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German Jews in Paris: Traversing Modernity

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The article traces Central European Jewish visitors of Paris during the Weimar Republic and the 1930s and analyzes the shifting meaning of travel, exile, and the figure of the flaneur. Their travelogues articulated their affection for Paris in the aftermath of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles, marking them as border crossers in multiple ways. Writing about modern capitals such as Paris became a way to temporarily belong to them, to reimagine modernity.

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Proponents of Europe and reason of the Enlightenment saw themselves as universal and often dismissed Jews as parochial.[1] The appeal to reason compelled Jews into the modernizing discourse and politics as part of the tacit deal in exchange for civic improvements. Jews in Germany ultimately only acquired full equality in the newly created German nation state of 1871. Their incorporation coincided with Germany's nation-building along with a pervasive social and cultural form of colonization of regional, social, and cultural and religious minorities on the margins of a largely Protestant German nation-state.[2] Those who resisted the logic of colonization of their cultures became the object of bureaucratic pressure, social activism, and political action. In the midst of fashioning Germany's first nation-state, the government, its bureaucracy and intellectuals unleashed an attempt to colonize Socialists, Catholics, and Jews.

For the German historian Detlev Peukert, the margin marked the boundary of the "modern project." The margins occurred in what he called the "Gleichschaltung" of particularity and nonconformity and the "colonization of life-worlds" (Kolonisierung der Lebenswelten).[3] Peukert's wording is not coincidental. The colonization of

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1 Tamar Garb, "Introduction," *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity*, eds. Linda Nochlinand Tamar Garb (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 20–30, and Sutcliffe, Adam, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2003.

2 Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, Mark Roseman, eds., *German History from the Margins* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006).

3 Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 16, and Frank Bajohr, Werner Johe and Uwe

life-worlds, the erasure of particularities exhibited a totalitarian desire to establish homogeneity. National Socialist policy forged total coordination, control, and uniformity to establish as Peukert argued "an [*sic*] utopian Volksgemeinschaft … in which any attempt at nonconformist behavior, or even any hint or intention of such behavior, would be visited with terror."[4] Arguing in a slightly different manner, Zygmunt Baumann in his *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989) interprets the Holocaust not as an aberration, but sees modernity's rationality and efficiency to have provided the necessary conditions.[5]

Within these historical fault lines culminating in the Third Reich, Jews already are perceived to have inhabited the role as the quintessential Other. They function as the Other of Western Christian and German culture.[6] Contrary to these views, relations between Jews and Christians remained more ambiguous. The enlightened Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn aptly captured this when he defended Judaism against its enlightened challengers: "If it be true that the cornerstones of my house are dislodged, and the structure threatens to collapse, do I act wisely if I remove my belonging from the lower to the upper floor for safety?"[7] The occupant of the lower level is not an outsider. His status is that of an insider and outsider.

In the aftermath of the World War II and the Holocaust, postcolonialism and postmodernism questioned the epistemological foundation of modernity. Peukert's view was informed by a historical discourse on Germany's political left, which drew on the first critical responses of the Third Reich and the Holocaust, most notably the Frankfurt School and Hannah Arendt. These philosophers invariably furnished postcolonial thinkers with their critical perspective on modernity. The different strands of post-Holocaust philosophies illuminated the discursive practices and the coercive power of modernity. They called into question its foundation and unearthed moments of resistance. Even before the Holocaust, German Jews had investigated the limits of modernity and reason. Jewish philosophers like Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, and Gershom Scholem all in their different ways questioned the universal claims of modernity. They belonged to a generation of German Jews in Germany that existed not solely as outsiders. Rather, as Peter Gay famously claimed, the outsiders were the true insiders of Weimar culture.[8]

To Jews on the social margins of German society, the crisis of modernity during the Weimar Republic engendered deep social, political, and cultural changes, in addition to creating possibilities for social mobility. Boundaries between territories, masculinity, and femininity, in addition to popular and high culture, mark the many contentious lines of Weimar's modernity. Problems of cultural modernity, social

Lohalm eds., *Zivilisation und Barbarei: Die widersprüchlichen Potentiale der Moderne: Detlev Peukert zum Gedenken* (Hamburg: Christians, 1991).

4 Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life*, 220.

5 Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 13.

6 Susan E. Shapiro, "*Ecriture judaique*: Where Are the Jews in Western Discourse?" *Displacement: Cultural Identities in Question*, ed. Angelika Bammer (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 182–201, here 187.

7 Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, ed., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 103.

8 Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), and Peter Gay, *The Berlin-Jewish Spirit: A Dogma in Search of Some Doubts* (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1972).

modernization, and mass political movement intersected and propelled writers to consider their relationship to the new mass culture of the world of consumer goods, as well as the new media and conflicting political ideologies.[9] Writing from the social margins but from the cultural center, German Jewish travelers often pluralized modernity on and from the borders. Their travelogues articulated their affection for Paris in the aftermath of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles, marking them as border crossers in multiple ways. Embracing Paris entailed a confession for Europe against nationalistic ideologies and the potential threat of Americanization or Soviet culture. Visiting Paris and writing longingly about the French capital in major German newspapers represented a thinly veiled attempt to remap Weimar's modernity from across the French-German border. Far from being simply a pleasurable experience, visiting the French capital was not static and reflected the changing status of Berlin in their respective imaginations. Pleasure requires stability and certainty. This was neither attainable for the central European travelers of the highly politicized and conflicted Weimar Republic, nor was it for German Jews who had been forced into exile in the 1930s.

Nevertheless, crossing the Rhine and visiting Paris created temporarily new possibilities to think about modernity, communities, cultures, and identities. Notwithstanding the conflicts and tension and blurring of boundaries of high and popular cultures, the traveling writers remained confident in their ability to experience and represent their version of Paris. They did not question the status of a city, its multifaceted qualities and constantly changing nature, but largely believed that their individual experiences and observations authenticated and validated their representation of the city. Traveling thus became an important cultural practice for travelers and their readers and articulated a sense of belonging beyond the nation-state.

The encounter with the French capital was different for German Jews as compared to a visiting black Antillean, "who feels the call of Europe like a breath of fresh air."[10] To this visitor, Paris was not only the "holy of holies" but also where "his departmental superiors, and innumerable little potentates came from. . . ." Visiting Paris is both potentially empowering and also always mutilating, Martinique-born Afro-Caribbean philosopher, Frantz Fanon, writes.[11] Jamaican-American writer Claude McKay equally felt degraded and exploited in Paris. He remained unmoved by Paris, which, "has never stormed my stubborn heart/ And rushed like champagne to my head." Seeing Paris not as a city of joyous adventures but as the center of an empire, the French capital is a city that builds "the Frenchmen and his mind complete/ And fit him for his civilizing part."[12]

For German Jews, visiting Paris provided a very different experience. For them it was reassuring and often liberating as much as the sociologist Georg Simmel noted

9 Detlev Peucket, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York: Penguin, 1993), 164–90.

10 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 5.

11 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 7.

12 Claude McKay, *Complete Poems*, ed. William J. Maxwell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 232, and Leah Rosenberg, "Caribbean Models for Modernism in the Work of Claude McKay and Jean Rhys," *Modernism/modernity* 11.2 (April 2004): 219–38.

that "wandering is the liberation from every given point in space, and thus the conceptional opposite to fixation at such a point."[13] What Simmel describes here—the key elements of the stranger who does not belong—often became a key feature of the traveler. Similarly, the perceptive sociologist of the Weimar Republic, Siegfried Kracauer, observed that travel "granted access to the Beyond."[14] Walter Benjamin recounts an anecdote about Kant, where his assistant, who struggles to connect philosophy with theology, asks the philosopher for guidance. Kant advises his assistant in the following manner: "Read travel literature."[15]

Traveling was both a commodified leisure activity and held great promise to the Weimar Jewish travelers. The explorers and travelers intensely reflected on their practice to distinguish themselves from mere leisure travel. Egon Erwin Kisch, who was born in 1885 in Prague into a middle-class German Jewish family, wanted to unmask an alienated vision of reality with his travel exploration. Following a new tone of "new objectivity" (*neue Sachlichkeit*), his reports invited readers to participate in the process of constructing meaning by abstaining from logical interconnection, crafting surprising juxtapositions, and creating an atmosphere of separation and contrast.[16] Franz Hessel sought to resurrect nineteenth-century aesthetic experience of city strolls. Walter Benjamin's writings critically investigate the figure of flaneur to overcome the aesthetic experimental quality of slumming that Hessel strove to revive. Joseph Roth believed that minute details of life are significant and allow exposing from the particular the general.[17] Roth captures in his strolls a disjointed montage of coexisting fragments that amount to a portrayal of "all its absurdity and triviality."[18] These travelers' shared concern for literature and sociological exploration made them critical of established patterns of commodified tours and travel writings. Their accounts provided not only important information for curious readers, but related and narrated multifaceted, highly individualized experiences.

Many of the famed Weimar flaneurs traversed the vaunted discourse of modernity by traveling and undoing links between space and people, countries and cities. Their crossing of borders and engagement with Paris sought to denaturalize links between territory and identity. Their explorations of Paris were part of their wider critical engagement with modernity through their travels and writings.

13 Georg Simmel, "Stranger," *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. and trans. Kurt H. Wolf (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1950), 402–08, here 402.

14 Siegfried Kracauer, "Travel and Dance," *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. and trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 65–73, here 71.

15 Walter Benjamin, "Unbekannte Anekdoten von Kant," *Gesammelte Schriften*, eds. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, Vol. 4. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974–1985), 808–15, here 809.

16 Keith Williams, "The Will to Objectivity: Egon Erwin Kisch, 'Der Rasende Reporter,'" *Modern Language Review* 85 (January 1990): 92–106, here 97. Holitscher was compelled by the Baedeker firm to change the title to *Der Narrenführer durch Paris und London. Mit Holzschnitte von Frans Masereel* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1925). On Holitscher, see Arthur Holitscher, *Lebensgeschichte Eines Rebellen: Meine Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Fischer, 1924), 65; Heribert Seifert, "'Ein weises Kind geht durch die Welt': Die Reisen des Arthur Holitscher," *Neue deutsche Hefte* 31.1 (1984): 48–61, here 49; Gert Mattenklott, "Zeit in Holz geschnitten: Arthur Holitscher und Frans Masereel," *Neue Rundschau* 97.2/3 (1986): 125–41, here 127.

17 Joseph Roth, *What I Saw: Reports from Berlin, 1920–1923*, trans. Michael Hofmann (London: Granta Books, 2003), 24.

18 Roth, *What I Saw*, 23.

Visiting Paris was one of the many destinations including London, the Soviet Union, America, and Palestine that represented different manifestations of modernity.[19] Together these routes and explorations aided what Aamir Mufti formulated in his *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (2009) to "question any settled identification of *this* place with *this* people and *this* language."[20]

Following German Jewish travelers to Paris becomes a way to rethink the concept of diaspora that often is still conceptualized solely in relation to a former home.[21] The Boyarins charged critics like Stuart Hall for reducing the Jewish diaspora to the Zionist project. Instead, they advocate the extent to which the Zionists infused the diaspora and the ways in which Jews' longing for Cordoba, Cairo, or Vilna served to celebrate Zion.[22] Less noticed is the extent to which diasporic traveling articulated alternating versions of modernity. Diasporas are in the words of Avtar Brah " 'inhabited' not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous. In other words, the concept of *diaspora space* (as opposed to that of diaspora) includes the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put.' "[23]

Writing about modern capitals like Paris became a way to temporarily belong to them, to reimagine modernity, and to fashion a new diverse and inclusive cosmopolitanism that grounded the itinerant identities of frequent Weimar travelers. Writing from Paris in 1925, the German Jewish journalist Kurt Tucholsky, who had become a foreign correspondent to the *Weltbühne* und die *Vossische Zeitung*, observes: "Emigrants. In Paris there are many of them."[24] For Germans, Paris, London, and New York played important roles as cultural, social, and economic markers of modernity to compare and contrast with Berlin.[25]

19 Nils Roemer, "London and the East End as Spectacles of Urban Tourism," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99.3 (2009): 416–34, and Nils Roemer, "Jewish Traveling Cultures and the Competing Visions of Modernity," *Central European History* 42.2 (2009): 429–49.

20 Aamir R. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 106.

21 There is a significant amount of literature written on the concept of diaspora. For various views on the meaning of diaspora, see Gabriel Sheffer, "Whither the Study of Ethnic Diasporas?" *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (1986): 37–46; William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myth of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora* 1 (1991): 83–99; Robin Cohen, "Rethinking 'Babylon': Iconoclastic Conceptions of the Diasporic Experience," *New Community* 21 (1995): 5–18; Jon Stratton, "(Dis)placing the Jews: Historicizing the Idea of Diaspora," *Diaspora* 6 (1997): 301–29; Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2001); and Stephan Dufoix, *Diasporas*, trans. William Rodarmor (Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 2006).

22 Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 222–37, and Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (Summer 1993): 693–725. See also Michael Galchinsky, "Scattered Seeds: A Dialogue of Diaspora," *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, eds. David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susannah Heschel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 185-211.

23 Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996), 181.

24 Kurt Tucholsky, "Emigranten. In Paris gibt es davon viele," *Gesamtausgabe: Texte und Briefe: Texte 1925*, ed. Baerbel Boldt and Andrea Spingler, Vol. 7. (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2002), 372–73.

25 Conrad Wiedemann, *Rome–Paris–London. Erfahrung und Selbsterfahrung deutscher Künstler in den fremden Metropolen. Ein Symposium* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1988).

Visiting Paris and surveying cities during the modern period has often been associated with the figure of the flaneur, the observing city stroller, who drifted aimlessly through urban spaces, a fin-de-siècle dandy who explored European cities in search of bustle, gossip, and beauty. For Walter Benjamin, modern Paris had created the flaneur as a distinct social type.[26] The flaneur appears as intimately tied up with the emergence of a new consumer culture and the creation of the city as a spectacle. Whereas the original flaneur assumed, in Mary Gluck's distinction, "that Paris, or at any rate Europe, was the center of modernity and that he could not exist anywhere else in the world," Charles Baudelaire's "avant-garde flaneur" had become a "man of the world and . . . a great traveler, who felt at home in all parts of the globe."[27]

Instead of the idealized version of mid-nineteenth-century flaneur, the explorer of cities of the turn of the century exhibited a problematic relationship to his surroundings and an almost "tragic belatedness."[28] Contrary to the stable subject position of the flaneur, the urban explorer of the twentieth century walks out of his subject position to experience and situates himself in a different manner. This quality is particularly visible in what came to be known as "slumming."[29] If already for the flaneur, the city and its goods had become increasingly a place of exotic goods, slumming involved mobility across class and ethnic divides. Slumming in a foreign city meant walking the boundaries of gender, class, and, nationality, and ethnicity.

Paris had already intrigued German Jews for almost a century. In the nineteenth century, Heinrich Heine had called the city on the Seine "the beautiful magical city."[30] In the French capital, Heine sought out museums, libraries, salons, cafes, and above all, the streets of the city: "In Paris, I experience many great things, I see world history with my own eyes, I freely associate with the greatest heroes," as he proudly writes to Friedrich Merckel in 1832.[31] In letter from December 11, 1841, he also noted that Christmas shopping might provide pleasant pastime for the "idle flaneur." In a more critical mode, he continues by saying that if the brains of the flaneur are not entirely vacant, he might also have some thoughts and notice the passers-by, whose faces are "ugly, serious, and suffering, impatient and threatening." Heine thus critically engages the figure of the flaneur from the perspective of his self-absorption in the spectacle of commodities, while neglecting to see the misery that surrounds it.

Heine's observations of the city are never devoid of political ambitions. In his *Ludwig Börne: A Memorial* (1840), composed in Paris, he imagines himself standing on the Rue Lafitte in rose-red tights at night. The self-fashioning in tights as Spartan

26 Walter Benjamin, "The Return of the Flaneur," *Selected Writings* II 1927–1930, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al., eds. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 262–67, here 263.

27 Mary Gluck, "The *Flâneur* and the Aesthetic Appropriation of Urban Culture in Mid-19th-Century Paris," *Theory, Culture and Society* 20.5 (2003): 53–80, here 78.

28 Sabine Hake, *Topographies of Class: Urban Architecture and Mass Utopia in Weimar Berlin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 148.

29 Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 9.

30 Heinrich Heine, "Verschiedenartige Geschichtsauffassungen," *Heinrich Heine: Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Klaus Briegleb, Vol. 3. (February 10, 1932; Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1997), 133.

31 Heinrich Heine: *Säkularausgabe. Werke, Briefwechsel, Lebenszeugnisse: Briefe 1831–1841*, rev. Fritz H. Eisner, Vol. 21. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2011), 38.

leader Leonidas served Heine to reclaim literature's political aspirations. In his dreamlike post, Heine is surrounded by "stock-jobbers, gamblers and many other low-lives" that the socially constructed and segregated city increasingly marginalizes.

His fantasy, inspired by Jacques-Louis David's *Leonidas aux Thermoplylae* paintings, already knows of despair, when he is "awaiting the battle, and meanwhile the flowers are fading on my head."[32] Employing the Spartan leader of the last three hundred warriors serves not to articulate the place of Jews in modernity, but rather Heine's position on the street. Being on the street, Heine repopulates the city in the name of those who are marginalized. Taking the street and strolling was much more than an idle pastime; it was in fact an imminently political act.

The political nature of traveling to Paris became even more a truism for German Jewish visitors in the aftermath of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles. Franz Hessel, whose parents had converted to Protestantism, moved to the French capital in 1906. Visiting Paris at the end of World War I entailed confession for French culture. He recalls in his *Pariser Romanze: Papiere eines Verschollenen* (1920), a collection of letters written while serving during World War I, how he was always visiting Paris in his dreams. In his dreams he sought to recall an ideal of Paris.[33] Hessel, who had during World War I commenced with his work *Parisian Romances*, likewise sought refuge in a city that he could not visit: "Can I not be in the world to which I belong, so I hear in the wires/railings, grids, grates spin myself in memories."[34] In his strolls through Paris, he preferred to find the old Paris, which had increasingly vanished and given way to the new Paris.[35] Hessel's imaginary recollection of Paris recalled the Parisian bohemia and avant-garde to counter the image of war and conflict. Notwithstanding the political desire that structures Hessel's narrator's, Arnold Waechter's, strolls, wandering through the streets is conceptualized as an undirected experience. Contrary to Heine, Hessel's strolls appear liberated from any purpose or responsibility. They aim to give solace and compensate in the face of historical and social challenges. "Paris is the city, where nothing ever ends, where the past continues to live. Paris is always present and memory."[36] The past never seemed to have quite the same reassuring quality for Benjamin. Viewing himself in a world in which ideologies like Marxism had already lost their appeal, Benjamin's excavations of Paris during the 1930s were marked by an overwhelming and apocalyptic sense of crisis and despair. Despite these profound differences, Benjamin contemplated collaborating with Hessel. Their initial sketches included the Parisian ghetto, which remained part of Benjamin's large and unfinished Arcades project.[37]

In the immediate aftermath of the war, there was an overarching sense of relief in travelogues as already evidenced by Hessel's publication. Visiting France

32 Heinrich Heine, *Ludwig Boerne: A Memorial*, trans. Jeffrey Sammons (Cambden: Rochester, 2006), 108, and Willi Goetschel, "Street, Life, and Other Signs: Heine in the Rue Laffitte," *City & Society* 21.2 (2009): 230–44.

33 Franz Hessel, *Pariser Romanze: Papiere eines Verschollenen* (Berlin: E. Rowohlt, 1920), 1.

34 Hessel, *Pariser Romanze*, 32.

35 Hessel, *Pariser Romanze,* 27.

36 Hesssel, *Sämtliche Werke 3. Städte und Porträts*, 306.

37 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 919.

in the year of the Versailles Treaty, 1919, the German Jewish theater critic and writer Alfred Kerr confessed: "I have always loved France. It would be an idiocy, to deny the beauty of a country and a city once you had found it unspeakably lovely. The world war is not reason to cowardly cover it up."[38] Paris remained the most beautiful city on earth for Kerr, and he was more eager than ever to roam its streets after his years of absence from the French capital.[39] The experience of war only intensified his longing for the past. What attracted Kerr to the French capital was the sense that the old still existed within its landscape. He saw something that came from Athens to Paris, which, however, he believed was doomed to fall victim to Anglicization and Americanization.[40] Far from just presenting a city in tune with its past, traveling to Paris was liberating. To Kerr, Paris was also attractive in a very personal sense. He felt that he was able to say anything he wanted in Paris.[41]

A few years later, he still believed that the city captured its visitors.[42] He regarded the many cards at Heine's grave as indicative of the universal recognition of the German Jewish poet.[43] His enchantment with Paris, however, made him wary of Germany and Berlin. To him Berlin was shrouded in uncertainty. Whereas everything is in the making in Berlin, Paris is already made.[44] Returning finally to Germany, he wondered whether he might rather turn to Hamburg instead of Berlin. The capital, he believed, was an unfortunate "German mistake."[45]

Kerr's travelogue articulates the longing of crisis-ridden Berlin. Paris offered freedom and stability, whereas the politically charged and economic strained conditions of Berlin created uncertainty. Other German Jewish travelers like Siegfried Kracauer echoed Kerr's observations. Paris exists in Kracauer's imagination as the counterpart to Berlin. Whereas he critically assessed modern aesthetics and Berlin's culture as a reflection of capitalist rational economy, Paris healed the visitor. It is impossible for people from Berlin to walk the streets and boulevards with the same speed. There is a "compulsion to be a flaneur" in Paris, which cannot be renewed in Berlin. When he returned in 1931 to Berlin after a few days in Paris, the German capital appears as dangerously looming and paradoxically alluring: "Slowly we are driving into the nightly city, which appears more threatening, tattered, massive, closed and promising than ever before."[46]

Critical of mass culture as an aesthetic reflex of capitalist rationality, he viewed photography as the destroyer of tradition and memory, much like Walter Benjamin did. Kracauer noticed that larger metropolitan centers in the world increasingly appeared the same. Paris served to Kracauer as the nemesis of Berlin, where

38 Alfred Kerr, *Die Welt im Licht* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1920), 255.
39 Kerr, *Die Welt im Licht*, 323.
40 Kerr, *Die Welt im Licht*, 335.
41 Alfred Kerr, *Die Welt im Licht*, ed. Friedrich Luft (Cologne and Berlin: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1961), 72.
42 Alfred Kerr, *Zwischen Paris und Rom. Reiseimpressionen* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2000), 11.
43 Kerr, *Zwischen Paris und Rom*, 23.
44 Kerr, *Die Welt im Licht*, 348.
45 Kerr, *Die Welt im Licht*, 348, and Kerr, *Zwischen Paris und Rom*, 35.
46 Siegfried Kracauer, "Ein Paar Tage in Paris," *Siegfried Kracauer: Aufsätze, 1927–1931*, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990), 296–301, here 298 and 301.

accelerated change created historical amnesia.[47] In Paris he found alternatives to modernity's ravages in the recovery of the city's past.[48] In the French capital, modernity revealed itself within its historical layers: "in Paris the present has the shimmer of the past."[49] Favoring poorer districts, he unearthed intersecting streets where he still encountered the past inside the present.[50]

The infatuation with Paris stems from a sense of crisis of radical modernity of Berlin. Ensuing Americanization of wider consumer culture, historical discontinuity and amnesia, political conflict, and economic difficulties rendered Berlin as less desirable. Being in Paris stabilizes the identity of the travelers and modern Europeans, whereas Berlin undermines this sense of themselves. Their fascination for Paris only heightened their critical perspective on Berlin. This was equally true for Tucholsky, who initially participated in the effort to fashion a democratic society, but became dismayed and withdrew. In 1923, in one of his smaller articles, he hinted at his desire to leave for Paris.[51] Like other Weimar travelers, Tucholsky became enamored. The entire city celebrated the July 14th holiday without any imperialistic or military posturing.[52] Moreover, it was a city that was composed of its past. Its modernization, he believed, had not erased older layers of the past. Tucholsky considered Haussmann's profound transformation of the city very sensible, particularly in comparison to Berlin.[53] He also identified more with the poorer districts of the city than with its more famous tourist sides. Yet in Paris he became at odds with the pervasive perception of the city on the Seine as the den of sexual iniquity.[54] Traveling through France became for Tucholsky a process of self-discovery.[55]

Stefan Zweig echoed the joyous assessment, when he wrote in 1932 that only in Paris have people savored life encouraged from the "beauty of the surroundings, the mild climate, the wealth of and tradition."[56] Zweig shared with his Austrian

47 Siegfried Kracauer, "Straße ohne Erinnerung," *Siegfried Kracauer: Aufsätze, 1932–1965*, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990), 170–74.

48 Siegfried Kracauer, "Pariser Beobachtungen," *Siegfried Kracauer: Aufsätze, 1927–1931*, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990), 25–36.

49 Kracauer, "Erinnerungen an eine Pariser Straße," 247.

50 Siegfried Kracauer, "Analyse eines Stadtplans: Faubourg und Zentrum," *Siegfried Kracauer: Aufsätze, 1915–1926*, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990), 401–03; and Siegfried Kracauer, "La ville de Malakoff," *Siegfried Kracauer: Aufsätze, 1927–1931*, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990), 22–24; and Siegfried Kracauer, "Das Straßenvolk in Paris," *Siegfried Kracauer: Aufsätze, 1927–1931*, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990), 39–43; and Siegfried Kracauer, "Erinnerungen an eine Pariser Straße," 243–48.

51 Kurt Tucholsky, "Kleine Reise," *Gesamtausgabe: Texte und Briefe*: *Texte 1923–1924*, eds. Antje Bonitz, and Gustav Huoker, Vol. 6. (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2000), 117–23, here 122.

52 Kurt Tucholsky, "Der 14. Juli," *Gesamtausgabe: Texte und Briefe: Texte 1925*, eds. Antje Bonitz, and Gustav Huoker, Vol. 7. (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2002), 330–33, here 333.

53 Kurt Tucholsky, "Das falsche Plakat von Paris" and "Das konservative Paris," *Gesamtausgabe: Texte und Briefe: Texte, 1923–1924*, eds. Antje Bonitz, and Gustav Huoker, Vol. 6. (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2000), 223–26, here 224 and 296–99.

54 Kurt Tucholsky, "Spaziergang," *Gesamtausgabe: Texte und Briefe 1925*, eds. Antje Bonitz, and Gustav Huoker, Vol. 7. (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2002), 193–97, here 197, and Stephanie Burrows, *Tucholsky and France* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2001), 145–47.

55 Kurt Tucholsky, "Dank an Frankreich," *Gesamtausgabe: Texte und Briefe: Texte 1927*, eds. Gesela Enzmann-Kraiker, Utee Maack, and Renke Siems, Vol. 9. (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1998), 169–71.

56 Patrice Higonnet, *Paris, Capital of the World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 291.

fellowman, writer and journalist Joseph Roth, nostalgia for the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, a critical attitude toward America, and an unrestricted praise for Paris. To Joseph Roth, France appeared as a counterweight to Germany and represented continuity, tradition, and tolerance for cultural diversity.

When in 1925 Roth was assigned the role of foreign correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, he resided in Paris. Roth had become a very successful writer in the German capital. He chronicled in many of his writings the sights and sounds of Berlin's modernity. Yet in 1924 he expressed his longing for both Paris and Prague. He wanted to reside on Sundays in Paris and during the week in Prague, a city where one does not have to have roots but which is the home of the homeless. In Berlin, he views his life as sitting in the waiting room of a train station, trying to make money to leave.[57]

Once he arrived in the French capital and France became the realm for his rediscovery, he moved increasingly closer to Catholicism. He viewed "Paris as the capital of the world" and exuberantly exclaimed, "Whoever has not been here is only half human, and no sort of European."[58] Paris represented bridges and crossing between cultures. The city was both French, free, Catholic and "a European expression of Judaism."[59] To him it was the "summit of European civilization."[60]

Roth enlisted Jews into the culture of the capital that he partook to celebrate on Bastille Day. He enthusiastically recalled the celebration of July 14th in the French capital.[61] During the beginning of 1920s, Roth increasingly and with distance captured the growing presence of American culture in the German capital.[62] He became, however, increasingly critical of this trend and saw America as the nemesis of Paris. In an article on the celebration of July 14 in Paris, he described in 1925 "America over Paris" in the shape of a large advertisement balloon. The balloon became a haunting presence of America in Paris and made him feel "a sense of darkness."[63]

In Roth's account of Paris, Jews are prominently featured. Whereas for the other authors Paris became a means through which they asserted their modern European identities, Roth layered his narrative of Paris with descriptions of Eastern European Jews. To him, Paris, unlike Vienna or Berlin, had become a truly metropolitan city that was much more enjoyable than Berlin: "There's no fun in Berlin. But fun rules in Paris" and the Jewish restaurants, which, unlike those of Berlin's barn district, were "merry, warm, and noisy."[64] In the Jewish inns of Paris, Eastern European Jews spoke a cheerful "gibberish."[65] Gender too mattered here, when Roth singled out Jewish

57 Joseph Roth, "Heimweh nach Prag," *Heimweh nach Prag: Feuilletons, Glossen, Reportagen für das "Prager Tagblatt,"* ed. Helmuth Nürnberger (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 274–76. The article initially appeared *Prager Tagblatt* in 1924.

58 Letter to Benno Reifenberg, May 16, 1925, *Joseph Roth: A Life in Letters*, ed. and trans. Michael Hofmann (London: Granta, 2012), 38.

59 Letter to Benno Reifenberg, May 16, 1925, *Joseph Roth: A Life in Letters*, 38.

60 Letter to Bernhard Brentano, June 2, 1925, *Joseph Roth: A Life in Letters*, 40.

61 Joseph Roth, *Report from Parisian Paradise: Essays From France, 1925–1939*, trans. Michael Hofmann (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 26.

62 Roth, *What I Saw*.

63 Joseph Roth, *Report from a Parisian Paradise: Essays from France, 1925–1939*, 27.

64 Joseph Roth, *The Wandering Jews*, 81 and 83. See also Katja Garloff, "Femininity and Assimilatory Desire in Joseph Roth," *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 51.2 (2005): 354–73.

65 Roth, *The Wandering Jews*, 83.

women for criticism. In Paris, he argued, pleasure came at a price, when Roth presented women as the major promoters of assimilation.[66]

Considering the importance of Paris for many traveling German Jewish writers of the Weimar Republic, it was only natural for many of them to leave Nazi Germany for Paris. They did not have to wait for the actual burning of books by Jewish, Communist, and pacifist writers on May 10, 1933. Overnight German Jewish literature was in exile and with that almost all of the famed Weimar travel writers. Travel eventually folded into exile, when Alfred Polgar, for example, published 1939 in the exiled German newspaper *Pariser Tageszeitung* an article titled "In der Fremde"; in it, he stated, "The longer you stay in a foreign place, the more foreign it becomes."[67] Many Weimar travel writers had already been uprooted and become permanently itinerant. Their travels and strolls had reflected their desires as well as their failures to locate a place for themselves anywhere. But to be uprooted is not identical to being exiled. Travel remains ultimately voluntary; exile is coerced and transforms the traveler into a refugee, whose status as Edward Said points out is legally defined.[68] Leaving Nazi Germany was never voluntary but always political as the Jewish philosopher Günther Anders (1902–1992) acknowledged in 1933.[69] During the 1920s, Joseph Roth aptly captured the difference between travelers and refugees, saying the latter were "travelers with a load." Travelers' luggage was marked not by their innate nature but rather by their destination. Train wagons dedicated to "travelers with a load" invoked a "philosophical definition" of homelessness, he surmised.[70]

During the 1930s, the new status of exile did not immediately become apparent. Exile rested not on legal statuses and political circumstances. It hinged on variables like socio-economic status, ability to travel, and finally the interpretation of the political events that unfolded in Nazi Germany. Together these shifting factors determined the sense of homelessness. Assuredly, exile became a legal and political status. Although it made all other criteria meaningless, it was not always visible to those travelers who remained trapped and without a permanent destination in a state of homelessness during the early 1930s.

Exile was mapped onto established traveling cultures. Routes of refugees initially followed the paths of previous leisure journeys. There was undoubtedly consolation in turning toward familiar cities. After 1933, Paris became the city of home and exile.[71] Keen observer Harry Kessler noted in June 1933 that the whole "Kurfürstendamm pours out over Paris."[72] Many German Jewish writers and artists who had left

66 Roth, *The Wandering Jews*, 85.

67 Alfred Polgar, "In der Fremde," *Pariser Tageszeitung* 4.888 (January 9, 1939), 2.

68 Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile," *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173–86, which was originally published in *Granta* 13 (Winter 1984).

69 Anthony Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artist and Intellectuals in America from the 1930s to the Present*, 2nd edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1997), 24.

70 Joseph Roth, "Reisende mit Traglast," *Feuilletons, Glossen, Reportagen für das "Prager Tagblatt,"* ed. Helmuth Nürnberger (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 208–11, here 209.

71 Hendrik Weber, "Reisen in Die Heimat? Paris als Emigrationsziel in Texten deutschprachiger Autoren nach 1933," *Berlin, Paris, Moskau, Reiseliteratur und die Metropole*, eds. Walter Fähnders, Nils Plath, Hendrik Weber, and Inka Zahn (Bielefeld Aisthesis-Verlag, 2005),125–34.

72 Diary entry, Harry Graf Kessler, June 22, 1933, *Tagebücher, 1918–1937*, ed. Wolfgang Pfeiffer-Belli (Frankfurt: Insel, 1961), 725.

Nazi Germany moved to Paris. Arriving in Paris brought relief as Herman Kesten writes in a letter to Ernst Toller: "I am enchanted by the city of Paris." What a dream exile is." Crossing the border from German to France, "the terror becomes 'foreign.' "[73] The city offered solace and reassurance. German Jews went home into exile when they fled to Paris. Many refugees fused past and current experiences to soften the blow of radically new circumstances. Their texts evoke and articulate that which is both foreign and home.[74]

Paris was not just exile. It was also political opposition to Nazi Germany. It appeared partly as choice. German exile papers recalled the lives of Heine, Boerne, Marx, and others, as well as their respective views of Paris as the home of liberty.[75] Among the exiled Jews and other Germans, Paris was widely associated with the ideals of the French Revolution. In 1939, Alfred Wolfenstein published a larger collection of articles on Paris in which he celebrates the French as the capital of the spirit and human rights after the failure of the Socialists and Vommunists to effectively oppose Nazi Germany. His poem is a journey through one thousand years of history on liberty of the capital in which he traces Victor Hugo's introduction to the guide to the Parisian World Exhibition of 1867 that views Athens, Jerusalem, and Rome as precursors to Paris.[76]

The famous roving reporter Egon Erwin Kisch turned to the French capital when he published in 1934 *Geschichten aus sieben Ghettos* with the Amsterdam-based émigrés publishing house Querido. Prague-born Kisch, who had been imprisoned by the Nazis after the fire of the national parliament and then expelled, had become homeless. The collection of essays on various ghettos entailed the short chapter titled "Notes from the Parisian Ghetto." Organized in notes, Kisch's travelogue in exile sketched the social, political, and religious diversity of immigrant Jews. Highlighting the diversity of the immigrants served to illustrate the internal differentiations of the community. His portrayal remained informed by his detachment from religious practice and his political orientation toward the political left. His almost ethnographic gaze created distance. This cultural and ideological gulf that had already existed in the previous decades only amplified his sense of exile. His style of report betrayed Kisch as a distant observer that could not fathom to overcome the space between himself and the Jews of the ghetto. They remained an object of his intellectual curiosity, when he painted in broad strokes a portrait of the economic and religious life of the community. He compared the Marais on Jewish high holidays to Poland and Romania with the notable difference that the synagogues in Paris were plagued by fluctuation and instability. The conservative spirit in the ghetto had its inhabitants entrenched in

73 Hermann Kesten to Ernst Toller, March 23, 1933, quoted after Mark M. Anderson, ed., *Hitler's Exiles: Personal Stories of the Flight from Nazi Germany to America* (New York: The New Press, 1988), 135–36.

74 Manfred Briegel, "Paris als zweite Heimat? Deutsche Schriftsteller im Exil der 30er Jahre," *Rom–Paris–London. Erfahrung und Selbsterfahrung deutscher Schriftsteller und Künstler in den fremden Metropolen*, ed. Conrad Wiedemann (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1988), 523–36.

75 Lutz Winckler, "Zum Mythos-Paris im Pariser Tageblatt/Pariser Tageszeitung. Texte von Franz Hessel, Hermann Wendel, Alfred Wolfenstein, Richard Dyck," *Fluchtziel Paris: Die deutschsprachige Emigration 1933–1940*, ed. Anne Saint Saveur-Henn (Berlin: Metropol, 2002), 261–70, here 263.

76 Winckler, "Zum Mythos-Paris im Pariser Tageblatt/Pariser Tageszeitung. Texte von Franz Hessel, Hermann Wendel, Alfred Wolfenstein, Richard Dyck," 266.

patriarchal thoughts. He chronicled how the high holidays brought together Jews of very divergent religious and political backgrounds.[77] He dismissingly treated religious observance as an empty token of a small sacrifice on the high holidays, when all dance halls and apartments were temporarily converted into houses of worship.[78] In Germanyc cultural, religious, and political differences between Jews increasingly became meaningless. Removed from the exclusionary politics of harassment and violence in Germany, Kisch continued to believe that class differences made ethnic loyalty impossible.[79] The distance was only temporarily overcome when he recorded not the poverty of Jewish ragmen in Marais, but also the signs on their stores: "Les représentants de maisons allemandes ne sont pas recu," repelling, apparently, German businessmen.[80]

During the 1930s, Hessel viewed the French capital through the prism of Berlin's urbanism. He republished material from an earlier period without radical changes. Paris still appeared as the city in continuity with its past: "Paris is the city where nothing ends, where the past continuously lives on. Paris is always present and remembrance."[81] Written most likely between 1935 and 1939,[82] the volume *Women and Cities* (*Frauen und Städte*) remained unpublished; in it, Hessel was less interested in the Parisian urban modernity, but his strolls from the suburbs to the city cemetery narrated his encounter with diversity of small quarters and suburbs.[83] He identified with the less official version of Paris—a city that existed for him in the Bastille Day, July14th celebrations in small and removed streets.[84] Never a great admirer of the Champs-Elysées, he ventured to the Rue Mouffetard and its market.[85] Hessel also visited the ghetto, however, it remains unclear as to whether this reflected an appreciation of his Jewish background.[86] His narrative on the ghetto represented the double image to his description of Berlin's Eastern European Jewish immigrant quarter. Like in Berlin, he found Paris to be the "the presence of the older world, whose foreground is the Jewish lane."[87] Like Kisch, Hessel remained the outsider to the Parisian ghetto. Short sentences convey the mobility of the narrator, who nameed book titles and culinary offerings. His views remained detached and represent snapshots: "At a bar caftans and bearded heads with side locks appear."[88]

77 Egon Erwin Kisch, "Notizen aus dem Pariser Ghetto," *Geschichten aus sieben Ghettos* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag 1985), 115–22, here 119.
78 Kisch, "Notizen aus dem Pariser Ghetto," 115–22.
79 Kisch, "Notizen aus dem Pariser Ghetto," 122.
80 Kisch, "Notizen aus dem Pariser Ghetto," 122.
81 Franz Hessel, *Frauen und Städte*, in Franz Hesssel, *Städte und Porträts: Sämliche Werke 3.*, ed. Bernhard Echte (Oldenburg: Igel Verlag, 1999), 193–262, here 306.
82 Michael Opitz, "Frauen und Städte. Ein unrealisiertes Buchprodukt von Franz Hessel," *"Geniesse froh, was du nicht hast": Der Flaneur Franz Hessel*, eds. Michael Opitz and Jörg Plat (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1997), 157–89, here 159.
83 Hesssel, *Frauen und Städte*, 193–362.
84 Franz Hessel, "Tanz aller mit allen. Paris tanzt," (1930), 1939 in *8-Uhr-Abendblatt* and *Pariser Tageszeitung*, reprinted in Franz Hessel, *Frauen und Städte*, Franz Hesssel, *Städte und Porträts: Sämliche Werke 3.*, ed. Bernhard Echte (Oldenburg: Igel Verlag, 1999), 193–262, here 328–29.
85 Hessel, *Frauen und Städte*, 193–262, here 315–18.
86 See Bernhard Echte, ed., *Ein Garten voll Weltgeschichte. Berliner und Pariser Skizzen* (Munich: DTV, 1994), 145f.
87 Hessel, *Frauen und Städte*, 306.
88 Hessel, *Frauen und Städte*, 312.

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The differences between the Weimar traveler and the exiled and stateless refugee remained blurry. Several of Hessel's pieces that would comprise the unpublished volume *Women and Cities* appeared in print in the *Pariser Tageszeitung*. Republished in the papers of German exile, these articles resonated differently: "Paris is the home of the stranger."[89] Seemingly, the position of the distant flaneur overlaps with the experience of exile. The difference is intractable, when home and belonging still seemed attainable: "A stroller acquires here a little citizenship. The streets are the living space," Hessel both observed and hoped.[90] His observation reverberated with an urban stroller's excitement. His reflections, though, resonated potentially with new meaning. Strolling the city became a way of acquiring the city in lieu of proper status. Hessel's wording of small citizenship might communicate the difference.

It is not just the changed circumstances of the essay's publication that make them prone to be interpreted in new ways. Hesselss choice of pseudonym furthers this interpretation. He published these essays as Ezekiel in the *Pariser Tageszeitung*. Articles such as his "Break in Paris" appeared originally in 1930, but now the exiled prophet took the reader to the Montparnasse and the Quartier Latin at night and to the Place Pigalle, where foreigners sat and observed the crowds "like on deck of a pleasure boat."[91]

The erstwhile Paris enthusiast Tucholsky, who had left the city on the Seine already in 1929, more clearly articulated in 1934 dismay at the experience of exile as opposed to flaneur in Paris "For the big city, I am finally lost. Everything is tiring, nothing makes me happy anymore, I do not care about anything anymore."[92] Two days later, Tucholsky confided in a letter that there is "nothing that I like in the great city anymore."[93]

After the fire in the German parliament, however, Benjamin went to Paris, where he lived the last seven years of his life; there he continued his surrealist project to uncover and document the essence of modernity. His project sketch "Paris—Capital of the Nineteenth Century" outlined the agenda for tracing the history of modernity.[94] This perspective of Paris echoed two other German Jewish émigrés. Earlier in the nineteenth century, Ludwig Boerne had referred to Paris as the "capital of the nineteenth century" and in 1832 Heine had called the French city on the Seine the "capital of the entire civilized world."[95] Aside from this elevation of Paris, Benjamin's critical distance to Baudelaire became more visible, and during the 1930s, Heine's dream

89 Hessel, *Frauen und Städte*, 306. See also Winckler, "Zum Pariser Mythos im Pariser Tageblatt/Pariser Tageszeitung," 268.

90 Hessel, *Frauen und Städte*, 306. See also Lutz Winckler, "Zum Pariser Mythos im Pariser Tageblatt/Pariser Tageszeitung," *Fluchtziel Paris. Die deutschsprachige Emigration 1933–1940*, ed. Anne Saint Sauveur- Henn (Berlin, Metropol, 2002), 261–70, here 268.

91 Hessel, *Frauen und Städte*, 322–23.

92 Letter to Hedwig Mueller, May 10, 1934, in Kurt Tucholsky, *Gesamtausgabe: Texte und Briefe 1933–1934*, eds. Antje Bonitz and Gustav Huoker, Vol. 20. (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1996), 314.

93 Letter to Hedwig Mueller, May 12, 1934, in Tucholsky, *Gesamtausgabe: Texte und Briefe 1933–1934*, 317.

94 On the Arcades project, see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

95 Quoted after Patrice Higonet, *Paris: Capital of the World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 2.

about taking the street to reclaim literature's political aspiration became even as a dream increasingly impossible. The flaneur's desire for pleasure had been predicated on walking the street and lines of divergent conflicted subject positions. To Benjamin, in Baudelaire's *Spleen of Paris*, there are only "amorphous crowd of passers-by, the people of the street," but no social classes.[96] Moving against Baudelaire, Benjamin rejected the equation of the French poet's flaneur with Poe's "man of the crowd."[97] The flaneur in Baudelaire, Benjamin insisted, "demanded elbow room and was unwilling to forgo the life of a gentleman of leisure."[98] To illustrate the leisurely quality of the flaneur further, Benjamin refers to E. T. A. Hoffmann's short essay, *The Cousin's Corner Window*. Here, an immobile cousin observed the passing crowd. Without leaving his place in the interior of his private room, the cousin with the aid of binoculars followed the path of individuals. None of this could be any further from Benjamin's city stroller. Benjamin's flaneur in mid-century Paris experienced social isolation and alienation from excessive sensory bombardment of commodity culture. By the time of the Bauderlaire essay in 1938, the flaneur is isolated and has become as Susan Buck-Morss astutely notes the "salaried employee" of newspapers. Benjamin dismissed the "collective" of the people in the city's streets as mere illusionary appearance: "The 'crowd' in which the flaneur takes delight, is just the empty mold with which, seventy years later, the *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community) was cast."[99] Mass political movements of the twentieth century had altered the people, and from the perspective of the 1930s the flaneur appear as "the first to fall victim to an ignis fatutus which since that time has blinded many millions."[100] Now the flaneur had become Henri Beraud, the antisemitic and fascist journalist.[101] This flaneur as a journalist and antisemitic agitator could already be found in Baudelaire's diary. In his notes Benjamin dismissed Baudelaire's anti-Semitic statement as a joke. Yet during the 1930s it was difficult if not impossible to view it as a joke, when Benjamin copied the following quote into his notes for the Arcades project from the French poet: "To organize a grand conspiracy for the extermination of the Jewish race./ The Jews who are librarian and bear witness to the Redemption."[102]

Written in Paris between February and July 1939, Benjamin's essay does not identify city strolling with pleasure. The city stroller was not simply experiencing sensory overload or alienation, but the subject position of the removed observer had become untenable in the highly politicized environment of the 1930s. For Benjamin the flaneur experienced alienation and social isolation much like the refugee, who roamed the city, or as he put in a late entry: "It is a very specific experience that the proletariat has in a big city—one in many aspects similar to that which the immigrant has there."[103]

96 Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *Selected Writings, 4, 1938–1940*, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 313–55, here 321.
97 Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," 326.
98 Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," 326.
99 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 345, and Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 306–07.
100 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 346.
101 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 804.
102 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 300.
103 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 347.

When World War II broke out in September 1939, Paris lost status as a potential space of residence. By the time Hitler toured Paris on June 23, 1940, 2 million Parisians had fled the city. The central European exiled flaneurs either dispersed or ended up in the grasp of the Nazi administration. For many, there was nowhere to escape to anymore. Tucholsky, all along dismayed, ended his temporary residence in Paris in 1930 when he moved to Sweden, where he committed suicide five years later. Like Tucholsky, Roth also entertained no hope. Even before the breakout of war, Roth sensed the imminent end of Europe. He feared that Europe was "to become a cemetery."[104] The book burning led Roth to note "the European mind is capitulating."[105] Learning of his friend Ernst Toller's suicide in New York, Roth, a chronic alcoholic, died in 1939 after a period of excessive drinking in which he harbored a great sense of nostalgia for the pre-1914 Austrian-Hungarian empire. Döblin, who fled to Paris at the beginning of World War II, worked for the French Ministry of Information writing counter-propaganda against Nazi Germany. In 1940, he spent many weeks in a refugee camp in Mende, where he attended mass and converted the following year. In September 1940, he left France and embarked from Lisbon on a ship to New York. After his release, Benjamin also succeeded in obtaining a travel visa to America. Seeking to cross the border to Spain, but fearing that Spanish authorities would return him to Nazi France, Benjamin took his life with an overdose of morphine tablets on September 25, 1940. Having just being released, Hessel died in Sanary-sur-mer in 1941 of the effects of his internment.

From the perspective of 1933, since the 1920s German Jews already appeared as homeless and marginalized. Indeed, their infatuation with Paris testifies to a profound unease about Berlin and the Weimar Republic. Their description combined confidence with a sense of crisis, and most of the travel writers never fully committed themselves to any of the competing ideologies of liberalism, communism, and nationalism. Kisch's endorsement of the Soviet Union had its limits also, and his political leftist orientation remained eclectic and unorthodox. Benjamin never resolved his relationship to the Soviet Union and Marxism, nor to Palestine or Zionism. Roth combined his celebration of Europe and his infatuation with Paris with his nostalgia for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as his dismissal of America with his ambivalent hopes for the Soviet Union. Hessel was almost equally estranged in Paris and Berlin. Kerr became enchanted with Palestine, America, and France—always to return to Berlin, while Tucholsky abandoned both Berlin and Paris. It is the very absence of identifiable ideologies during a period of heightened political conflicts that define these travelers. Their liminality resists classification and describes them at the same time.[106]

Walking the streets fulfilled an important function and was far from providing an aesthetic pleasure, but marked an appeal to geographies of belonging beyond the

104 Joseph Roth, "Clemenceau" (abridged version, 1939), *Report from a Parisian Paradise. Essays from France 1925–1939*, trans. Michael Hofmann (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), 256–75, here 258.

105 Joseph Roth, *What I Saw*, 207.

106 See my "Jewish Traveling Cultures and the Competing Visions of Modernity," *Central European History* 42: 2 (2009): 429–49, and Steven E. Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 101.

nation-state. The fleeting attachment to Paris allowed travelers to differently think about themselves, culture, and politics. Their travelogues fashioned for themselves and other Germans not the diasporic space they inhabited, but represented the French capital to the diverse German readers in the aftermath of the Treaty of Versailles. In that sense, their travelogues were so immensely political and committed to European modernity that they partly sought to experience and represent in Paris.

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