The German-Hebrew Dialogue

Perspectives on Jewish Texts and Contexts

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The German-Hebrew Dialogue

Studies of Encounter and Exchange

Edited by
Amir Eshel and Rachel Seelig

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Rachel Seelig with Amir Eshel

Editors' Introduction

1 Opening the dialogue

> *Meine Muttersprache ist nicht die Muttersprache meiner Mutter. Die Muttersprache meiner Mutter ist nicht die Muttersprache ihre Mutter. Die Mutter Sprache ihre Mutter ist nicht die Muttersprache und so weiter. Und So viel viel weiter.* (Tomer Gardi 2016, 91)
>
> [My mother tongue is not my mother's mother tongue. My mother's mother tongue is not the mother tongue her mother. The mother tongue her mother is not her mother tongue and on and on. And so much much more on.]

Fragmented, ungrammatical, some might say "improper," *Broken German* is not only the title of Israeli writer Tomer Gardi's latest novel but also the language in which it was written. As a hopeful for the 2016 Ingeborg Bachmann Prize, Gardi was the dark horse in what has been described as the most diverse group of nominees in the prize's thirty-nine year history, with five out of fourteen authors claiming non-German citizenship or ancestry (including the winner, British-Ghanaian novelist Sharon Dodua Otoo). Yet unlike all of the other nominees, Gardi, a native of Kibbutz Dan and resident of Tel Aviv, neither lives in a German-speaking country nor speaks German perfectly. His nomination for the Bachmann Prize points to a loosening of norms surrounding the aesthetics and politics of German. Is "proper German" (*reines Deutsch*) no longer a prerequisite for receiving one of the highest German literary honors? This was the question on everyone's mind at the Festival of German-Language Literature in Klagenfurt, Austria.

The question is deceptively simple. Today, with three and even four generations of Turkish migrants and "post-migrants" calling Germany home, and swaths of immigrants and refugees entering the country every year, most recently from Syria, the country that Helmut Kohl once famously declared "not an immigration land" (*kein Einwanderungsland*) is now remarkably multicultural and multilingual. In light of the demographic changes – as well as reactionary opposition to these changes from the Radical Right – the notion of "proper German" has become highly controversial. According to Klaus Katsberger, the judge who nominated Gardi for the Bachmann Prize, "broken German" constitutes an important alternative to this hegemonic concept. In his view, Gardi's ungrammatical idiom is the language of newcomers and a powerful symbol of Germany's emerging "welcome culture" (*Willkommenskultur*). "One should have

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more faith in German literature," Katsberger argues, "*It succeeds where European politics fails*. Providing a home to the refugee and to linguistic immigration, which arrived long ago and live among us, is among [this literature's] greatest tasks" (Katsberger 2016).

Katsberger's remarks reflect a shift in the critical reception of writing by so-called *Ausländer* (foreigners) in the last half century. It is certainly a departure from the reactions provoked by Paul Celan's receipt of the Georg Büchner Prize in 1960, which betrayed abiding anti-Semitic sentiments in describing the poet's hermetic language as the product of an "alien" (*Fremdling*) from the "eastern outskirts of the German-language domain" (Eshel 2004, 59). In the post-reunification era a similar argument about language was attributed to Turkish-German migrant writers such as Emine Sevgi Özdamar, the first non-native German speaker to receive the Bachmann Prize in 1991. One critic of Özdamar's play *Karagöz in Almania* (1982) declared, "Broken German is tantamount to bad theater," while another, commenting on Özdamar's Bachmann-Prize submission, condescendingly praised the "awkwardness" (*Unbeholfenheit*) of the language as a sign of its "authenticity," ignoring the deliberate nature of Özdamar's language errors (Jankowsky 1997, 267). Today, twenty-five years since reunification and Özdamar's Bachmann Prize victory, writers who consistently expand the horizon of the German language and the sphere of German literature are respected, indeed celebrated around the globe. Yoko Tawada's ascendance to global literary recognition is but one indication of this tendency (Galchen 2016).

Tomer Gardi, neither a native German speaker like Celan, nor a migrant to Germany like Özdamar and Tawada, is seen not as an illegitimate interloper but as emerging talent worthy of consideration. During the judges' discussion at the Bachmann Prize competition, Hildegard Keller summed up the state of affairs with a comment that mimicked what she called Gardi's "poetic pidgin," saying, "German belongs to everyone. German belongs also to me. I can Bachmann Prize!"

Gardi's self-confident arrival on the German literary scene signals not only a transformation in German attitudes toward writing by so-called *Ausländer* but also a change in Israeli attitudes toward Germany and the German language. It is therefore an appropriate point of departure for the present volume, which is devoted to exploring the fraught yet fruitful relationship between German and Hebrew cultures, two cultures long viewed as separate or even as diametrically opposed. The essays gathered here call into question the prevailing belief, which gained purchase in the wake of World War II and the Holocaust, that there was no space for German in Israeli culture, just as there remained no trace of Hebrew

in German culture. The notion that German and Hebrew could occupy the same cultural space seemed unfathomable, even anathema.

During the early years of Israeli statehood, German became taboo, despite the fact that it had been the lingua franca of thousands of Jewish immigrants and possibly the most commonly heard language in the coffeehouses of the *yishuv* during the 1930s and 1940s (Halperin 2015, 46). At the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, German language instruction was banned in 1934 in response to the ascent of the Nazi regime, even though roughly fifty percent of the faculty at the time were either native German speakers or trained in German universities. It was not until 1953, following the signing of a reparations agreement between Israel and West Germany, that German courses were reintroduced at the university (Weiss 2014). Even after the establishment of diplomatic relations between West Germany and Israel in 1965, the relationship between the two cultures remained tense. German, once celebrated as a vehicle of *Bildung,* came to be linked in the nascent Israeli imagination with Hitler's regime; the language of Goethe and Schiller was now tied to the perpetrators of the Holocaust.

In recent years, however, the relationship between German and Israeli cultures has evolved from one of mutual estrangement to one of mutual fascination. Government-sponsored academic exchange programs, joint startup ventures, national film board collaborations, not to mention the sheer increased mobility of students and young professionals, have impacted this relationship profoundly. Whereas Germans growing up in the shadow of World War II were largely unfamiliar with Jews and Jewish culture, their children are now traveling to Israel as volunteers and exchange students and immersing themselves in the Hebrew language and Israeli culture. And whereas Israelis born to Holocaust survivors tended to boycott all things German, their children now flock to Berlin, where a growing Israeli expat community has taken root.[1] These nomadic Germans and Israelis share liberal values and view increased exchange between their cultures as an important response to rising ethnic nationalism and right-wing extremism in both Germany and Israel. More than seventy years since the end of World War II, the rift between Germans and Israelis, especially those who came of age in the post-Cold War era, has begun to narrow.

1 Official estimates of Israelis living in Berlin range from 5,000 to 15,000. It is difficult to determine a precise figure, since many enter Germany with European passports, and Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics does not identify as emigrants anyone who returns to visit Israel within a year of departure. For a sociological study of the Israelis in Berlin phenomenon, see Oz-Salzberger 2001; Yair 2015. For further demographic information, see Alon 2015.

2 German-Hebrew studies

A major outgrowth of increased exchange between Germany and Israel within the academic arena is the subfield of "German-Hebrew Studies." Moving beyond concepts of rupture, trauma and collective memory that long have dominated German-Jewish Studies, while challenging the Zionist frame that has long defined the study of modern Hebrew literature and Israeli culture, this new area of scholarship focuses on relational concepts such as migration, bilingualism, dialogue and translation, concepts that refer less to the boundaries between cultures than to the ways in which such boundaries are traversed. *The German-Hebrew Dialogue: Studies of Encounter and Exchange* is the first book dedicated to sketching out the parameters of this emerging field. The idea for the volume, which follows a number of scholarly gatherings, articles and journal issues on the subject, stems from a workshop convened at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2015, entitled "The German-Hebrew Dialogue in the Multilingual Era." Expanding the focus of the workshop, which focused primarily on literature, the present study brings together essays on literature, film, art, theater and intellectual history that reveal the manifold ways in which German and Hebrew cultures have intersected from the Enlightenment until the present day.

If German-Hebrew Studies constitutes a "subfield," under which disciplinary rubric does it fall? The question does not have a simple answer. As the hyphen indicates, German-Hebrew Studies is by definition interdisciplinary, and thus disrupts and decenters the boundaries by which various fields are defined. First, it adds a crucial new layer to German-Jewish Studies, which generally has been restricted geographically to German-speaking lands and chronologically to the pre-World War II period. German-Hebrew Studies points to the ways in which encounters between these two cultures emerged during the eighteenth century and have persisted – albeit in a dramatically altered fashion – until today. The interlinguistic, intercultural dialogue between German and Hebrew dates back at least as far as Moses Mendelssohn, the father of the eighteenth century *Haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment), whose Bible translation (1780–1783), written in High German but transcribed in Hebrew characters for a broad public of Jewish readers, not only marked the beginning of linguistic assimilation for Jews in Germany but also foreshadowed the linguistic "hybrids" that are beginning to emerge with greater frequency in contemporary literature (Eshel and Rokem 2013, 1).

The adoption of German and assimilation into German society that Mendelssohn's Bible translation was intended to promote did not result in a permanent rejection of Jewish languages, as is often assumed. During the early decades of the twentieth century, many post-assimilation German Jews expressed interest in Jewish languages, specifically Hebrew and Yiddish, as sources of the

Jewish tradition and cultural cohesion that they feared had "dribbled away," as Franz Kafka lamented in his famous letter to his father (Kafka 1966, 81). Kafka's Hebrew notebook is just one concrete example of the fascination with Hebrew that emerged during this period of Jewish renewal. Another more symbolic example can be found in Martin Buber's address at the 1909 Congress for the Hebrew Language in Berlin. The paladin of Jewish renewal, Buber would soon translate the Hebrew Bible into German together with Franz Rosenzweig, yet admitted defeat when called upon to speak publicly in Modern Hebrew: "Unfortunately, I must speak about the Hebrew language in a foreign tongue, as I am not able to think in the Hebrew language and I do not want to translate my thoughts, which are thought in the foreign language, into my own but less known language" (Brenner 2013, 13). Else Lasker-Schüler took a different tack when the poet Uri Zvi Greenberg requested to translate some of her poems from German into Hebrew, to which she shot back incredulously, "But I have *already* written them in Hebrew" (Brenner 1996, 138). Kafka, Buber and Lasker-Schüler regarded Hebrew as their "own" tongue, even if it was less familiar than German, the "foreign language" in which they spoke and wrote exclusively. As they grappled with questions of native language and national identity, they turned to Hebrew as an imagined language of origin while facing the conundrum that Kafka summed up as "the impossibility of writing German and the impossibility of writing differently" (Kafka 1977, 289).

While early twentieth-century German-Jewish writers expressed fascination with Hebrew as the wellspring of a dormant Jewishness, Hebrew (and Yiddish) writers of the interwar years were strongly influenced by German literature and culture. Writers such as Michah Yosef Berdichevsky, Hayim Nahman Bialik, S.Y. Agnon, Avraham Ben-Yitzhak and Leah Goldberg (to name just a few) wrote and published not only in German-speaking cities but also about these cities. A flurry of new research on interwar Hebrew and Yiddish cultures identifies Berlin and Vienna as two leading centers, or temporary "enclaves," in which an expressly diasporic Jewish literary modernism developed (Brenner 2015; Nethanel 2013; Pinsker 2011; Schachter 2011; Seelig 2016). Scholars interested in the transnational, multilingual nature of Jewish modernism increasingly resist the division of Hebrew and Yiddish literatures, their exclusion from the study of European modernism, and the conflation of Hebrew with Zionism and the State of Israel. Their work casts doubt on the monocultural nationalist narrative that has governed the study of Hebrew culture by drawing attention to the various European centers in which Hebrew literature developed alongside Jewish writing in Yiddish and other languages during the first half of the twentieth century.

This new body of scholarship reflects a growing discourse on "diasporic Hebrew," a concept that celebrates intercultural exchange and linguistic pluralism. Insofar as it contributes to this discourse, German-Hebrew Studies

corresponds to another area of Hebrew literary scholarship that rejects monolithic conceptions of "Israeli Hebrew" by drawing attention not only to lost European heritage languages such as German, Yiddish and Russian but also to the suppressed heritage languages of Mizrahim (Jews of Middle Eastern and North African descent), especially Arabic and Ladino (Hochberg 2007; Levy 2014). With increasing scholarly efforts to expose a wealth of cultural and linguistic origins and influences the multiplicity of voices that make up Israeli society slowly is coming into clearer view.

The Holocaust of European Jewry changed the relationship between German and Hebrew cultures irrevocably. But the relationship was not cut short. German-Jewish culture persisted after World War II in the newly formed state of Israel, with German-Jewish writers and thinkers such as Werner Kraft, Gershom Scholem, Else Lasker-Schüler and Ilana Shmueli continuing to write German in the Jewish State. Some writers who once had expressed a purely symbolic fascination with Hebrew actually began writing bilingually in both German and Hebrew, such as Arieh Ludwig Strauss, whose oeuvre has garnered renewed interest in recent years (Barouch 2016; Seelig 2016). Strauss is remembered not only as a bilingual poet but also as a prominent Hölderlin scholar and influential teacher; his lectures on Hebrew literature and world literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem strongly impacted the next generation of Hebrew writers, including Yehuda Amichai, Tuvia Rübner and Dan Pagis, likewise native German speakers. Although these writers are associated with the so-called "Statehood Generation," the first crop of Hebrew writers to produce ostensibly "national literature" in vernacular Hebrew, their abiding attachment to German betrays the inherent limitations of such designations (Gold 2008; Rokem 2010).

Whereas early statehood writers often concealed German behind a veneer of "native" Hebrew, more recent Israeli fiction reflects the process of coming to terms with Germany and the German language and its relationship to Israeli culture. The semi-autobiographical protagonists of Chaim Be'er's *Lifney ha-makom* ("Upon a certain place," 2007) and Yoram Kaniuk's *Der letzte Berliner* ("The last Berliner," published in German translation in 2001 and then in the original Hebrew in 2004) travel to Germany as representatives of Israeli culture, where they are forced to grapple with the German-Jewish past. The experimental novelist Yoel Hoffmann, meanwhile, demonstrates the manner in which German has been pushed to the margins of Israeli society by incorporating German words and phrases (alongside Yiddish, Arabic and the occasional Hungarian) – accompanied by explanatory notes in the margins – directly into his ostensibly monolingual Hebrew texts (Barzilai 2014).

Writing "between" Hebrew and German, or between Israel and Germany, these writers represent the movement of languages across linguistic and national

borders. This brings us to the third area to which German-Hebrew Studies contributes, namely the study of migration, diaspora and transnationalism. Tomer Gardi's *Broken German* exemplifies the fluidity of linguistic and national borders in the age of globalization. The epigraph of this essay, which was included in Gardi's submission for the Bachmann Prize, is on the surface a simple (albeit grammatically flawed) statement about language, but in fact it refers to the aftereffects of ongoing migration, the repeated transmutation of the mother tongue (*Muttersprache*) from one generation to the next in an age defined by mobility and mass migration. As the epigraph suggests, the seemingly narrow topic of German-Hebrew exchange may be regarded as emblematic of a much larger wave of linguistic migration and subsequent cultural transformation. Perhaps "subfield," then, is not the correct term, since German-Hebrew Studies contributes to several different disciplinary categories while also calling into question the ways in which these categories are demarcated and divided. Indeed, what makes German-Hebrew Studies so rich is that fact that it reflects on the crossing of borders while itself crossing borders.

3 Between Berlin and Tel Aviv

German-Hebrew exchange is not merely a topic of academic fascination but rather a thriving aspect of contemporary German and Israeli cultural life, particularly in the wake of increasing Israeli migration to Germany, especially to Berlin. Indeed, "Israelis in Berlin" has become a kind of catchphrase in its own right, eliciting a wide range of reactions in the media. Some Israeli politicians and public personalities have lambasted young Israelis for choosing to "return" to the country responsible for the destruction of twentieth century Jewish life in Europe. Former Minister of Finance Yair Lapid, for instance, expressed utter incredulity and disdain over the willingness of these young migrants to "throw the only country the Jews have in the trash just because life is easier in Berlin." Evidently, the choice of Berlin has touched a nerve. As *Ha'aretz* editor Aluf Benn commented sardonically, the Israeli establishment sees Israeli immigration to the German capital, of all places, as "the ultimate failure of Zionism" (Rudoren 2014). This tension reveals a growing rift between mounting Zionist nationalism and the desperation and disenchantment of a generation of secular young Israelis who associate Germany with future opportunities rather than with the traumatic past.

The controversy provoked by Israeli migration to Berlin points to another rift in Israeli society, namely between *Ashkenazim* (Jews of European origin) and *Mizrahim* (Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origin). *Mizrahi* Jews

residing in Berlin feel alienated by the incendiary critiques of a Jewish "return" to Germany, since they descend not from Holocaust victims or survivors but from Jews who emigrated or were exiled from Muslim lands, for whom Arabic and Ladino, rather than German and Yiddish, represent repressed heritage languages. Mati Shemoelof, a *Mizrahi* journalist, activist and writer based in Berlin, co-organizes the Poetic Hafla ("party" in Arabic), a monthly event for multilingual literary readings, spoken-word poetry and interdisciplinary performance art that takes place at various venues throughout the city. Organized by Israelis but attended by guests of various national backgrounds, the Poetic Hafla reflects Shemoelof's belief that Berlin is not simply a city once conquered by Hitler or divided by a menacing wall but rather a liberal environment in which linguistic, cultural and religious identities can be negotiated openly, indeed, a city where walls can and should be toppled. Berlin, for *Mizrahi* writers like Shemoelof, must not be reduced to its blighted past but rather viewed as the city of a hopeful future.

It is not only the city but also its language that is capturing the imagination of a growing cohort of young Israeli writers, some of whom take up German as a language of composition, as in the case of Tomer Gardi, or as a metalinguistic preoccupation. Whereas Gardi writes "broken German" in Latin letters, Shemoelof experiments with code-switching, occasionally incorporating transliterated German fragments into his Hebrew writing:

איש שרייבה היבראיש
איש כותב עברית
דו פראגסט וארום שרייבה איש היבראיש אין ברלין
וואלה, אני לא יודע

> [Ish shreibeh Hebreyish/ A man writes Hebrew/ Du fragst varum shreibeh/ ish hebrayish in Berlin/ *Wallah*, I don't know] (Shemoelof 2016)

Another Israeli poet, Almog Behar, who does not actually speak German but claims a connection to it as one of the languages of his grandparents (along with Arabic, Ladino, and Dutch), incorporates quotes from Hebrew translations of German texts by writers such as Gershom Scholem and Paul Celan as part of his ongoing critique of "Israeli Hebrew" and the suppression of Jewish heritage languages. Not unlike the early twentieth century German Jews who felt a connection to Hebrew despite their limited familiarity with the language, contemporary Israeli writers like Behar claim a connection to German despite their tenuous grasp of the language.

In a sense, Israeli writers looking to German and Germany are working to salvage the multilingual tradition of their predecessors. This is how Tal

Hever-Chybowski describes the mission of his Berlin- and Paris-based Hebrew literary journal, *Mikan ve'eylakh* ("From here onward"), whose mission statement heralds "the return of diasporic Hebrew to here – to Europe, to Ashkenaz, to Berlin – not just to the site of its destruction but also a place that was once one of the greatest centers of the diasporic republic of Hebrew letters." Hever-Chybowski views his journal as part of a broader movement of "non-hegemonic, intercultural, interlingual literature."[2] In a similar vein, the Berlin-based journal *Aviv,* also founded in 2016 by a German, Hanno Hauenstein, and an Israeli, Itamar Gov, is aimed at "renew[ing] the relationship between the Hebrew and German language and culture" by showcasing art, literature, and journalism that present "linguistic diversity as enrichment and bilingualism as a gift."[3]

Well before the new crop of "Israeli Berliners" began writing in and about German, German writers of both Jewish and non-Jewish origin began to investigate Hebrew and Israel as a kind of imagined second home. For example, Maxim Biller's short story "Land der Väter und Verräter" ("Country of fathers and perpetrators," 1994), set in Haifa's Mount Carmel neighborhood, seamlessly incorporates Hebrew words such as "Shuk" (market) and "Allijah" (immigration to Israel), while Katharina Hacker's *Tel Aviv: Eine Stadterzählung* ("Tel Aviv: tale of a city," 1997) conveys intimate details of living in Tel Aviv from the perspective of a young, non-Jewish German woman. The increased mobility of Germans and Israelis and attendant decline of inherited stigmas have facilitated new forms of bilingual exploration and expression. For these cultural nomads, the relationship between German and Hebrew is no longer confined to conventional binaries of victim/perpetrator and exile/homeland, but rather serves as a source of creativity and transnational identity.

While contemporary literature produced in German and Hebrew tends to expose a two-sided trajectory between disparate cultural spaces, cross-cultural collaboration and inter-linguistic exchange increasingly takes place in the world of cinema. A watershed achievement in this field was Eytan Fox's *Walk on Water* (*Lalekhet ʻal ha-mayim,* 2004), produced in Israel and premiered to great acclaim at the Berlin Film Festival. The film tells the fictional story of Eyal, an Israeli Mossad agent hired to assassinate a former Nazi, who poses as a tour guide and befriends his target's grandchildren, Axel and Pia (Pia now lives on a kibbutz, and Axel has arrived to visit her from Germany). Although the film unfolds primarily in English, the dialogue often weaves seamlessly between German and Hebrew.

2 See the mission statement on the journal's website: http://mikanve.net/wp/ (10 January 2017).

3 See the description on the magazine's website: http://avivmag.com/en/ (10 January 2017).

In the last ten years since Fox's success, there has been a veritable renaissance of German-Israeli film co-productions, many dedicated to exploring postwar German-Israeli relations, including Arnon Goldfinger's *The Flat* (2012), Ester Amrami's *Anderswo* (2014) and Mor Kaplansky's *Café Nagler* (2016). Perhaps the most interesting of these films in terms of linguistic and cultural exchange is *Anderswo* (meaning "elsewhere"), about a romantic relationship between Israeli Noa (Neta Riskin) and German Jörg (Golo Euler). The relationship is put under pressure when Noa leaves their home in Berlin to visit her ailing grandmother and Jörg follows her unannounced. Although he manages to find common ground with Noa's mother (played by Hanna Laszlo) thanks to a mishmash of German and Yiddish, he is tone deaf with respect to Israeli gallows humor. When Noa's brother, Dudi, mentions that the grandfather of the German football star Bastian Schweinsteiger died in Auschwitz, Jörg is perplexed. "He fell from a watchtower," says Dudi without cracking a smile, eliciting nothing but a blank stare. "It was a joke, man," Dudi quickly adds.

Although the relationship between Noa and Jörg survives such awkward moments, cultural tensions persist and some things are inevitably lost in translation. The culture gap forms the heart of Noa's floundering academic research project, a "dictionary of untranslatable words," featured throughout the film in a series of short linguistic "excursions" in which immigrants from China, Korea, South America, Russia and Israel attempt to explain untranslatable words from their native languages. Yet, as the movie clearly demonstrates, this gap also serves as fertile ground for artistic engagement and the creation of new narratives and works of art – indeed, the very fabric of an emerging German-Hebrew, German-Israeli shared life and culture. While the generation of Schweinsteiger's grandparents may have lived or served in the grim locations where many Jews were murdered, their grandchildren and great-grandchildren tell each other stories about their divided and shared histories, creating herewith new literature, cinema and even new families. Katharina Hacker's more recent novels, *Eine Art Liebe* (2003) and *Skip* (2015) are just one example of what is a clearly discernable, broader trajectory.

4 Chapter overview

The following essays are divided into two parts. The first part, "German-Hebrew Exchange in Modernist Literature," concentrates on twentieth-century German-Hebrew literary exchange, while Part Two takes up contemporary topics. The essays gathered in Part One coalesce around questions of translation, bilingualism and linguistic migration. Abigail Gilman's contribution spans the Enlightenment

era to the early twentieth century in its comparison of Moses Mendelssohn's and Franz Rosenzweig's translations of the medieval Hebrew poet Yehuda Halevi. Gillman argues that working with poetry, specifically with Halevi's most famous poem, the Zionide, shaped both philosophers' vocation as translators and served as a stepping-stone on the path that led both to translate the Hebrew Bible.

Several of the essays that follow take up the topic of self-translation. Using newly discovered materials from the archive of Avraham Ben-Yitzhak (born Avraham Sonne), Maya Barzilai explores the interplay of German and Hebrew in the poet's modest yet seminal oeuvre. By tracing common motifs in poetic drafts and fragments produced in both languages, Barzilai demonstrates an "interlingual poetic dialogue" that reveals a profound tension between fin-de-siècle Viennese decadence and the Zionist conception of Hebrew as the "language of revival." Another poet whose archive betrays a continuous, non-linear movement between German and Hebrew is Dan Pagis, the subject of Na'ama Rokem's essay. Through close-reading of two archival documents written in German, a translation of the poem "In the Laboratory" (*Ba-ma'abadah*) and a letter addressed to the Austrian poet Ernst Jandl that includes two poems of homage, Rokem offers an intimate portrait of Pagis's bilingual "laboratory," her metaphor for the process of self-translation that creates space for experimentation, uncertain outcomes and multiple contingent paths. The process of self-translation is likewise the focus of Rachel Seelig's essay on Tuvia Rübner, a contemporary and close friend of Pagis. Seelig takes as her point of departure the concept of "stuttering" as both a leitmotif and an aesthetic strategy that calls into question monolithic notions of fluency and challenges the conventional binary categories of translation theory.

While the above essays focus specifically on translation and bilingualism in the works of individual poets, two of the essays in Part One examine cultural-historical events and trends through the genres of memoir and book history. Giddon Ticotsky presents a new reading of Leah Goldberg's *Encounter with a Poet* (*Mifgash 'im meshorer,* 1952), inspired by the life and work of Avraham Ben Yitzhak, as a prism for the encounter of East European Jews with German and Austrian modernism during the first of the twentieth century. He argues that Jewish writers who hailed from the "periphery" of the German *Kulturkreis* saw themselves as scions of *Vera Europa* (the true Europe), identified strongly with German culture and sought to preserve it as part of their collective memory. Stefanie Mahrer turns to the wider field of book publishing as an index for German-Jewish cultural continuity in a transnational context. Her study of the Salman Schocken Publishing House (*Schocken Verlag*) traces the venture's trajectory from Berlin to New York and Jerusalem and discusses its role in promoting Jewish cultural literacy, facilitating collaborations between Jewish publishers and non-Jewish artisans and resisting the policies of the National Socialist Regime. Finally, the last essay in

Part One provides a kind of poetic coda and spiritual mediation on bilingualism, the loss of language, loss and mourning. Focusing on the lexically distinct yet vocally similar words איכה and *Ach*, Galili Shahar considers the ways in which words of despair, in both Hebrew and German, are reduced to mere sounds, cries and breath. The pairing of these words, which are utterly emptied of meaning, allows German and Hebrew to meet, as Shahar puts it, "at a place of lingual poverty."

In the second part, "German-Hebrew Encounters in the Arts Today," we move from discussions of literary modernism and twentieth century German-Jewish and Israeli culture into the twenty-first century and recent discourses surrounding contemporary art. Ruth Ginsburg proposes a fresh approach to the poet Almog Behar's notion of "multilingual Hebrew," a concept that implicitly critiques hegemonic "Israeli Hebrew" by remaining open to the past and to silenced Jewish languages. While most scholars interested in Behar's work have emphasized his *Mizrahi* origins and critique of the suppression of Arabic as a Jewish language, Ginbsurg examines two poems that betray Behar's relationship to German, a language he does not speak but that he regards as an equally integral aspect of his family history, the site of collective memory and acknowledged rupture. Freddie Rokem transports us into The Ruth Kanner Theatre Group's experimental theater performance, *The Hebrew Notebook – And Other Stories by Franz Kafka,* commissioned in 2013 in honor of the 120th anniversary of the National Library of Israel, where the notebook is now housed. A non-traditional performance consisting of recitation (in both German and Hebrew), interactive performance and collective storytelling, *The Hebrew Notebook,* Rokem argues, investigates the mechanisms of translation between languages and cultural contexts while offering a cultural critique of the dominant Israeli Hebrew culture.

The focal point of Yael Almog's essay is Yael Bartana's experimental film trilogy, *And Europe Will Be Stunned,* which mirrors the classic Zionist theme of "return" to the Land of Israel in its portrayal of an imagined "Jewish return to Europe." Almog shows how Bartana, an Israeli artist based in Berlin and Amsterdam, critiques established Zionist narratives and memorial practices while taking part in the broader discourse on migration, integration and xenophobia currently underway in Europe. Transnational artistic production is a central theme of Amir Eshel's essay on the Israeli artist Dani Karavan, whose work combines sculpture and architecture with natural topography and literary sources, often from the Hebrew Bible. Focusing on some of Karavan's major public works in Germany from the 1970s to the present, Eshel examines the role of Hebrew names in facilitating a meaningful aesthetic experience that invites the viewer to reflect on the German and Jewish past as well as on broader ethical and political dilemmas of modern history. Drawing on the philosophies of Martin Heidegger and

Hannah Arendt, Eshel presents Karavan's works in Germany as a crucial expression of the relationship between German and Hebrew and as a case study for investigating the German-Hebrew junction in the arts. Both Almog and Eshel show how politically aware and internationally active artists such as Bartana and Karavan not only erect bridges between Israeli and German/European cultures but also move beyond hermetic discussions of national identity to take part in the transnational discourse on the politics of memory.

The volume concludes with previously unpublished translations of texts by two leading representatives of the new Israeli culture in Berlin. The first is the introduction to the inaugural issue of the Berlin- and Paris-based Hebrew literary journal *Mikan ve'eylakh* (From here onward), written by Founding Editor Tal Hever-Chybowski. This programmatic essay endorses the concept of "world Hebrew" (*'ivrit 'olamit)*, a term that encompasses both spatial and temporal dimensions (the Hebrew adjective *'olami* means "worldwide," "universal" and "eternal") and highlights the reach of the Hebrew language and Hebrew literature throughout the world and across generations. Calling into question "the myth of the death of Hebrew," Hever-Chybowski makes a powerful plea to salvage the diasporic origins and legacy of Hebrew by celebrating the continuity of literary production in cities like Paris, London, New York and Berlin. Pride of place is given to Berlin, the cradle of *Ashkenaz,* not only as a historical site of cultural transfer and transformation since the period of the *Haskalah* but also as the location where most of the essays and literary works gathered in the journal were written and edited.

The volume closes with a literary contribution by Mati Shemoelof (published here in English translation), an excerpt from his novel in progress, *The Berlin Prize for Hebrew Literature*. Whereas Hever-Chybowski's essay concentrates on the relationship between Hebrew and the languages of *Ashkenaz,* German and Yiddish, Shemoelof's piece introduces us to the inner world of Chezi Morad, a Berlin-based Israeli writer of Iraqi origins who feels snubbed by the Eurocentric mainstream Israeli literary establishment, and his German girlfriend, Helena, who is coping with the psychological aftermath of a miscarriage. Shemoelof's writing takes us into the most intimate quarters of this striving and struggling Berlin couple, offering a restrained portrait of love and loss, compassion and inevitable misunderstanding. Taken together, Hever-Chybowski's essay and Shemoelof's literary excerpt reveal the dynamism and diversity of Hebrew culture in Berlin, which spans not only a vast historical spectrum, extending from the days of Moses Mendelssohn to the present, but also the ethnic and cultural spectrum that encompasses Hebrew, German, Yiddish and Arabic, literary languages cultivated in the diaspora and nourished by one another.

The essays gathered in this volume do not exhaust the parameters of the broad, emerging field of German-Hebrew Studies, but they gesture at the depth and breadth of an ongoing and constantly evolving encounter. Indeed, the twentieth and twenty-first centuries alone account for four generations of writers and artists whose creative consciousness bears the imprint of multilingual, transnational exchange between German and Hebrew, two languages and cultures that are anything but separate.

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