

Yiddish Haunts: The Yiddish Underpinnings of Appelfeld's *Laylah ve'od laylah*

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Appelfeld has said of his childhood in his parents' home: 'All around us lived masses of Jews who spoke Yiddish, but in our house Yiddish was absolutely forbidden'.¹ Did the young Aharon Appelfeld absorb any of the Yiddish spoken by the 'masses of Jews' who lived around him? It is impossible to know now. Even the most self-reflective eight-year-olds do not give their language much thought. What is more, there are few who lived then who could attest now to the facts, and so much time has elapsed that memory cannot be relied on.

The picture is yet more muddy because for Appelfeld Yiddish has a strong emotional overlay. Despite the fact that his parents forbade the use of Yiddish in their home, Appelfeld's grandparents still spoke Yiddish.² The young boy undoubtedly heard them and probably understood them. Thus, even before the Holocaust, the positive pull towards Yiddish (grounded in his grandparents' attitude) was counter-balanced by the aversion towards Yiddish (grounded in his parents' attitude). After the Holocaust, Appelfeld reports: 'Hebrew became my mother language and I studied Yiddish to avoid German'.³ Few of us can consciously choose a mother language; the window of opportunity closes in early adolescence.⁴ Appelfeld came to Israel at the last moment. He was able to adopt a new mother tongue, Hebrew, and from his account, he embraced Yiddish. And yet, he remains conflicted about Yiddish. In his words: 'On one side, I have an affinity for it, on the other side, I have a complex about it'.⁵

A careful study of the language of *Laylah ve'od laylah*, I maintain,

1. Aharon Appelfeld quoted in Daniel R. Schwartz, *Imagining the Holocaust* (New York 1999) 249.

2. Joseph Cohen, *Voices of Israel* (New York 1990) 132.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Robert E. Owens, Jr., *Language Development: An Introduction* (Columbus 1988) 380, and David Singleton, *Language Acquisition: The Age Factor* (Clevedon and Philadelphia 1989) 80.

5. Cohen, *Voices of Israel* 132.

reveals that whether or not he intended it, Appelfeld definitely acquired Yiddish. His Hebrew is flavoured with Yiddish influence; the morphological and syntactic structures of Yiddish are there, right underneath the Hebrew surface.

A caveat is in order here. Because Yiddish is a Germanic language, it shares some vocabulary, some morphological patterns and some syntactic patterns with German. If Yiddish influences are found in Appelfeld's work, must one go on to investigate whether these elements are present in German too? I believe not. On this matter Appelfeld should be taken at his word. If he states that he studied Yiddish to avoid German, I shall assume that for him the impacting language is Yiddish, not German. This is the language he heard all around him as a child and the language with which he wants to identify now. Moreover, as I shall show, the one grammatical pattern that is least amenable to conscious acquisition or rejection is unquestionably derived from Yiddish.

In Appelfeld's novel *Laylah ve'od laylah* Holocaust survivors living in Israel bemoan the loss of their native Yiddish. The novel itself is written in Hebrew but its Yiddish skeleton 'sticks out' all over. As I probe its Hebrew outer skin to get at the Yiddish skeleton that lies beneath the surface, I shall show that Appelfeld's Yiddish casts an ironic light on one of the major characters, and the Yiddish morphological and syntactic structures that force themselves on his Hebrew reinforce the novel's theme in unexpected ways.

Some of the character names in the novel are neutral; they add nothing to what is known of the character from the descriptive parts of the novel. 'Manfred', the name of the main character of the story and its narrator, and 'Arthur', that of his son, are two such neutral names.⁶ Other character names clearly reflect and reinforce what is known of the character from the novel. 'Christina' and 'Clara' are two such names. Christina, the young Jewish woman who was brought up in a convent by nuns, is only nominally Jewish. She behaves and feels like a Christian. Her name tells us the most important thing about her. Clara, the retarded daughter of the hero, is a simple young woman, who lives in a protected, shelter-like home. Like Isaac Bashevis Singer's Gimpel, she leads a life free of inner tension and unclouded by complexity. 'Clara' is therefore a name that reflects her personalit.

6. To be sure, for Jews the choosing of names in the Diaspora was never entirely neutral. One can assume that a man named Manfred who names his son Arthur is of somewhat secular persuasion. A thorough analysis of the names in *Laylah ve'od laylah* could be undertaken but that would make for a different paper.

There are two other names, however, that are decidedly ironic. One belongs to the minor character Dr Shutz, the other to the major character Mrs Prakht. Dr Shutz is the psychiatrist who cares for Edward, a former resident of the pension in which the hero lives. What exactly is wrong with Edward is never revealed. By the time the novel starts he has already left the pension and has been admitted to a psychiatric hospital. But one thing is known: his doctor is unable to stave off his emotional decline. Edward is unable to function in society and he becomes a permanent resident of the psychiatric hospital. Now *shutz* in Yiddish means protection but Dr Shutz affords Edward scant protection. In the hospital Edward is, it is true, protected physically but his spirit, sadly, goes unguarded. Dr Shutz, the would-be protector, then, has a name that can only be ironic.

There is yet more irony in the name given to the proprietress of the pension that serves as a home for the hero and his fellow Holocaust survivors. The proprietress's name is Mrs Prakht. The word *prakht* in Yiddish means splendour or magnificence.⁷ When the story opens, it does indeed seem as though Mrs Prakht deserves this name. She is superior to her boarders three times over: financially, socially and culturally. She is the owner of the pension while they are her boarders. She arrived in Jerusalem before the Second World War and has high-placed acquaintances, while they are displaced newcomers with few native connections. She is German-speaking and is proud to belong to a trans-national German cultural group, while they are Yiddish-speaking, aware that their language and its culture are despised throughout Europe and denigrated even in their new homeland. All these advantages conspire to give Mrs Prakht an aura of splendour. But finally, at the end of the story it can be seen that this splendour, like the wizardry of the 'famous' Wizard of Oz, was nothing more than a chimera. Mrs Prakht was not rich at all; in fact, she was nearly bankrupt. Stripped of her wealth, Mrs Prakht's social and cultural advantages dissipate and become inconsequential. The splendour suggested by her name can, therefore, be only ironic. And, one is left thinking, if her splendour was only apparent, perhaps her social and cultural superiority were also only a chimera.

Now for the morphological and syntactic elements of Yiddish that haunt the Hebrew of *Layla ve'od laylah*. As any one who has tried to learn a foreign language knows, one of the most common forms of interference in the learning of a new language is 'loan translation'.

7. In a traditional Jewish source such as the *tsenerene*, the Yiddish bible for women, *prakht* is generally associated with God and/or His retinue. The meaning I have given is that found in Uriel Weinreich (ed.) *English-Yiddish Yiddish-English Dictionary* (New York 1968) 304.

8. Again I must add the caveat of the similarity between German and Yiddish.

However, a *moshl mashal* was clearly derived from the Hebrew-Aramaic component of Yiddish and was returned, somewhat altered, to the corpus of modern Hebrew.

The influence of Agnon on Appelfeld is especially obvious in this case, a guess of mine which a conversation with Appelfeld confirmed.

9. A. Shpiegelblatt, [short story] *Topfpunkt* 6 (winter 2003) 10–11.

10. Aharon Appelfeld, *Laylah ve'od laylah* ('Night after Night', Jerusalem 2001) 9.

11. Used this way *kemo* appears on 17, 55, 61, 74, 83, 133, 144, 145, 148, 150, 161, 180.

This happens when one has acquired the vocabulary of a new language but has not quite mastered all its syntactic and semantic nuances. What happens is that the words of the new language are put into the moulds (syntactic patterns and semantic fields) of the former language. Called 'calque formation' by linguists, this phenomenon usually persists long after the new language has been effectively mastered. Calques might be thought of as the trace elements that a former language leaves in the newly acquired language. There are so many Yiddish calques in the Hebrew of *Laylah ve'od laylah* that a linguist who knows nothing at all about Appelfeld's biography but knows only the grammatical patterns of both Hebrew and Yiddish would suppose that the author's first language was Yiddish.⁸ I shall now examine the most common of these calques.

When there is a need for a comparative clause in Yiddish, the word that heads the clause and conveys the comparative sense is the word *vij*, literally 'like' and often translated into English as 'as though'. Here is an example from a contemporary Yiddish story: 'Er hot es geton dveykesdik... *vij* er volt zikh gegreyt tsu brengen a korbn der almekhtikayt' (He did this with devotion... *as though* he were preparing himself to bring a sacrifice to the Omnipotent One).⁹ Here is the same *vij* in Appelfeld's story, where it surfaces as the Hebrew word *kemo*: 'Ish lo samakh ve-ish lo kina, *kemo* lo medubar haya be-khatuna ela be-hapalat goral' (No one was happy and no one was jealous, *as though* what was at stake was not a wedding, but the fall of the dice).¹⁰ A native Hebrew speaker would use *ke'ilu* here; it is the natural choice for a comparative clause. What Appelfeld has done is translate the Yiddish *vij* into the Hebrew *kemo* and then proceed to use *kemo* to head the comparative clause. Examples of *kemo* used to head a comparative clause are rife in this book. I counted more than a dozen in the story, and I probably missed others.¹¹

Another calque found here is the Hebrew word *akh* used to replace the Yiddish word *nor*. Page 19 of *Laylah ve'od laylah* begins with this sentence: '*Akh* patakhti et ha-sha'ar u-miyad ra'iti et klara' (*As soon as* I opened the door, I immediately saw Clara). Had the sentence been in Yiddish it would have read: 'Kh'hob *nor* ge-efnt di tir, un kh'hob tekef gezen klarn'. Once again, Appelfeld has translated a term from Yiddish into Hebrew and then used it as he would have used the Yiddish term. This use of *akh* to mean 'as soon as' is so non-native to modern Hebrew that it does not even appear as one of the

many uses of *akh* in the seven-volume Hebrew dictionary edited by Even Shoshan.

If the word *akh* in the meaning of 'as soon as' is indeed non-native to contemporary Hebrew, how did the publishers allow it to appear in a Hebrew novel? The answer, I believe, is that this usage of *akh* is not entirely foreign to Hebrew. It was acceptable in Biblical Hebrew, and anyone who has read the story of Jacob and his brother Esau at their father's bedside has encountered this usage. Genesis 27:30 reads: '*Akh yatso yatsa Ya-'akov... ve-Esav ba'* (As soon as [No sooner had] Jacob left... [than] Esau arrived). At a guess, few speakers of modern Hebrew could dredge up this verse from memory if asked to do so. Nevertheless, all understand how the word *akh* is used in the Biblical verse. No one has trouble understanding what it means. It is this passive knowledge, then, that accounts for the acceptance of Appelfeld's contemporary use of *akh*.

Is it reasonable to suppose that Appelfeld consciously had this Biblical verse in mind when he used *akh* the way he did? That seems unlikely given that this usage of the word occurs only twice in the Bible.¹² It is far more likely that Appelfeld's model was his early exposure to a Germanic language. Nevertheless, when Appelfeld's native language worms its way into his acquired Hebrew, it takes a syntactic pattern of ancient Hebrew and revive it for modern usage.

A third calque found many times in *Laylah ve'od laylah* is the Hebrew word *mashal* linking (and comparing) two independent clauses.¹³ Here Appelfeld's Hebrew word is from the Yiddish phrase *a moshl*, itself a *loshn-koydesh* (Hebrew-Aramaic) word derived from that component of Yiddish. In Biblical Hebrew *mashal* means 'parable', while in the Hebrew of the Sages (*lashon khakhamim*) *mashal* is closer to the English word 'example'. The contemporary use encompasses both the Biblical and the later, but in no case do modern speakers use *mashal* to link two independent clauses. This use clearly derives from the Yiddish phrase *a moshl*.¹⁴ In Appelfeld's use of the word *mashal*, then, once more a word has been derived from the Hebrew, gained a new usage in Yiddish and is then redeposited into the Hebrew repertoire, to be used in a new, expanded way.

It is possible, of course, that Appelfeld was consciously or unconsciously imitating Agnon here. After all, he admits to studying

12. The other occurrence of *akh* used in this way is Judges 7:19.

13. In the usage X *mashal* Y (independent clause *mashal* independent clause), *mashal* serves to equate X and Y.

14. For an overview of the relationship between Hebrew and the *loshn-koydesh* component of Yiddish, see M. Weinreich, *Geshikhte fun der Yidisher Shprakh I* (New York 1973) 311–20. for amore precise definition of 'component' vs 'determinant' see II 3ff. Using Weinreich's terminology, an element can be said to be found in the Hebrew-Aramaic component of Yiddish if it is derived from either Hebrew or Aramaic and has adjusted to the norms of Yiddish phonology and/or morphology.

15. Once again, a non-Yiddish speaker can understand this. However, he or she would not ordinarily resort to this.

16. I am not ruling out a *leshon khakhamim* influence here. However, the most likely (and clearly the strongest) influence for Appelfeld is his native German.

17. I am not suggesting that *ze khashuv etsli* is wrong, only that it has a slightly non-native feel.

Agnon when he was discovering Israeli writers. This is certainly a possibility. However, it is more likely that this is simply a known Yiddish usage making itself felt in Hebrew.

Here is an example of *marshal* in *Laylah ve'od laylah*, used as it would be in Yiddish: 'Le-shema devaray khiyekha, marshal giliti la sod' (At the sound of my words, she smiled, as though I'd divulged a secret to her). Only someone who knows Yiddish would use *marshal* this way.¹⁵

There are some Yiddish calques that put in a single appearance in the novel. Not surprisingly, these are prepositions, the peskiest parts of speech. These small words, which go almost unnoticed, convey nuances that are highly language-specific. When transferred directly to a new language, they are the telltale signs of a foreign influence. One such preposition is the word *etsl(a/o)* in its meaning of 'for her/him'. Literally speaking, *etsla* means 'next to her'. The Hebrew use of *etsel* to indicate possession is derived from the Yiddish. When a Yiddish speaker would say *bay ir* (literally, 'next to her'), Appelfeld translates *bay* into *etsel* and says *etsla*. Hence this sentence in *Laylah ve'od laylah*: 'veha-seder khashuv *etsla* yoter mey-ha-khayim' (And order is more important *for her* than life).¹⁶

Once again, this usage is not as odd as it may seem. Because the revivers of modern Hebrew were native Yiddish speakers, it was natural for them to import their native Yiddish usage into their newly acquired Hebrew. One of the more common of their loan translations was this use of *etsel* as a translation of the Yiddish *bay*. Thus when a Yiddish speaker would say '*bay mir iz alts in ordenung*' (As for me [literally, next to me], all is well), a modern Hebrew speaker would say '*etsli ha-kol be-seder*' and never feel the presence of a loan translation. Indeed, there was a popular Hebrew song with just these words: *etsli ha-kol be-seder* (As for me, all is OK). However, not all replacements of Yiddish *bay* with Hebrew *etsel* feel equally nativized. It is true, for example, that *etsli* is used to mean 'in my place/house' just as *bay mir* is used in Yiddish. However, *etsli* is not naturally used in conjunction with the word *khashuv*. Although a non-native speaker would be (and is) understood if he or she were to say *ze khashuv etsli* for 'it is important to me', the more natural choice would be *ze khashuv li*. In using the *bay > etsel* with the word *khashuv*, Appelfeld discloses his non-native origin.¹⁷

Another calque that slips by because it is nearly native (but not quite) is the use of the Hebrew preposition *al* for the Yiddish *oyf*. *Al* is indeed the proper translation for *oyf* but it cannot necessarily be used wherever *oyf* would be used in Yiddish. On page 43 of *Laylah ve'od laylah* is the sentence: 'Aval la-rov yoshvim ha-dayarim *al* mekomam' (But for the most part the residents sit *in* their seats). The Hebrew preposition *al*, which means 'on', is not the native choice for this usage. A native Hebrew speaker would use the preposition *be* in this case and the sentence would be: 'yoshvim *be*-mekomam'. Appelfeld chose *al* because in Yiddish the sentence would have been: 'zitsen *oyf* zeyer ort'. Once again Appelfeld has taken the preposition that Yiddish would use, translated it into his acquired Hebrew and then used it where it would be appropriate for Yiddish.

It is worth explaining why Appelfeld's use of *al* here is nearly native. There are dozens of examples in the Bible of the word *al* used for sitting in a chair, the best-known (at a guess) being that from the Megilah read on Purim: 'keshevet ha-melekh... *al* kise malkhuto' (when the king... was sitting *on* his throne [literally, the chair of his kingdom]).¹⁸ However, there are no examples of *al* with *makom* (place) as it is used in *Laylah ve'od laylah*. When one considers that sitting in a chair is not semantically far removed from sitting in one's place, and that when one speaks of sitting in a chair in Hebrew one does (or can) use the preposition *al*, one can see why the use of *al* with *makom* would not seem particularly strange to a Hebrew speaker.

I come now to a syntactic device common in Yiddish, known to earlier stages of Hebrew, but present primarily in the modern Hebrew of native Yiddish speakers: fronting. Many languages have the option of moving to the front of the sentence a word, phrase or clause that would ordinarily appear later in the sentence. This move to initial position lends the fronted element an emphasis it would not ordinarily have.¹⁹

An example of such fronting in *Laylah ve'od laylah* is 'mi-yidish hiy kamuvan soledet' (From Yiddish she naturally recoils),²⁰ in which the device of fronting, borrowed from Yiddish, is used by Appelfeld in a sentence which is itself discussing Mrs Prakht's abhorrence of Yiddish. It is as though the author is telling the reader (by the use of a Yiddish syntactic device) that there is no way to avoid the influence of Yiddish

18. One could argue that it is not *kise* but the phrase *kise malkhut(o)*, which is one morpheme. I suggest that *al* and *kise* do co-occur but only with *al kise malkhut(o)*. Of course, *al* does co-occur with *makom* (as in the phrase *shav al mekomo be-shalom*, resumed normalcy, ended as it should have). However, *yashav al mekomo* does not occur.

19. It is a prejudice of Anglo-Saxon linguistics to consider a primary word order (either subject, verb, object or verb, subject, object) the norm and all else an aberrant result of rules that move elements within the sentence. In this case, moving a prepositional phrase to initial position in a sentence is generally called 'topicalization' (see Stephen Crain and Diane Lillo-Martin, *An Introduction to Linguistic Theory and Language Acquisition*, Malden, Mass. 1999, 113 and 120). Even under a static model of grammar, however, the verbal phrases *soledet mi-x* and *borakhat m-pney x* are each a unit. The detachment of the direct object phrase from its verb occurs under special conditions and calls for an explanation.

20. Appelfeld, *Laylah ve'od laylah* 6.

even (or perhaps especially) if one wants to describe someone who will have no truck with Yiddish. In this case the medium – the use of a Yiddish syntactic device – is itself the message.

As noted more than once, Appelfeld's Hebrew Yiddishisms have a way of feeling almost native to modern Hebrew speakers. With fronting, as with the calques discussed earlier, the feeling of near nativeness derives from the existence in ancient Hebrew of a fronting pattern that is reminiscent of what is found in *Laylah ve'od laylah*.

In Genesis 16:8, when Hagar runs away from her mistress Sarah and is asked by an angel why she has run away, she answers: 'Mipney Saray gevirty anokhi borakhat' (From-before [literally, from the face of] my mistress Sarah I am fleeing). Here a preposition and its noun (which together function as a direct object) are fronted in a fashion closely similar to the fronting used by Appelfeld in the sentence given above. There are dozens of examples of fronting in his novel.²¹ Some of them almost feel like Biblical Hebrew revived; others do not.

Whereas Biblical Hebrew fronts nouns and phrases with ease, it does not front a noun together with its dependent clause. Yiddish, on the other hand, can and does front a noun along with its dependent clause. In the following sentence from *Laylah ve'od laylah*, 'Tefila kemo shel Meshulem Ber lo shom'im od' (Prayer like that of Meshulem Ber one no longer hears).²² The fronting here may have echoes of a Biblical pattern but when examined closely it is clearly derived from Yiddish.

As I pointed out earlier, some of the Yiddish elements in the novel may in fact be German elements. When German and Yiddish share a common feature and that feature is detected in Appelfeld's Hebrew, it is impossible to say with certainty which language is exerting an influence. (Perhaps the two together exert a double-strength influence.²³) However, there is one feature of Appelfeld's Hebrew that is indubitably Yiddish in origin: the use of a rise-fall contour to convey a question or a statement that presupposes a negative. In its simplest form this intonation pattern can be assigned to a sentence consisting of only one word, and a monosyllabic word at that. Thus the monosyllabic *ikh*, 'I', when assigned a rise-fall pattern becomes two units, the first taking a rising pitch and the second taking a falling pitch: *iy/lyikh*. When spoken with this rise-fall contour, the one-

21. Other examples can be found on 15, 23, 40, 58, 60, 66, 67, 70, 72, 77, 78, 79, 81, 86, 94, 99, 111, 118, 131, 144.

22. Appelfeld, *Laylah ve'od laylah* 15.

23. I know no way of measuring a single-force strength against a double-force one but it is worth thinking about.

word sentence becomes a question which means: You don't mean me, do you?

This contour was first discussed by U. Weinreich and elaborated on by me.²⁴ I showed that the rise–fall contour characterizes a *kashe* in the Talmud²⁵ and that it is by way of Talmudic chant that the rise–fall contour made its way into Yiddish speech. I also demonstrated that this chant originated in the land of Israel and was brought to Ashkenaz by the early Jewish settlers.²⁶

When the Jews of Europe acquired a non-Jewish language, they often learnt its phonology and grammar but retained something that gave them away as Jews. This something, I have contended, was the intonation pattern of Yiddish.²⁷ Because intonation has no graphic reification, it is not learned consciously; it is learned subconsciously and transmitted subconsciously. That is why, when the Jews of Europe changed their language, they took with them the intonation patterns that stem from Talmudic chant.

It is this rise–fall intonation pattern that is found in *Laylah ve'od laylah* over and over again.²⁸ Quite often the reader encounters something that looks like a declarative sentence but is not. From the context one knows that the sentence has the meaning of an interrogatory sentence. As was the case with the one-word sentence *ikh*, it is the rise–fall intonation contour that transforms the declarative sentence into an interrogative. In the following passage from the novel, 'Klara, at lo rotsa lavo eylay la-pensyo', if I were to give this a literal translation it would be 'Clara, you don't want to come to my pension' but this is not the reading indicated by the author, for the words that follow this are 'lo paskati lish'ol' (I didn't stop asking).²⁹ The author himself shows that the reader is confronted with a question. If this is to be a question, then, it must be assigned a rise–fall contour to the last two syllables of the word *pensyon*, with a rise on *pen* and a fall on *syon*. Once that is assigned, the declarative sentence is turned into a question that presupposes a negative. The revised translation will now be: 'Clara, don't you want to come to my pension?' This is only one of many examples of Appelfeld's dependence on the rise–fall contour to convey a question (or statement) that has a presupposed negative.

Although the text gives no diacritical marks for intonation reading,

24. U. Weinreich, 'Notes on the Yiddish Rise–Fall Intonation Contour' in M. Halle (ed.) *For Roman Jakobson* (The Hague 1956) 633–43; Z. Kahan Newman, 'The Jewish Sound of Speech: Talmudic Chant, Yiddish Intonation and the Origins of Early Ashkenaz' *Jewish Quarterly Review* XC 3–4 (Jan.–April 2000) 293–337.

25. Kahan Newman, 'Jewish Sound of Speech' 304–11.

26. *Ibid.* 316–30.

27. *Ibid.* 329–30, esp. n. 55.

28. Examples can be found on 17, 21, 37, 43, 45, 52, 58, 60, 66, 85, 108, 136, 160, 179. Occasionally there is more than one occurrence on a page.

29. *Ibid.* 21.

there is no other way the reader can properly interpret this clause as a question and not a statement. Only the assignment of a rise–fall contour will give the sentence not only a question meanin, but also a presupposed negative.

Summary

I have shown that the Hebrew of *Laylah ve'od laylah* is fraught with the telltale signs of Yiddish grammar. Sometimes these Yiddish words or grammatical patterns tell something about the novel's characters. Often they hark back to earlier, more ancient patterns of Hebrew. They are reminiscent of possibilities that used to exist in ancient Hebrew, and they revive these possibilities for modern Hebrew. One could say that Appelfeld has used a Yiddish sieve to recycle (and often to re-work) ancient elements and patterns of Hebrew.

The many examples of a rise–fall contour in *Laylah ve'od laylah* are examples of yet another cycle. Appelfeld may have acquired German as his first language, but he apparently also acquired the ancient intonation pattern brought to Ashkenaz (as a Talmudic chant pattern) by its early settlers. This chant pattern, which originated in the land of Israel and moved with the settlers and chanters to Ashkenaz, took root, it is true, in Yiddish but, because of Appelfeld and others like him, it has returned to the land of Israel, this time as an intonation pattern of modern Hebrew.

One of the themes of the novel is the seeming demise of Yiddish. My analysis has shown, however, that Yiddish is not really dead. Many of its elements have simply divested themselves of their outer Germanic shell and taken refuge in modern Hebrew.