selected Poems of David Vogel. Trans. A.C. Jacobs. The Menard Press: London, 1976.