

“To Hell with Futurism, Too!”

The Metamorphoses of Western and Eastern European Modernism in Yiddish Manifestos

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Abstract

After World War I, Yiddish poets and artists in Lodz, Warsaw, Kiev, Vilna, Moscow, Paris, London, and New York created a number of short-lived publications such as Yung-idish, Khalyastre, Albatros, Di vog, Ringen, Milgroym. The editors spoke different languages beside Yiddish, were familiar with numerous cultural and literary traditions and, while living all over the world, created common networks of cooperation. Their artistic programs as formulated in the manifestos opening the magazines are complex hypertexts referring to the Torah and the Talmud in the same breath as to futurist and expressionist images. These manifestos form the core of the multilayered and polycentric Yiddish modernist culture. The article traces the threads connecting the Yiddish modernist magazines to various cultural traditions with special attention to the processes of cultural translation and hybridization.

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Introduction: Little Magazines

The late 19th and particularly the early 20th century saw the emergence of a new genre that provided a forum for discussion and enabled both differentiation and interconnectedness among modern artists, writers, and intellectuals – the little magazine.¹ Yiddish modern art as a case in point is unthinkable without these short-dated publications. Self-published, they granted artists the required autonomy, leaving them free to decide about layout, contents, circulation, and publication frequency. The new medium made possible an international cooperation of artists and writers, who contributed in different languages.² The variety in the repertoire went beyond multilingualism, stemming also from the publishers' interest in diverse contemporary art movements: a little magazine is usually impossible to identify with any “ism.”³ The publishers of these magazines – in their different ways – aimed to realize the same project of modern art,⁴ the

¹ For an extensive critical history of little magazine see *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines: Europe 1880–1940*, eds. Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). In their foreword, the editors' note the importance of the genre for modern art: little magazines are “points of reference, debate, and transmission at the heart of an internally variegated and often internationally connected countercultural sphere” (p. 2).

² On specific features of modernist little magazines such as multilingualism, internationalism and stylistic pluralism, see *Breaking the Rules. The Printed Face of the European Avant Garde 1900–1937*, ed. Stephen Bury, (London: British Library, 2008); Id., “‘Not to Adorn Life But to Organize It.’ Veshch. Gegenstand. Objet. Revue internationale de l'art moderne (1922) and G (1923–6),” in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines, 3, Europe 1880–1940, Part II*, eds. Peter Brooker, Sascha Bru, Andrew Thacker and Christian Weikop, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 855–867.

³ The German magazine *G* edited by Hans Richter is characterized as “cut[ting] across Dadaism, Expressionism, Futurism, Constructivism, and De Stijl,” while the Russian-German-French magazine *Veshch*, eds. El Lissitzky and Ilya Ehrenburg “included Cubism, Constructivism, De Stijl, Purism, and Dadaism” (*Ibid.*, 867).

⁴ The concept of “project” as related to avant-garde movements and opposed to Habermas' “unfinished project of modernity” has been treated extensively by Asholt and Fähnders; see Wolfgang Asholt, “Projekt Avantgarde und avantgardistische Selbstkritik,” in *Der Blick vom Wolkenkratzer. Avantgarde – Avantgardekritik – Avantgardeforschung*, eds. Wolfgang Asholt and Walter Fähnders, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 97–120; Walter Fähnders, “Projekt Avantgarde und avantgardistischer Manifestantismus,” in *Ibid.*, 69–96; Walter Fähnders, “Avantgarde – Begriff und Phänomen,” in *Literarische Moderne. Begriff und Phänomen*, eds. Sabina Becker and Helmuth Kiesel, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 277–290; “Einleitung,” in *Metzler Lexikon Avantgarde*, eds. Hubert van den Berg and Walter Fähnders, (Stuttgart, Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2009), 1–20; 11–14.

agents were not merely aware of each other's work, but typically participated in several publications simultaneously. The relationship between the magazines was based on rivalry and support in equal measure: little magazines promoted each other, placed advertisements and reviewed works published by their rivals.⁵ In the Yiddish milieu, intensive efforts to integrate the specifically Jewish-Yiddish element into the transnational avant-garde resulted in a range of little magazines appearing immediately after World War I, between 1918 and 1924. Among the best known of these are *Yung-idish* ([Young Yiddish] 1919, Lodz), *In zikh* ([In oneself] 1920–1940, New York), *Ringen* ([Rings] 1921–22, Warsaw), *Albatros* (1922–23, Warsaw/Berlin), *Khalyastre* ([Gang] 1922, 1924, Warsaw/Paris), *Di vog* ([The Scales] 1922, Warsaw), *Milgroym* ([Pomegranate] 1922–24, Berlin).⁶ Less well known are *Heftn far literatur un kunst* ([Notebooks for literature and art] 1919, Lodz) and *Kveytn* ([Flowers] 1922, Panevezys).⁷ Besides periodicals, there were literary almanacs, or *zamlbikher* – collected volumes devoted to a specific philological or historical problem or expressing the publishers' views on art: *Eygnis* ([One's Own] 1918, 1920, Kiev), *Oyfgang* ([Rise] 1919, Kiev), *Der inzl* ([The Isle] H. Leyvick, 1918, New York), *Glokn* ([Bells], Alter Kacyzne, 1921, Warsaw), *Sambatyen* (Maks Shats-Anin, 1922, Riga). This article presents a case study of the programs of two Yiddish modernist magazines: *Yung-idish* (Lodz), the first Yiddish little magazine, and *Albatros* (Warsaw/Berlin), recognized as the culmination of the Yiddish modernist movement.

⁵ *Die Aktion*, 18–19, May 1, 1915 published an advertisement (including the contents) of *Die Weißen Blätter* [White Pages], a monthly by René Schickele. The last column of the same issue featured a letter asking for a review of the first issue of *Deutsche Kriegsklänge* [German War Sounds] and the review written in response. Yiddish magazines promoted each other's work: The Lodz Yiddish modernist *Yung-idish* [Young Yiddish] was reviewed in Leo Kenig's *Renesans*, see Melekh Ravitsh, "Dikhter-yugnt," *Renesans* 2/3 (June 1920): 183–189. The magazine *Albatros* announced an issue of *Khalyastre* [Gang] (*Albatros* 2, 1922, 19). *Albatros* itself was reviewed in the Berlin *Milgroym* [Pomegranate], (*Milgroym* 5, 1923, 40).

⁶ For a more recent perspective on *Milgroym*, see the special issue of the online magazine *In geveb* – *The Milgroym Project*, <https://ingeveb.org/issues/the-milgroym-project>. Accessed on June 18, 2019.

⁷ Art magazines remained popular in the 1930s, too: *Tsushtayer* [Contribution], Lwów, 1929–1932), *Pasifik*, (Los Angeles, 1929), *Globus*, (Warsaw, 1932–1934), *Studyo*, (New York, 1934–1935), *Yung-Vilne*, (Vilna, 1934–36), *Pasifik*, (Santiago 1938–1939).

Yung-Idish: The Group

In his memoirs, Yekhiel Yeshaye Trunk, a Yiddish and Hebrew writer from Lodz, describes the historic evening that saw the emergence of Yung-Idish:

אויפדערנאכט האָט מאַקס שידלאָווסקי געמאַכט אַ קבלת־פנים פאַר די יידישע קינסטלער פון לאָדזש מיט יאַנקל אַדלערן און משה בראַדערזאָנען בראש [...]. משה בראַדערזאָן האָט ביד־רחבה אימפּראָוויזירט גראַמען לכבוד די חנען פון פעלאָן. איטשל ברוינער האָט אימיתירט פאַרשיידענע פאַרשוינען און דערציילט מעשיות וועגן אַלערליי הינט. יאַנקל אַדלער האָט זיך געמאַכט רעדן ספרדיש לשון־קודש, הגם ער האָט פאַרשטאַנען העברעאיש וויניקער ווי אַ טערק. מען האָט געזונגען יידישע פאַלקס־לידער און געמאַכט אַ חסידיש רקודל. כאור איז דער עולם געוואָרן ערנסטער. מען האָט באַשלאָסן אַרויסצוגעבן אַ ליטעראַריש־מאַלערישן זשורנאַל אונטערן נאָמען „יונג יידיש“.

In the evening, Maks Szydlowski organized a reception for Lodzer Jewish artists, with Jankel Adler and Moyshe Broderzon at the head of the list. [...] Moyshe Broderzon improvised rhymes in great abundance in honor of Fela's charms. Itshe Brauner imitated various people and told stories about a series of different personalities. Jankel Adler pretended to read in Sephardic Hebrew, even though the holy language was Greek to him. Yiddish folk songs were sung and a Hasidic dance was performed. Towards dawn, the gathering grew more serious. They decided to publish a literary-artistic magazine titled *Yung-idish*.⁸

Maks Szydlowski was one of the numerous entrepreneurs who prospered in post-World War I Lodz. The reception took place upon his return to Lodz from Warsaw, where he had married Felicja (Fela), the art-loving daughter of the Warsaw 'iron tycoon' Shaye Prywes. Szydlowski's friends – Moyshe Broderzon, Jankel Adler und Icchok Brauner – were invited. In the course of the evening, it was decided to give a tangible expression to the intensive activity of the artistic

⁸ Yeshaye-Yekhezkl Trunk, *Poyln. Zikhroynes un bilder*, vol. 6, (New York: Undzer tsayt, 1951), 130.

group formed in Lodz, and in 1919, the first Yiddish modernist magazine, *Yung-idish*, was launched.

Lodz had been an industrial town on the periphery of Tsarist Russia. After World War I, it became Poland's second largest city. At the time it was a *yidische shtot* – Jews accounted for 34.5% of the city's total population.⁹ The history of Jewish as well as non-Jewish Lodz up until that time was brief: it was only in 1820 that the town gained political and economic importance due to its status as a “factory town.”¹⁰ From the very beginning, the city was characterized by multiculturalism, inhabited as it was not only by Poles but also by Germans and Jews, whose numbers increased during the 19th century. World War I led to the downfall of old-style factory owners and the quick rise of the new rich.¹¹ Economic and industrial growth was accompanied by cultural development: from the late 19th century on, numerous sculptors and artists, such as Samuel Hirszenberg, Henryk (Henoch) Glicenstein and Henri Epstein, resided in Lodz.¹² Lodz literary life centered around Yitskhok Katsenelzon, who founded the *Yidisher literatn un zhurnalistsn fareyn* [The Association of Yiddish Writers and Journalists] in 1918.¹³ Katsenelzon, who was also the founder of the Hebrew-language education

⁹ Georges Weill, “Lodz,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Fred Skolnik, (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2007), 155–160; 155.

¹⁰ On the history of Lodz, see Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795–1918*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), passim; specifically for the history of its Jewish community, see Robert Moses Shapiro, “Łódź,” *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, (August 26, 2010) <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/%C5%81odz>. Accessed on January 20, 2020. For a literary account of Lodz' economic rise, see the novel by I. J. Singer, *Di brider ashkenazi* [The Brothers Ashkenazi].

¹¹ Trunk, *Poyln*, 47. See the description in Joseph Roth's *Hotel Savoy*, taking place in Lodz after World War I: “[...] du kommst mit einem Hemd im Hotel Savoy an und fährst weg als ein Gebieter über zwanzig Koffer.” “[...] you arrive at the hotel Savoy with a single shirt and depart as the owner of twenty trunks.”: Joseph Roth, *Hotel Savoy*, (Munich: dtv, 2003), 97, translation mine. On the localization of the novel, see Joanna Jabłkowska, “Ein Grab der armen Leute: Hotel Savoy – Parabel für das Ende des alten Europa oder Łódź-Roman?” in *Joseph Roth. Zur Modernität des melancholischen Blicks*, eds. Wiebke Amthor and Hans Richard Brittnacher, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 103–116.

¹² Leo Kenig, “Di tkufe fun Yung-Yidish un Moyshe Broderzon,” *Di goldene keyt* 26 (1956): 92–102; 102.

¹³ Gilles Rozier, *Moyshe Broderzon. Un écrivain yiddish d'avant-garde*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1999), 35.

network in Lodz, belonged to the cultural traditionalists.¹⁴ The rise of the Lodz avant-garde movement began after the Yiddish poet Moyshe Broderzon, who had fled to Moscow during World War I,¹⁵ and Jankel Adler, who had studied in Wuppertal and Düsseldorf, met there.¹⁶ Their friendship developed into an intensive cooperation that reflected a typically modernist phenomenon: a close interaction between writers and artists that gave rise to the phenomenon of *Gesamtkunstwerk*.¹⁷ The idea of a “Zusammenfassung aller künstlerischen Kräfte zur Erlangung des Gesamtkunstwerkes” [centralization of all artistic forces to achieve the total artwork]¹⁸ had been on the agenda of various artists – from Schwitters (“Merzgesamtkunstwerk” [Merz total artwork]) to Ball (“Synthese der modernen Kunst” [synthesis of modern art]), Gropius (“Einheitskunstwerk” [unity artwork]), Kandinsky, Picabia, Malevich, Mondrian, Lissitzky and Tatlin.¹⁹ The *Yung-idish* subtitle – “lider in vort un tseykhenung” [poems in words and drawings], may also have been inspired by the principle of “wechselseitige

¹⁴ In 1919, simultaneously with *Yung-idish*, the writers Yitskhok Katsnelzon and Hirsh-Leyb Zhitnitski edited another Lodz miscellany, *Heftn far literatur un kunst* [Notebooks for literature and art]. The design – text printed in two columns, no images – indicates the traditional or even conservative affiliation of the magazine, which is also expressed explicitly in the foreword’s statement that the editors aimed to bring about not a revolution but rather a restoration of the literary world after the destructive chaos of World War I (Di redaktsye, “Heftn,” *Heftn far literatur un kunst*, 1919, not paginated). Most strikingly, their opposing views on art never hindered their cooperation: Broderzon contributed a poem to *Heftn*, whereas Zhitnitski and Katsnelzon published in *Yung-idish*.

¹⁵ In Moscow, he visited the literary salon of Daniel Tsharni, which grew into the Moscow Association of Yiddish Writers, see Daniel Tsharni, *A yortsendlik aza*, (New York: Tsiko-bikher-farlag, 1943), 227–228; Rozier, *Moyshe Broderzon*, 49. Broderzon became acquainted with the Futurists (Rozier, *Moyshe Broderzon*, 41) and was presumably familiar with publications by the various subspecies of pre-revolutionary Russian Futurism (Ego-Futurism, Cubo-Futurism, and more) from the first publication *A Trap for Judges* (Sadok sudej, 1910) on. In 1917, he co-operated with El Lissitzky who designed his book *Sikhes khulin*. Broderzon’s appearance in Lodz – “a mix of the proletarian revolution and Pushkin” (Trunk, *Poyln*, 115) – was also testimony to his focus on Russian culture.

¹⁶ Trunk, *Poyln*, 115.

¹⁷ See Bury, *Breaking the Rules*, 51.

¹⁸ Kurt Schwitters, “An alle Bühnen der Welt,” in *Anna Blume. Dichtungen*, (Hannover: Paul Steegemann Verlag, 1919), 31–35; 31.

¹⁹ For an interpretation of the particularities of *Gesamtkunstwerk* in Futurism, Expressionism, Dadaism, and Bauhaus, see Anke Finger, *Das Gesamtkunstwerk der Moderne*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 61–71.

Erhellung der Künste”²⁰ [mutual illumination of the arts] put forth by Oskar Walzel in 1917. Yiddish artists recognized the necessity of having their own platform to lead the “bloody struggle against the established authorities.”²¹ A young and fast growing city, Lodz provided a better setting for this struggle than the three cities of the Yiddish ‘classics’ – Odessa (Abramovitsh), Warsaw (Peretz) or Kiev (Sholem-Aleykhem).²² Maks Szydłowski, a friend of both Broderzon and Adler,²³ financed the publication, and the first issue of *Yung-idish*, proclaiming the cultural rivalry between Lodz and Warsaw, was published in 1919.²⁴ Lodz was now one of the centers of the Yiddish avant-garde.

Besides Broderzon and Adler, *Yung-idish* included the artists Iosif Čajkov, Marek Szwarc,²⁵ and Icchok Brauner.²⁶ The attribute *jung* in the name of the group and the magazine was reminiscent of such groups as *La jeune Belgique*, *Jung-Wien*, *Młoda Polska* and *Das junge Rheinland*,²⁷ underscoring the Lodz group’s affiliation with pan-European developments in art. At the same time, it expressed

²⁰ *Expressionismus. Manifeste und Dokumente zur deutschen Literatur 1910–1920*, eds. Thomas Anz and Michael Stark, (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1982), 543.

²¹ Trunk, *Poyln*, 116.

²² “געטאָן האָט מען עס אויפן קאָכעדיקן לאָדזשער באָדן און געטאָן אין דער פּערזן-קונסט. דאָרט איז כלומרשט “לייכטער אַלצדינג צו שטעלן אויפן קאָפּ” [It was done on boiling Lodz soil and it was done in verse. There it was allegedly easier to turn everything upside down], (Trunk, *Poyln*, 99).

²³ Trunk, *Poyln*, 127.

²⁴ “[sic] “וואַרשע מיט איר גאַנצער אַמאָליקער גאווה האָט אָנגעהויבן אויסצוקוקן קעגן לאָדזש ווי אַ מלופּם-קינד” [Warsaw, with all its pride of yore, began to look up to Lodz as a little child.], (Trunk, *Poyln*, 97).

²⁵ Szwarc stayed in Paris between 1910 und 1914; there he met, among others, Marc Chagall, Amadeo Modigliani and Chaim Soutine. The Lodz artists gathered in Szwarc’s house (Rozier, *Moyshe Broderzon*, 61–63).

²⁶ On the history of the group, its participants and stylistic affiliation, see Erzy Malinowski, “The Yung Yiddish (Young Yiddish) Group and Jewish Modern Art in Poland 1918–1923,” *Polin* 6 (1991): 223–230; Joanna Lisek, “Yung Yidish,” in *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Dan Diner, (Stuttgart: Springer-Verlag GmbH Deutschland, 2011–2017). Brill Reference Online. Accessed on January 20, 2020.

²⁷ *Das junge Rheinland* was founded in February 1919, issue 1 of *Yung-idish* is dated Purim (March) 1919. Jankel Adler was in Wuppertal through 1919 and most likely witnessed the emergence of the German group. According to some sources, the founding of Yung-Idish and/or the publication was initiated by Adler, see Annemarie Heibel, “Jankel Adlers Beziehungen zur Avantgarde-Gruppe Jung Jiddisch und die Reflexe jüdischer Thematik in seinen Bildern,” in *Jankel Adler und die Avantgarde. Chagall, Dix, Klee, Picasso*, eds. Antje Birthälmer and Gerhard Finckh, (Wuppertal: Von der Heydt-Museum, 2018), 61–69; 62.

their interest in secular Yiddish culture by linking them to the New York *l'art-pour-l'art* group *Di yunge* (The Young, 1907–1910).²⁸ The magazine was issued on Jewish holidays – Purim (March) and Pesach (April), which underlined the connection with both Jewish tradition and modern Yiddish culture: in the 1890s, Yitskhok-Leybush Peretz similarly published one of the first Yiddish magazines, *Yontev-bletlekh* [Holiday Pages], on Jewish holidays. He did it out of necessity, because Yiddish periodicals were prohibited in Tsarist Russia and the holiday issues allowed him to pass them off as non-periodical publications. For *Yung-Idish*, however, the traditional calendar signified the periodical's substantial link to Jewish culture.

The *Yung-idish* Manifestoes

The first issue of *Yung-idish* opens with an untitled, anonymous short text²⁹ that reads like a program of the new magazine and presents the Yung-Idish group as fighters for modern art. The second issue opens with a longer text following up on the first proclamation: in the first issue, the artists sought to establish themselves in a positive way, whereas in the following issue their group was defined *ex negativo*. The two texts function as a manifesto: the first establishes the group and states its aims; the second expresses its protest against current artistic conventions.³⁰

²⁸ The title can also be read as the answer of the moderns to the question posed by Peretz in 1910. In the essay *Vos felt undzer literatur* [What our literature lacks] (1910), he asked: “ווער ביסטו, יונג?” “די שער שרייבער?” [Who are you, young Yiddish/Jewish writer?]. Yitskhok-Leybush Peretz, “Vos felt undzer literatur?,” *Ale Verk*, vol. 7, (New York: Tsiko-bikher-farlag, 1947), 270–279; 270.

²⁹ The authorship is not certain; the text was most likely written by Broderzon – an opinion also supported by Melekh Ravitsh (Ravitsh, “Dikhter-yugnt,” 184). The assumption applies to the second text, as well.

³⁰ Establishment and protest are essential categories in the literary genre of the manifesto. For the concepts of *manifest d'imposition* and *manifest d'opposition* see Benedikt Hjartarson, *Visionen des Neuen: Eine diskurshistorische Analyse des frühen avantgardistischen Manifests*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter GmbH Heidelberg, 2013), 56–58. See Bourdieu identifying the right of the new literary and artistic groups to exist with their right to be different: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 234; the new position-takings (texts, manifestoes, actions) of the artists derive their value “from the negative relation which unites it to the co-existing position-takings”

Yung-idish is a typical little magazine in that it combines elements borrowed from a variety of art styles, literary devices, and linguistic and artistic means derived from different artistic traditions, but the magazine as a whole eludes classification.³¹ The founding of Yung-Idish as an autonomous group, in keeping with the rules of the avant-garde involved two steps, protest and establishment, articulated through the literary category of a collective speaker.³² This first Yiddish little magazine set the benchmark for those to come in later years. An essential element of these magazines was cultural transfer. In the process of cultural translation, traditions, ideas, and visions from different times and places intersected. The locus of their encounter was the human being, the artist; the friendship among several Jewish artists and writers in Lodz led to the founding of Yung-Idish; the stylistically heterogenous avant-garde magazine became the vehicle of expression for their ideas on art.

The artists' diverse biographies and artistic backgrounds made any consistent stylistic categorization of *Yung-idish* impossible. The number of contributors grew steadily: from the first issue, which, with one exception, was made up of poems by Moyshe Broderzon, to the last, which included work by Moyshe Nadir, then already living in the USA.³³ The magazine evolved beyond geographic and stylistic borders and included pieces by the symbolist Dovid Zitman and the

(*Ibid.*, 233).

³¹ This was indicated by Melekh Ravitsh in his review in another modernist magazine, *Renesans*, published by Leo Kenig in London: „דאָס איז דוקא דאָס סימפאטישע אין די ״יונג־אידיש״ העפֿטען, ״וואָס כאָטש זיי גילטען אַלס עקספּרעסיאניסטישע האָבען זיי דאָך טיר און טויער אָפֿען־געלאָזט פֿאַר אלע מינים פֿאַרזע״. [... this is what is so likeable in the *Yung-idish* booklets – although they are considered Expressionistic, they leave the door open for poetry of all kinds]. Ravitsh felt positive about this kind of pluralism: he did not reject Expressionism per se, though he did reject the Expressionists' dismissal of everything that did not fit the Expressionist mold (Ravitsh, “Dikhter-yugnt,” 184).

³² For the collective speaker in manifestoes, see Przemysław Czapliński, *Poetyka manifestu literackiego (1918–1939)*, (Warsaw: Instytut badań literackich, 1997), 31–33.

³³ Alongside Broderzon's poems, the first issue published one poem by Yitskhok Katsenzon; among the contributors to issues 2 and 3 were Elimeylekh Shmulevitsh, Hirsh-Leyb Zhitnitski, Hershele, Yekhezkl-Moyshe Neyman; issues 4–6 contained essays and poems by Kurt Heynicke (in translation), Moyshe Nadir (living in the USA at the time), Daniel, Khayim-Leyb Fuks, Uri Tsvi Grinberg, Dovid Zitman, Yisroel Shtern, Melekh Ravitsh, Yisroel Shturem, Khayim Krul.

“folksy”³⁴ poet Hershele, as well as the Expressionists Uri Tsvi Grinberg und Melekh Ravitsh.³⁵ It was in *Yung-idish* that the special sort of collaboration without stylistic constraints or strict group affiliation, typical of little magazines, evolved. The key to the polycentric network was the chronicle on the last pages of each issue. These chronicles, which covered cultural events such as exhibitions, receptions, and recent publications, reflect the growth of Yiddish modernist culture. The last issue of *Yung-idish*, for instance, expressed appreciation for the efforts of Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland to create a “spiritual brotherhood of nations.”³⁶ The publishers also announced a joint exhibition with the Polish groups *Bunt* und *Zdrój*.³⁷ Finally, the editor welcomed poets committed “to the true beauty of Yiddish poetry;” this included Melekh Ravitsh and Uri Tsvi Grinberg, who were active in Poland, as well as Ukrainian and American Yiddish poets, who were embraced “from afar.” These references shed light on the

³⁴ Itzik Nakhmen Gottesman, *Defining the Yiddish Nation. The Jewish Folklorists of Poland*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 52.

³⁵ A year later, Grinberg and Ravitsh began issuing rivaling magazines of their own, *Albatros* and *Di vog*, respectively.

³⁶ This short notice referred to the founding of the Clarté group (*Pour l'Internationale de l'esprit*) by Henri Barbusse in May 1919. The Clarté movement had been initiated by Romain Rolland in 1918, Nicole Racine, “The Clarte Movement in France, 1919–21,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 2/2 (1967): 195–208.

³⁷ The Bunt (Rebellion) was a Polish Expressionist group founded in 1918. The group collaborated with the bi-weekly *Zdrój* [Spring] (1917–1922): a special issue titled *Zeszyt buntu* [The Bunt issue] came out in April 1918. *Zdrój* strived to influence public life through aesthetic activism (Czapliński, *Poetyka*, 49–51) and organized public readings, matinées, and exhibitions; the magazine published articles translated from other little magazines such as *Die Aktion* or *Der Sturm* as well as illustrations by artists belonging to other groups, among others by members of Yung-Idish; Lidia Głuchowska, “Poznań and Łódź. National Modernism and the International Avant-Garde. *Zdrój* (1917–1922); Yung-Yidish (1919); and Tel-Awiw (1919–1921),” in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, eds. Peter Brooker, Sascha Bru, Andrew Thacker and Christian Weikop, vol. 3, Europe 1880–1940, Part II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1208–1233. The programs of *Zdrój* and *Yung-idish* share some features in common, thus suggesting mutual collaboration: e.g., striving for the truth (Art as “the expression of the highest truth in human souls” (“wyr[a] Najwyższej w duszach ludzkich spoczywającej Prawdy”) (Jan Stur, “Czego chcemy,” *Zdrój* 1 [1920]) or protest against brutal reality – “[the] only way to heal the world sinking in the orgies of the materialistic worldview [are] bloody wars and bloody revolutions” (“jedyn[a] możliwoś[ć] uzdrowienia świata, nurzającego się w orgiach materjalistycznego światopoglądu: — w krwawych wojnach i w krwawych rewolucjach”, *Ibid.*).

landscape of modernist Yiddish culture, with its distinguishing features of polycentrism and the yearning to belong to world culture.³⁸

The multilateral connections shared by Yung-Idish artists with various modernist movements became apparent in both the design and the content of the magazine. The provocative gesture of printing on packaging paper and the dynamic interplay of text and image suggest familiarity with Russian Futurism.³⁹ At the same time, some statements made in *Yung-idish* manifestoes contradicted some of the most

³⁸ *World culture* refers here to the phenomenon of an intercultural “entanglement, intermixing and commonness,” in Wolfgang Welsch, “Transculturality – The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” in *Spaces of Culture. City, Nation, World*, eds. Mike Heatherstone and Scott Lash, (London: Sage, 1999), 194–213; 205. Based on the cooperation and communication of cultural agents across state and linguistic borders. Closely linked to this notion is the transnational concept of *Weltliteratur* [world literature] which was developed by Wolfgang von Goethe and refers initially to a network of cultural actors. The word *Weltkultur* [world culture], however, occurs in Goethe’s oeuvre but a few times and does not possess a transnational dimension; it rather means “high culture, canonized masterpieces,” see his article “Neuere Deutsche Poesie” [Recent German Poetry], *Über Kunst und Alterthum*, 1827, Heft 1: 279–280. In the 1920s, German and Yiddish writers used the term *world culture* to suggest both a canon and a transcultural network – often applying these meanings indiscriminately. According to Walter Goetz, a German scholar of cultural history who studied the relation between national and world culture, world culture was “[the sum of] the selected national values, a collection of gemstones from the whole world” (Walter Goetz, “Nationale Kultur und Weltkultur,” *Die neueren Sprachen. Zeitschrift für den Unterricht im Englischen, Französischen, Italienischen und Spanischen*, 34/1 (January-February 1926): 1–16; 12) – in other words, a canon which had emerged through a process of transcultural cooperation, in an “international sphere of exchange, of learning from and complementing each other” (*Ibid.*). In the context of the Yiddish discourse, the activists of the education and cultural organization *Kultur-Lige* strove for transnational cooperation as a means to enter the “big family of world culture,” in “Vos iz di kultur-lige?,” *Byuleten “Kultur-lige”* 2 (June-July 1920) col. 15–20; 15. In practice, this meant translating canonical literary works into Yiddish. In a similar vein, the journalist A. Almi called on Yiddish writers to adopt international scientific and cultural achievements into Yiddish culture, in order to allow it to join other cultures on the “world road;” see A. Almi, “Fun dalet-ames-kultur tsu velt-kultur,” *Literarische bleter*, (February 18, 1927), 5–6; 6.

³⁹ The first Russian Futurist publication, *A Trap for Judges* (1910), for instance, used differently patterned wallpaper for the text and the cover. On the visual elements in Russian Futurism see Gerald Janecek, *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-Garde Visual Experiments, 1900–1930*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). One of the members of Yung-Idish was the Lodz poet Dovid Zitman (1898, Cielądz – 1923, Breslau), who published a Futurist poem collection with lithographs by Ida Brauner in 1921, see Dovid Zitman, *Af vaytkaytn krayznde fal ikh* (Lodz: Achrid, 1921): the hand-written text, the interaction of the text and the illustrations are strongly reminiscent of Russian Futurist artists’ books. For case studies of the fusion of the visual and the textual in Russian Futurism, see Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Moment. Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture*, (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986).

basic tenets of the Futurists, such as “total repudiation of all extant beliefs, authorities, and traditions,”⁴⁰ which was characteristic of Italian and Russian futurism alike.⁴¹ By contrast, the poets of Yung-Idish were not going to break with tradition; instead, they welcomed everything worthy and capable of contributing to their art, pledging to embrace “all new strivings and *attempts* (emphasis in the original) to light and to embellish the inherited treasures of our unique and eternal nation with all of our enthusiasm and young heartiness” אַלע נייע שטרעבונגען און פּרובן צו באשיינען און פארשענערן די ירושה־אוצרות פֿון אונזער אייגנארטיק אייביק פֿאַלק, וועלן מיר מיט אונזער גאנצער התלהבות און יונגער הארציקייט אויפֿנעמען.⁴²

The poets were struggling against the contemporary ism-epidemic. They refused to identify with any one art movement and presented their art as comprehensive:

[מיר] זענען [...] דורך און דורך רעאליסטן אין אונזער מיסטיש גלויבן, אין אונזער סימבאליזם, אין אונזערע ווענדונגען צום אימפרעסיאניזם, עקספרעסיאניזם, קוביזם, אדער, [...] פֿוטוריזם. We are thoroughly realistic in our mystical belief, in our Symbolism, in our orientation toward Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism or [...] Futurism.⁴³

⁴⁰ Victor Erlich, “The Place of Russian Futurism within the Russian Poetic Avantgarde. A Reconsideration (1983),” in *Literarische Avantgarden*, ed. Manfred Hardt, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), 306–328; 318. In her detailed study of Russian avant-garde painting, Gurianova shows that the exploration of tradition played an important role for painters such as Mikhail Larionov or Natalia Gončarova. Nina Gurianova, *The Aesthetics of Anarchy. Art and Ideology in the Early Russian Avant-Garde*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

⁴¹ The similarity between the Italian Futurists’ call for the destruction of museums and the Russian futurists’ demand “to throw Puškin overboard from the ship of modernity” are discussed in Erlich, “The Place of Russian Futurism;” Anna Lawton, “Russian and Italian Futurist Manifestoes (1976),” in *Literarische Avantgarden*, ed. Manfred Hardt, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), 285–305; 290.

⁴² *Yung-idish* 2–3, back cover. (Russian) Futurism had an impact on Yiddish poets in post-revolutionary Russia, too. Similarly, Yiddish Futurism was not a copy of the Russian, but a distillation of its essence modified to fit the peculiarities of the Jewish-Yiddish cultural, social, and political experience. For further details in the case of Perets Markish’s poetry, see Chana Kronfeld, *On the Margins of Modernism. Decentering Literary Dynamics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 202–208; Sabine Koller, “Das Ich in der Revolte. Vladimir Majakovskij und Perets Markish,” in *Osteuropäisch-jüdische Literaturen im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert. Identität und Poetik*, ed. Klavdia Smola, (Munich, Berlin, Washington DC: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2013), 38–54.

⁴³ Manifesto, *Yung-idish* 2–3 (1919). The ambition to create an all-embracing art was shared by a

The members of the Yung-Idish group, like many of their contemporaries, had become disenchanted with the kaleidoscopic shifts among short-lived art styles. By openly embracing all art movements as such, they were rebelling against the very establishment of isms – which, ironically, forced them to name all the art movements they were struggling against and to explicitly state their attitude toward them. This paradox is reminiscent of the Dada leader Tristan Tzara, who protested against manifestoes with yet another manifesto.⁴⁴ The rebellion found its ultimate expression in the rallying call: **אויך פֿוטוריזם – צו אַל די אייביקע גוטע יאָר!** – [To Hell with Futurism, Too!].⁴⁵

Text translation as cultural translation

The Yiddish translation of an essay by German Expressionist Kurt Heynicke⁴⁶ published in the last issue of *Yung-idish* offers an illuminating example of cultural

number of contemporary art programs and manifestoes; Broderzon may have been acquainted with the 1915 manifesto *Rayonists and Futurists* [Lučisty i buduščniki]: “Все стили признаем годными для выражения нашего творчества, прежде и сейчас существующие, как то: кубизм, футуризм, орфизм и их синтез лучизм, для которого, как жизнь, все прошлое искусство является объектом для наблюдения.” [We acknowledge all styles as suitable for the expression of our art, styles existing both yesterday and today – for example, Cubism, Futurism, Orphism, and their synthesis, Rayonism, for which the art of the past, like life, is an object of observation]. Timofej Bogomazov, Natalija Gončarova, Kirill Zdanevič, Ivan Larionov, Mikhail Larionov, Mikhail Le Dantu and Vjačeslav Levkieskij, “Lučisty i Buduščniki. Manifest,” *Oslinyj Khvost i Mišen’* (Moscow: Ts. A. Mjunster, 1913), 5–15; 12–13; English translation in *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde. Theory and Criticism 1902–1934*, ed. John E. Bowlt, (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), 90.

⁴⁴ “Ich schreibe ein Manifest und ich will nichts, trotzdem sage ich einige Sachen und ich bin aus Prinzip gegen Manifeste, wie ich auch gegen Prinzipien bin (...)” [“I am writing a manifesto and I don’t want anything; still, I say some things and I am against manifestoes in principle, just as I am against principles (...)”], Tristan Tzara, “Manifest Dada 1918,” in *Manifeste und Proklamationen der europäischen Avantgarde (1909–1938)*, eds. Walter Fähnders and Wolfgang Asholt (Stuttgart, Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2005), 149–155; 150. On subversion in avant-garde manifestoes, see Fähnders, “Projekt Avantgarde,” 80–84.

⁴⁵ Manifesto, *Yung-idish* 2–3 (1919).

⁴⁶ Kurt Heynicke (1891–1985), German Expressionist poet, writer and essayist. His essays were published in *Der Freihafen*, *Das neue Rheinland*, *Das Kunstblatt* and other magazines. Heynicke also criticized artistic isms; see, e.g., *Herrschaft des Geistes* from 1919. Magdalena Maruck, *Kurt Heynicke (1891–1985). Ein Dichter aus Schlesien Zwischen Revolte und Opportunismus. Eine Rezeptionsgeschichtliche Studie*, (Dresden: Neisse, 2015), 406.

translation in the sense of adaptation, with the original text serving as but a source of inspiration. Already the Yiddish title suggests the technique adopted by the anonymous translator: Heynicke's original title *Seele zur Kunst* [Soul to Art]⁴⁷ is rendered as דער קונסט פֿון די נשמה [The Soul of Art] in Yiddish. This free translation alludes to a general shift of emphasis: whereas Heynicke's original title referred to the devotion of the artists and their souls to art, the Yiddish translation shifts the focus to the soul of art meaning that art is granted autonomy and seen as a reality in its own right. Such a shift, even if the result of a translation mistake, is in perfect keeping with the avant-garde concept of the autonomy of art. The translation was a logical continuation of the theses formulated in the manifestoes in issues 1 and 2–3, where art was presented as a kind of independent universe, created by demiurge artists.⁴⁸

If the translated text expressed artists' views, the translation process behind the text exemplified the cultural transfer underlying the magazine as a whole. Yiddish literati found inspiration in Heynicke's essay because his ideas corresponded to their own worldview; they also felt free to alter translation, including the paragraphs' division, in order to adapt it to elements of Yiddish culture. This adaptation manifested itself in the strong link to Jewish tradition established by the translator.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ First published in German in *Das Kunstblatt*, vol. 1 (1917): 348.

⁴⁸ This interpretation centered on the narrative of the creation of the world is supported by another change in the text: The translator changes the plural "lords" ("But nature bows before its lords [...]") to the singular, obviously influenced by Jewish monotheism and the idea of only one Lord. Furthermore, the word "Lord" is emphasized in the Yiddish translation but not in the German source text.

⁴⁹ The German original and its Yiddish translation are juxtaposed to show the correspondence of the paragraphs; the English translation of the German original follows.

<p>Seele zur Kunst</p>	<p>די נשמה פון דער קונסט</p>
<p>Die Zeit, die im Expressionismus eine Krankheit ihres Körpers sah, ist tot. Die Kunst der Seele lebt, denn die Seele ist schaffende Mutter der neuen Kunst. Die Bewegung des Alls fängt der Geist auf und gestaltet sie sichtbar durch den Ausdruck der Kraft, die Rhythmus ist, wie das strömende All.</p>	<p>די צייט, וואָס האָט אין דעם עקספרעסיאַניזם געזען אַ קראַנקהייט פון איר גוף – איז טויט. די קונסט פֿון נשמה לעבט. מחמת די נשמה איז די שאַפֿנדיקע מוטער פון דער נייער קונסט. די באַוועגונג פֿון אַלעס דינג נעמט אין זיך אויף דער גייסט, און געשטאַלטיקט עס ממשות'דיק דורך דעם אויסדרוק פֿון דער קראַפֿט, וואָס איז, אייגנטליך, דער ריטמוס פֿון דעם שטרוימענדיקן אַליץ.</p>
<p>Die neue Kunst ist erwacht. Sie ist die junge Stufe der neuen Menschheit. Die neue Menschheit – vorerst noch <i>Kreis</i> in der Menschheit – lernt, mit der <i>Seele</i> zu <i>fühlen</i>. Bisher <i>sah</i> sie mit dem <i>Auge</i>. Bisher ging der Mensch über die Sinne zur Seele und wunderte sich, wenn er die Seele nicht fand. Denn die Sinne sind dunkel und leuchten nicht. Die neuen Menschen haben die Seele gefunden, sie fühlen die Kunst mit der Seele. Sie stellen die unaussprechliche Bewegung dar, indem sie sich in die Bewegung stellen und sich selbst bewegen. Sie stellen sich mitten in das bewußt gewordene Gefühl. Das sehende Auge ist nur Gleichnis des schauenden Gefühls.</p>	<p>די נייע קונסט איז דערוואַכט, זי איז די יונגע מדרגה פון דער נייער מענטשהייט. די נייע מענטשהייט – לעת עתה נאָך אַ קרייז אין דער מענטשהייט – לערנט מיט דער נשמה צו פֿילן. ביז איצטער האָט זי מיט דעם אויג געזען. ביז איצטער איז דער מענטש געגאַנגען פֿון די חושים צו דער נשמה, און האָט זיך געוואונדערט, ווען ער פֿלעגט די נשמה נישט געפינען. ווייל די חושים זענען פֿאַרטונקלט און לויכטן נישט. די נייע מענטשן האָבן די נשמה געפֿונען. זיי פֿילן די קונסט מיט דער נשמה. זיי שאַפֿן אונז די נישט־אַרויסגעזאָגטע באַוועגונג דערמיט, וואָס זיי שטעלן זיך אַליין אין דער באַוועגונג, און באַוועגן זיך גופֿא.</p>
	<p>זיי שטעלן זיך אין דערמיטן פֿון דאָס באַוואוסט־געוואָרענע געפֿיל. דאָס זעהענדיקע אויג איז נאָר דער וועג פֿון דעם בליקנדיקן געפֿיל.</p>

<p>Einst lehnte der Künstler an den Dingen, heute lehnt er die Dinge ab, er verachtet die Dinge. Er gestaltet sich – sich, Teil der Welt, – und seine Gestalt steht mitten im Kunstwerk. Die neue Kunst führt uns zu uns. Sie ist der Weg zur Seele.</p>	<p>אָנומלט האָט דער קינסטלער זיך סומך געווען אויף דעם חומר – אצינדערט לעגט ער דאָס חומריות אָפּ ער טראָגט א פֿאַראכטונג צו דעם מין גשמיות. ער געשטאלטיקט זיך – זיך, אלס טייל פֿון דער וועלט – און זיין געשטאלט שטייט אין דערמיטן פֿון דעם קונסטווערק. די נייע קונסט פֿירט אונז צו אונז. זי איז דער וועג צו דער נשמה.</p>
<p>Der Bürger fürchtet sich vor der Seele, die seine Lächerlichkeit tötet. Er fürchtet sich vor einer Kunst, welche Seele fordert, um zu geben. Deshalb schreit seine Stimme nach der Natur. Aber die Natur beugt sich vor ihren Herren und lächelt über die Nachahmer ruhender Ereignisse, über die Nachahmer, welche die Bewegung noch nicht gefunden haben. Nicht die Natur gebar die Bewegung, sondern die Bewegung schuf die Natur. Es ist schwer, die Seele zu finden. Denn sie ist Ewigkeit. Aber mitten unter uns steht die Kunst. Wir brauchen uns nur in die Ewigkeit zu stellen.</p>	<p>דאָס בעל־הבת־ישע געפֿיל האָט מורא פֿאַר דער נשמה, וואָס מאכט טויט איר לעכערלעכקייט. עס האָט פֿחד פֿאַר אזא קונסט, וואס פֿאָדערט נשמה־דיקייט אָפּצוגעבן. דעריבער רופֿט ער מיט קול־קולות צו דער נאַטור, צום דרך הטבע. אָבער די נאַטור פֿאַרנייגט זיך צו איר האַר, און שמייכלט פֿון די נאַכמאַכער פֿון דעם רוהענדיקן פֿאַרפֿאַל. זי שפּאַט אויס די נאַכמאַכער, וועלכע האָבן נאָך די באַוועגונג נישט ארויסגעפֿונען. נישט די נאַטור האָט די באַוועגונג געבוירן, נאָר די באַוועגונג האָט די נאַטור געשאַפֿן.</p>
	<p>שווער איז די נשמה צו געפינען. מחמת די נשמה איז דער עולם ועד – די אייביקקייט. אָבער אינמיטן און מיט אונז שטייט די קונסט. מיר באַדאַרפֿן נאָר אין דער אייביקקייט זיך צו געפינען.</p>

[Soul to Art

The time that had seen Expressionism as a sickness of its body is dead. The art of the soul lives, because the soul is the creating mother of the new art. The spirit absorbs cosmic movement and forms it visibly by expressing the power, which is rhythm, – like the flowing cosmos.

The new art has awakened. It is the young level of the new humanity. The new humanity – for the time being, only a *circle* within humanity – is learning to *sense* with the *soul*. Previously, it used to *look* with the *eye*. Previously, humanity used to reach for the soul by means of the senses and was surprised when it did not find the soul. For the senses are dark and do not shine. The new humans have found the soul; they feel art with the soul. They present the ineffable movement by placing themselves inside the movement and by being in motion themselves. They place themselves in the middle of the now known feeling. The seeing eye is but a parable of the viewing feeling.

The artist once used to lean on things; now he declines things, he despises things. He forms himself – himself, part of the world – and his creation is in the midst of the artwork. The new art is leading us to ourselves. It is the way to the soul.

The burgher fears the soul, which kills his ridiculousness. He fears the art that the soul demands in order to give. Therefor is his voice crying out for nature. But nature bows before its lords and smiles about the imitators of the reposing events, about the imitators who have not yet found movement. It was not nature that bore movement, but movement that created nature. It is difficult to find the soul. For it is eternity. But among us there is art. We need only set ourselves in eternity.]

This translation exemplifies the processes of appropriation and transformation of the foreign into one's own. While generally faithful, the translation contains some obvious mistakes; it also loosens the syntax, thus depriving the text of its original

dynamics. However, not all of these lexical, morphological, or syntactic transformations amount to mistakes attributable to poor understanding of the text. Many of them are intended to extend the source text by giving it an additional dimension which would turn the translated (and thus secondary) essay into an authentic contribution to Yiddish modernism. This added dimension was traditional Jewish culture.

The translator's initial orientation towards free translation is apparent in the new text structure. The last sentences of the second and the last paragraph, respectively, became separate paragraphs in the Yiddish version. One can only speculate about the reasons: perhaps the translator considered these sentences crucial; alternately, he may have been trying to imitate the style of German manifestoes, with their short, apodictic sentences and paragraphs;⁵⁰ or attempting to loosen the dense syntax. Several added words lowered the tempo of Heynicke's expressionist German manifesto by changing the intonation and the syntax.⁵¹ In one passage, a paragraph is interrupted, only to begin again with a repetition making the Yiddish text longer than the source text:

אַבער די נאַטור פֿאַרנייגט זיך צו איר האַר, און שמייכלט פֿון די נאַכמאַכער פֿון דעם רוהענדיקן
פֿאַרפֿאַל. זי שפּאַט אויס די נאַכמאַכער, וועלכע האָבן נאָך די באַוועגונג נישט אַרויסגעפֿונען.

⁵⁰ The first sentences of *Expressionistische Dichtung* by Lothar Schreyer: "Der Expressionismus ist die geistige Bewegung einer Zeit, die das innere Erlebnis über das äußere Leben stellt. // Der Expressionismus in der Kunst schafft die Gestalt, in der der Mensch sein inneres Erlebnis kündigt. // Die Gegenwart errichtet ein Reich des Geistes. // Expressionisten sind die Künstler und Dichter der Gegenwart." [Expressionism is the spiritual movement of a time that prefers inner experience over external life. // Expressionism in art creates the form for the human being to pronounce his inner experience. // The present erects a realm kingdom of the spirit. // Expressionists are the artists and poets of the present]. Lothar Schreyer, "Expressionistische Dichtung," *Sturm-Bühne. Jahrbuch des Theaters der Expressionisten* 5 (September 1918): 19–20.

⁵¹ The adverb "actually" was inserted in the clause "...durch den Ausdruck der Kraft, die Rhythmus ist" [through the expression of force which is *actually* rhythm]; instead of an apposition ("sich, Teil der Welt" [oneself, part of the world]) a comparison was used (זיך, אלס טייל פון דער וועלט) [oneself, *as* part of the world].

But nature bows before the *Lord* and smiles about the imitators of the reposing occurrence. It mocks the imitators who have not yet found movement.⁵²

The translator dispensed with essential elements of the original: Heynicke had written emphatically of the *Furcht* [fear, fright] the *Bürger* [bourgeois] had of the new art;⁵³ the translator, however, decided to vary the lexemes by using מורא [*moyre*, great fear, awe] and פחד [*pakhed*, fear], thus decreasing the tension created in the original text by means of the repetition. A similar downgrade in expressivity is evident in the closing passage, where Heynicke calls on his readers to “uns in die Ewigkeit zu stellen” [set ourselves in eternity], whereas the Yiddish encouraged his readers to merely “find” themselves in eternity.

Some of these transformations may have resulted from the translator’s insufficient linguistic competence (although it is unclear whether the calques in the translation should be attributed to his poor knowledge of German or, rather, to the influence of the morphology and syntax of the source text). The cosmic images, central to Expressionism, are lost in the translation: the word “All” (the universe) in the first paragraph is twice erroneously rendered as “all, everything.” Another transformation produced a meaning in direct contradiction with Heynicke’s thesis: in the sentence “Das sehende Auge ist nur Gleichnis des schauenden Gefühls” [The seeing eye is but a parable of the viewing feeling], the word *Gleichnis* [parable, simile] was substituted with *veg* [way, pat]: דאָס זעהענדיקע אויג: דאָס זעהענדיקע אויג איז נאָר דער וועג פֿון דעם בליקנדיקן געפֿיל [The seeing eye is but a way of the looking feeling]. Heynicke had demanded immediacy: according to him, it was not with the eye, but with one’s soul, that one perceived the world.

Far from all the changes are arbitrary or false. At first glance, דאָס בעלי־הבת־ישע” [the bourgeois feeling] appears to be an inadequate translation of *Bürger*, but in this context it is a more precise translation than בירגער [*birger*, burgher]

⁵² In the source text: “But nature bows before its lords and smiles about the imitators who have not yet found movement.”

⁵³ “Der Bürger *fürchtet sich* vor der Seele [...] Er *fürchtet sich* vor einer Kunst [...]” (“The bourgeois fears the soul [...] He fears an art [...],” my emphasis).

thanks to its connotation of self-contentment, oversaturation, and preoccupation with material values.

Another element, not present in the source text, which emerges gradually in the Yiddish translation is that of the Jewish tradition. This endows the secondary (translated) text with special significance for modernist Yiddish culture. By using many words of Hebrew-Aramaic origin, the translator introduces Jewish connotations into the universalistic-expressionist source text. These words are not indispensable; in some passages, they are inserted in addition to neutral synonyms of German origin. “Deshalb schreit seine Stimme nach der Natur” [Therefore is his voice crying out for nature] contains a double reference to the Jewish tradition: *schreien* [to cry out] is translated as מיט קול־יקולות רופן meaning “cry out loudly (in the loudest voice),” a popular idiom traced back to the Talmud,⁵⁴ and “nature” is translated twice – as the Germanic נאטור and the idiom of Hebrew origin דרך הטבע [way of nature, the natural way]. Similarly, the word *Ewigkeit* [eternity] appears twice in the short apodictic sentence “Denn sie [die Seele] ist Ewigkeit” [For it [the soul] is eternity]. The translator stresses the meaning through pleonasm: די איביקייט – די איביקייט. ⁵⁵ (For the soul is eternity – eternity).⁵⁶ In yet another passage, the word “Dinge” (things) is rendered as גשמיות, echoing an important concept in Hasidism – *hitpashtut ha-gashmiyyut*, “stripping of corporeality,” the liberation from the material in order to make room for the spiritual.⁵⁷

Read from this perspective, which reveals the transformations of the translation process, the translated and thus supposedly secondary text becomes another *Yungidish* manifesto. The translation establishes the amalgamation of one’s own with

⁵⁴ Tractate Berakhot 15b.

⁵⁵ *Oylem voed* [Hebrew *olam va-ed*] refers to the expressions *le-olam va’ed* [forever], *min ha’olam ve’ad ha’olam* [from eternity to eternity], linking the texts to the tradition of Jewish liturgy.

⁵⁶ Here, too, the tempo is loosened with the addition of the synonym and repetition of the word “soul” instead of a personal pronoun as in the source text.

⁵⁷ “[...] the ‘stripping off of corporeality’ [...] serves as a high ideal which can be achieved in prayer or meditation. The here and now does indeed present a valuable opportunity for meeting between God and man, but such meeting can occur only where man tears open another dimension in the here and now—an act which makes the ‘concrete’ disappear.” Gerschom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, (New York: Schocken, 1971, e-book edition).

the foreign as the main technique of the Yiddish artists active in Lodz – a town which, though lacking a long history or tradition in Jewish collective memory, nevertheless became the center of a singular constellation of Jewish literati and artists initiating Yiddish modernism in the chaotic years after World War I.

Albatros

How did Warsaw, the “center of all centers”⁵⁸ of the Yiddish literary world, react to the rapid rise of provincial Lodz to the hub of the cultural avant-garde? Opinions differ depending on whether one adopts an internal or external perspective. The Lodz writer Yekhezkl Trunk spoke of the backwardness of Warsaw compared to Lodz: ״וואַרשע האָט אָנגעהויבן אויסצווען לגבי לאָדזש ווי אַ פֿאַרצײטישע אָפּגעקומענע באַבע״ [Compared to Lodz, Warsaw began to look like a prehistoric withered grandma].⁵⁹

According to Trunk, Lodz overtook Warsaw on the cultural front after World War I. However, voices from Warsaw stressed the Warsaw Yiddish literary tradition, which ensured the city’s position in Yiddish culture and literature during the 1920s and beyond. Yet Warsaw was anything but an old literary center: it began to attract young writers between 1890 and 1905 – the period in which Yitskhok-Leybush Perets arrived and established his salon.⁶⁰ Perets’s death in 1915 ushered in an interregnum in literary Warsaw.⁶¹ Warsaw’s avant-garde thus developed not only as a result of external (economic and demographic) factors (as in Lodz), but also of the internal impulse for change: there was a general longing for a centripetal organizing force, and several contenders claimed to be Peretz’s

⁵⁸ Chone Shmeruk, “Warsaw as a Yiddish Literary Centre,” in *From Shtetl to Socialism. Studies from Polin*, ed. Antony Polonsky, (London, Washington: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1993), 120–133; 129. Shmeruk pinpoints the time when Warsaw became a Yiddish literary center as from the 1890s to 1905, *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Trunk, *Poyln*, 132.

⁶⁰ Shmeruk, “Warsaw,” 129.

⁶¹ Prior to 1915, Warsaw had at least four literary salons – those associated with Yitskhok-Leybush Peretz, Hillel Zeitlin, Yehoyshue Perle, and Noyekh Prilucki (Itzik Nakhmen Gottesman, *Defining the Yiddish Nation*, 5).

literary heirs. A number of rival salons operated at once, such as those led by Hillel Zeitlin, Itshe-Meyer Vaysenberg⁶² and Hersh-Dovid Nomberg.⁶³ This last became the president of the *Fareyn fun yidishe literatn un zhurnalistsn* in Warsaw, ruling Warsaw's literary world till his death in 1927, though he never achieved Peretz's status. The avant-garde poets wanted to break with the conventions of these salons.⁶⁴ 1922 saw the launch of three modernist magazines in Warsaw, marking a rebellion in Yiddish literature: *Albatros*⁶⁵ (edited by Uri Tsvi Grinberg), *Khalyastre* (edited by Perets Markish) and *Di vog* (edited by Melekh Ravitsh).⁶⁶

The title *Albatros* alluded to tradition and modernity at the same time; it reflected a cross-cultural process similar to what had taken place in *Yung-idish*. Firstly, it could be traced back to the literary tradition associated with the 1861 poem by Charles Baudelaire, 'Albatross,' in which the poet is compared with the large seabird, strong while in its own element, helpless or even ridiculous on the ground. Grinberg borrowed the elitist poetic attitude but did not position himself as a Symbolist. His leanings toward Expressionism became obvious with the publication of the namesake poem by Ester Shumyatsher:

⁶² Avraham Novershtern, "Vaysenberg, Itshe Meyer", in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Vaysenberg_Itshe_Meyer. Accessed on January 20, 2020.

⁶³ Melekh Ravitsh, *Dos mayse-bukh fun mayn lebn*, Vol. 3, (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-farband fun poylishe yidn in argentine, 1975), 315.

⁶⁴ For Zeitlin's criticism of the new group, see Tseytlin 1922. Nakhmen Mayzl writes about Nomberg's critical reception of the avant-garde: Nakhmen Mayzel, *Geven a mol a lebn. Dos yidishe kultur-lebn in poyln tsvishn beyde velt-milkhomes*, (Buenos Aires: Tsentral-farband fun poylishe yidn in argentine, 1951), 269; Id., *Noente un eygene: fun Yankev Dinezon biz Hirsh Glik*, (New York: Ikuf-Farlag, 1957), 126. For an example of Nomberg's criticism of modern art is his article against Dadaism, see Hersh-Dovid Nomberg, "Vegn 'dadaizm,'" *Der moment*, March 4, 1921.

⁶⁵ On history and stylistic affiliation see Lipsker, "The Albatrosses of Young Yiddish Poetry. An Idea and Its Visual Realization in Uri Zvi Greenberg's *Albatros*", trans. Ruth Bar-Ilan, *Prooftexts* 15/1 (1995): 89–108; Schalom Lindenbaum, *Shirat Uri Tsvi Grinberg (Ha-Ivrit we-ha-yidit)*. *Kavey mit'ar*, (Tel Aviv: Hadar, 1984).

⁶⁶ Lipsker, "The Albatrosses," 89; Seth Wolitz, "Khalyastre," in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Khalyastre> Accessed on January 20, 2020).

נע־ונד איז דיין גורל
 קרייצנדיק ווינטן
 נאָך שיפֿן פֿון שטאַל.
 צירקלענדיק,
 נישטערט דיין הונגער
 ערדישע אָפּפֿאַלן.
 אלבאַטראָס!

Wandering is your destiny: // crossing winds, // following steel ships. // circling,
 // your hunger is lurking // for earthly waste. // Albatross!⁶⁷

The first issue of *Albatros* opened with two manifestoes marking the entry of the “albatrosses of young Yiddish poetry” into Yiddish and world literature by means of self-proclamation and protest. The authors of *Proklamirung* (Proclamation) und *Manifest tsu di kegner fun der nayer dikhtung* (Manifesto to the opponents of the new poetry)⁶⁸ protested both against the obsolete in art and the numerous contemporaneous isms.⁶⁹ They demanded an art that would give voice to the sufferings of modern man, expressing both the proclamation and the protest through references to discarded ideals and contemporary rivals. These references established Grinberg’s magazine as a modern publication and made *Albatros* a European phenomenon.

The protest brought *Albatros* poets together with other art movement activists. Expressionism appears to have been the chief influence in their development. *Albatros* subscribed to a number of Expressionist concepts which became fundamental to both their manifestoes and their fiction, including *Weltschmerz* or *Wahrheit. Globus-vey* [global pain],⁷⁰ *alvelt-umet* [world sadness],⁷¹ *ache, pain* – all of them being variations and probably intended as translations of *Weltschmerz* – are significant leitmotifs in Grinberg’s manifestoes and poetry.

⁶⁷ On the title *Albatros*, see Lipsker, “The Albatrosses,” 90–93.

⁶⁸ “Proklamirung,” *Albatros, zhurnal far dem nayem dikhter- un kinstler- oysdruk* (Warsaw, September 1922): 3–4; “Manifest tsu di kegner fun der nayer dikhtung,” *Ibid.*: 4–5.

⁶⁹ Lipsker designated the epoch between rejection of tradition and the establishment of the new art as “the reality of cultural interregnum” (*Ibid.*, 93).

⁷⁰ “Proklamirung.”

⁷¹ “Manifest tsu di kegner.”

Numerous compound nouns such as *vey-kep*, *vey-vald* (p. 15), *vey-fleysh*, *vey-shtet* (p. 16), *veytikn-heym* (p. 20) are crucial for the poem *In malkhes fun tseylem*⁷² which reflects on the experience of the Jewish poet in Christian Europe. The most frequently encountered temporal setting in these poems is the Expressionist *shkie* [dusk, twilight]; Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* [The Decline of the West, first volume published in 1918]⁷³ and the Expressionist anthology *Menschheitsdämmerung* ([Twilight of Humanity] 1919) are two possible references. The motifs of war and destruction permeating the manifestoes are also essential Expressionist elements, as confirmed by the column *Dichtungen vom Schlachtfeld* [Poems from the Battlefield] printed in *Die Aktion* from 1914 on.⁷⁴

Albatros' affiliation with Expressionism is most obvious in the rhetorical devices, which, in contrast to occasional motifs and topics, are characteristic of the publication as a whole. Syntactical structures such as simple sentences, nominalism, or parataxis are typical of Expressionist writing style.⁷⁵ *Albatros* manifestoes are rich in examples illustrating Expressionist poetry 'rules' as formulated by Lothar Schreyer in *Sturm-Bühne* in 1918–19.⁷⁶

⁷² Published in *Albatros* 2–3: 15–24.

⁷³ Spengler's culture typology (apollonian, magian, faustian) was known to Yiddish literati as testified by Maks Erik's critique *A letter to Uri Tsvi Grinberg*, in *Albatros* 3–4 (1923): 5–6, based on the concepts of faustian and magian culture and quoting some passages. Grinberg's apocalyptic poem *Velt barg-arop* [World falling down] also alludes to *Untergang des Abendlandes*. Parts of the poem were published in *Albatros* 1 (1922): 12–14 and in *Khalyastre* 1 (1922): 13–20.

⁷⁴ On war and destruction in Expressionism, see Angelika Zawodny, "[...] *Erbau ich täglich euch den allerjüngsten Tag.*" *Spuren der Apokalypse in expressionistischer Lyrik*, (Cologne: Universität zu Köln, 1999), 248–255.

⁷⁵ On Expressionist style and rhetorical devices, see *Ibid.*, 121–150.

⁷⁶ Schreyer, "Expressionistische Dichtung;" Id., "Expressionistische Dichtung. Fortsetzung," *Sturm-Bühne. Jahrbuch des Theaters der Expressionisten* 6 (May 1919): 1–3.

1. Shortening of the sentence by omitting the copula (nominal sentence):⁷⁷

גניסטיקע שפניז: אייגן פלייש; אָדערן; נערוון. געטראַנק אין די אייגענע קנאָכן־בעכערס:
פולסירנדיק בלוט. און שוואַרץ־שבת־ברויט – אונדזער לחם־הפנים: לייד.

Spiritual nourishment: [one's] own flesh; veins; nerves. Drink in cups of [one's]
own bones. Pulsing blood. And black Sabbath bread– our shew bread: suffering.⁷⁸

Nominal sentences reduce the content to a few crucial details by naming phenomena without describing the relations between them. Further on, the adoption of a postulating rather than a descriptive or narrative tone provides the presentation with particular self-confidence.

2. Rhythmic repetition structuring the text:⁷⁹

אין דער נייער ייִדישער דיכטונג זענען דאָ אַ סך אומקרויטן, סם־גראָזן.
אין דער נייער ייִדישער דיכטונג זענען דאָ באַנאָליטעטן, אַבסורדן, נישט־אייגנס,
אויפֿגעכאַפּטס [...]

אין דער נייער ייִדישער דיכטונג זענען פֿאַראַן גראַפֿאָמאַנען־נאָכשלעפּערס [...]

In the new Yiddish poetry, there are a lot of weeds, poisonous herbs.

In the new Yiddish poetry, there are banalities, absurdities, things that are not our own, but were picked up [...]

In the new Yiddish poetry, there are a lot of epigonic *graphomaniacs* [...]⁸⁰

⁷⁷ “Einfache Satzverkürzungen sind das Auslassen der Präpositionen, der Kopula und die transitive Verwendung intransitiver Verben.” (Simple sentence shortenings include omitting prepositions and copulas and using intransitive verbs as transitive), cf. Schreyer, “Expressionistische Dichtung,” 20.

⁷⁸ “Proklamirung.”

⁷⁹ “Wichtige Mittel der Dezentration sind die Wortfiguren. Solche Wortfiguren sind die unmittelbare Wiederholung, die Wiederholung in Zwischenräumen, die Parallelismen der Wortsätze.” [Rhetorical devices are important means of decentration. Such devices are an immediate repetition, a repetition in gaps, parallel sentence structures.], Schreyer, “Expressionistische Dichtung. Fortsetzung,” 1.

⁸⁰ “Manifest tsu di kegner.”

Repetition places the text on the boundary between prose and poetry. It is a particularly important device in Expressionism, which discovered the source of life in rhythm or rhythmical movement. In this way, the rhetorical devices used in the manifesto fulfill the program that the manifesto proclaims.

3. Chiasmus:⁸¹

איר האָט מסתמא געלייגט וואַטע אין די אויערן און די אויגן געהאַלטן פֿאַרמאַכט [...] ⁸²
You must have put cotton wool into your ears and your eyes you keep shut [...]

The reversal heightens the terseness of the sentence; in this case, this effect is further strengthened by the rhythm.

Albatros makes use of a key genre feature of the manifesto: the collective speaker. Not only did Grinberg speak in the name of the anonymous group,⁸³ but he also created the image of the individual who represents the whole of humanity:

די יחידים, וועלכע זענען אין שטורעם און דראַנג גייסטיק אויסגעוואַקסן און אידעיש
– צוגעוואַקסן צום אוניווערסאַלן: מענטש-דור-ביסט-פֿאַראַן-מיליאָנענדיק⁸⁴
– those few who had grown up spiritually in the Sturm-und-Drang and
conceptually adhered to the universal: human-you-are-million-wise – –

The image of the human being as an individual connected to millions of others is an absolutized view of the collective principle voiced by the manifesto: rather than thinking of themselves as members of a limited artistic group, the poets considered

⁸¹ “Die Umkehrung der Wortstellung wirkt die Einheit umgekehrter Begriffe.” [The reversed word order brings about the unity of reversed concepts.], Schreyer, “Expressionistische Dichtung. Fortsetzung,” I.

⁸² “Proklamirung.”

⁸³ Cf. the refrain “נישט מיר זענען שולדיק” [not we are guilty].

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. further: “דאָ פּראָקלאַמירט זיך דער מיליאָנען-קעפּ- און הערצערדיקער אינדיווידואַליזם” [million-headed and -hearted individualism is proclaiming itself there] (“Proklamirung”); “ס'האָט דער צעלעפֿצנטער קאַלאָס: מענטש, אַ מיליאָנען-קעפּעדיקער, אויפֿגעברילט (לויט גראַז: ווי אַ מאַשין. “טעכניקציט!”)

[The wounded colossus: human, million-headed – roared (According to Grosz: like a machine. The epoch of technology!)] (“Manifest tsu di kegner”).

the whole of humanity to be their allies. In creating this image, Grinberg may have been inspired by Walt Whitman, who is known to have been worshipped by the Yiddish Expressionists.⁸⁵ Whitman's poem *One's-Self I Sing* begins with these lines:

One's-Self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

These lines articulate a tension between the "separate" human being and poetry as something universal, "En-Masse." Grinberg, however, was primarily interested not in the all-encompassing nature of poetry, but rather in presenting humanity as a single entity, an organism. Expressionist circles in Germany coined similar images: "Viele, viele Menschen; sind: Ein Mensch" [Many, many people; are: one person], as published in *Die Aktion* 1917.⁸⁶ The image can be traced back to Expressionist metaphors and apocalyptic promises of the coming of the "new man" after the catastrophic destruction of the world.⁸⁷ In the years following World War I, numerous publications presented the unity of humankind in opposition to nations waging war against each other.⁸⁸ Expressionist art was therefore the art of the new humanity. It was at this moment that Grinberg came up with his fantastic million-headed human. The *we* in his manifestoes had a twofold significance: on the one hand, it was the expressionist image of the new man closely linked to the whole of humanity; on the other, the plural pronoun was the collective narrator, a feature typical of the manifesto genre. The resonance of the two meanings together granted Grinberg's manifestoes a unique expressivity by allowing the individual poet (Grinberg) to use the plural form (the collective narrator) in order to speak for the whole of humanity.

⁸⁵ Melekh Ravitsh expressed his admiration in his *Theses* published in Albatros: Melekh Ravitsh, "Di naye, di nakete dikhtung. zibn tezisn," *Albatros* 1 (1922): 15–16. See also Lipsker, "The Albatrosses," 106, note 4.

⁸⁶ Heinrich Stadelmann-Ringen, "Musik der Materie," *Die Aktion* 7/13 (March 30, 1917), 172.

⁸⁷ The Expressionists' interest in the "masses" was stimulated by the first studies on mass psychology (see, e.g., *Psychologie der Masse* by Gustave Le Bon, 1895), as well as by the new mass arts such as the cinema. Both are closely linked to modern migration and urbanization.

⁸⁸ The images and topics associated with this are summed up (mostly pejoratively) in the concept of "O-Mensch-Pathos." Thomas Anz, *Literatur des Expressionismus*, (Stuttgart, Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2010), 67.

The contents of the manifestoes, the articles and poems as well as the composition of the magazine make it clear that the Yiddish poets were not simply dreaming of belonging to the modernist network, but saw themselves as already part of this community. This claim was spelled out, for instance, in an obituary for the Russian Futurist Velimir Chlebnikov published in the first issue of *Albatros*,⁸⁹ or a notice by Else Laske-Schüler, which appeared in issues 3–4.⁹⁰ Not unlike the editors of *Yung-idish*, Grinberg engaged European literati to write for his publication. Passages on language by Franz Werfel in issue 2 are an instructive example of such cooperation.⁹¹ The text was an obvious adaptation rather than a faithful translation: the passages had been compiled by the translator; the article as a whole never existed in German in this form.⁹²

Contributions by or news about literati belonging to the ‘great’ cultures such as the German or the Russian established Yiddish letters in the context of contemporary European modernism. Simultaneously, a unique Yiddish literary network developed: a special chronicle announced events such as public readings and the arrivals and departures of well-known personalities.⁹³ Last but not least, the editor advertised for other modernist Yiddish publications, such as the *Khalyastre* magazine.⁹⁴ Like the Yung-Idish poets, Grinberg fused various components – aesthetic concepts of German Expressionism (*Schauder* [shiver]), Christianity (*Evangelium* [Gospel], *Kreuzweg* [way of the Cross]), the Hebrew Bible (*tohuvaobhu*), and Buddhism (*nirvana*) – to create a modernist work.⁹⁵ The neologism *umruer* [a restless person] was a concise verbalization of the

⁸⁹ “Baym shlus,” *Albatros* 1 (1922), 19.

⁹⁰ “Ich widme das Wappen meiner // Stadt Theben dem Albatros // Prinz Jussuf” (I devote the arms of my // city Theben to albatros // Prince Jussuf), Else Lasker-Schüler, “A tsushrift fun elze lasker-shiler,” *Albatros* 3–4 (1923): 29.

⁹¹ *Albatros* 2 (1922): 16.

⁹² The first column contained Werfel’s response to the critique of his poetics – a debate conducted in *Die Aktion*. The article cited in *Albatros* appeared in issue 11–12, March 17, 1917, col. 152–154. The aphorisms printed in the second column quoted various essays by Werfel.

⁹³ Such as Perets Hirshbeyn and Ester Shumyatsher. The date of their departure was given in Grinberg’s Expressionist manner as “aching November” (“veytuendiker november 1923”) (*Albatros* 2 [1922]: 19).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Cf. Jordan Finkin, “Constellating Hebrew and Yiddish Avant-Gardes: The Example of Markish and Shlonsky,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 8/1 (2009): 1–22; *if.*

processes of cultural borrowing and adaptation. The concept of *Unruhe* appeared in German sources in *Die Aktion*⁹⁶ and in Jankel Adler's writings,⁹⁷ but it never played as prominent a role in German Expressionism as in Yiddish modernism.⁹⁸ Recognizing the artistic potential of the concept, Yiddish literati borrowed and transformed it, endowing it with a significance it never achieved in the surrounding dominant cultures.

Conclusion

Yiddish literati were conscious of the processes of cultural translation, which, as the historian Elye Tsherikover observed, were essential for Jewish art in general:

מען זאָגט: אין לאַנד פון בלינדע איז אַן איין־אויגיקער אַ קיניג, און מען דאַרף ניט מגזם זיין דעם קינסטלערישן ווערט פון יידישן פּאָלקס־פּרימיטיוו, וואָס איז ניט אַריגינעל און האָט נאָכגעמאַכט די ארומיקע פעלקער. אַזוי זאָגן די, וואָס האָבן ניט קיין חוש פאַר דיאַלעקטן אין קונסט.
אמת, די יידישע פּאָלקס־קינסטלער האָבן אַפֿט סטיל און טעכניק גענאַשט פון דער ניט־יידישער וועלט. זיי האָבן אָבער גענומען ניט נאָר וואָס עס לאַזט זיך, נייערט אויך וואָס

⁹⁶ Franz Jung, "Eine Ankündigung. Die Vertrustung des Geistes," *Die Aktion* 5 (October 1915): 526.

⁹⁷ In 1933, Adler was interviewed by the Warsaw Yiddish weekly *Literarische bleter*: "די שטרעבונג [The aim of modern art: to make the spectator restless [...], see Shmuel-Leyb Shnayderman, "Fun yidishn monparnas (a shmues mit Yankl Adler)," *Literarische bleter*, September 20, 1933, 10. The artists aimed to attract public attention by breaking the rules and making art accessible to the general public – in this sense, the concept *ostranenie* [estrangement] developed in Russian Formalism might be a counterpart of *umru*, since "[...] priēmom iskusstva javljaetsja priem «ostraneniya» vešcej i priēm zatrudnennoj formy, uveličivajušcej trudnost' i dolgotu vosprijatija [...]" ("the device of art is the device of 'estranging' things and the device of complicating the form, which increases the difficulty and the duration of reception"), Viktor Šklovskij, *O teorii prozy*, (Moscow: Federacija, 1929), 23.

⁹⁸ On this concept in Markish's poetry, see Karolina Szymaniak, "The Language of Dispersion and Confusion: Peretz Markish's Manifestoes from the Khalyastre Period," in *A Captive of the Dawn. The Life and Work of Peretz Markish (1895–1952)*, eds. Joseph Sherman and Gennady Estraiikh, (London: Legenda, 2011), 66–87; 75. Peretz Hirshbeyn was still writing about *umruikayt* in 1928: "[...] איך בין [..] אַן עדות אויף דער אומרויקייט, וואָס כאַפּט אַרום די אָפּגעריסענע און דערווייטערטע פּאָלקסשטיקער" "[...] I witness the restlessness grasping parts of the nation, which are torn apart and far-off [...]), Peretz Hirshbeyn, "Vegn un sheydveng," *Di yidishe velt* 1 (April 1928): 71–80; 71.

עס פאסט זיך פארן יידישן גייסט און אינעווייניקסטן געשמאק. האבן דאס גענומענע איבערגעדיכטעט אין אן אייגענעם סטיל, אריינגערעגן פאלקס-שטריכן און פאלקס-פארבן, און אזוי האט זיך באקומען די „יידישע ליניע“.

People say: in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is a king, so one should not exaggerate the artistic value of Jewish folk art, which is not original and imitates the other nations. Only those having no understanding of the dialects of art say so.

Indeed, Jewish folk artists often borrowed the style and the technique of the non-Jewish world. However, they did not take everything there was to be taken, but only the things corresponding to the Jewish spirit and inner taste. They recreated what they borrowed in a new way and in their own style, incorporated the folk features and atmosphere, and this is how the “Jewish line” evolved.⁹⁹

Tsherikover emphasized the dependence of interpretation on perspective. As an insider, he knew that for Jews living in close contact with neighboring nations, cultural contact was a daily experience. The derogatory opinions cited in this passage derive from an external perspective, presumably voiced by nationalist believers in a “pure” national art. Writing his article in 1937, when nationalism was at its peak, Tsherikover perceived the urgency of protecting the fusion principle in art against criticism of the purportedly non-original, epigonic nature of Jewish art. In this passage he points up the difference between adoption and adaption, borrowing and translating – a difference which has recently come to the forefront as a result of the *translational turn* in cultural studies. Tsherikover proclaimed hybridization¹⁰⁰ – “recreat[ing] what they borrowed in a new way and in their own style” – to be the “Jewish line” in art.

⁹⁹ Elye Tsherikover, “Di folks-kunst un ir yoyresh,” *Yisokhr Ber Ribak. Zayn lebn un shafn*, (Paris: Komitet tsu fareybikn dem ondenk fun Yisokhr-Ber Ribak, 1937), 52–58; 56.

¹⁰⁰ On the concept of (dynamic) hybridization or translation as opposed to the (static) concept of the hybrid, see Doris Bachmann-Medick, “From Hybridity to Translation. Reflections on Travelling Concepts,” in *The Trans/National Study of Culture. A Translational Perspective*, eds. Doris Bachmann-Medick, Horst Carl, Wolfgang Hallet and Ansgar Nünning, (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 119–136.

This borrowing and recreating defines Yiddish modernist manifestoes, each of them with its elements of Futurism, Expressionism, and Symbolism, combining the old and the new art movements with Jewish tradition (encompassing religion, folklore, and language), thus making this seemingly chaotic blend authentic. Fusion appears to be the guiding principle for Jewish modernist writers in Yiddish. Due to the diasporic mode of existence of the Jews in Europe,¹⁰¹ these cultural agents were exposed to different cultures, literatures, and art styles; their translingual¹⁰² and transnational projects were shaped by their respective biographical and artistic backgrounds. Thus, Moyshe Broderzon, acquainted with Russian Futurist experiments in poetry, became a virtuoso of Yiddish rhyme, whereas Uri Tsvi Grinberg was guided by the Faustian bent in German Expressionism. By hybridizing features of various art styles in their manifestoes, the editors of *Yung-idish* and *Albatros* managed to create a heterogeneous yet coherent vision of Yiddish modernism, which became far more than European modernism in Yiddish translation. Dreaming of joining the ranks of the avant-garde, Yiddish modernist activists did not renege on their particularity; instead, they continued to search for ways to integrate their Jewish culture into world culture.¹⁰³ It was their willingness to adopt, adapt and translate, which emerged in the course of their centuries-long exposure to transcultural processes as members of a minority on the periphery of dominant cultures – that turned Yiddish modernists into moderns *par excellence*.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ “[...] diaspora [is] a synchronic cultural situation applicable to people who participate in a doubled cultural (and frequently linguistic) location, in which they share a culture with the place in which they dwell but also with another group of people who live elsewhere, in which they have a local and a trans-local cultural identity and expression at the same time.” Daniel Boyarin, *A Traveling Homeland. The Babylonian Talmud as Diaspora*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 19.

¹⁰² On translingualism, see Naomi Brenner, *Lingering Bilingualism. Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literatures in Contact*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2016), 14–20. I suggest expanding the concept beyond Jewish bilingualism. Yiddish writers and poets were multilingual (besides Yiddish and Hebrew, they were proficient in German, Polish, Russian, and more); many of them had grown up in assimilated families and had their literary debuts in non-Jewish languages. Thus, the processes of translation and transgression took place not only between Hebrew and Yiddish, but among all the languages the Yiddish literati were in contact with.

¹⁰³ Allison Schachter, *Diasporic Modernisms. Hebrew and Yiddish Literature in the Twentieth Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 88, 184.

¹⁰⁴ For a historical perspective, see Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).

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