*Spaces of Gendered Jewish and Non-Jewish Encounters: Bed Lodgers, Domestic Workers, and Sex Workers in Vienna, 1900–1930**

BY SUSANNE KORBEL

University of Graz

ABSTRACT

This article presents findings on encounters between Jews and non-Jews in the context of daily life in Vienna between 1900 and 1930. In the early twentieth century, the Habsburg capital underwent tremendous population growth, which increased the opportunities among its inhabitants of interreligious and cultural interactions, but also confronted them with a housing shortage. Up to twenty per cent of the population had to share housing or even beds with their fellow citizens. Those who could afford more comfortable living conditions, such as private apartments, also shared them with non-family members. The middle and upper classes employed domestics who lived with the families they worked for and had rooms within the family apartments. Homes thus provided spaces in which Jewish and non-Jewish relations thrived. This article sheds light on the range of encounters that took place in homes, how Jewishness and gender were negotiated in such encounters, whether relations were formed as a consequence, and, if so, what they looked like. Based on a close examination of memoirs, novels, and court records, I argue that the range of Jewish and non-Jewish relations was much broader than historiography has hitherto suggested, due to the shared experiences triggered by the urban making of Vienna.

Fin-de-siècle Vienna provided a pluricultural urban setting characterized by a new quality of mobility.¹ A large number of people, Jews and non-Jews alike, were on the move, new professions emerged, and increasing possibilities for leisure and entertainment spread along the Danube.² These developments occurred in a climate of antisemitism, popularized and

* Research for this article was funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), grant P31036-G28. I wish to thank Gabriel Finder, Klaus Hödl, Joachim Schlör, and the anonymous referees for their helpful feedback on earlier drafts of this article. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

¹ Moritz Csáky, 'Hybride Kommunikationsräume und Mehrfachidentitäten. Zentraleuropa um 1900', in Elisabeth Röhrlich (ed.), *Migration und Innovation um 1900. Perspektiven auf das Wien der Jahrhundertwende*, Vienna 2016, pp. 65–97. The concept of pluriculturalism builds on the assumptions of multiculturalism, although, in an attempt to overcome the problematic singularity of the concept of multiculturalism, scholars have begun to focus on how cultures resonate, interact, and merge through mutual mediation, rather than merely tolerating one another or coexisting. See Anil Bhatti, 'Plurikulturalität', in Johannes Feichtinger and Heidemarie Uhl (eds), *Habsburg neu denken. Vielfalt und Ambivalenz in Zentraleuropa—30 kulturwissenschaftliche Stichworte*, Vienna 2016, pp. 171–180.

² Mary Gluck, *The Invisible Jewish Budapest: Metropolitan Culture at the Fin de Siècle*, Madison 2016; Klaus Hödl, *Entangled Entertainers: Jews and Popular Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, New York 2019; Susanne

made socially acceptable by Mayor Karl Lueger's transformation of the religious into racist agitation. This strong animosity towards Jews was rooted in a type of biologicistic thought termed 'Moderner Antisemitismus' ('modern antisemitism').³ 'Arierparagraphen' ('Aryan paragraphs') expelling Jewish students from fraternities competed with institutions like the Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus (Association to Counter Antisemitism).⁴ Nonetheless, everyday life provided inhabitants with seemingly endless opportunities for encounters between Jews and non-Jews that were nourished by the city's pulse.

The massive growth of its population transformed Vienna into a metropolis of more than two million inhabitants, leading to citizens having to share housing with their fellow citizens.⁵ The vast majority of the population shared lavatories with their neighbours on the same floor or even with the entire building. They got running water from the 'Bassena' (a communal basin) in the hallway, their children played in the courtyards, and the adults gathered in the 'Zimmer', 'Küche', or 'Kabinett' (the room, kitchen and connecting room that constituted many Viennese apartments at the time).⁶ Those who could afford more comfortable conditions lived in private apartments with their family members, but also others. Both high society and average middle-class families employed domestic workers—maids, nannies, caretakers—who lived together with the families they worked for and had rooms in their homes. In this article, I explore intimate spaces such as apartments and shared bedrooms in fin-de-siècle Vienna as places that facilitated encounters between Jews and non-Jews, and investigate the overlapping of Jewishness and gender as spatial experiences.⁷ What

Korbel, *Auf die Tour! Jüdinnen und Juden in Singspielhalle, Kabarett und Varieté zwischen Habsburgermonarchie und Amerika um 1900*, Vienna 2020.

³ See Victor Karady, *Gewalterfahrung und Utopie. Juden in der europäischen Moderne*, tr. Judith Klein, Frankfurt am Main 1999, 203–221.

⁴ Albert Lichtblau, 'Antisemitismus 1900–1938. Phasen, Wahrnehmungen und Akkulturationseffekte', in Barbara Eichinger and Frank Stern (eds), *Wien und die jüdische Erfahrung 1900–1938. Akkulturation—Antisemitismus—Zionismus*, Vienna 2009, pp. 39–58.

⁵ Between 1890 and 1930, Vienna's population increased threefold. In 1880, approximately 730,000 people lived in Vienna. In 1890, the population had crossed the one million threshold, with 1.1 million people settled there, and by the turn of the century it had 1.6 million inhabitants. By 1910, the population had again increased by a quarter, with two million people, including 175,000 Jews, living in the metropolis. Ivar Oxaal, 'Die Juden im Wien des jungen Hitler. Historische und soziologische Aspekte', in Gerhard Botz, Ivar Oxaal, Michael Pollak and Nina Scholz (eds), *Eine zerstörte Kultur. Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus in Wien seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*, Vienna 2002, pp. 47–66 and pp. 50–51.

⁶ 'Zimmer, Küche, Kabinett' became a characteristic flat design for Vienna; a perfect scheme for having as much space to rent out as possible. Bruno Frei, *Jüdisches Elend in Wien. Bilder und Daten*, Vienna 1920, pp. 44–53.

⁷ Jewish studies is currently witnessing the heyday of the spatial turn. See for example Simone Lässig and Miriam Rürup (eds), *Space and Spatiality in Modern German-Jewish History*, New York 2017, and especially Anne-Christin Saß, 'Reconstructing Jewishness, Deconstructing the Past: Reading Berlin's Scheunenviertel Over the Course of the Twentieth Century', in *ibid.*, pp. 197–214.

kinds of Jewish and non-Jewish encounters took place in private spaces in Vienna? How were Jewishness and gender negotiated in such encounters? Were relations formed through these encounters and, if so, what did they look like?

SHARED LIVING SPACES

Vienna around 1900 offered multifarious opportunities for encounters between Jews and non-Jews. Not only public spaces provided regular coincidental and unintended meetings with people outside of the family; in supposedly private spaces such as apartments, people also encountered their fellow citizens. These spaces were not divided between Jewish and non-Jewish spheres, but rather the opposite: Jews lived together with non-Jews, Jews worked for non-Jews, Jews had non-Jewish nannies and maids, Jews produced goods together with non-Jews, and even Jewish sex workers might have had non-Jewish clients, and vice versa.

However, the historiographic view of Jewish and non-Jewish co-residence in Vienna around 1900 still remains within the limits of a narrative that emerged in important studies during the early 1980s. For example, in her classic account of Jewish life in fin-de-siècle Vienna, Marsha Rozenblit writes, while examining the phenomenon of intermarriages as ‘the final stage in the process of ethnic assimilation’:⁸

The Vienna Jews lived with other Jews. The creation of Jewish neighbourhoods in the city served to separate Jews from gentiles and install more deeply the perception—among Jews and non-Jews alike—that Jews formed a distinct group. Within their neighbourhoods, Jews came into contact chiefly with other Jews. Their residential concentration thus hindered them from forming friendships and other intimate relationships with non-Jews.⁹

I have found that this was not the case. Many memoirs by Viennese Jews contradict Rozenblit’s findings, as Ivar Oxaal emphasized when he stated: ‘Viennese Jews undoubtedly lived principally among other Jews during the half-century of internal migration before 1914, but a great many of them lived in close proximity to non-Jews, too’.¹⁰ Nevertheless,

⁸ Marsha Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867–1914: Assimilation and Identity*, New York 1983, pp. 126–131 (p. 126).

⁹ Ibid., p. 71. In addition, Rozenblit argued that ‘Jews lived not in areas which accorded with their economic status but in Jewish areas’. Vienna’s second district, Leopoldstadt, and ninth district, Alsergrund, constituted these areas. Ibid., pp. 78–79.

¹⁰ Oxaal, pp. 52–53.

narratives of Jewish particularism, as embodied in the ostensible spatial segregation of Jews from non-Jews in the cityscape, continue to be perpetuated by historical scholarship, as well as in literary, cultural, and social studies. Notions of shared Jewish and non-Jewish daily life have only rarely and recently come to the fore of research.¹¹

This article begins by presenting seven examples of memoirs and/or memories that portray Vienna during the fin-de-siècle as a space for regular encounters and even intimacy between Jews and non-Jews. For example, Vilma Neuwirth (1928–2016) wrote in her memoir *Glockengasse 29* that she and her family settled into surroundings that were not solely inhabited by Jews: ‘There were five apartments on the second floor. Besides us, two other Jewish and two Catholic families lived there’.¹² In his memoir, Hans Stein (1918–?)¹³ reflected on his childhood in Vienna and on his family’s neighbours, some of whom became friends of the Stein family:

Our family lived on the second floor of a three-storey apartment house in Hardtgasse 6 in the nineteenth district [Döbling] in the city of Vienna. The most important person in the house was the caretaker, a she: Frau Englisch. She lived on the first floor; everyone who entered the house had to pass her door. [...] Frau Barnas and her family lived on our floor. She had a son about my age. A decent person, she was friendly to us. I remember very little of the Barnas family except that Hans Barnas, the son, tried to play the piano although his efforts sounded rather futile. [...] Mr and Mrs Heller, a retired old Jewish couple, lived on the floor below. They were Jewish, but we did not have any contact with them. Next to them lived Frau Petersilka and her boyfriend, a dental technician, who in his spare time tried to be a dentist. My sister and I were treated—badly.¹⁴

¹¹ Scholarship has investigated everyday life in the German territories. For example, Kaplan, Liberles, Loewenstein, and Maurer have published an edited collection on the making of Jewish everyday life since the seventeenth century, while Jensen examines the notion that Jews and non-Jews shared spaces and experiences, drawing the conclusion that Jews nevertheless remained ‘Bürger der anderen Art’ (‘citizens of another type’). See Robert Liberles, ‘An der Schwelle zur Moderne’, in Marion Kaplan, Robert Liberles, Steven M. Loewenstein, and Trude Maurer (eds), *Geschichte des jüdischen Alltags in Deutschland. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis 1945*, Munich 2003, pp. 21–124; Marion Kaplan, ‘Konsolidierung bürgerlichen Lebens im kaiserlichen Deutschland 1871–1918’, in *ibid.*, pp. 226–346; Uffa Jensen, *Bürgerliche Juden und Protestanten im 19. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2005. However, there has only rarely been comparable work done on Jewish life in Central Europe. See Erica Szívós and Michael L. Miller (eds), Special Issue on Historic Jewish Spaces in Central and Eastern European Cities, *East Central Europe*, 42, nos. 2–3 (2015).

¹² Vilma Neuwirth, *Glockengasse 29. Eine jüdische Arbeiterfamilie in Wien*, Vienna 2008, p. 20.

¹³ Gideon Hans Stein was born on 17 May 1918, the son of Dr Wilhelm Stein, a secondary school teacher in Vienna. Hans Stein studied philology at the University of Vienna until the summer of 1938. In 1939, he emigrated to the United States, where he later continued his studies at Columbia University and became a professor at a college. ‘Gideon Hans Stein (später Stewart)’, *Gedenkbuch der Universität Wien*, <https://gedenkbuch.univie.ac.at>, accessed 26 February 2020.

¹⁴ Hans Stein, *Vienna Childhood Memoirs*, pp. 1–2, Leo Baeck Institute New York (LBI), Austrian Heritage Collection, ME 1180.

Stein's memoir emphasizes not only that he and his family lived among Jews and non-Jews, but also that Jews shared daily interactions with their non-Jewish neighbours in the spaces surrounding their private homes.¹⁵

In his autobiography *Winds of Life*, Evan Gershon, born Gustav Ziegler (1923–1998), indicated that housekeeping also made close encounters inside private rooms unavoidable:

Many Jewish families employed young girls as domestics. They came from villages not far from Vienna. The young women were not paid much, but had a room and board and, most important, learned to cook and run a household. [...]. We too had a domestic at different times, the last one being Julia. She, more than any of the other girls, became almost a part of the family. Sundays were her days off, but she never went out, nor did she have a boyfriend.¹⁶

Gershon describes the relationship between the domestic staff and his family as particularly close, especially as they were the only people who interacted with their maid Julia, who did not encounter anyone else while working for the Zieglers.¹⁷ Hans Stein also reflected on the conditions of living in close proximity with non-Jewish domestic staff, given that they all lived in the family apartment:

Even though our family was middle class, we had help running the household. It was customary to employ girls, mostly from the country, who wanted to come to Vienna, the big city. [...] In our apartment, next to the kitchen was a little room, big enough for a bed and a small dresser with a washstand. This was the room designated for the maid.¹⁸

Like Gershon and Stein, Vinzenzia Safar (1891–1963), née Landau, vividly remembered her non-Jewish nannies and the family's domestic workers. In her memoir, she emphasized that the domestic who had worked for the family already back in Cilli/Celje (then in the Habsburg Empire, today Slovenia) before moving with them to Vienna in 1907, always

¹⁵ For other memoirs in which close relations between authors' families and maids are mentioned, see Ulrich Furst (1913–?), *Windows to My Youth*, p. 43, LBI, Memoir Collection, ME 902; Toni Stolper (1890–1988), *Recorded Memories*, p. 8 and pp. 20–21, LBI, Memoir Collection, ME 390.

¹⁶ Evan Gershon was born Gustav Ziegler in Vienna and grew up in an apartment at Brigittenauer Lände 26. Evan Gershon, *Winds of Life: The Destinies of a Young Viennese Jew, 1938–1958*, Riverside 2000, p. 6.

¹⁷ Between 1880 and 1900, the number of domestic workers in Vienna doubled. Usually, young Catholic women from the countryside (from all provinces of the empire) migrated to Vienna to work as maids.

¹⁸ Stein, p. 4.

had her room in the very centre of the family's home. In Vienna, the Landaus settled in Margareten, the fifth district.¹⁹ Another contemporary of theirs, Kurt Schwarz (1913–1998), shared the memory of an even more intimate relationship with his nanny. Schwarz grew up in Schönbrunnerstraße 186 before the family moved to a huge apartment situated in Vienna's thirteenth district, Hietzing, at Trautmansdorffgasse 56. Schwarz remembered his and his sister's relationship with his nanny being very close, stating: 'I am amazed how little contact I had with my parents', and continuing that he felt unbelievably close to his 'nanna or Freulein[!]', with whom 'we two kids slept together in a room'.²⁰

However, Jewish life in fin-de-siècle Vienna comprised both the experiences of well-situated families and those of a fresh arrival living in small accommodation with at least five other people, and possibly up to ten.²¹ In addition to vividly describing the private life of a bourgeois family, Evan Gershon described what housing in Vienna was like for his family earlier on. He remembered his childhood growing up as the son of Eastern European immigrants, who luckily managed to make their way out of mass housing. He himself lived in a small one-room apartment with his parents and up to four so-called 'Bettgeher' (bed lodgers)—tenants who rented a bed in the family's room for several hours a day. These 'Bettgeher' usually made Gershon flee outside to parks or entertainment sites.²² Still, these 'walk-in customers' had contact and interacted with their landlords in their private homes on a daily basis.

¹⁹ Vinzenzia Safar, *Aus meinem Leben*, pp. 36–37, LBI, Memoir Collection, ME 546; Grete Beck-Klein, 'Was sonst vergessen wird. Von Wien nach Shanghai, England und Minsk', in Erhard Roy Wiehn (ed.), *Jüdische Schicksale 1918–1996*, Konstanz 1997, p. 19 and pp. 22–23. The same applied, for example, to Grete Beck-Klein (1918–1996) and Gertrude Hammerschlag (1919–2019). Beck-Klein used to live in Ottokring, Vienna's sixteenth district, which was known as a working-class district, and Hammerschlag used to live at the very edge of Vienna's third district, Landstraße. Trude Berg was born Gertrude Hammerschlag in Vienna in 1919. She later married the cabaret artist Jimmy Berg, with whom she performed together in the Viennese cafés that emerged in New York in the 1930s and 1940s. Interview with Trude Berg, conducted by Susanne Korbel, 28 June 2016. See also 'Interview with Gertrude Berg', 23 October 2013, LBI, Austrian Heritage Collection.

²⁰ Kurt Schwarz, *Autobiography*, LBI, Memoir Collection, ME 1423. The memories quoted in this section reflected the childhood experience of the subjects, and are often less negative with regard to antisemitism. These memories were written down a relatively long time afterwards; some were preserved in an archive, others were published. Most have not yet been considered in historiographical analysis. It must be emphasized that most of the memoir literature available to historians derives from the generation of children around 1900. Historian Tony Kushner has highlighted, in relation to memories of Second World War refugees, that children in particular tend to have more favourable memories and usually underestimate levels of antisemitism. See Tony Kushner, 'The Kindertransport: A Case of Selective Memory', in *Remembering Refugees: Then and Now*, Manchester 2006, pp. 141–180.

²¹ On bed lodgers in Vienna, see for example 'Wiener Wohnungselend', *Wiener Montags Post*, 20, no. 974 (13 November 1911), pp. 1–2; Stenographische Protokolle der im k.k. Arbeitsstatistischen Amte durchgeführten Vernehmungen und Befragungen, 1899–1904; Josef Ehmer, *Familienstruktur und Arbeitsorganisation im frühindustriellen Wien*, Munich 1980; Frei.

²² Gershon, p. 2.

These seven depictions of everyday life during the fin-de-siècle and in the first decades of the twentieth century reveal the memories of authors who grew up in various neighbourhoods belonging to different social classes, but still shared frequent and sometimes very close relationships with non-Jews living in the same surroundings, and even in the same homes. Their memoirs and autobiographies represent a broad shared experience: urban developments at the turn of the century regularly enabled Jews to encounter non-Jews and vice versa, not exclusively in public, and even more so in private spaces. The living contexts of the bourgeoisie, of immigrants, and everything in between, offered such spaces, even in the most intimate atmosphere of bedrooms.

One must also bear in mind that, due to a competitive and tense situation in the labour market, many of the immigrants in Vienna had to earn their living as sex workers—and a disproportionately high number of these were women.²³ The clandestine prostitution scene flourished in the vicinity of the Kaiser-Ferdinand-Nordbahnhof, the train station where migrants from the Russian ‘Pale of Settlement’ and the easternmost provinces of the Habsburg Empire arrived.²⁴ Encounters between sex workers and their clients were less anonymous than one might expect. For example, we learn from the writer Else Jerusalem (1876–1943) that women who offered sex in the streets usually took their clients home, where they faced encounters with the women’s children.²⁵

Such encounters have not been included in the narratives of the history of Jews in Vienna. Scholarship has to date mainly investigated Jews as members of the bourgeoisie, and their history of ‘assimilation’ or ‘acculturation’ into a non-Jewish surrounding and culture.²⁶ In doing so, both the fact that interactions between Jews and non-Jews had occurred in homes and the considerable experiences of an impoverished mass of people were ignored. To outline the extent of the phenomenon under consideration, I will provide some details and figures concerning the housing conditions in the Habsburg capital, before drawing conclusions about the insights we can gain from such evidence.

²³ Alison Rose, *Jewish Women in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, Austin 2008, p. 3.

²⁴ Markian Prokopovych, ‘Prostitution in Vienna in the Nineteenth Century’, in Jean-Michel Chaumont, Magaly Rodríguez García, and Paul Servais (eds), *Trafficking in Women: The Paul Kinsie Reports for the League of Nations*, vol. 2, Geneva 2017, pp. 232–237; Nancy Wingfield, *Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria*, Oxford 2017, pp. 137–170.

²⁵ Else Jerusalem, *Der heilige Skarabäus*, Berlin 1909, pp. 25–30.

²⁶ In the 2010s, popular entertainment formed one area of interest in studies about Jewish history in the Habsburg Empire and its successor states. See Gluck; Hödl 2019; Korbel; Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture Between the World Wars*, Oxford 2015.

BED LODGERS, DOMESTIC WORKERS, AND SEX WORKERS IN VIENNA AROUND 1900

Between 1880 and 1900, Vienna's population doubled from 880,000 to 1.6 million people. The rapid growth presented the city's inhabitants with the challenge of how to make a living in the metropolis. Among the most crucial factors affecting daily life was privacy in the home, which was less limited to family life than we might imagine today. One fifth of the population could not afford to rent an apartment or even a room of their own. This twenty per cent of the Viennese population paid for a bed to sleep in for a few hours before the next bed lodger settled in.²⁷ Thirty-two per cent of available apartments hosted such tenants. These immense numbers were distinctive to the Habsburg capital: other European cities also faced relatively dense housing conditions, but the number of bed lodgers and apartments offering additional sleeping places in Vienna was unique in terms of households being subject to bed lodging and the average number of people living together in a shared space.²⁸

The city's population frequently lamented its 'Wohnungselend' ('housing misery'),²⁹ referring to the fact that usually up to ten (and sometimes even more) individuals would be living in one small apartment. In particular, Vienna lacked 'small apartments for workers', and '[s]ince there are no apartments one can afford, one minimizes the apartment itself by renting every dispensable space to those who have even less, not even furniture for an apartment'.³⁰ A typical report on the living conditions these people shared reads as follows: 'In the house in Handeslkai 206 in the second district [Leopoldstadt], an apartment is situated between the front of the building and the rear. It consists of one room, a closet, a kitchen, and a small hall. Besides the landlord, eight to ten bed lodgers of either sex inhabit this apartment'.³¹ The tenants' situation was so serious that the Arbeitsstatistische Amt (Austrian

²⁷ 'Aftermieterwesen' ('subletters') was used as a synonym for 'Bettgeherwesen' ('bed lodgers'), while 'Schlafgänger' was a synonym for 'Bettgeher'. 'Auf Schlafstelle gehen' was the common phrase to refer to what bed lodgers did. In 1880, Favoriten, Vienna's tenth district, housed the most bed lodgers, who made up 22.5 per cent of the population. For approximate numbers of bed lodgers in Vienna from 1880 to 1910, see Renate Banik-Schweitzer, Erich Kopechy, and Hans-Michael Putz, 'Bettgeher und Untermieter in Wien, Karte 3.7.3./2', in *Historischer Atlas der Stadt Wien*, Vienna 1990.

²⁸ 'Die Wohnungsnot in Wien', in *Neues Wiener Journal*, no. 801 (17 January 1896), pp. 2–3 (p. 3).

²⁹ 'Wohnungselend' emerged as the most important term in the discourse relating to all, mostly negative, images associated with renting out a part of an apartment. See for instance 'Wiener Wohnungselend', *Wiener Montags Post*; 'Das Wiener Wohnungselend', *Reichspost*, 3, no. 18 (23 August 1896), pp. 2–3.

³⁰ Fritz Winter, 'Das Hotel zum Bettgeher', *Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung*, 11, no. 12 (5 June 1902), pp. 1–2 (p. 1).

³¹ 'Wiener Wohnungselend', *Wiener Montags Post*, p. 1.

Labour Office) frequently issued reports on the living and working conditions of Viennese citizens. One study demonstrated that, in 1901, more than twenty per cent of households sheltered on average nine or more people.³² Some social and professional cohorts lived in even worse conditions. For example, more than one third of Viennese shoemakers had to sublet their apartments to bed lodgers.³³ The subsidized council housing project launched by Social Democratic politicians from the early 1900s onwards, which peaked in the 1920s and 1930s in what is now known as ‘Rotes Wien’ (‘Red Vienna’), improved living conditions, but the mass of refugees arriving during the First World War still kept the average number of tenants high during the interwar period.³⁴

Another factor contributing to and worsening housing conditions was that apartments functioned not only as living but also as working spaces. A considerable number of people performed ‘Heimarbeit’ (‘work at home’) in the same crowded conditions there.³⁵ Inside dwellings, workers who were not employed by a company produced shoes, clothing, and trading goods such as decorative covers, boxes, and so forth, working together in groups in order to sell their products to traders. The Wiener Kleider- und Wäschekonfection (the production of garments and underwear) was the sector to which the Viennese population working in this employment pattern were most likely to belong. Such workers were overwhelmingly female, making up ninety-four per cent of ‘Heimarbeiter’ (‘home workers’). ‘Heimarbeit ist Frauenarbeit’ (‘work at home is women’s work’), as Käthe Leichter (1895–1942),³⁶ a Social Democrat, women’s rights activist, and activist in the labour movement pertinently put it. The average apartment they worked from consisted of a kitchen and one room only, meaning that a disproportionately high amount of home workers faced ‘krassestes Wohnungselend’ (‘the most miserable living conditions’).³⁷ ‘Families working at home, who lived only in one room and with one kitchen, whose refuge was the cellar or the poorhouse;

³² Arbeitsstatistische Ämte im Handelsministerium (ed.), *Die Wohnungs- und Gesundheitsverhältnisse der Heimarbeiter in der Kleider- und Wäschekonfection*, Vienna 1901, p. 16.

³³ Arbeitsstatistischen Ämte im Handelsministerium (ed.), *Wohnungs- und Gesundheitsverhältnisse der Schumacher*, Vienna 1906, p. 35 and p. 44.

³⁴ Felix Czeike, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik der Gemeinde Wien in der Ersten Republik (1919–1934)*, vols. 1 and 2, Vienna 1958–1959; Wolfgang Maderthaner, ‘Das kommunale Experiment. Die Veralltäglicung der Utopie?’, in Werner Michael Schwarz, Georg Spitaler, and Elke Wikidal (eds), *Das Rote Wien 1919–1934. Ideen, Debatten, Praxis*, Basel 2019, pp. 24–29.

³⁵ For a study on ‘Heimarbeit’, which was conducted during the first decades of the twentieth century and published in 1928, see Käthe Leichter, *Wie leben die Wiener Heimarbeiter? Eine Erhebung über die Arbeits- und Lebensverhältnisse von tausend Wiener Heimarbeitern*, Vienna 1928.

³⁶ Käthe Leichter was born Marianne Katharina Pick on 20 August 1895. She was murdered by the National Socialists in Ravensbrück concentration camp in 1942.

³⁷ Leichter, pp. 43–46.

female home workers, who pursued their professions as subletters or bed lodgers. [...] Bed lodgers, who performed their work at home during the daytime, sitting on a rented bed'.³⁸

From the turn of the century onward, the Sozialdemokratische Partei (Social Democratic Party) paid increasing attention to these conditions, taking responsibility for these workers' fates and organizing support for them. In addition, they became the subject of surveys, which aimed to learn about the housing conditions of the impoverished working class in order to change them for the better. Remarkably, however, the Arbeitsstatistische Amt did not ask for religious, ethnic, or cultural affiliations in these surveys, which were concerned with people's daily routines. Contrary to the radicalizing climate of antisemitism in Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century, no attention was paid to the question of whether someone was Jewish or not. Nonetheless, the report on how holidays were taken by 'Heimarbeiter', as well as newspaper articles on ordinary life and crimes among tenants, reveal that interethnic cohabitation and co-working were considered normal rather than extraordinary.³⁹

It is notable that while Jewishness was accorded no importance in questions concerning living conditions, gender appeared to matter. Newspapers emphasized that women in particular tended to perform the gender roles common in family life at that time—such as housekeeping and preparing hot meals—for male bed lodgers.⁴⁰ The Viennese, Social Democratic bimonthly newspaper *Die Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung* ('The Working Women's Newspaper'), known as the 'Sozialdemokratisches Organ für Frauen und Mädchen' ('Social Democratic Newspaper for Women and Girls'), highlighted that renting out beds to tenants was the only opportunity for women whose husbands had died or left them to keep making a living: 'Many proletarian women can only forego leaving their children alone and working in a factory by renting out their apartments to bed lodgers'.⁴¹ However, this practice exposed the girls and boys of the families to the danger of being raped by the tenants. Female domestic workers, who usually had their bedrooms or beds in the very centre of the apartments in

³⁸ Ibid., p. 44.

³⁹ See surveys conducted and published by the Arbeitsstatistische Amt of Vienna. In terms of interreligious cohabitation, the Labour Office compared the surveys with the 'Meldestatistik' (statistics from the records section). Unfortunately, statistics solely about religious affiliation are not available. For how holidays were arranged among home workers, see for example Arbeitsstatistischen Amte, *Wohnungs- und Gesundheitsverhältnisse der Schumacher*, p. 23; 'Frauenmord in der Wienstraße', *Reichspost*, 6, no. 151 (6 July 1899), pp. 6–7.

⁴⁰ Winter, p. 1.

⁴¹ Ibid.

which they worked, in many cases also became the victims of sexual violence at the hands of the men of the house.⁴² It is thus no coincidence that pioneering work in the movement for sexual education and demands for child protection merged in the context of the particular living conditions in Vienna at that time.⁴³

The increasing intimacy of bourgeois family homes and the movement of former male domestic work (e.g. cabmen) into the industrialized professions from the beginning of the nineteenth century⁴⁴ allowed positions for female domestic workers to increase in the following decades. This made up a substantial part of the migration movement in the Habsburg Empire, as women from outside Vienna made pilgrimages to the metropolis to find employment as housekeepers or maids.⁴⁵ Around 1900, nearly half of the women living in Vienna worked; of these, every other woman—a total of almost 500,000 people—served as a domestic worker. Unfortunately, statistics on the religious affiliation of these domestic workers are not available.⁴⁶ The memoirs quoted above illustrate how children developed close relationships with maids and domestic servants, although the relation between them and their employees often remained aloof—even if they worked for the families for several years or even decades.⁴⁷ This might be one reason why many of the sources researchers rely on to trace relations between (Jewish and non-Jewish) families and their personnel derive from the children of the early twentieth century.

THE NOTION OF INDIFFERENCE IN ASSESSING SHARED PRIVATE SPACES

On the basis of a close examination of memoirs, novels, court records, and photographs that

⁴² See, for example, Neuwirth, p. 30. On gendered urban spaces, see Franziska Meister and Daniel Kurz (eds), *Stadt-Raum-Geschlecht. Beiträge zur Erforschung urbaner Lebensräume im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Zurich 2000; Margarete Hubrath, *Geschlechter-Räume. Konstruktionen von "gender" in Geschichte, Literatur und Alltag*, Vienna 2000.

⁴³ For example, Bertha Pappenheim, who later became active in the Israelitische Frauenverein Frankfurt (Frankfurt Jewish Women's Association), was socialized and lived until her thirties in Vienna, witnessing the living conditions of the impoverished bulk of the population there. Arbeitsstatistisches Amt im Handelsministerium (ed.), *Erhebung über die Kinderarbeit in Österreich im Jahre 1908*, Vienna 1911.

⁴⁴ Michael John and Albert Lichtblau, *Schmezltegel Wien—einst und jetzt. Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart von Zuwanderung und Minderheiten*, Vienna 1993, p. 25.

⁴⁵ Annemarie Steidl, Wladimir Fischer-Nebmaier, and James W. Oberly, *From a Multiethnic Empire to a Nation of Nations: Austro-Hungarian Migrants in the US, 1870–1940*, Innsbruck 2017, pp. 262–265.

⁴⁶ Sylvia Hahn, 'Migrantinnen in Wien um 1900', in Elisabeth Röhrlich (ed.), *Migration und Innovation um 1900. Perspektiven auf das Wien der Jahrhundertwende*, Vienna 2016, pp. 173–192 (pp. 179–180). On female domestic workers in Vienna, see Marina Tichy, *Alltag und Traum. Leben und Lektüre der Dienstmädchen im Wien der Jahrhundertwende*, Vienna 1984.

⁴⁷ Hahn, p. 182; Tichy, pp. 28–34.

mention, recount, or explore the embeddedness of Jewish and non-Jewish relationships in everyday life in Vienna around 1900, I argue that considering such spaces in research allows for new insights into the multifarious encounters and relations between Jews and non-Jews that framed daily routines and homes. In the process, new perspectives shared by ordinary people can be added to what scholarship has learned from the debate between Steven Beller and Ernst H. Gombrich, and so be echoed in the narrative on the history of Jews in Vienna—illuminating what the ‘Jewish experience’ there was really like.⁴⁸ I thereby aim to augment existing narratives on Jews in Vienna by exploring their experiences through a new lens: namely that Jews did not live in separate homes, but shared living spaces with their non-Jewish peers.

An important first step in approaching spaces of daily encounters is to analyse them as shared spaces. When members of the New York Tenement Museum’s research group were developing a new part of their exhibition in 2016, they envisioned the spatial overlapping of immigrant stories, focusing especially on encounters between neighbours, because, as their argument went, these ‘shared spaces’ were the most important ones when it came to interactions, getting acquainted with new living conditions and neighbours, forming relationships and so on. They learned from testimonies that staircases, entrance areas, but also rooms within inner flats were open to the other inhabitants of a building. Indeed, gatherings in such spaces remained vivid in the memories of immigrants to New York. The spaces surrounding the inhabitants’ living rooms functioned as zones of active engagement with their fellow inhabitants.⁴⁹

The same approach, I argue, can be applied to the Viennese situation. As stated above, Viennese society during the fin-de-siècle was pluricultural. Roughly half of the population had not been born in the city,⁵⁰ and the majority had a shared experience of immigration within at least the last two generations. While this immense demographic growth had caused housing shortages, processes of embourgeoisement had also triggered new forms of housekeeping and cohabitation with domestic workers, as well as sexual encounters in order to earn a living. Notions of shared spaces are common in the memoirs of Vienna’s Jewish population. In addition, their memoirs reveal that they paid particular attention to these

⁴⁸ Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938: A Cultural History*, Cambridge 1989; Ernst H. Gombrich, *Jüdische Identität und jüdisches Schicksal. Eine Diskussionsbemerkung*, ed. by Emil Brix, tr. Dorothea McEwan, Vienna 2011.

⁴⁹ ‘Bowery Boy’, Episode 246, 17 December 2017; shared spaces occur at around 8:40.

⁵⁰ John and Lichtblau, pp. 12–13.

contact zones in or near their homes.

A second important aspect of the daily encounters between Jews and non-Jews in the private sphere is that, in contrast to the widespread and harsh antisemitic discourse of populists such as Viennese mayor Karl Lueger and newspapers at the time, debates surrounding shared living spaces were not characterized by antisemitism. On the one hand, antisemitism functioned as a cultural code to create a sense of community among antisemites.⁵¹ On the other hand, although exclusion by racist agitation shaped the political discourse from the turn of the century onwards and became even more extreme after the First World War, no anti-Jewish questions were asked about whether these poor fellows were Jewish or not (a large proportion of bed lodgers were in fact Jewish migrants from the eastern parts of the empire, who were also the most common targets of antisemitism at that time). Within their private spaces, and for the purpose of renting beds or earning money, most people were indifferent to antisemitism. The surveys used in the studies of the Arbeitsstatistische Amt did not even include questions about religious or ethnic affiliations.⁵² Klaus Hödl, for example, found evidence that Jewishness did not matter when deciding whether or not a person would be allowed to rent a bed. Instead, people tended to draw attention to the former experiences, relationships, and meaningful contacts which they shared with applicants.⁵³

In the context of everyday life, people acted with ‘indifference’ towards their peers. Individual activities suggest that behaviour necessary for daily routines or to earn a living may have diverged in some cases from the articulation of debates that shaped public opinion. While scholarship has paid a lot of attention to group identities in the last decades, interest has recently shifted towards individual experiences of behaviours that diverge from group-based explanations of behaviour according to identity. New perspectives such as ‘indifference’ and ‘similarity’ have recently begun to challenge group-based narratives and the binaries between Jews and non-Jews, and have helped to reach beyond narrations of

⁵¹ Shulamit Vulkov, ‘Antisemitismus und Antifeminismus. Soziale Norm oder kultureller Code’, in *Das jüdische Projekt der Moderne. Zehn Essays*, Munich 2001, pp. 62–81.

⁵² Arbeitsstatistischen Amte, *Wohnungs- und Gesundheitsverhältnisse*; Arbeitsstatistisches Amt, *Protokoll über die am 27. und 28. Juni 1901 abgehaltene Konferenz, betreffend die Ausgestaltung der Arbeitsvermittlungs-Statistik und das Project der Angliederung einer Wohnungs- und Werkstättenvermittlung an die allgemeineren Arbeitsnachweis-Anstalten*, Vienna 1901.

⁵³ Klaus Hödl, ‘Interaction and Meaningful Contact’, in Tim Corbett, Klaus Hödl, Caroline Kita, Susanne Korbel, and Dirk Rupnow, ‘Migration, Interaction, and Assimilation: Reassessing Key Concepts in (Jewish) Austrian History’, in *Journal of Austrian Studies*, 53, no. 2 (2020), forthcoming.

particularity.⁵⁴ According to new research, people in pluricultural societies are used to encountering differences in daily life and therefore do not perceive them as dominant factors in their daily routines. Rather, they act ‘indifferently towards differences’, and orient themselves according to the commonalities and similarities they spot with their peers.⁵⁵

Shared private spaces were characterized by a high degree of necessity, which set off a high degree of indifference. Marc Augé has described spaces that trigger indifferent behaviour towards the identifications of one’s fellow human beings as ‘non-lieux’ or ‘non-spaces’. As examples, he named mostly places of transit, like airports or hotels, and sites that people frequent for a distinct purpose. When pursuing particular goals, people are largely indifferent to the people they meet, even if they would usually have strong reservations about them.⁵⁶ What differentiates the spaces I am interested in from those Augé counted as ‘non-lieux’ is that private homes and neighbourhoods do not at first appear to be non-spaces of transit. However, bed lodgers, who constantly entered, passed through, and left these spaces, mainly just for the purpose of sleeping a few hours, might have experienced their homes indirectly as spaces of transit. According to Augé, in ‘non-lieux’ people are not interested in interacting with other visitors either, another aspect that does not hold true for private spheres. Yet these private spaces and the paradigmatic ‘non-lieux’ share the notion of necessity or purpose: in the case of ‘non-lieux’, it was the need for transport, and in the case of the private spaces, the need for accommodation. It seems that indifference towards bed lodgers in housing spaces resulted in their transient nature. However, the need to have an affordable place to live distinguished housing spaces from other spaces where everyday encounters between Jews and non-Jews frequently took place. It is significant that indifferent behaviour occurred in housing spaces, whereas other encounters between Jews and non-Jews, for example in fraternities or resorts, took an increasingly hostile turn. Antisemitism in

⁵⁴ Both approaches originate from the same post-structuralist perspective and differ only slightly. ‘Indifference’ is an approach applied to people’s attitudes when articulated about opinions, discursive knowledge, and so forth, whereas ‘similarity’ is a kind of empathy experienced in an encounter.

⁵⁵ The sociologist Rogers Brubaker and the historians Pieter Judson and Tara Zahra outlined ‘indifference’ as a tool to analyse relations, interactions, and belongings. Brubaker, along with Judson and Zahra, argued for the questioning of assumptions to prevent the passing on of exclusive narratives. Anil Bhatti and Dorothee Kimmich, ‘Introduction’, in Anil Bhatti and Dorothee Kimmich (eds), *Similarity: A Paradigm for Culture Theory*, New Delhi 2018, p. 8; Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, ‘Beyond Identity’, in *Theory and Society*, 29 (2000), pp. 1–47; Pieter Judson and Tara Zahra, ‘Introduction’, in *Austrian History Yearbook*, 43 (2012), pp. 21–27.

⁵⁶ Marc Augé, *Nicht-Orte*, tr. Michael Bischoff, Munich 2014. On the relation between spaces and places, see in particular Martina Löw and Gunter Weidenhaus, ‘Borders that Relate: Conceptualizing Boundaries in Relational Spaces’, in *Current Sociology Monograph*, 65, no. 4 (2017), pp. 553–570.

practice sought to undermine all possible forms of daily contact with Jewish fellow citizens through ‘Arierparagraphen’, ‘Vereinsverbote’ (bans on joining and/or forming associations), and the National Socialist ‘Judenstern’ (the yellow ‘Jewish Star’). In the final decades of the nineteenth century, fraternities had expelled their Jewish members, and in the interwar period, resorts in the Austrian alps had banned Jewish guests.⁵⁷

But how did such shared housing spaces, and the encounters that happened within them, affect Jewish and non-Jewish relations? This question will be answered through a close examination of three more memoirs, a novel that illuminates the living conditions of the impoverished masses, and discussions that link shared housing spaces to the necessity of protecting young people.

SHARED HOUSING SPACES, AND JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH RELATIONS

In common with the memoirs quoted above, Käthe Leichter’s 1938 memoir, written in Gestapo jail E 125 in Vienna,⁵⁸ was dedicated in part to her childhood memories of growing up in a Jewish bourgeois family at the turn of the century, when her family had employed a number of non-Jewish domestic workers. Her family used to spend the ‘Sommerfrische’ (summer holiday) outside the city in a small village in Lower Austria. There, they had a mansion in which not only she and her family lived: their domestic workers lived with their families and children in the basement.⁵⁹ In her memories of the relations inside the home, Leichter distanced herself from her family and sympathized with the domestic workers, for example when recalling how her mother treated them: ‘Once, when they were two months behind on the rent that they had to pay for their holes in the basement, the cold-hearted old woman—as was possible without question at the time—put them out on the street’.⁶⁰ For Leichter, speaking as a Social Democrat, what shaped their relations was not primarily a difference between Jews and non-Jews, but a difference in the social status of the two families. In a manner similar to other memoirs, Leichter countered the frequently stressed separation between the domestic workers and the family when describing the relationship between the children—her and her sister—and the domestic workers as closer, more familiar,

⁵⁷ Lichtblau, pp. 38–45.

⁵⁸ Herbert Steiner (ed.), *Käthe Leichter. Leben, Werk und Sterben einer österreichischen Sozialdemokratin*, Vienna 1997, p. 14.

⁵⁹ Leichter, p. 291.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

and more pleasant than the bond they had with their parents:

I was always happy to spend time in the kitchen where Cilli, the old cook who had been in the household since my birth, told me stories and showed me how to play the zither. I would often have to be fetched, because I would once again be with these people. I especially liked it when Cilli sat on my bed in the evenings when my parents were away and told me stories about her life [...] And like all children of the bourgeoisie, we asked the domestic worker where children come from [...] We would never have dared ask our parents unsavoury questions.⁶¹

Such interactions between Jews and non-Jews in private rooms provided important junctions for cultural exchange: Jewish children were often confronted with stories of angels and Catholic saints by their non-Jewish maids.⁶² For example, Elias Canetti (1905–1994) recalled such an exchange with the maid of the family when they settled in Vienna between the beginning of the 1910s and the middle of the First World War:

On New Year's Day, devout Jews stood on the banks of the Danube Canal and threw their sins into the water. Fanny [the maid], who was with us, commented on this. She always had her own views on things and told them to us straight. 'It'd be better if they didn't sin in the first place', she opined. 'Anyone can just throw [them] away.' The word 'sin' made her feel a bit uneasy, and she really didn't like big gestures.⁶³

While the memoirs of the children of the bourgeoisie at the turn of the century usually recalled their relationships with their domestic workers, the confined living conditions had an impact on privacy for many, as indicated above. Intimacy, family life, and childhoods suffered as a result: 'the housing shortage causes a terrible overcrowding of dwellings; the housing shortage destroys any family life; it robs the worker of random opportunities to spend even an hour of his leisure time with his family, because strangers are living with him all the time'.⁶⁴ Gendered issues instigated a profound yet highly constructivist analysis of what privacy tended to be thought of in the following decades. Newspapers and the movement for sexual education claimed that Vienna's youth was being damaged by witnessing the dishonest manners of the bed lodgers in their homes, that an increasing

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 292–294.

⁶² Hahn, p. 181.

⁶³ Elias Canetti, *Die gerettete Zunge. Geschichte einer Jugend*, Munich 1994, p. 115.

⁶⁴ Winter, p. 1.

number of women served as concubines,⁶⁵ and that the opaque character of the bed lodger could function as a cover for criminality.⁶⁶ For instance, in the memoir of a Viennese prostitute most likely written by Felix Salten (1869–1945), the probably fictitious Josefine Mutzenbacher wrote about her childhood, recalling that she was sexually abused several times, the first time by one of the family's bed lodgers at the age of four.⁶⁷ Yet the files of cases brought to court in Vienna at the time paint a picture that proves such accounts were bitterly realistic: children in particular were indeed raped by the bed lodgers of families.⁶⁸

Due to the cramped housing conditions, sex was embedded in daily life. Sex was omnipresent and became an enigmatic topic in political discussions about medical care and hygiene,⁶⁹ as well as in the context of work conducted at home,⁷⁰ in newspapers and in literature. The question of how young people should be taken care of and should be 'befreit vom Laster' ('freed from sin') dominated political and media discourses of the time. For example, the fin-de-siècle writers' society Jung-Wien (Young Vienna),⁷¹ a paradigmatic example of a meeting point for Jews and non-Jews, addressed the issues of intimacy and privacy as they merged in the metropolis. In the writings of several members of Jung-Wien, the negotiation of intimacy overlapped directly with the question of how to protect and educate children. Among the members of Jung-Wien, Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931), Felix Salten (1869–1945), Else Jerusalem, Hermann Bahr (1863–1934), and others examined both

⁶⁵ Else Jerusalem, born Else Kotyáni in Vienna on 23 November 1876, published widely on sex work and claimed to do so for the sexual education of young people. See for example Else Jerusalem, *Gebt uns die Wahrheit*, Leipzig 1902. For literature on prostitution, see Else Jerusalem, *Venus am Kreuz*, Leipzig 1899. She died on 20 January 1943 in Buenos Aires, where she had emigrated with her husband Viktor Widakowitch. She also published under the name Else Widakowitch in Buenos Aires. She was also a performer who frequently staged her plays and songs in Vienna around 1900.

⁶⁶ These were the most common assertions when arguing against the system of renting out beds in private apartments.

⁶⁷ Michael Farin (ed.), *Josefine Mutzenbacher oder die Geschichte einer Wienerischen Dirne von ihr selbst erzählt*, Munich 1990 [1906]. Michael Farin was a pseudonym. The authorship is not entirely clear; the novel was most likely written by Felix Salten, a member of Jung-Wien. According to research conducted to date, there are no autobiographies by prostitutes in Vienna. See Domenico Jacono, 'Der Sexmarkt im Wien des Fin de Siècle', in *Karkanien Revisited*, 12 October 2009, <http://www.kakanien.ac.at/beitr/essay/DJacono1.pdf>, accessed 1 March 2020, pp. 1–14 (p. 1).

⁶⁸ This portion of the article is based on my investigation of the criminal proceedings relating to paragraph 128 (rape of children) in Vienna between 1880 and 1920. For example, the criminal proceedings against Wilhelm Gemperle and Josef Hlavin, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (WStLA), Landesgericht für Strafsachen (LfS), Strafakten, Vr 9956/1900; criminal proceedings against Alois Weissmann, WStLA, LfS, Strafakten, Vr 5772/1902.

⁶⁹ Scott Spector, *Violent Sensations: Sex, Crime, and Utopia in Vienna and Berlin, 1860–1914*, Chicago 2016.

⁷⁰ Arbeitsstatistische Amte (ed.), *Heimarbeiter*.

⁷¹ Steven Beller, 'Vienna 1900: A World of Yesterday, Today—and Tomorrow?', in Günther Bischof and Ferdinand Karlhofer (eds), *Austrian Studies Today*, New Orleans 2016, pp. 258–267 (p. 262).

of these social issues in their writing.⁷²

Else Jerusalem was not only a gifted writer but also one of the founding members of the movement for sexual education. In her 1909 work *Der heilige Skarabäus* ('The Holy Scarab'), which was reprinted twenty-two times within its first two years of publication, she discussed the connection between clandestine prostitution and housing spaces as being responsible for corrupting young people. The novel was condemned as an 'Unsittenroman'—an affront to moral values. The first part, entitled 'Die Schwarze Katerine' ('Black Catherine'), depicts a shared housing scenario involving two female protagonists inside a building that serves mainly as a brothel. There, Janka and Katerine live together autonomously—depending neither on the official structure of the brothel nor on its operators. The two women share their small 'Küche Kabinet' apartment (a kitchen with one connecting room) with just Katerine's daughter Milada—a quite fortunate living situation for single women given the challenging housing market. In Jerusalem's depiction of the life of these two women from the lower social strata, they are only able to afford this apartment because they regularly earn money as sex workers, thus nourishing the clandestine prostitution scene. Katerine would take her clients back home, where they not only encountered her roommate but also her daughter: 'She opened the front door, whistled softly, and Milada scurried over with the candle and illuminated the way for her mother, who went silently and stiffly on with the visitor'.⁷³ Within the first months of her book's publication, Jerusalem was heavily criticized by the public and openly asked how she, 'an honourable woman', could write in such an open and plain way about this 'hidden and segregated subject in such a knowing manner'.⁷⁴ Answering with Zohar, the most important text of the Kabbalah, Jerusalem stressed that the events portrayed in her novel did not take place in isolation, and that the bourgeois world did not remain unaffected by prostitution. Rather, she argued, this world played out in the streets, and concerned the lives of their domestic workers and maids.⁷⁵

In 1920, the writer and journalist Karl Franz Kocmata (1890–1941)⁷⁶ voiced his

⁷² Jacono, pp. 1–14. Members of Jung-Wien were thus often treated with hostility. See for example one of the publications on Jung-Wien by a future member of the National Socialist Party: Arthur Möller van den Bruck, *Das junge Wien*, Berlin 1902.

⁷³ Else Jerusalem, *Der heilige Skarabäus*, mit einem Nachwort von Brigitte Spreitzer, Vienna 2016, pp. 30–31.

⁷⁴ Else Jerusalem, 'Der heilige Skarabäus. Prostitution und ihre künstlerische Beziehung zu meinem Romane', in *Der Zeitgeist, Beiblatt zum Berliner Tageblatt*, no. 22 (31 May 1909), pp. 1–2 (p. 1).

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 1–2.

⁷⁶ Karl Franz Kocmata was a Social Democrat. He did not conceive of himself as Jewish, and is a rare example of someone who had no religious affiliation cited in his records at the Meldeamt (administration office). As a Social Democrat, he was persecuted by the Austrofascist regime between 1934 and 1938, and thus had no

objections to the conditions depicted in *Der heilige Skarabäus* in an essay entitled ‘Der Sumpf von Wien’ (‘The Viennese Swamp’).⁷⁷ In it, he investigated the question of how children could be prevented from being overwhelmed with sex when unavoidably witnessing it in their daily surroundings, either inside or outside their homes. He legitimized his socially motivated thoughts and concerns by asking the medical doctor Heinrich Grün (1873–1924)⁷⁸ to introduce his article with the impressions and experiences he had faced on a daily basis while working for more than twenty-five years in the vicinity of the Prater, in the Leopoldstadt area, which was not only viewed as the Jewish district of the Habsburg capital, but was also said to be the scene of particularly high clandestine prostitution.⁷⁹ Grün stated that every ninth Viennese citizen suffered from venereal disease, of whom at least one third were children. Grün and Kocmata related this to the ‘Wohnungselend’ or miserable living conditions, and the ‘Bettgeherwesen’—the phenomenon of bed lodging.⁸⁰

CONCLUSION

The urban atmosphere of fin-de-siècle Vienna reveals a broad Jewish and non-Jewish entanglement in everyday life. Coping with ordinary life made religious and ethnic affiliations appear almost meaningless on the level of daily encounters. Housing spaces—of the impoverished masses and the bourgeois elite alike—offered diverse opportunities for frequent encounters between Jews and non-Jews. As I have argued, housing spaces in particular cannot be ignored when analysing interactions between Jews and non-Jews in the Habsburg capital. Focusing on private spaces helps us to add experiences of subaltern lifestyles to the history of Jews in Vienna. Without an adequate idea of the range of encounters that occurred between Jews and non-Jews in the fin-de-siècle metropolis, we undervalue private spaces and intimacy as a component of Jewish and non-Jewish relations,

permanent address. This, together with his lack of religious affiliation, might have made further persecution more difficult. See the Meldescheine (registration records of) Karl Franz Kocmata, K2 – B Antiquariat, K3 – C Antiquariat, K5 – E-Antiquariat, Austria, WStLA, Historische Meldekartei (HM). On the problems he faced after the ‘Anschluss’, see Karl Franz Kocmata to Karl Wache, 23 May 1938, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Alte Druckschriften, Autograph 1305/26-1.

⁷⁷ Karl Franz Kocmata, *Der Sumpf von Wien. Bilder des Niedergangs* [1920], Vienna 1921. See also Karl Franz Kocmata, *Anny Rober. Eine Wiener Mädchengeschichte*, Vienna 1920.

⁷⁸ Heinrich Grün was active as a Social Democratic politician in Vienna’s second district, Leopoldstadt. Meldeunterlagen Heinrich Gruen, K2 – B Antiquariat, K3 – C Antiquariat, Austria, WStLA, HM.

⁷⁹ Prokopevych; Wingfield.

⁸⁰ Kocmata, *Der Sumpf von Wien*, p. 2.

and their contribution to the multifarious modes of togetherness that existed between groups of whom it has hitherto falsely been claimed that they lived in separate parts of the city.

Encounters such as those experienced by Hans Stein, Evan Gershon, Karl Schwarz, Vinzenzia Safar, Vilma Neuwirth, Käthe Leichter, and Elias Canetti illustrate the range and intensity of non-familial relationships between Jews and non-Jews in private spaces. The other side of encounters in private spaces—which were often linked with impoverished Jewish immigrants—remain openly and aptly described only in novels or the sometimes published thoughts of the movement for sexual education, in which Jews were among the main protagonists. Evidently, different sources need to be considered in order to question the assumptions of conventional narratives, and to move beyond the particularity of a Jewish versus non-Jewish divide, so as to expand our narratives about Jews in late imperial Austria.