The title of this collected volume of essays, *Three-Way Street: Jews, Germans, and the Transnational*, pays homage to Walter Benjamin, the emblematic German Jew “on the move.” Benjamin’s work, which throughout expresses the urgency of collecting the fragments and pieces of the past as they are about to recede and insists on the necessity of reading history as a collection of fragments, as part of a constellation rather than a chronology of events, underlies this volume of essays on Germans, Jews, and the transnational. In his collection of aphorisms, *One-Way Street* (published in 1928), Benjamin writes: “The power of a country road when one is walking along it is different from the power it has when one is flying over it by airplane. [. . .] Only he who walks the road on foot learns the power it commands, and of how, from the very scenery that for the flier is only the unfurled plain, it calls forth distances, belvederes, clearings, prospects at each of its turns like a commander deploying soldiers at a front.” Benjamin used the country road as metaphor for the task of reading history, enjoining the “walker,” like the reader of the text of historical and cultural experience, to notice the details “at each of its turns.” The volume that follows seeks to enact precisely Benjamin’s strategy for excavating the texts of history. By presenting the interaction of Jews and Germans not as a strictly bilateral relationship between German Jews and non-Jewish Germans but rather as a constellation of ties that complicate and transcend the concept of the nation, this volume aims to reinvigorate the debates about transnationalism and German-Jewish culture and history.

To be sure, Jewish history has long acknowledged that Jews have always been a transnational group. As scholars have increasingly turned their attention to the ways in which migration and mobility are formative categories for understanding the emergence of national and ethnic identities, it would seem that German-Jewish culture presents a fascinating test case for thinking about
the movement of Jews to, from, and through Germany. And it also must be acknowledged that there are different histories contained within the notion of German Jewish history: the immigration to Germany in the prewar period by Ostjuden and the complex set of relations among immigrants, established German Jewry, and non-Jewish Germans, and the more recent influx of former Russian Jews into the Jewish community in Germany. Although scholarship on German Jewish culture has certainly challenged the paradigm of the single state, there still persists, to a certain degree, a notion of the fixed place of Germany and Austria (pre- and post-1918). The debates about the utility of a transnational perspective have evolved over the past decade among German historians, with established scholars of German National Socialism such as Konrad Jarausch, on the one hand, deeply dismissive of what he sees as a “trendy” approach; conversely, the German historians Michael Geyer and Young-Sun Hong have contributed important insights into the usefulness of thinking of German history in a transnational context. In her piece entitled “The Challenge of Transnational History,” Young-Sun Hong articulates a clear set of questions that elucidate the scope and importance of transnational history: “. . . transnational history involves deconstructing—from a potentially infinite number of perspectives—the nation-state as one of the fundamental categories through which Western modernity is narrated and doing so by showing how the national intersects with or is imbricated in sub- and supranational phenomena whose repression or forgetting first makes possible the political and cultural construction of the nation.”

While the very question of the place of Germany within German historiography is central to the debates about the transnational among German historians, the primacy of the Jewish “homeland” is at the center of debates about the meaning of the transnational within Jewish history. Rebecca Kobrin has made an important contribution in the field of transnational Jewish history in her insistence on displacing the very homeland/diaspora model in which diasporic Jewish history has been understood, to think instead of the multiple displacements of Jews from the lived places of multiple diasporic “homelands” and not as a dispersal from the Jewish “homeland.” Kobrin’s model of transnational Jewish history thus depends on a transnational network of multiple dispersals and migrations, forever displacing the notion of a fixed place of origin; it also exemplifies the so-called regional turn in historical studies, a complement to the transnational in that the focus of inquiry are the multiple migrations of cultures in cities and towns and not only among nations.

This volume continues these debates, yet it attempts to focus on the complex encounters between Jewish non-Germans in Germany and German Jews
outside of Germany. The “transnational turn” that made its first mark in the
discipline of history and, subsequently, migrated to literary and cultural studies
has produced, over the past decade, readings of culture and history that have
expanded our notions of nation, ethnicity, and the interplay between place and
migration. And yet much work remains to be done in the field of German-
Jewish studies to integrate these models of transnational history. To be sure,
there is a slipperiness to the term “transnational” as it currently is used in the
humanities and social sciences. The essays in this volume take a range of ap-
proaches to the term, suggesting in the end that the very discourse about the
relationship between nation, migration, and the transnational is in flux and
evolving. It is precisely the multivalence of the term “transnational” that we
have sought to present by drawing on scholarship from a range of disciplines
and methodologies.

The questions that guide this volume of essays are the questions at the
very center of work on migration, immigration, and identity central to so
many fields of inquiry in the humanities and social sciences. Indeed, Three
Way Street: Jews, Germans, and the Transnational is itself positioned at var-
ious crossroads, as it brings together work in a variety of fields and disci-
plines. Most significantly, however, is the central aim of this book: to dem-
onstrate that German-Jewish culture was not simply extinguished in 1933,
but rather was transplanted and fostered outside of Germany—even by east-
ern European Jews. In this way, this volume presents a challenge to many
conventional assumptions about modern Jewish life, including Jewish life in
America, where eastern European traditions predominate. It also enables
new explorations of the impact that German Jews, in their encounters with
Jews and “other Others” in the United States, England, and Israel, had on the
cultures outside of Germany.

German Jews⁶—both within Germany and as migrants or visitors
abroad—have critically influenced the religious, social, cultural, and political
patterns of modern Jewish life. In Europe, the Americas, the Yishuv (the pre-
1948 Jewish settlement in Palestine), and later Israel, Jews emulated, borrowed
from, or consciously rejected German-Jewish culture. Considering the role
German Jews had in the Jewish world beyond the borders of their own country,
it is possible to speak of German-Jewish transnationalism, as Tobias Brink-
mann has done in his short but wide-ranging study of the topic.⁷ Transnational-
ism is a multivalent topic, and, indeed, there is a significant body of research
that addresses many different aspects of transnational German-Jewish history.
Additionally, scholars have devoted considerable attention to many specific
aspects of this multivalent topic, such as Jewish emigration from Germany, the
lives of German-born and culturally German Jews outside of Europe, and relations between native German and non-German Jews within Germany.

As early as the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, German Jews migrated to the New World, and by the 1880s their descendants were the leaders of American Jewry. Scholars have focused on their success in establishing themselves and their version of Judaism in America as well as their later conflict with eastern European Jewish immigrants to the United States. Both Naomi W. Cohen and Avraham Barkai have examined the variegated German-Jewish immigrants to America and their encounter with American social values and politics. They eagerly embraced the values of their new home. Increasing Americanization led to alienation from non-Jewish German-Americans, yet German-American Jews also had a troubled relationship with Jewish migrants from eastern Europe who came to the United States in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. The German Jews withdrew into their own society as newcomers from eastern Europe became the vast majority of the American Jewish community. Nonetheless, German Jews also created the basis for Jewish civic engagement and Jewish institutional life in the United States. Scholars such as Michael Meyer and Stefan Rohrbacher have considered the German origins of nineteenth-century American Jewish religious practice, a topic insufficiently studied. Even though German-born Reform rabbis failed to create a unitary American Judaism in the nineteenth century, many of them had an outsized impact on religious life and Jewish civic life in the United States in the nineteenth century. Among them were Isaac Mayer Wise, David Einhorn, and Max Lillienthal, who are the subject of several studies.

Emigration of German Jews to America subsided in the late nineteenth century; however, in the twentieth century—particularly after the Nazis took power in 1933—there was a significant German-Jewish migration to Palestine. Most of these immigrants did not select Palestine because of preexisting Zionist commitment, but rather simply because it was a place that many Jewish refugees could go. Their struggle to find a place in the Yishuv has become legendary, and many scholars have elucidated the situation of German-Jewish immigrants—colloquially known as Yekkes—in Palestinian, and later Israeli, society. Yoav Gelber has argued that although German-Jewish immigrants contributed tremendously to urban and commercial culture of the Yishuv, they faced discrimination from the Zionist Establishment, which disapproved of their moderate politics and their enduring loyalty to their Diaspora culture (namely German culture). In the end, even the immigrants from Germany, or their children, merged into the prevailing culture of Israel. In a richly illus-
trated volume that is evocative of nostalgia, Joachim Schlör presents many of the experiences and travails that the German immigrants faced in Palestine. They inhabited a world that was both liminal and limited: a mixture of Jewish-German culture and Yishuv culture that was rapidly giving way as its exponents assimilated or died off. Complementing the monographs by Gelber and Schlör are several edited volumes of essays, including at least one derived from an international conference on the topic. Moshe Zimermann and Yotam Hotam edited one such volume that includes many essays on German-Jewish identity, particularly in pre-1933 Germany; brief examinations of singular aspects of the identity of German Jews in migration; and a collection of memories of Israelis from central Europe. In addition to broad surveys of the German Jews’ situation in Mandate-era Palestine and Israel, there has also been a focus on individual professional groups, such as lawyers, engineers, and architects. These German-speaking immigrants provided many of the technical experts in the Yishuv and early Israel. Fania Oz-Salzberger and Eli Salzberger have shown how many members of Israel’s Supreme Court were born in German-speaking lands or studied law there and elucidate their conflict with British/American-trained jurists over the nature of jurisprudence in Israel’s early decades. Similarly, Rakefet Sela- Sheffy has argued that both the German-Jewish immigrants and Yishuv Zionist leaders labeled the German Jews as “bourgeois,” but their identification with middle-class civic culture facilitated their achieving prominence in the emerging legal community. German-trained engineers and architects brought with them modern(ist) ideas on design and construction, as shown by Myra Warhaftig, Barbara Mann, Anat Helman, Yoav Gelber, and Walter Goldstern. However, Alona Nitzan-Shiftan and others have demonstrated that the ideology behind the Germans’ modernist architecture—which is so admired today in Israel—often clashed with the ideology of Yishuv Zionism or there were internecine conflicts between European-trained modernists.

At a less specific, but more basic level, German Jews were long associated with mobility and modernity. Indeed, as Todd Presner has theorized, constructions of Germanness and Jewishness collide and even find a confluence with the emergence of the modern, above all when people are in motion. Modern mobility—including mobility across national borders—finds its apotheosis in the railroad system, which facilitates migration, national identity formation and integration, and deportations of those outside the national community. While this certainly applies to Germany in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it also applies to early Zionists who wished to use or imitate Germany’s technology, including its transportation systems, for the process of Jewish nation building. Additionally, railroads brought Jews and their ideas
to Germany, from Germany, and through Germany. Interestingly, Alfred Ballin, one of imperial Germany’s leading shipping magnates and a facilitator of Jewish migration through Germany to the New World, was Jewish. He is the subject of a considerable body of scholarship.\textsuperscript{15} Aside from issues of transportation, Jews in Germany were often associated with modernity, including modern forms of commerce and science, which are inherently transnational phenomena, and there is an immense body of scholarship on transnational German-Jewish banking and commercial dynasties, such as the Rothschilds, the Warburgs, and the Schockens.\textsuperscript{16}

Germany was a magnet for Jewish migration from eastern Europe; however, as shown by Steven Aschheim, Trude Maurer, and Jack Wertheimer, the position of eastern European Jews in Germany was always complex and their presence was the source of considerable anxiety among German Jews.\textsuperscript{17} Many Jews who considered themselves “German,” or whom others considered as German, were only a generation or two removed from eastern Europe. Nonetheless, their views of eastern European migrants to Berlin and other German cities were frequently hostile or ambivalent. For many German Jews, the presence of observant Orthodox, Yiddish-speaking Jews was both an uncomfortable reminder of their own familial pasts and a potential obstacle in their efforts to prove the unqualified Germanness of Jews in Germany. Even well-meaning German Jews, including Zionists, treated their eastern coreligionists with a condescending attitude. Later, many German Jews adopted a romantic view of eastern European Jewry and engaged in a transnational voyage of Jewish self-discovery. This was particularly true during the First World War, which brought German Jews to eastern Europe as soldiers and brought Jews from Russian Poland to Berlin as refugees. (Galician Jews also fled to Vienna, the capital of their empire.) Immediately after the war, two Jewish veterans of the German army who had been stationed in Vilna and Bialystok, the author Arnold Zweig and the artist Hermann Struck, published a collection of illustrated essays on the Jews of eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{18} Among recent scholarship, Maurer adds additional texture to this subject by focusing on the attitudes of eastern European Jews toward German Jews, whom the easterners found insufficiently religious or culturally Jewish. Founding their own cultural and religious institutions, marked by practices more common beyond Germany’s eastern borders, they contributed to a renaissance of Jewish life in Weimar Germany, as Michael Brenner, among others, has amply demonstrated.\textsuperscript{19}

Additionally, even without considering issues of migration, one can speak of a German-Jewish transnationalism that involves German culture, language, and politics outside the borders of the German Reich and the lands of post-
1918 Austria. German culture, both Jewish and nonsectarian, had a hold on many Jews throughout eastern and central Europe. In places as far flung as Prague and Bohemia, Budapest, Lemberg (today Lviv), and Czernowitz (today Chernivtsi)—all under Habsburg rule—a great many Jews adopted aspects of German culture or a variation of Germanophone culture, in imitation of the leading class of Austrian Empire before 1848 or 1867. As Gary Cohen, Hillel Kieval, and others have shown, the Jews of Bohemia were often caught between the cultural demands of the ethnic Germans and the Czechs, and over time Bohemian Jewry did become more “Czech.” Meanwhile, as noted by John Lukacs and Michael Silber, Budapest Jewry—or more accurately Pest Jewry—was primarily Germanophone in the first half of the nineteenth century; however, by 1880 the Jews of Budapest were primarily Magyarophone. Even so, in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century they managed to support a number of German-language newspapers, including the liberal-democratic daily Pester Lloyd and the business-oriented Neues Pester Journal.

This volume of essays explores the experience of German Jews outside of their homeland as well as the culture produced by eastern European Jews within Germany. It posits that Germany was an essential crossroads and incubator for modern Jewish culture, including religious practice, philosophy, literature, and art beyond Germany. As emigrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and as exiles from Nazi Germany, German Jews took with them the traditions, culture, and particular prejudices of their home to places as disparate as the United States, Palestine (later Israel), Great Britain, and Australia. At the same time, Germany—which Joseph Roth ironically termed “the land of unlimited opportunity” for eastern Jews—drew both secular and religious Jewish scholars from eastern Europe. Though their cultural and religious practices differed greatly from those of the German Jews in whose midst they lived, they engaged in vital intellectual exchange with German Jewry and absorbed many cultural practices in Germany, which they brought back to Warsaw or took with them to New York and Tel Aviv. Later, after the Holocaust, German Jews and non-German Jews educated in Germany were forced to re-evaluate their essential relationship with Germany and Germanness as well as their notions of Jewish life outside Germany.

The essays in this volume demonstrate the range of scholarship from the fields of history, literature, film, visual studies, theater, architecture, philosophy, musicology, and theology. Yet beyond the integration of scholarship from a wide range of fields, the volume also suggests that the project of investigating the complex movements of German Jews to and from Germany necessitates an equally complex navigation of a range of critical fields and voices and a com-
plex reassessment of the very nature of narrative and historiography—indeed, of knowledge production overall. Among the better known German (or Austrian) Jews whose stories are reevaluated are Ernst Lubitsch, Joseph Roth, and Gershom Scholem, while lesser-known figures such as the architect Alfred Jacoby, filmmaker/photographer Helmar Lerski, and photographers Walter and Helmut Gernsheim broaden the scope of the analysis. In constructing both Jewish culture outside Germany and elements of modernity in the twentieth century, these artists transplanted and reinterpreted traditions born of the Jewish experience in pre-Nazi Germany. For eastern European Jews, including Dovid Bergelson, Der Nister, Jacob Katz, Joseph Soloveitchik, Rosa Luxemburg, and Abraham Joshua Heschel—leaders in their fields and figures not normally associated with Germany—German scholastic, literary, and theological traditions left an imprint as they expanded upon Jewish culture and thought in eastern Europe and America.

At the very core of the volume is, as well, an interrogation of the disciplinary assumptions that guide both German studies and Jewish studies, and, indeed, the emergent field of German-Jewish studies—namely an interrogation of the very terms “German” and “Jewish.” As Todd Presner has remarked so aptly in his book *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains*, in which he maps out a “cultural geography” of German and Jewish relations: “There is no such thing as German modernity pure and simple; instead, ‘German’ is always mixed together, for better and for worse, in splendor and in horror, with ‘Jewish.’” It is our contention, with the essays in this volume, to claim that German culture, even when not directly addressing questions of Jewish culture, is very Jewish; the abrasions, marks, and echoes of “the Jewish” are always present as trace within German history and culture. Similarly, Jewish studies, by virtue of the formative role of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the nineteenth century, is very German; yet even here, the early marks of the transnational become evident when one considers the vital contribution of post-*Wissenschaft* historians such as Salo Baron in the United States and Simon Dubnow in eastern Europe. This volume testifies to the porousness and entanglement of the textual, philosophical, and cultural encounter between German and Jew. By exploring precisely these cultural and historical encounters and entanglements of German and Jew in locations both within and outside Germany, we also hope, with this volume, to signal an approach to German-Jewish culture that is in dialogue with other national and ethnic spaces and cultures. The figure of the German Jew must be looked at not only in the flourishing of a particular German-Jewish culture in modernity but even more importantly as coming into being in the complex interplay of mobility, migration, immigration, and the transnational.
In the chapters that follow, scholars from a range of fields and disciplines—history, German studies, Yiddish, film and visual studies—present new ways of approaching the question of German Jews and the transnational. The first section of the volume, “To Germany, from Germany: The Promise of an Unpromised Land?,” gives a sense of the richness of Jewish life in Germany and German-Jewish life in other locations as part of multiple migrations and multiple sites of migration in the early twentieth century. It thus shifts the discussion about Jews and Germans from one of a static, one-way street of emigration and exile to a fuller discussion of the complex and ongoing entanglements of Jews and Germans. America was the “golden land” (the Goldene Medina) and the Land of Israel the “promised land.” Yet Germany was a magnet for non-German Jews. Its promise was religious freedom and economic opportunity in a land governed by rule of law. With its political economic stability, cultural familiarity, and geographic proximity to eastern Europe, Germany was a haven, an immigration land, or an ideal for Jews from Riga to Odessa, from Warsaw and Lemberg. For some Jews, it was merely a physical or cultural way station as they moved westward. For others, it was their final destination. It was a place where they could try out artistic or even political ideas, and it was a place where they were imbued with the spirit of Wissenschaft.

As Deborah Hertz shows in her essay on the personal life of Rosa Luxemburg, this daughter of a Jewish timber merchant from Zamość in Russian-controlled Poland, who received her higher education in Switzerland, came to Germany to join Europe’s most important socialist movement. Hertz reexamines the inherently transnational Jewish socialist and feminist Rosa Luxemburg, whose lifestyle did not necessarily match her radical career. As she crossed borders and entered into romantic and sexual relationships, her political ambitions took precedence over her personal desires, and the private life that she presented to the public took a different form than she may have wished. Moreover, it was in Germany that she would not only attain prominence among socialists but also have a real impact on national politics. Immediately after World War I, she helped found the Communist Party of Germany, and in January 1919 she co-led a revolution against the government of the new German republic. Interestingly, despite Luxemburg’s political and economic radicalism, she gave the public impression of having a less-than-fully-radical romantic life. Indeed, she attempted to maintain the public fiction that she and her Polish-Jewish socialist lover were married, which Hertz ascribes to the socially conventional nature of the socialist subculture in Germany and Switzerland. Even if Russian radicals openly flouted bourgeois conventions, Luxemburg adopted—or seemed to adopt—the ethos of the German socialists. To have
done otherwise would have led to marginalization among the German socialists, even German socialist feminists.

Rosa Luxemburg was not the only prominent eastern European Jew who went to Germany because of its political or economic centrality, who engaged in its life, and who absorbed, adapted, or reacted to its values. Alan Levenson’s essay seeks to shift the discourse of immigration and exile from the binary notions of moving from one place to another to instead take into account the “triple immersion” of Joseph Soloveitchik, Jacob Katz, Nehama Leibowitz, and Abraham Joshua Heschel, four prominent Jewish intellectuals from traditional eastern European Jewish backgrounds whose migration from eastern Europe to Germany to Israel and the United States constitutes an intriguing and complex intellectual encounter. They each studied in Germany and adapted or adopted German models of scholarship for the study of Jewish religion. At the same time, their deep rootedness in Yiddishkeit and tremendous traditional learning differentiated them from many similarly educated Western peers, and their meaningful engagement with German (or German-Jewish) models differentiated them from other eastern European Jews—especially Zionists—who spent time in Germany without absorbing anything from its culture or traditions. Far more than generally assumed, German experiences had an impact on and shaped traditional and neotraditional Jewish intellectual life in Israel and the United States in the latter half of the twentieth century, reaching beyond the scope of German Jews in emigration and Reform Judaism.

The other essays in this section similarly grapple with the encounter of German Jews with other Others. In his article on Yiddish writers in Weimar Berlin, Jeffrey Grossman seeks to reverse the optic and to consider the impact of German and German-Jewish culture on Sholem Aleichem, Dovid Bergelson, Anna Margolin, and Der Nister, going beyond the cursory and sometimes dismissive treatment that previous literary scholarship has given this transcultural exchange. Berlin may seem to be an unlikely locus of Yiddish literature, particular as acculturated German Jews looked askance on Yiddish as shtetl patois, but as Grossman shows, not only did eastern European Yiddish emulate German literary models, but during the era of World War I and the Russian Revolution they also found a home in Berlin. Moreover, despite German-Jewish ambivalence or hostility toward eastern European Jewish culture, German culture, such as Expressionism, continued to have an impact on Yiddish writers, and German literature served as a model for avant-garde Yiddish literature in the 1920s.

Outside the borders of Germany, the Zionist propaganda film *Avodah* (Work), made in Palestine in 1935, interwove the culture of labor Zionists in
the Yishuv with that of the Jewish bourgeoisie from interwar Germany. Lerski was, according to Ofer Ashkenazi in his essay “The Symphony of a Great Heimat: Zionism as a Cure for Weimar Crisis in Lerski’s Avodah,” the very embodiment of the transnational artist—born to Polish-Jewish immigrants in Strasbourg (then a part of Germany), Lerski lived in Zurich, immigrated to the United States until 1915, when he relocated to Berlin; he stayed in Berlin until his first trip to Palestine in 1931 but soon returned to Switzerland, then returned to Palestine until his final departure for Zurich in 1948, where he died in 1956. Yet it is not only the dizzyingly nomadic quality of Lerski’s life that makes him the paramount transnational artist but rather, as Ashkenazi demonstrates, the complex inter-cultural encounters seen in his work. As Ashkenazi demonstrates in his essay, Lerski drew on two important Weimar German films, Berlin. Die Sinfonie der Grosstadt (Berlin, Symphony of a Great City) and Metropolis, to present Zionism as the remedy for the ills of life in a modern world where machines displaced or oppressed people. Not only was the theme of problematic modernization present in Weimar-era cinema, but German films also served as a site for meditations on German-Jewish identity, Ashkenazi argues. Thus, Avodah, an important early Zionist film, created outside of Germany yet dependent on the stylization and themes of 1920s German cinema, reveals Lerski’s negotiation of two “cultural paradigms”—that of labor Zionism in Mandate-era Palestine and of liberal bourgeois culture in Weimar Germany—in light of his multiple emigrations.

The second section, “Germany, the Portable Homeland,” draws on the canonical notion of Jewish culture formulated by German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine, who famously declared not Germany but rather the Hebrew Bible the “portable Homeland,” to consider the various textual reimaginings of Germany. Jay Geller’s contribution on Gershom Scholem and his three brothers, for instance, provides a much thicker description of Scholem and his family than most accounts to date. By unraveling the Scholems’ own rhetoric and probing their cultural and political experiences, Geller elucidates the limits and durability of Germanness among German Jews outside the Heimat. However, German-Jewish immigrants to other lands did not just passively absorb new cultures and allow their Germanness to dissipate. They were also active generators of culture in their new homes and drew on their German training and German sensibilities as they contributed to society. Moreover, their position on the margins of society encouraged creative reconsiderations of culture. Michael Berkowitz’s essay, through an exploration of the photography of German-Jewish émigrés to Britain, Walter and Helmut Gernsheim, reconsiders the history of visual culture, and in particular photography, through a transnational
lens. The contribution by Rick McCormick explores the impact of German Jewish émigré director Ernst Lubitsch’s films, both those made in Germany and those made in Hollywood after his emigration in 1922, and argues for the distinctively transnational nature of German-Jewish comedic film, with an emphasis on migration and identities—mistaken, altered, or reformed. Kerry Wallach’s essay forges a new way of writing transnational literary history, as it considers the multiple strands of social relations between these writers’ places of origin and emigration. Wallach examines the negative, pessimistic vision of America in serialized novels by Joseph Roth, Sholem Asch, and American-Jewish author Michael Gold, whose work was translated into German and serialized in the German-Jewish press, thus creating a network of textuality about Germany and Jews both inside and outside Germany. The contribution by Joachim Schlör recasts even further the notion of “Germany as Portable Homeland,” as he reflects on the creation of a “thirdspace” (Edward Soja) between Israel and Germany. In examining the liminality of the act of emigrating from Germany, as well as later return to Germany as visitors, Schlör makes a strong case for the specificity of German-Jewish transnational history, arguing for the necessity of shedding “more light on the intermediate, the transnational, the moving elements in travel and migration as cultural practices and on their representation in memory.” The final essay in this section, Atina Grossmann’s “Transnational Jewish Refugee Stories: Displacement, Loss, and (Non)Restitution,” enacts a new kind of transnational historiography by taking into account the history of emotion as it incorporates the narrative of her own family into the history of German-Jewish refugee writing. Grossmann’s essay explores, drawing on her own family history, the history of the refugees and the complex process of “Wiedergutmachung” (reparations) and insists on the dual processes that shape both the transnational history and the history of emotions that, as Grossmann states at the end of her essay, “considers especially questions of intergenerational transmission across time and place, and the fraught, mostly invisible, ways in which objects, tangible and remembered, still link the heirs of the looted and the looters.”

The final section of the volume, “A Masterable Past? German-Jewish Transnationalism in a Post-Holocaust Era,” extends the discussion about a transnational German-Jewish culture into the post-1945 period. While much scholarship has focused attention on the complex mechanisms of memory, trauma, atrocity, and art in post-Holocaust Germany, there has to date been little work done that brings this discussion beyond the borders of Germany to consider the ways in which both trauma and the discourse about traumatic history migrate, moving across national and ethnic borders. The four essays in this
section all attempt to grapple with the legacy of the loss of Jewish culture and Jewish sites in Germany by turning to the complex mediation of the culture of memory between Germany and the United States.

Although German-born, Germany-based German Jewry largely ceased after 1945, the phenomenon of German-Jewish transnationalism did not. In many ways, it grew more complex. Prewar German Jewry lived on in emigration in Tel Aviv, New York, San Francisco, London, Sydney, and São Paulo. There, German-Jewish émigrés wrestled with the dilemmas faced by emigrant communities everywhere, including assimilation to a new culture and diminution of one’s native culture as well as the question of one’s relationship to the former homeland. Of course, in the case of the German-Jewish émigrés, this issue was immensely more complex because of the legacy of the Nazi regime. As shown in the essays in Part 2 by Joachim Schlör and Jay Geller, émigrés related to Germany in differing ways. Even those émigrés who returned to Germany for visits differed in their view of contemporary Germans and the past, while retaining their own private relationship with Germanness.

Concurrently, Jewish life did continue in Germany, though the size and character of the postwar Jewish community differed considerably from that before the Holocaust. Rather than five hundred thousand mainly German-born Jews, the community numbered twenty thousand to forty thousand Jews born in eastern Europe or born in Germany to eastern European parents. This diminished community could not satisfy all its religious, cultural, and social needs. Foreign-born or foreign-trained rabbis led congregations. Karen Remmler frames this final section of the volume by problematizing the use of the term “normalization” in post-Holocaust Germany, examining the complex mechanisms of how the “work of memory in the affective realm continues” into the second and third generations of victims and perpetrators. In her essay, “Normalization and Its Discontents: The Transnational Legacy of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany,” Remmler seeks to understand the mechanisms of reconciliation and “normalization” in the descendants of Nazi perpetrators. Putting the term “normalization” under a critical lens, Remmler elucidates the complexity and slipperiness of the term “normalization” by exploring Christina von Braun’s 2007 family memoir Stille Post, Malte Ludin’s film “2 oder 3 Dinge, die ich von ihm weiss” (2005), and Nerburg Rohde-Dahls’s film “Ein weites Feld. Das Holocaust Mahnmal in Berlin” (2007).

Gavriel Rosenfeld picks up on Remmler’s question about “normalcy” as he examines synagogue architecture in Germany from 1945 to the present. Not only does the reinscription of synagogues in the German cityscape mark a desire for a return to “normalcy,” but the design of such Jewish sites of worship
indicates both an evolving relationship with the past and a transnationalization of Jewish identity in Germany as unobtrusive synagogues by German architects gave way to overtly Jewish structures, often designed by American Jews. Without a large number of architects among its own ranks, the Jewish community in Germany looked to foreign architects—mainly Jewish—to design synagogues and communal institutions.

Thus, some aspects of German-Jewish transnationalism have reversed course in comparison to the prewar years. Rather than Germany supplying Jewish leaders and Jewish ideas to the world, the world supplied Jews in Germany with religious and cultural leaders to some degree. As both Gavriel Rosenfeld and Michael Meng note in their contributions to the volume, this cultural interchange gave institutions of the Jewish community in Germany a transnational character. Similarly, as Raysh Weiss shows in her essay, “Klezmer in the New Germany: History, Identity, and Memory,” non-German Jewish musicians (as well as non-Jewish German musicians) cater to musical tastes that differ greatly from those that existed among Jews in Germany before the war. In addition, interest in eastern European Jewish folk music among non-Jewish Germans is quite strong—a phenomenon virtually unknown before 1933. Raysh Weiss argues that non-German Jews provide a Jewish cultural experience to non-Jewish Germans that may or may not correspond to the cultural offerings of the official Jewish community. She explores the ways in which klezmer, as the sound of a fabricated Jewishness that is no longer present in contemporary Germany and, for the most part, not even performed by or for Jews, offers a case study of the spatial and temporal relocation of a cultural practice.

The last essay in the volume, by historian Michael Meng, suggests that the process of mediating the memory of Jewish sites in Germany after the Holocaust must be understood, in his words, as “at one and the same time the national and the transnational contexts of Germany’s recollection of the past and recovery of Jewish sites.” By turning to post-1945 Jewish sites in Berlin and Essen, Meng untangles both transnational and national memories in both cities; Meng’s insistence on the imbrication between the national and the transnational offers a nuanced way of approaching the very question of Jewish life in contemporary Germany.

Our hope with this volume is to spark dialogue not only in the fields of German Studies and Jewish Studies, but more importantly to allow the scholarship that is being done in German-Jewish studies to seep across and out of the disciplinary confines of German studies and Jewish studies and to be part of a larger discussion in the humanities. For it is precisely in the fertile, contested,
and open space of the hyphen linking “German” and “Jew” and the movement of Jews to and from Germany that new readings and newly generative work in our respective fields can take place.

NOTES


2. An important debate unfolded in a forum on transnationalism on H-German in 2006. See H-German Forum: Transnationalism, in particular Young-Sun Hong’s and Michael Geyer’s contributions.


5. For an insightful study of regional history for German-Jewish history, see Nils Roemer, *German City, Jewish Memory: The Story of Worms* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2010).

6. We will use the term “German Jews” to refer to those Jews who were raised in a German cultural milieu, even if their homes were outside the borders of the German Reich. Such Jews may have been from Germanophone communities in eastern and central Europe, or they may have been the children of German emigrants living abroad.


20. Dan Diner notes that in Israel, the terms “Yekkes” and “German Jews” were not limited simply to Jews from the German Reich, but rather ascribed to Jews from Europe who spoke German and who had a certain set of characteristics, personality traits, and values. Dan Diner, “Jecckes—Ursprung und Wandel einer Zuschreibung,” in *Zweimal Heimat*, ed. Zimmermann and Hotam, 100.


27. After 1945, most of the Jews living in Germany were born in eastern Europe and had come to Germany either at the end of World War II or been brought there by the Nazis during the war. They were not culturally German, and over the course of several decades they redefined what it meant to be a Jew in Germany. Indeed, their leading representative organization was the Central Council of Jews in Germany, not of German Jews. Only by the 1980s were there discussions about changing the name of the organization, and those discussions generally ceased after the massive influx of culturally Russian Jews to Germany after 1991.

28. Since 1999, there have been rabbinical seminaries in Germany once again.