CHAPTER I

How Did We Get Here from There?

Introducing the Problem

In the twenty-first century, the debate surrounding cosmopolitanism has become a surrogate for thinking about the positive or negative aspects of the new globalization. Yet cosmopolitanism is the concretion of a range of concepts firmly embedded in historical memory, and like other such concepts, it has been constantly refashioned for use in different periods and with specific shades of meaning. Hidden within today’s cosmopolitanism is a whole range of meanings and concepts that, like an intellectual Venn diagram, come to be included within or indeed self-consciously excluded from our understanding of this concept. We can recall how George Bernard Shaw in 1907 ironically lampooned Broadbent, the ultimate Englishman, who decried everything and everyone who was not English enough: “You are thinking of the modern hybrids that now monopolize England. Hypocrites, humbugs, Germans, Jews, Yankees, foreigners, Park Lancers, cosmopolitan riffraff. Don’t call them English. They don’t belong to the dear old island, but to their confounded new empire; and by George! They’re worthy of it; and I wish them joy of it.” Things change; things remain the same. From rootless riffraff at the turn of the twentieth century, the cosmopolitan has turned into a global elite at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Yet over and over again cosmopolitanism and its sister concept, nomadism, have taken on quite different meanings when their referent is the Jews. Once this litmus test is applied, both cosmopolitanism and nomadism are clearly revealed as symbolic manifestations of the antisemitic stereotype that associates Jews with capital. Over time, as we shall see, the related concept of the nomad gives way to that of the exile, the refugee, the Dplaced Person. The association with capital also wanes but never quite vanishes. This is also part of the tale. Such a history of the cosmopolitan points toward the ambivalence of these concepts when applied in the present day to specific categories of social and geographic mobility, whether they refer to the Jew, the asylum
seeker, the migrant, the undocumented immigrant. The riffraff of Edwardian London and of Wilhelminian Germany may have transmuted into the global citizen of the twenty-first century in some instances, but the aura of the corrupt and corrupting, of the rootless and the transitory, of the foreign and the unhoused always remains beneath the surface and shapes the sense of what it means to be cosmopolitan and global. And as such it impacts on the self-image of those so defined as mundivagant.

With the turn of the millennium, cosmopolitanism—that intellectual tradition culturally extolled but politically reviled in the European context between the 1800s and the 1950s—had come back into vogue. Cosmopolitanism is the new diaspora—indeed, the new multiculturalism. The latter, celebrated (or at any rate paid lip service) by many in the 1990s, has now largely been disavowed by the new conservatives, such as Theresa May, now dominating Europe in the early twenty-first century. Indeed the British Prime Minister was quite clear about this at the 2016 Conservative Party Conference, where she stated that “if you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere. You don’t understand what citizenship means.”

Shaw would not have been surprised at the parochialism of a post-Brexit politics. The new nationalism has many faces, but not that of the cosmopolitan. Indeed, the cosmopolitan has come to be threatened by its old foe, the local, the national, the autochthonous, the indigenous. As Peter Geschiere notes, citing Tania Murray Li, “With the present-day ‘global conjuncture of belonging,’ all over the world more cosmopolitan forms of citizenship are being discarded in a return to highly exclusive definitions of the nation.”

The struggle of the various notions of the cosmopolitan against the local and the historic and contemporary function of the image of the Jew as a proof text for such struggles lies at the core of our project. Given that Geschiere sees “religion play[ing] a front-stage role in this quest for belonging,” this question continues to engage us in the twenty-first century. While it is evident that today as well as historically, being Jewish is not conterminous with being a practicing religious Jew (in any or all of its manifestations), it is clear that Jewish ethnicity, Jewish religious practice, and (at least in religious Zionism) Jewish political identity often overlap or are confused. We know that “being Irish,” especially in the diaspora, is a vague and often confusing identity. On St. Patrick’s Day, a minor religious holiday in the Republic of Ireland, the Chicago River is dyed green: on that day, “everyone is Irish.” Yet such an Irish identity seems not to demand any religious subtext. Other religious identities have played and continue to play a role in both Irish identity and Irish politics (in the republic as well as in Northern Ireland). Indeed, Anne Kane notes that “the construction of Catholic
Irishness was strengthened by the disaster of famine from 1845 to 1849. . . . Religious affiliation became increasingly a surrogate for national identity as the effective agent for communal solidarity.” Such contradictions and transformations are no different with “being Jewish.”

To what extent, however, does the current idealizing or demonizing discussion of cosmopolitanism need to be challenged, especially given the divisive history and implications of this concept? Modern cosmopolitan discourse has been markedly ambivalent, and its often anti-Jewish and Eurocentric uses have reproduced rather than dispelled discursive margins and centers. The twenty-first-century rise of a new radical nationalism in Greece and Hungary has seen the reproduction of older attacks on minorities such as the Jews and the Sinti and Roma (Gypsies) as well as on “asylum seekers” and economic refugees as cosmopolitans undermining the nation-state. Other forms of modern nationalism, such as in Russia, use the presence of a resuscitated Jewish community with strong links to the country’s authoritarian regime to prove the liberalism of core governmental attitudes even as that regime aggressively pursues strongly national positions vis-à-vis other minorities and nations.

Given the rise in radical nationalism, why has the concept of the cosmopolitan reemerged in academic discourse? Is it merely a knee-jerk liberal response to what has been perceived as a conservative realignment of national politics, specifically in regard to the legal or illegal movement of peoples across national borders? In philosophy as well as in cultural, political and social theory, diaspora and multiculturalism have similarly come to be questioned, albeit for entirely different reasons. Today’s debates about cosmopolitanism are shaped not solely by the prospect of large-scale legal immigration and its challenges to traditional cultural hierarchies, as signified by the evolution in contemporary Germany of the concept of Leitkultur, but also by the invisible history of that concept and the function of the Other in such theories.

All three concepts—diaspora, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism—are concerned with diversity. In contemporary theory, however, cosmopolitanism reflects more clearly the imagined crossing and mixing of cultures and ethnicities in the savvy environments of contemporary globalized cities, whereas the concepts of diaspora and multiculturalism more readily invoke notions of difference and separation. As Saskia Sassen has notably commented, such nodal points are the point of the conflict, concentrating on both “the leading sectors of global capital” and “a growing share of disadvantaged populations (immigrants, many of the disadvantaged women, people of color generally, and, in the megacities of developing countries, masses of shanty dwellers).” But they are also rooted in nation-states, as Singapore has shown,
where the global city becomes the nation-state, with all its anxieties about the control of the masses moving through and remaining in its sphere. Those moving into the new global cities are diasporic by definition, whether wealthy British businessmen or marginal Indonesian contract laborers. The former are rarely seen as disadvantageous, because they are the agents of global capital; the latter are seen as potentially dangerous because they represent the diasporic in its most marginal form. *Diaspora* literally means to exist in two spheres, suggesting that the diasporic subject has its roots “elsewhere,” whereas multiculturalism suggests the coexistence of different cultures and ethnicities.

In contrast, Ulrich Beck, a late German sociologist and contemporary theoretician of cosmopolitanism, argues that it “has become the defining feature of a new era, the era of reflexive modernity, in which national borders and differences are dissolving and must be renegotiated.”11 Whereas globalization is frequently understood as the now global flow of commodities, people, and communications as well as of cultural artifacts, Beck casts cosmopolitanism as a type of internal globalization, an outlook producing a “global sense, a sense of being without boundaries. An everyday, historically alert, reflexive awareness of ambivalences” that “reveals not just the ‘anguish’ but also the possibility of shaping one’s life and social relations under conditions of cultural mixture. It is simultaneously a skeptical, disillusioned, self-critical outlook.”12 Such a view of cosmopolitanism, which saw a common bond among the European nations, appeared as a liberal defense against the nationalist excesses that had led to World War I and had paved the way for the rise of National Socialism. For Beck, this complex system of cosmopolitanisms reaches from merely empathetic to the political:

What, then, does the cosmopolitan outlook signify? It does not herald the first rays of universal brotherly love among peoples, or the dawn of the world republic, or a free-floating global outlook, or compulsory xenophilia. Nor is cosmopolitanism a kind of supplement that is supposed to replace nationalism and provincialism, for the very good reason that the ideas of human rights and democracy need a national base. Rather, the cosmopolitan outlook means that, in a world of global crisis and dangers produced by civilisational and international, us and them, lose their validity and a new cosmopolitan realism becomes essential to survival.13

Such a view is embedded in history. It is not merely a form of contemporary existence in the global marketplace but one that has carefully crafted who and
what defines the borders of such a fluid identity. Who is dangerous in their ability to cross boundaries, and who is benign? And how are they perceived as such over time? In this book, we will look at how the Jews, however defined, come to shape the various contemporary models of the cosmopolitan and how such models, in turn, come to redefine what is understood as Jewish.

Modern Jewish historians, such as Jacob Neusner in *Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: Exile and Return in the History of Judaism*, have argued for a material understanding of diaspora. For Neusner, that understanding is the model of wilderness and land, the dialectic between tent and house, nomadism and agriculture, wilderness and Canaan, wandering and settlement, diaspora and state.

Welsh Congregationalist W. D. Davies has argued in *The Territorial Dimension in Judaism* that this dichotomy is well balanced in the Bible, that for every quote praising wilderness as the decisive factor in Judaism, there could be found a counterpart in praise of the land of Zion. Analogous problems are present the scholarship dealing with Jews beyond of the sphere of Ashkenazi Jewry. As Ammiel Alcalay notes, such a dichotomy “must be grounded in a context that is both broader and more specific that the standard binary approach, which would see ‘rabbis’ on one side and thought that ‘dislikes residence and offers itself as a philosophy for nomads’ on the other.”

Diaspora presents a complex problem of being self-aware of inherent binaries as structuring principles for self-definition.

The involuntary dispersion of the Jews (*galut* or *golah*), conversely, is often understood as the experienced reality of being in exile, albeit structured by the internalization of the textual notion of the diaspora and tempered by the daily experience (good or bad) of life in the world. The Jew experiences the daily life of exile through the mirror of the biblical model of expulsion, whether the expulsion from the Garden of Eden or freedom from slavery in Egypt. *Galut* has formed the Jewish self-understanding of exile. Yet for some thinkers today *galut* is articulated as being inherently different from the voluntary exile of the Jews (*diaspora* or *tfutsot*). These two models exist simultaneously in Jewish history in the image of uprooted and powerless Jews on the one hand and rooted and empowered Jews on the other. It is possible to have a firm, meaningful cultural experience as a Jew in the *galut* or to feel alone and abandoned in the diaspora (as well as vice versa)—two people can live in the same space and time and can experience that space and time in antithetical ways. Indeed, the same person can find his or her existence bounded conceptually by such models at different times and in different contexts. Moreover, there are *galuts* within *galuts*, diasporas within diasporas. The children of Israeli Jews
in Berlin become German Jews in New York; Soviet Jews in New York come to see themselves as American refugees in Russia. What at one moment are antitheses come to be felt as complementary situations.

If the debates about the *Leitkultur* define acceptable political identity in contemporary Germany (and variants of this concept exist today in every European and North American country), the impact of such views can also be found within discussions of what being Jewish means in the contemporary world. The strongly nationalistic tone of modern Zionism, which has dismissed and continues to dismiss the cosmopolitan as an aberration of Jewish identity, has paralleled much of the recent general movement against a positive cosmopolitan identity, at least for Jews. The idea of *shilat ha’golah* (the negation of the diaspora), has deep roots in Zionism, though, as we shall see, not necessarily in the thought of its modern founder, Theodor Herzl. Recently, there has been a Jewish reaction to such dismissal of the cosmopolitan. Alan Wolfe wrote in 2014 that “for universalists who viewed particularism as a step down from cosmopolitanism, selectivism was a step down from particularism: The circle of concern was narrowed from all humanity, to all Jews, and finally only to those Jews deemed worthy of the name.” Indeed, Wolfe sees such a movement as contrary to the general adaptation of Jews in the diasporic world, in “such cosmopolitan centers as Berlin, London, and Chicago” (W, 42), where their deeply Eastern European Jewish identity enabled them to draw “universal lessons that could be applied to any people wrestling with questions of identity and meaning” (W, 42–43). For Wolfe, the diaspora provided and provides all Jews with “the opportunity that living in a land not their own has offered: a deep understanding of unfairness and a commitment to the absolute necessity of fighting against it” (W, 2). Thus, diasporic cosmopolitanism offers “a blessing in disguise” (W, 2). Here, Wolfe quotes British liberal Rabbi David J. Goldberg, who sees this cosmopolitanism as bridging the “tension between particularism and universalism” (W, 2) that haunts modern Jewish identity. Virtually all commentators on Jews and cosmopolitanism stress this tension, and it forms a paradigm for the evaluation of the radical poles of identity, not for the complex construction of identity itself. The question of an authentic life grounded not in geography but in belief, as Neusner and other scholars advocate, provides an alternative meaning for cosmopolitan Jewish culture in the diasporic situation, at least in the United States (W, 6). Even here, the contradictions and conflicts out of which a fluid and evolving identity is formed become defined by a single quality of experience. The cosmopolitan remains contested beyond and within debates about Jews’ identity but rarely without references to the Jews as evidence for the benign or corrosive presence of the cosmopolitan.
Unlike Natan Sznaider’s excellent study, *Jewish Memory and the Cosmopolitan Order*, we do not use “‘Jewishness’ as a metaphor for people on the margins, people who are minorities, whether against their will or by choice.”20 We examine the representation of Jews in writing by Jews (however defined) and others as cosmopolitans not as a means of either judging “their victimhood” or of “exploring the possibilities of autonomous cosmopolitan social and political action” (Sz, 61) but as an index to the ever-shifting internal sense of a Jewish cultural identity rooted both in experience and in its representation in the world. On one level, we see the literary text as the author’s ability to undertake a thought experiment, to think him- or herself into a world analogous to or radically different from his or her own and to make such images accessible to the public sphere. Thus, we do not agree with Sznaider that “Jews were cosmopolitan before Europe became cosmopolitan” (Sz, 197); instead, we see the notion of cosmopolitanism as arising at a historical moment and being shaped by its image of the Jew. Here, we agree with the late Benedict Anderson’s now classic formulation that the concept of the nation “was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith’s ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.”21 Religious identity recedes in importance, defining the nation-state as the plurality of religions becomes more and more evident following the wars of religion or at least by the early Enlightenment. Ironically, cosmopolitanism and the idea of the Jews become inexorably linked at this moment as national identity separate from religion comes to define rootedness and the Jews come to define its antithesis, the cosmopolitan.

In this new nation-state, the Jews were tagged as representing the limits of autonomy and thus of the national, and they began to understand themselves in these terms. Concepts such as rooted cosmopolitanism evolved to explain such shifts. The Jews became cosmopolitan in all of its varieties as the world came to codify what the cosmopolitan could and could not be. In *Imperial Encounters: Religion, Nation, and Empire*, Peter van der Veer notes that these terms are perhaps deemed to demand that “the enlightened assumption is that a cosmopolitan person has to transcend religious tradition and thus be secular.”22 Thus the tensions that arose also denied the core of a Jewish religious identity in the early modern period, stressing its secular nature. Indeed, if Talal Asad is
correct in his assumption that the break with the idea of religion in the Enlight-
enment is the construction of a radical discourse of secularization, then the
“problem” of the Jews was that they were seen to continue to link both spheres
in a world where the separation had come to be a pillar of the new nation-
state. They were a religion (if merely of the abdomen, if Ludwig Feuerbach
is to be believed) as well as a nation (or at least a nation within a nation, ac-
cording to Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s view). The irony is that by the late twenti-
eighth century, as Bruce Robbins points out in *Perpetual War: Cosmopolitanism
from the Viewpoint of Violence*, religion is “certainly considered worth dying
for by many” and is “at least as cosmopolitan as it is national.” This is the
inherent difficulty in Geschiere’s notion of the function of religion in the public
sphere as solely the prerogative of the local, the national, the autochthonous,
the indigenous. This volume is underpinned by the tension between the univer-
sal and the particular, between the secular and the religious, between identity
and action. Our argument reflects a basic debate about whether the post-
Enlightenment is an age of increased or decreasing secularization by postulat-
ning that the debate about cosmopolitanism also reflects the question of the
space of alterity in the modern world. And for all of these fragile and partial
dichotomies, the Jews, defined as religion, ethnicity, culture or “race,” serve as
a litmus test.

This chapter traces the evolution of the modern concept of the cosmo-
politan in relation to the Jews, who became its central signifier in the twentieth
century. We show how Enlightenment cosmopolitanism excluded the Jews,
seen as rootless nomads, from its idea of a rooted universality. We offer an al-
ternative historical reading to that of Yuri Slezkine, who has defended a “cos-
mopolitan, nomadic Jewish identity” rooted in a transhistorical notion of “ser-
vice nomads,” people who serve in agrarian society as the purveyors of
resources beyond those easily accessible to that society. He observes, “In com-
plex agrarian societies (no other preindustrial kind has much interest in cosmo-
politanism), and certainly in modern ones, service nomads tend to possess a
greater degree of kin solidarity and internal cohesion than their settled neigh-
bors. This is true of most nomads, but especially the mercurial kind, who have
few other resources and no other enforcement mechanisms.” For him, this
social role defines the cosmopolitan and provides nomads with a marginalized
and often ostracized social role that guarantees their ultimate financial and
social success. While such an approach certainly has value in providing a ma-
trix into which most of such “service nomads” fit, we are interested in the
historical context of such social roles and how they are read as part of a retro-
spective history of the nomad and the cosmopolitan. Slezkine acknowledges
that the Sinti and Roma constitute exceptions to his model, and these exceptions are important in the construction of the idea of Jewish particularism for specific reasons at a specific historical moment. How Jews become Gypsies and how Gypsies become Jews is part of our tale.

We also show how Enlightenment discourses on both the cosmopolitan and the nomad remained ambivalent in their treatment of the Jews, who nonetheless functioned as the archetype of these notions within Immanuel Kant’s cosmopolitanist dialectic of particularist universality. The period between 1880 and 1933 nevertheless saw the generalized eclipse of a cosmopolitan self-image with positive connotations, particularly among German-speaking Jewish intellectuals. Twentieth-century discourse on cosmopolitanism and the Jews found its nadir in the National Socialists’ annihilation of the Jews as “rootless parasites” and the Stalinist persecutions of Jews as “rootless cosmopolitans.” The memory of these images, which prevailed until a few decades ago, is largely absent from the new academic discourses on the nomad and the cosmopolitan.

The Cosmopolitanist Debates

The history of the term *cosmopolitanism* reflects its historical constitution. Whereas the concepts of diaspora and multiculturalism refer to (often essentialized) ideas about Otherness, cosmopolitanism appears on the surface to be a more readily inclusive concept, addressing the condition of a universalized human subject regardless of its positionality—that is, its discursive fixation in discourses about culture, race, and ethnicity in particular. Yet cosmopolitanism’s universalism betrays its origins in Enlightenment thought, which, like the concept of the diaspora, took its cues from ancient Greek thought. The term *cosmopolitanism* is derived from the Greek words *cosmos* (the universe) and *polites* (citizen, referring to an inhabitant of a city-state). When asked about his origins, Diogenes of Sinope, also known as the Cynic (ca. 412 BCE), founder of stoicism, reportedly responded that he was a *cosmopolitēs* (citizen of the world). This was the same rather odd Diogenes who also lived in a large, empty jar and sought out an honest man with his lantern in the daylight.) This term connoted the allegiance to the *polis* (city-state) as well as a sense of belonging to a wider, universal context beyond local ties. During the Enlightenment, when cosmopolitanism came to define a certain set of relationships to the modern nation-state, the archaic baggage that the Greeks (understood as proto-Germans in togas) provided for this concept allowed it to become part of a modern vocabulary of identity.
The tension between the universal and local meanings of *cosmopolitanism* originally arose in the Enlightenment, as did the common use of the term itself. Standard etymologies in various European languages note that while the term is Greek, its modern usage in English was borrowed from the French as early as the sixteenth century by necromancer John Dee to denote a person who is “A Citizen . . . of the . . . one Mystical City Vniuersall.” However, the word only became common in English in the early nineteenth century. In German, the term *Weltbürger* (world citizen) was likewise generated in the early sixteenth century to provide an alternative to the French *cosmopolitisme* and *cosmopolite*. The French Academy documents *cosmopolitisme* in its 1762 dictionary, but that is the first official recognition of a much older, if rare, usage. As in English, the earlier German usages are sporadic. Erasmus seems to have been the first to use it: in the early sixteenth century, he wrote to Zwingli that when Socrates had been asked of what city he was a citizen, he replied that he was a “cosmopolites sive mundanum.” The term came into wider use earlier than it did in English but nevertheless not until the German Enlightenment. Jakob Friedrich Lamprecht seems to have popularized the term in German with his periodical, *Der Weltbürger* (1741–42). G. E. Lessing used the term *cosmopolitan* (rather than *Weltbürger*) in 1747, with a wide range of Enlightenment figures quickly following suit. In all of these European languages, the widespread use of *cosmopolitan* is linked to social and conceptual shifts in the course of the eighteenth century. Indeed, what seems on its surface to be a coherent concept revealed itself already in the eighteenth century, as we shall show, to be a range of cosmopolitanisms with multiple, contradictory adaptations and transmutations. Functioning as the litmus test for the cosmopolitanisms in the German Enlightenment in all of its myriad cases is the status of the Jews.

In modern Western discourse, both diasporic subjectivities and the cosmopolitan became inextricably linked with the figure of the Jew in Enlightenment thought. Jewish intellectuals themselves played an important role in this discourse, through which they inscribed themselves as cultural and political agents within European and German-speaking culture in particular but at the same time maintained their Jewish specificity. But after the Holocaust, the notions both of the diaspora and of the cosmopolitan lost currency in the Jewish context. The diaspora was seen as having rendered the Jews culturally defenseless, establishing the preconditions for their situation. The Holocaust and the persecution of Jews as rootless cosmopolitans by both Hitler and Stalin led to a turning inward among Jews, an assertion of particularity over universality. Especially during the first decades after its founding, Israel disavowed the di-
aspora Jew as a shameful, passive figure. Indeed, the recent diaspora of Israelis, especially in Germany, has resuscitated the charge of rootlessness, now against those whose Israeli roots seemed to have provided them with a firm national identity.

Jews have been largely excluded from the rehabilitation of the concepts of diaspora and the cosmopolitan since the 1990s. In his essay on “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” (1990), Stuart Hall goes so far as to construct Jews as the imperialist antithesis to postcolonial diasporas. They are not among the people who “originally ‘belonged’ there.”30 Because of its seemingly heightened inclusivity, the concept of cosmopolitanism has, in contrast, recently assumed a key position in academic debates on diversity. Cosmopolitanism is frequently seen as a solution to discourses and social practices of exclusion based on cultural and ethnic (or racial) Otherness, an Otherness that the discourses of diaspora and multiculturalism seek to maintain (though the latter has retained an important place in political practices seeking to address the existing social inequalities between ethnic groups in the United Kingdom and elsewhere). Yet in the current discourse on cosmopolitanism, the Jewish story has likewise been nearly forgotten or is at best marginalized.

In this way, modern cosmopolitanist discourse inadvertently repeats its own history of exclusion. When the first theories of cosmopolitanism arose in the critical discourse of the Enlightenment, the Jews came to exemplify the virtues and ills of this concept because of the weight given to Jewish emancipation and mobility during the eighteenth century. A closer glance at the status accorded to the Jews, that quintessential example of a people beyond borders, within cosmopolitanist thought can thus help us ascertain the possibilities and limitations of this discourse. After all, early modern cosmopolitanist theory saw Jews as the antithesis of its lofty universalism. The ancient Greek concept of cosmopolitēs saw a revival in Germany just as the French Revolution was ushering in the end of feudal absolutism in Europe and heralding the beginnings of the modern state. Modern cosmopolitanism combined patriotism, presumed to be progressive, with universalism. It became a powerful tool in nascent German nationalism, which opposed the particularist division of the German-speaking lands into a myriad of duchies and kingdoms.

Immanuel Kant became a key figure in the rise of modern cosmopolitanist discourse when his Third Article of his Perpetual Peace (1795) demanded a Weltbürgerrecht (law of world citizenship) to which all humans would be entitled.30 Kant’s idea of cosmopolitan rights formed the basis not only of a unified legal order following the Peace of Westphalia but ultimately of global norms of justice today, including concepts such as crimes against humanity
and, to quote Hannah Arendt in the preface to *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, “the right to have rights.” A century and a half would pass before Kant’s dream of a universal law, a “Foedus Amphictyonum,” as he calls it in his 1784 *Idea of a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent*, with all of its caveats, took root in the legal realm, and this process arguably remains under way, littered with loopholes and exceptions. These footnotes, exceptions, and caveats interest us and are explored in terms of Kant’s views in greater detail in chapter 2.

**The Jew in Contemporary Theories of Cosmopolitanism**

In one of the most striking attempts recently to understand the new use of this old concept, New York University philosopher and public intellectual Kwame Anthony Appiah has attempted to bridge the idea of the local/community and the global/transnational by demanding that both be respected as aspects of human identity in our globalized world. Appiah notes that “the idea behind the Golden Rule is that we should take other people’s interests seriously, take them into account. It suggests that we learn about other people’s situations, and then use our imaginations to walk a while in their moccasins. These are aims we cosmopolitans endorse. It’s just that we can’t claim that the way is easy.” Local meanings modify claims about cosmopolitan universals; the cosmopolitan as a surrogate for the global is effective only insofar as it reflects the specific experiences of individuals and communities.

The universal claim of globalization and its surrogate, cosmopolitanism, is that all human beings share certain innate human rights, including the free movement of peoples across what are seen as the superficial boundaries of nation, class, race, caste, and perhaps even gender and sexuality. This notion, projected onto the New World by Anglo-Jewish dramatist Israel Zangwill (1864–1926), is sometimes referred to as the melting pot, the title of his 1908 play, and finds its classic expression in the model of the hybrid, the “Golden” or “New Man,” of the merging of differences to form a world that incorporates the best qualities of the cultures that contribute to it and is constantly being revised, altered, and changed precisely by the movement of all peoples across all boundaries. This is what Shaw satirizes at the same moment on the London stage. The local form, sometimes referred to as “cultural pluralism,” to use the phrase coined in 1915 by early American Zionist thinker Horace Kallen (1882–1974), recognizes that local claims always modify such human rights regarding change and that the flexibility demanded by the melting pot is super-
imposed rather than self-generated.

Appiah’s views today echo one of the major Enlightenment thinkers, the Abbé Grégoire, who attacked the facile use of a universal claim of cosmopolitanism before the National Assembly during the French Revolution:

A writer of the last century (Fénélon) said: I love my family better than myself: I love my country better than my family but I love mankind better than my country. Reason has criticized both those extravagant people who talked about a universal republic and those false people who made a profession out of loving people who lived at a distance of two thousand years or two thousand leagues to avoid being just and good towards their neighbors: systematic, de facto cosmopolitanism is nothing but moral or physical vagabondage.  

For the Abbé, the local case was the question of the universal emancipation of French Jewry as French citizens, trumping their specifically Jewish identity, an idea he powerfully advocated. For the Enlightenment—and this tale begins with the Enlightenment—Jews in Paris, not in the distant past or in faraway Palestine, are the test for true French cosmopolitanism. The attention to the immediate and the proximate defined true cosmopolitanism, a topic much debated at the time.

Another significant problem with Appiah’s otherwise praiseworthy book involves his discussion of the Jews—or, rather, what is missing from his discussion even of the French and German Enlightenment. His tale begins with Voltaire, but Appiah also enthusiastically quotes perhaps the first major German literary advocate of cosmopolitanism, Christoph Martin Wieland, who in the 1780s devoted several essays, most famously “The Secret of Cosmopolitan Order” (1788), to cosmopolitanism: “Cosmopolitans . . . regard all the peoples of the earth as so many branches of a single family, and the universe as a state, of which they, with innumerable other rational beings, are citizens, promoting together under the general laws of nature the perfection of the whole, while each in his own fashion is busy with his own well-being” (A, xiv–v). But Appiah does not note that Wieland, like the philosophes, sees this as a transcendental category, trumping the local. Wieland is himself paraphrasing Friedrich II’s oft-cited June 1740 note concerning Huguenot and Catholic toleration but not emancipation: “Each should be blessed in their own manner.” In 1750, this toleration was grudgingly extended to Prussian Jewry. Wieland’s own Enlightenment views on the Jews are clear: his Private History of Pereginus Proteus (1781) mocks the pagan whose grandfather “had a boundless aversion for Jews and Judaism; his preju-
dices against them, were, perhaps, partly unjust, but they were incurable”; however, Wieland equally detested Christians, who “passed for a Jewish sect.” Enlightenment thought more generally promoted a rooted cosmopolitanism, a universalist sensibility based in the nation. Religious affiliation, particularly that of the Jews, was rejected for its particularity. Wieland’s cosmopolitanism thus contests the religious exclusivity of both Christians and Jews over the universal.

In contrast, Appiah draws on Wieland but invokes an ideal type of universal cosmopolitanism when referring to the Jews:

For many long years, in medieval Spain under the Moors and later in the Ottoman Near East, Jews and Christians of various denominations lived under Muslim rule. This modus vivendi was possible only because the various communities did not have to agree on a set of universal values. In seventeenth-century Holland, starting roughly at the time of Rembrandt, the Sephardic Jewish community began to be increasingly well integrated into Dutch society, and there was a great deal of intellectual as well as social exchange between Christian and Jewish communities. Christian toleration of Jews did not depend on fundamental values. (A, 70)

Appiah’s view of the Jews is predicated on the notion that toleration is a sign of the positive cosmopolitanism in the Ottoman Empire and early modern Holland. For him cosmopolitanism neither incorporates the contentious multiculturalism of contemporary Israel nor indeed any of the many contemporary cases in which global toleration bumps up against resurgent local prejudice concerning the Jews (for example, contemporary Hungary). Rather he draws on the distant and mythic world of historical Jewry for his proof. Thus these Jews come to be the sign of a world in cosmopolitan harmony in Appiah’s account. Yet given the complex history of the so-called Golden Age of Spain, harmony may not be a particularly apt term. This account of the Iberian Golden Age is a fantasy created by Central European Jews in the mid-nineteenth century striving to find a model of utopian integration into the evolving European nation-states. Rembrandt’s Amsterdam is no less fraught with its complex internecine conflicts among Jews (such as Spinoza’s earlier excommunication) and between Jews and their Protestant neighbors, given that the drive to open England to Jewish migration from Holland was begun by these Jews. Appiah’s model is, if anything, utopian, at least when it comes to the idealized history of the Jews in his concept of cosmopolitanism.

Yet Appiah’s view of Jewish cosmopolitanism and the Jews as embodying a successful cosmopolitan moment constitutes a clear counterpoint to the idea
that the Jews defined the corrosive cosmopolitan element and thus were inimical to the nation-state. The latter view climaxed under National Socialism and later Stalinism. As National Socialist ideologue Alfred Rosenberg claimed in a 1935 talk,

Marx recognized that the age of technology had descended upon the world and that this required an attendant maturation of the social framework. He, along with his followers, an international swarm of Jewish orators and literati from the cosmopolitan centers of increasingly racially degenerate cities, got together to formulate a set of social tenets for the despairing victims of an age who are so estranged from land and landscape as to have been stripped of the standards for judging this disastrous doctrine of doom.41

Rosenberg’s idea of Jewish cosmopolitanism is the antithesis of Appiah’s, and the fulcrum that makes them so radically different is striking. Rosenberg assumes that cosmopolitanism in his moment is rooted in the economic function attributed to stereotypical Jews in his fantasy of mid-twentieth-century Europe. Marxist-Leninist ideology uses the term in much the same manner. Appiah avoids any possible discussion of the stereotyped role of the Jews as an economic factor in the Ottoman Empire or in Holland and does not evoke the role of the Jews in the twenty-first century in this or indeed any other manner. For Appiah, the past is a safe haven for images of the cosmopolitan.

Jewish cosmopolitanism is contested when it is defined in terms of capital; when it is uncontested, any discussion of capital is avoided. Indeed, any discussion of the fantasies about some type of unitary definition of Jewish cosmopolitanism necessarily hangs on the meaning associated with capital and its function within the new nation-state. The fantasy of the Jews is that of a people or nation or race driven solely by their own economic motivation. It is Shylock’s curse that historian Derek Penslar so elegantly presents as a core reference for Jewish identity in modernity.42 But this modernity is indeed what Zygmunt Bauman has called “liquid modernity,” a modernity ever up for renegotiation and rethinking, especially by those caught up in it and formed by its conflicts.43

Richard Wolin has argued that modernity itself, in its contemporary form, benefits from a new (if utopian) cosmopolitanism. His claim that today the notion of a “Western sovereignty has been permanently decentered. The rhetoric and the commonplaces of European hegemony—moral, historical, and technological—can no longer be parroted naively.” He sees undermining “the relationship between Self and Other, subject and subaltern” as central, “even in
instances where such discursive transformations have become merely perfunc-

tory or obligatory (as is often the case with contemporary global elites).” “In 

this sense,” he continues, “the West, too, has become the beneficiary of a new 
cosmopolitanism that has constructively challenged the insularities of ethno-
centrism in Europe, North America, and elsewhere. In this sense, the Other has 
helped liberate the Western Self from the constraints of its own complacency, 
from the constrictions of its own self-referentiality.”

The notion that this “new cosmopolitanism” is a tool to confront the prob-
lems of historical particularism is inherent in the history of the claims of the 
cosmopolitan. By confronting and thus transcending the local through claims 
on the universal, the cosmopolitan, according to Wolin, comes to define mo-
dernity. Central to the argument of this book is this claim that transcendence in 
the present and in the past is to a great degree a poisoned chalice.

Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the 
Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) that the image of the modern nation-
state is “fully, flatly, and evenly operative over each square centimetre of a le-
gally demarcated territory. But in the older imagining, where states were de-
defined by centres, borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded 
imperceptibly into one another.” Beginning in the seventeenth century, the au-
tomatic legitimacy of the sacred monarchy in Western Europe began to decline. 
As late as 1914, dynastic states remained a majority, but they were already 
using the idea of the nation, rather than the sacred principle, as a source of le-
gitimacy. Such nation-states had to deal with those who did not fit the new 
model but could have been accommodated in the older one.

Thus Anderson, like Appiah, turns to the Iberian experience of the Jews, 
whose integration into the collective nation-state Anderson sees in terms of the 
older imperial model as imagined in “Portugal, earliest of Europe’s planetary 
conquerors, [which] provides an apt illustration of this point. In the last decade 
of the fifteenth century Dom Manuel I could still solve his ‘Jewish question’ by 
mass, forcible conversion—perhaps the last European ruler to find this solution 
both satisfactory and ‘natural.’” There is no idea of a Golden Age here: forced 
conversion is a model for integration, even though we know that such converts 
were then targeted by the Inquisition as false Christians, whatever their actual 
beliefs. The doubts about the efficacy of such conversions for Dom Manuel I 
(and the other Iberian monarchs of the early modern period) was the role that 
the Jews played in the newly evolving world of capital and exchange. As long 
as they were imagined to fulfill this role, no matter what their religious prac-
tices or social realities, they remained Jews in the eyes of the authorities. This 
is lost on Anderson.
As with other modern concepts such as multiculturalism, the Jews as an abstract and as a social reality come to be the proof through which these notions’ potential and difficulties can be analyzed. When cosmopolitanism is examined under this lens, we have a double focus: first, the role that the abstraction the Jews played in formulating theories of the acceptability of or dangers in the movement of peoples beyond and across national boundaries; and, second, the response of actual individuals who define themselves as Jews to such attitudes and meanings. This idea is a forerunner of what British scholar of geography Ulrike Vieten calls the “novel form of regional cosmopolitanism [that] is underway in Europe.” But it has deeper historical roots. As the meanings of all of these concepts (cosmopolitanism, boundary, Jews, as well as capital) shift and evolve, so too do the responses of those generating them and seeing them as applicable or inapplicable to their particular circumstances.

**Nomads, Gypsies, Jews**

The Enlightenment had an alternative manner of speaking about the Jews as a people that offers a different history of the concept of cosmopolitanism. For Christian Enlightenment thinkers, cosmopolitanism was the hallmark of the Enlightened subject rooted in a particularist universality. Jews, confined to their backward particularity, could not, by definition, achieve this status. They were simply nomads out of time and space. Contemporary theories of nomadism, like those of cosmopolitanism, attempt to recuperate the term from its negative associations in National Socialist ideology. In 1933 publicist Eberhard Freidank stressed that the cosmopolitanism of the “November criminals” (that is, the Weimar state) was innately foreign to the Aryan. “For many years, Michel [the prototypical German] was happy to be seen as cosmopolitan; the spiritual fruits borne of such breeding ground were hardly recognizable as expressions of a pure German nature, much in the same way the myriad foreign influences to which the German has been subjected since time immemorial, among other things the alien religious circle once foist upon us, made it difficult to discern between what was foreign and what was ours.” As a result “a swelling antisemitic movement, the expression of a healthy German drive for self-preservation, sought to rein in the raging Jewish incursion.” This incursion by intellectual nomads is now understood as the antithesis of the pure German spirit.

In contrast to these defamations, a romanticized vision of the nomad prevails in today’s academic discourse on globalization and cultural difference. This new vision takes its central cues from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s
rehabilitation of the nomad in their *Mille Plateaux* (1980; *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1987). As with Appiah’s cosmopolitanism, this work resuscitates a corrupted concept to answer its misuse in European nationalistic discourse. Deleuze and Guattari’s nomad, never actually defined, is the liminal and the anxiety-provoking, the unsettled in a world of supposed settlement. But it is a state of ethical being rather than a being unless that being is the oft-cited Prague Jewish writer Franz Kafka. In such a world in flux,

Jews, Gypsies, etc., may constitute minorities under certain conditions, but that in itself does not make them becomings. . . . [E]ven the Jews must become-Jewish (it certainly takes more than a state). If this is the case then becoming Jewish affects the non-Jew as much as the Jew. . . . A becoming-minoritanian exists only by virtue of a deterritorialized medium and subject that are like its elements.51

This is a version of Jean-Paul Sartre’s idea of the Jew as a label based on outside perception rather than an ethnic or religious category.52 The nomad is the new subject for the late twentieth century that resists centralization and is the key to a modern deterritorialized state that moves and flows, becoming reterritorialized as it changes over time. The nomad is the new world citizen, not quite Jewish enough when only a Jew with a new nation. But to create this new nomad, Deleuze and Guattari must distance the idea from any thought of the National Socialist notion of the Jew as moneylender and capitalist, even in a work saturated with Marxist assumptions.

After *A Thousand Plateaus*, nomadism suddenly became the new cosmopolitanism.53 Australian philosopher Paul Patton’s nomadism is an answer to the claims of a state philosophy that pretends to universality, even when its concerns are the most particular, providing the theoretical foundations for existing orders of temporal power. . . . The real alternative is not the position of the mystical Other of state philosophy, the relativist for whom all distinction is impossible and nothing is any better than anything else, but that of the nomad—not so much the member of a tribe as an activist in a movement, a militant on behalf of an avowedly partial perspective. Above all, it is the relation to theoretical space that is not the same.54

Here, unlike in his French source, the Jews are completely missing. We are all nomads, according to this view, in the sense that when we leave or are
forced to leave the symbolic space of the nation-state we become cosmopolitan. Similarly, Rosi Braidotti’s *Nomadic Subjects* invokes the concept of the nomadic to theorize the “nonunitary subject” in the current context of “global hybridity.”\(^5\)

This state, Braidotti argues, arises from the fragmenting power of advanced capitalism, which requires a search for new analytical tools that cut across the formerly fixed lines of scholarly subjects. The feminist academic becomes the privileged site of this “nomadic subjectivity” and its quest for “a creative alternative space of becoming that would fall not between the mobile/immobile, the resident/foreigner distinction, but within all these categories” (B, 7). Through this embodied and situated subject in becoming, Braidotti wishes to disrupt the traditional binaries of margins and centers, home and belonging, and instead to pose “an act of resistance against methodological nationalism and a critique of Eurocentrism from within” (B, 7).

Despite owing a debt to Deleuze and Guattari, neither Patton nor Braidotti discusses the Jewish predicament at any length. While Patton elides the Jews altogether, Braidotti references “the woman, the Jew, or the black” as “certainly ‘different’ from the figuration of human subjectivity based on masculinity, whiteness, and Christian values that dominates our scientific thinking” (B, 242). Also missing here, however, is a critical awareness of the historical concept of the nomad and of the image of the Jews within it. Taking this concept into account, of course, would inevitably have made Braidotti’s resignification of the concept more complex and problematic.

Patton’s and to a large extent Braidotti’s elisions of the Jews are all the more remarkable given that during the latter half of the twentieth century, the nomadic state has generally been associated with the diaspora of European Jewry fleeing National Socialism. As early as 1951, Theodor Adorno, having returned to Frankfurt from exile in California, claimed in *Minima Moralia* that “dwelling, in the proper sense, is now impossible. The traditional residences we grew up in have grown intolerable . . . the house is past . . . it is part of morality not to be home in one’s home.”\(^5\)

With great irony, such a sense of the modern nomad turns all cosmopolitans into Jews, in the same way that after World War II and the Holocaust, German-language writers such as Alfred Andersch in his novel *Zanzibar; or, The Last Reason* (1957) and Max Frisch in his drama *Andorra* (1961) turned the actual experience of Jews during the Holocaust into the symbolic representation of the cosmopolitan sacrificial victim. By the 1990s, Edward Said, citing Adorno’s *Minima Moralia*, concludes “Reflections on Exile” with the universal claim that “exile is life led outside habitual order. It is nomadic, decentred, contrapuntal; but no sooner does one get accustomed to it than its unsettling force erupts anew.”\(^5\)

Well it may, but the link between the
nomadic and the exilic have deeper and much more unsettling roots in the debates about Jewish cosmopolitanism, which are effaced in Said’s text.

These postwar writers demonstrate little awareness of historic uses of the nomad prior to Goebbels’s account and its mid-twentieth-century recuperation. This is found in the overlapping history of the Sinti and Roma and the Jews. Some early German commentators, such as W. E. Tentzel at the close of the seventeenth century, correctly argued that the “Gypsies” had come from South Asia even if those commentators were uncertain of the exact origins (Tenzel guessed Ceylon, today’s Sri Lanka). However, those theologians who focused on converting the Jews looked closer to home. Christian Hebraist Johann Christoph Wagenseil claimed in his *Benachrichtigungen Wegen Einiger die Gemeine Jüdischheit Betreffenden Sachen* (1705) that the first Gypsies (“Zigeuner”) were indeed Jews who fled into the forests in the fourteenth century after having been accused of poisoning wells. Claiming that they had come from Egypt, these Gypsies cheated the peasants there by alleging that they had the power to effect wondrous cures, tell the future, and prevent fires. The Gypsies eventually returned to the cities, again became sedentary, and declared themselves Jews. But thieves and beggars had joined the group and continued their nomadic ways. As proof, Wagenseil declared that the Gypsies were unknown before the fourteenth century, that the Gypsy language was full of Hebrew words, and that their amulets used Kabbalistic formulas. Johann Jakob Schudt’s infamous *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten* (1714) includes a long chapter that argues that Wagenseil was simply wrong and that the Jews were condemned to their wanderings in Egypt for having rejected Jesus and Mary on the flight to Egypt. He follows this with a long digression on the Eternal Jew, the shoemaker Ahasverus (Cartaphilus), whose rejection of Christ led the savior to condemn Ahasverus to wander the world, learning the language of each country he visits (Sc, 502), until the Second Coming. According to Schudt, the Jews, like the Turks, are “sanctimonious cheats” because of their usury (Sc, 504). The economic role of the Jews as pseudo-nomads is integral to these contradictory images. Whether authentic or not, the Jews are nomadic in the same way as the Sinti and Roma, even if they are not “Gypsies” per se.

The Enlightenment saw nomads as failing to productively use their given space. As early as the mid-eighteenth century, Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* presented the nomad through the lens of the colonist, explaining why Germans seek adventures abroad. The novel’s protagonist, Lenardo, speaks of the enticement of “immeasurable spaces [that] lie open to action” and have “great stretches of country roamed by nomads.” In the present, nomads have no value and must be replaced by those who do, but this is a false promise that
may lead to the corrosion of the Europeans’ national identity. Here, Goethe loosely follows Immanuel Kant’s *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* (1786), which sees the nomad as an idealized stage of human development that is possible as long as there is little competition for resources. It is a leisurely life that, unlike agriculture, is not toilsome. The nomads deplore the ownership of land that comes with the rise of agricultural society, since it limits their ability to graze their flocks. Yet these flocks damage the hard-won crops and force farmers to protect their fields and thus move into settlements. With the movement to settlements that is the result of agriculture, Kant claims, the centrality of the deity gives way to the authority of the ruler. His example is the Bedouins, who even today willingly abandon the leadership of their putative tribe and join another since no property is at stake in such an action. Pastoral life, for Kant, is a necessary but transient stage of societal development ill suited for the modern, rational society that follows. The Jews do not figure in Kant’s argument, since he sees them merely as a political and legal community rather than a religion and thus brackets Judaism as having no essential connection to the one universal religion, Christianity.

In this Enlightenment view, nomads add no value to the land today and thus seem to need to be replaced by members of a national community. But these nomads were the starting point for the nation-state and for its most egregious exploitative feature, capital. Karl Marx wrote in *Capital* that “nomad races are the first to develop the money form, because all their worldly goods consist of moveable objects and are therefore directly alienable; and because their mode of life, by continually bringing them into contact with foreign communities, solicits the exchange of products.” The nomad is implicitly cast as the ur-capitalist, the Jew, whose drive in the modern world is shaped by his inheritance from the desert. (This is also analogous to the explanation for the rise of monotheism among the Jews: the need for a portable God after the destruction of the Temple.)

In contrast to Marx, Georg Simmel explains in the *Philosophy of Money* (1900) that “as a rule, nomadic peoples hold land as common property of the tribe and assign it only for the use of individual families; but livestock is always the private property of these families. As far as we know, the nomadic tribe has never been communistic with regard to cattle as property. In many other societies too movables were already private property while land remained common property for a long period thereafter.” Not so much ur-capitalists as ur-communists, perhaps?

Two decades earlier, Russian Zionist Leon Pinsker argued in his German-language pamphlet, *Auto-Emancipation* (1882), that the Jew’s state-
lessness in the age of nationalism condemned him to be a nomad. For the Jewish people produce

in accordance with [their] nature, vagrant nomads; so long as [they] cannot give a satisfactory account of whence [they come] and whither [they go]; so long as the Jews themselves prefer not to speak in Aryan society of their Semitic descent and prefer not to be reminded of it; so long as they are persecuted, tolerated, protected or emancipated, the stigma attached to this people, which forces [them] into an undesirable isolation from all nations, cannot be removed by any sort of legal emancipation.67

For Pinsker, these are nomads living as “Jew peddlers” because they refuse to acknowledge their rootedness in the desert as true nomads. At the same time, the diaspora has conditioned the absence of a Jewish national state and made the Jews into cosmopolitans:

The Jews are not a nation because they lack a certain distinctive national character, inherent in all other nations, which is formed by common residence in a single state. It was clearly impossible for this national character to be developed in the Diaspora; the Jews seem rather to have lost all remembrance of their former home. Thanks to their ready adaptability, they have all the more easily acquired characteristics, not inborn, of the people among whom fate has thrown them. Often to please their protectors, they recommend their traditional individuality entirely. They acquired or persuaded themselves into certain cosmopolitan tendencies, which could no more appeal to others than bring satisfaction to themselves.68

Unlike Enlightenment German theologians such as J. G. Herder (discussed in chapter 2) who see the Jews as less adaptable because of the coherence of their religious practice, Pinsker sees them as highly adaptable and thus lacking that “natural” coherence that Herder saw as essential to the nation-state. For Pinsker, as for most pre-Holocaust writers, this is an imperfect state. To become Jews again, Pinsker maintains, the Jews must regain their former national identity. The counter to this idea in the age of integration, Bavarian reform rabbi Kaufmann Kohler argued in defense of the Jews in 1881, is to see the Jew as “a true cosmopolitan, but only disgusting and uncomfortable to those authorities who wish to rule and dominate with blood and iron, who destroy freedom, support bigoted hypocrisy and wish to corrupt eternal human rights”—that is, to the new German nationalism of Bismarck and his anti-
Catholic politics. Pinsker argues in favor of Jewish nationalism, which rescues the Jews from their nomadism, whereas Kohler privileges Jewish cosmopolitanism as a sign of Jewish universalism. By and large, however, Jewish writers evoked the concept of race, that science of the time, to propose a Jewish nationalism that was both particularist and universal. As an anonymous author wrote in the influential *Jüdische Monatsschrift*,

> The Jewish race alone has the capacity to dwell in every portion of the earth, to reproduce and to develop without abandoning its racial specificity, but also in healthier circumstances than the indigenous population. . . . One can see in this the promise of God that Israel will spread to the limits of the world.70

Here and elsewhere, Jewish racial identity thus provides the key to an understanding of the Jews’ cosmopolitanism. Ironically, at the same moment, Friedrich Nietzsche, who in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) saw the Jews as the strongest people in Europe because of their constant persecution, condemns in *The Antichrist* (1888) the Christian appropriation of the Jewish God by Paul as creating a weak, global, boring God who “will become modest and full of fear, he will cringe in corners and recommend ‘peace of soul.’ Forbearance, an end to hatred, and ‘love of friends and enemies.’ He will constantly moralize, he will creep into the crevices of private virtue, he will be a god for one and all, a private and cosmopolitan god.” Prior to this, God had been the God of the Jews, “the strength of a people, all aggression and thirst for power in the soul of a people.”71 For Nietzsche, the corrosion of Pauline Christianity leads to such ubiquitous, shallow cosmopolitanism. The Jews may have many faults, but this is not one of them.

If the nation-state has its roots in a nomadic world before capital, and if the cosmopolitan symbolically represents the dangers (and advantages) of capital, we can turn to a major Jewish thinker of the late nineteenth century for a sense of the linkage between the two concepts. Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921), a great Jewish Hungarian scholar of Islam, published a detailed 1876 study of the constitution of Jewish mythology that adds further nuance to our sense of the ambivalent image of the cosmopolitan hovering between advantage and danger.72 For Goldziher, “The national level [of Jewish mythopoeia] can be sorted out of the mix. It was Abraham, not yet rethinking these tales in national terms, who was not yet a cosmopolitan figure but an individual,” who formed these tales (G, 59). In this portrayal of the biblical Abraham, individuality (the particular) and cosmopolitanism (the universal) are portrayed as dichotomous.
Abraham is an individual, not a cosmopolitan, for he is part of “the nomadic level that found its element in a continual wandering from grazing pasture to grazing pasture, in the continual changing of their abode, before it was historically grounded in the completion of its movement to agriculture” (G, 64). Like the Arabs, whom Goldziher idealizes, the Jews (here he cites Philo) “glorify their nomadic life” (G, 103). The Jews detest artisan labor, no matter how intense “their desire for money,” as beneath their status as nomads (G, 105). They are thus inherently different in their storytelling from the ancient Greeks and the Aryan inhabitants of South Asia:

The Hellenes and the Indians have their primary figures of myth being of a cosmopolitan character, for Zeus and Indira have no specific national character, even though now and then they are specifically local. The figures of Hebrew myth in this period become the national ancestors of the Hebrew people, where myth is raised to become the national prehistory of the Hebrew people before its settlement in the land of Canaan. (G, 306)

Here, the national and the cosmopolitan appear diametrically opposed. Jewish tales are restrictedly national and local rather than cosmopolitan and global. They are the product of the world of the nomad, at least as imagined from the point of view of the biblical national Jewish state, which remained local, unlike the transcendent worlds of Greece and India.

Nomadism is also pressed into service to explain the origin of the Jews’ “natural” relationship to cosmopolitanism and to capital. One of the most quoted academic antisemites of the late nineteenth century, blind socialist economist and philosopher Eugen Dühring, echoed in 1881 the notion that the Jews were both nomads and gypsies as the core of their economic role in the West: “The Jews’ skull is certainly not that of a thinker. The Lord God and business have since ancient times taken up much to much room there in, as much as it is not empty. . . . With such an armament these nomads, and, as Voltaire called them, these Gypsies from Palestine have forced their way to our tables in the North to mock and tease us.”

More centrally, another Berlin economist, Werner Sombart, in his classic response to Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), wrote in *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* (1911) of the “restless wandering Bedouins [who] were the Hebrews,” who established in “this promised land” an “economic organization” where “the powerful and mighty among them after having conquered large tracts of land instituted a sort of feudal society. Part of the produce of the land they took for themselves, either by way of rent in kind, by farming it out
to tax-collectors, or by means of the credit nexus.” In other words, the Jews were protocapitalists of a particularly nasty kind—the origin of the stereotyped Jewish banker in the world of the nomad. For Sombart, contemporary Jews represent an extension of the earlier nomad as far as their character and relationship to capital are concerned.

Weber argues against such a view in *Ancient Judaism* (1920–21). He accepts the existence of a narrative (but not historical) succession of “the stages of the three Patriarchs from the ‘nomad’ Abraham to the ‘peasant’ Jacob” (W, 438). However, he refutes the idea that the nature of Jewish usury stems from any biblical claims to divine approbation in Deuteronomy 28:43–44: “The medieval and modern money and pawn usury of the Jews, the caricature in which this promise was fulfilled, was certainly not intended by the holy promise.” Rather, Weber reads Jewish usury as symbolizing the triumph of city over countryside, “which prevailed in every typical polis throughout early Antiquity from Sumerian-Accadian times” (W, 69). While a quality of the urbanized Jews, usury as practiced by them is no different from the manner by which it was undertaken elsewhere in the cosmopolitan world of the ancient city. Such cities created their own myth of a pure origin in an agrarian settlement that existed without incipient capitalism.

Weber is not alone, of course. R. H. Tawney in 1926 rejected the notion that the Jews, as cosmopolitans, are the origin of capitalism. Yet he was not exactly friendly to the idea of the Jews in history. He dismissed Calvin as “legalistic, mechanical, without imagination or passion. . . . Calvin’s system was more Roman than Catholic, more Jewish than either” (T, 131). The rise of capitalism stemmed from Catholic Florence, where usury was forbidden and lenders punished. The city imported Jews in the early fifteenth century “to conduct a business forbidden to Christians” (T, 37). For Tawney, this movement of the Jews is cosmopolitan but not nomadic, and he sees cosmopolitanism as a productive quality of rising nationalism and capitalism: “Of that cosmopolitan country, destined to be the refuge of the international idea when outlawed by every other power in Europe, Antwerp, ‘a home common to all nations,’ was the most cosmopolitan city” (T, 73). The fine line between the nature of the Jews and the nature of capital is drawn, and the Jews, as Weber also maintained, are freed of the onus of capital but not of their innate nature.

The Jews are nomads according to the theology of the German Enlightenment (as chapter 2 shows), and the essence of the Jew is captured by his nomadism in the present-day world of the nineteenth-century pan-European anti-semitism. In *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1912), the seminal antisemitic work by Richard Wagner’s son-in-law, Houston Stewart Chamber-
lain, the history of the Jew in the distant past is again the history of the Jew today: “Of all the histories of the ancient world there is none that is more convincing, none more easily to be realized, than that of the wanderings of the patriarch Abraham. It is a story of four thousand years ago, it is a story of yesterday, it is a story of today.” But it is the history of a degenerate people, Chamberlain argues, for

any change in the manner of living is said to have a very bad effect on the high qualities of the genuine and purely Semitic nomads. The learned [A. H.] Sayce, one of the greatest advocates of the Jews at the present day, writes: “If the Bedouin of the desert chooses a settled life, he, as a rule, unites in himself all the vices of the nomad and of the peasant. Lazy, deceitful, cruel, greedy, cowardly, he is rightly regarded by all nations as the scum of mankind.”

And it is the history of an impure race as well: “As a matter of fact the current opinion is that the Semite and even that purest Bedouin type are the most absolute mongrels imaginable, the product of a cross between negro and white man!” Mixed races, Chamberlain suggests, have no spaces left for them, so they simply wander. As early as 1887, Austrian-German Orientalist Adolf Wahrmund had cast the Jew as nomad as the essential capitalist:

Thus we have the typical image of the private enterprise of the nomad that continues to today, in the form of the wandering merchants and dealers who cross the land selling junk, stocks, and . . . thus rob our peasants and return on the Sabbath with their plunder home to wife and children.

The nature of capitalism is that of the “parasitic” nomad and is the essential nature of the Jew. However, the Jews are not very good nomads insofar as they violate one version of the Enlightenment’s underlying assumptions concerning the claims of cosmopolitanism: the Greek concept of xenia, guest friendship. As German journalist Otto Gildemeister noted in 1921, “Even the highest law regarding the safety of the stranger is not recognized by these nomads. Thus the Jewess Jael murders Sisera after having been tempted into a tent and served milk. Trusting her he goes to sleep. Then Jael drives a stake into his temple and mocks his mother when she comes to seek her son.” Beginning in the Enlightenment, “true nomads” are ideals against which the Jews are often set. Indeed, the ancient Jews violate the rules of many of the nomads described in Lebensraum theorist Friedrich Ratzel’s History of Mankind (1896), where the Jews are seen as originally
nomads like their kinsmen in Arabia and Syria. . . . Their oldest books know nothing of fixed altars and their sacrifices are always of cattle. They took to a settled life on conquering and dividing the land of Canaan. But the promised land was only an oasis. . . . The misfortunes of the national ruin, however, brought about a purification, which in a race aesthetically deficient, but spiritually proud and austere, tended to strengthen the conception of a deity all powerful and all-knowing, and at the same time jealous and severe.  

It is only through “contact with the Greeks, fundamentally Aryan, yet touched by a Semitic spirit, who, independently of the Jews, had gone through a process of spiritual refinement in the direction of truth, knowledge, and beauty, [that] Christianity developed into a power capable of transforming races” (R, 547). The Jews’ only value derives from qualities that were filtered through Greek sensibility and contributed to the creation of a modern consciousness. For Ratzel, the Jews’ initial contribution to Western culture may have been a sort of primitive monotheism (as opposed to Christianity), but their long-term impact is on “above all the economic life of other nations” (R, 548).

The impact of such late-nineteenth-century discussions of Jewish nomadism as a permanent reflex of Jewish character becomes part of the romantic restatement of Jewish character among early Zionists. “You say,” they paraphrase, “that we are of the desert. We agree, but we are not and never have been nomads. We are the descendants of the makers of empires and the builders of cities.” It is no wonder that Max Brod, writing in Buber’s periodical, The Jew, in 1916, complained, “One should not inject us with being a centrifugal force in society and then marvel at the findings of ‘nomadism’ and ‘critical destruction’ in our corpse.” This internalization of the cosmopolitan and the nomad has come to define the Jew in the post-Enlightenment world, even into the twenty-first century. But the Zionists and their allies see themselves as defined not by the Jewish nomad, the Jewish cosmopolitan, but by the Jewish nationalist. Others at the time, however, believed that the Jews were terrible at being nomads because, well, they were Jews. As Adolf Hitler stated baldly in Mein Kampf, echoing his reading of Chamberlain,
territory. The outward reason for this is to be found in the small fertility of a soil that simply does not permit of settlement. The deeper cause, however, lies in the disparity between the technical culture of an age or people and the natural poverty of a living space.\textsuperscript{86}

The Jews are only symbolic nomads in the modern world. That the Jews are nomads in this pejorative sense means that they are parasites on settled, non-nomadic national peoples. Echoing Wagner’s claim that the Jews lack the ability to create original art, psychologist C. G. Jung stated in a 1934 lecture in Hitler’s Berlin,

The Jew who is something of a nomad, has never yet created a cultural form of his own, and as far as we can see never will, since all his instincts and talents require a more or less civilized nation to act as a host for their development. Aside from certain creative individuals, the average Jew is already much too conscious and differentiated to be pregnant with the tensions of the unborn future. The Aryan unconscious has a higher potential than the Jewish; that is the advantage and the disadvantage of a youthfulness not yet fully estranged from barbarism.\textsuperscript{87}

It is not what one does but who one is that defines the nomad, defines the cosmopolitan, symbolizing the role that identity is seen as playing in the world one inhabits.

**Jews and the Nation-State**

In the Enlightenment game of cosmopolitanism, the Jews as a category take on symbolic value in the new game of national definition, as William Bloom states concerning the function of related images. This symbolic function comes to define “national identity . . . that paradigm condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with the national symbols—have internalized the symbols of the nation—so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to, or the possibility of the enhancement of, these symbols of national identity.”\textsuperscript{88} This national symbolic language is not necessarily one of affirmation but of definition. Precisely because of this quality, the Jews serve both as a negative symbol defined by their perceived cosmopolitanism and as, in fewer cases, a positive symbol of a national cosmopolitanism.
According to Bloom, “The nation-state into which the infant is born as citizen is in a state of permanent competition with its international environment. Other countries are competitors in the great international game.” How the Jews are figured in this game of opposites is central to any consideration of the shifting meanings of cosmopolitanism.

As Appiah and virtually all other contemporary theorists who write on cosmopolitanism acknowledge, the term has ancient classical roots in Greek thought and practice. However, both our and their understanding of the world of Greece and Rome is also a product of the Enlightenment. The reality is that cosmopolitanism as a concept is truly the product of the European Enlightenment and its constantly debated category of l’homme, the human being. Central to that definition is the relationship of the individual to the state and to the definition of state economy. The Encyclopédie (1751–72) acknowledges in “Cosmopolitain, ou Cosmopolite,” that the cosmopolitan was often used to signify a “man of no fixed abode, or a man who is nowhere a stranger.” The Encyclopédie’s essay on the Jews, provides an account that uses an economic factor to explain the Jews’ cosmopolitanism. Louis, Chevalier de Jaucourt, states that the persecution of the Jews by Christian states forced them into usury:

These ordinances, and other similar ones, tie them most tightly together, fortify them in their belief, separate them from other human beings, and leave them for their subsistence only commerce, a profession long disdained by the majority of the peoples of Europe. It is for this reason that this profession was left to them during the centuries of barbarism; and as they necessarily enriched themselves through it, they were called infamous usurers. Kings who could not go through the pockets of their subjects tortured the Jews, whom they did not regard as citizens.

But, according to Jaucourt, in the Enlightened world of Europe, the princes have opened their eyes to their own interests and treated the Jews with greater moderation. They have sensed, in some parts of the north and south, that they could not do without their help. But (without speaking of the Grand Duke of Tuscany) Holland and England, which are animated by the noblest principles, have accorded them every possible mild treatment under the invariable protection of their governments. Thus dispersed in our day with the greatest security they have ever had in every country in Europe where commerce reigns, they have become instruments by means
of which the most distant nations can converse and correspond together. They have become like the pegs and nails that one uses in a great building, and which are necessary to join all of its parts.⁹²

Jews, now defined by their relationship to capital, are seen as the models for the new cosmopolitanism advocated by the Abbé Grégoire. The Jews as an abstraction come to function as the limit case of what is possible to understand and debate within the concept of the cosmopolitan. As Benedict Anderson argued, not only did the Enlightenment see the creation of the idea of the nation-state, but such nations are, in his oft-cited formulation, “an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign . . . because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”⁹³ The function of the image of the Jews in this symbolic realm, prefigured by their similar function in the world of medieval Europe (following Johan Huizinga’s understanding of the symbolic meaning of medieval hierarchies), means that the Jews continue to define the boundaries of who is included within that sense of community that defines cosmopolitanism as a positive or a negative factor.

The concepts of cosmopolitanism and nomadism take on quite different meanings when the index is the Jews—in particular, when they are symbolically defined by capital. Such a history points toward the ambivalence of these concepts when applied in our day to specific categories—the Jew, the asylum seeker, the migrant, the illegal, the undocumented. This study examines how these labels come to be both internalized and developed by cultural producers who understand themselves as Jewish from the Enlightenment states that subsequently became Germany and those of the imperial state and republic that has its capital in Vienna. Our view extends then to the diasporic situation, another means of understanding cosmopolitanism and nomadism, under and following National Socialist domination of these nation-states. We conclude with an examination of the implications of this phenomenon in a contemporary Israeli context informed by the ideological debates surrounding Zionism and diaspora, as cultural producers deal with Jews from lands other than Europe and migrants, legal and illegal, whose identity comes to be Israeli or indeed cosmopolitan but not just Jewish.
The Enlightenment Imagines Cosmopolitan Jews

In 1749, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, a German Protestant gadfly and author, wrote a one-act comedy, *The Jews*. Short, pithy, enlightened, it tells the story of robbers masquerading as Jews and a Jew incognito as a Traveler who rescues the Baron and his daughter from the robbers. Lessing’s Traveler is the paradigm of Enlightened cosmopolitan gentility and courtesy, a model of the new bourgeois gentleman later sketched by the Mr. Manners of his day, Adolf Freiherr von Knigge (1752–96), whose handbook of correct behavior, *Practical Philosophy of Social Life* (*Über den Umgang mit Menschen*, 1788), became and remains the German best seller on social etiquette. It provides a measure of what economic success looks like when the bourgeoisie have access to resources hitherto limited to the upper classes. Thus, traveling in a carriage with livery has become so middle class by the 1780s that Knigge observes that it is “an uncommon phenomenon to see a gentleman travelling on foot; as it excites the curiosity of the multitude, and innkeepers know not how to treat him” (K, 231). For “travelling renders us sociable; we get acquainted, and in a certain degree intimate with people whom otherwise we probably should not have chosen for companions, which can produce not bad consequences if we carefully avoid putting too much confidence in those strangers we meet on the road, lest we should be taken in by adventurers and knaves” (K, 224). Or even Jewish adventurers and knaves.

The Enlightened man is gracious, generous, and brave, as Lessing’s Traveler remarks:

> It’s no small pleasure for me that I’ve earned the thanks of so many decent people with such a slight service. Your gratitude is more reward than I need for what I did. I did it because I had to, because I care for people. I
felt it was my duty, and I would be content if it weren’t taken as anything else. You are too kind, dear people, to thank me for what you yourselves would undoubtedly have done with just as much zeal if I had been in a similar danger.⁴

Here we have a far cry from Knigge’s warning about the new bourgeoisie and their anxiety about dealing with strangers, especially Jews. For though “at Berlin, many Jewish families cannot be distinguished in the least from those that belong to other religious sects” (K, 315): “It is necessary we should look very sharp in all our dealings with Hebrews of the common class. It is natural that a Christian should not rely upon their conscientiousness and solemn protestations.”⁵ Jews are entering the bourgeoisie, Knigge warns, and they are just like you and me (at least superficially); just watch out for the “common class” of Jews, who remain dangerous because they economically exploit the (Christian) middle class.⁶

Indeed, the Baron’s invective against the Jews, which resulted from his robbery by individuals dressed as Jews, very much echoes Knigge’s warning, not Lessing’s sentiment. But Lessing seeks to show that this is simply a long-held belief, not a truth:

BARON. And isn’t it true that they have something in their face that prejudices us against them? You can practically read it in their eyes—treachery, unscrupulousness, selfishness, trickery, lying. . . . But why are you turning away from me?

TRAVELER. As I hear, sir, you are a great expert in physiognomy, and I’m afraid that mine. . . .

BARON. Oh! You offend me. How could you come to such a suspicion? Without being any expert in physiognomy, I have to tell you that I’ve never found such a sincere, generous and pleasant face as yours.⁷

Prejudices, as the one philosopher that Enlighteners read on the topic, Georg Friedrich Meier, noted in 1766, were always formally wrong because they were based on insufficiently grounded judgment but could be—and here the Germans are quite different from the French Enlighteners such as the Baron d’Holbach—quite accurate in their content.⁸ Lessing clearly would have disagreed with Meier, Thomas Abbt, and others on this point. All prejudices against the Jews vanish when we see them as human beings and define them as well-dressed people who can afford a coach ride within the carriage, not on its roof. According to Knigge, truly cosmopolitan travelers “are the citizens of the
world at large, and feel as comfortable and as much at ease at the top of a stage coach as in a splendid chariot” (K, 319).

The flirtation between the Baron’s daughter and the Traveler seems to seal the claim that Jewish invisibility is the key to understanding the cosmopolitan Jew as an economically acceptable human being. All human beings are equal, at least when correctly attired, accompanied by servants, and traveling across the landscape in a bourgeois means of transport:

**TRAVELER.** Excuse me, miss. I just wanted to tell my servant to get everything ready for our departure.

**YOUNG LADY.** What are you talking about? Your departure? When was your arrival? Granted, if you had been here for a year and a day, then a moment of melancholy might have given you such an idea. But now? Not even to stay a whole day? That’s awful. I tell you I will be angry if you ever think of it again.

**TRAVELER.** You couldn’t threaten me with anything that would hurt me more.

**YOUNG LADY.** No! Seriously? You mean you would be hurt if I were angry with you?

**TRAVELER.** Who could be indifferent to the anger of a kind woman?

Indeed, the flirtation proceeds to the point where the Baron imagines the Traveler as a son-in-law. This moves the Traveler to reveal himself as a Jew, which ends all talk of the possibility of marriage:

**TRAVELER.** Even this offer is of no use to me, since the God of my Fathers has given me more than I need. All I ask as my compensation is that from now on you judge my people more kindly and with less generality. If I kept myself hidden from you it isn’t because I’m ashamed of my religion. No! But I saw that you had sympathy for me and antipathy for my nation. And a person’s friendship, whoever he may be, has always been priceless to me.

**BARON.** I’m ashamed of how I acted.

Yet the social impossibility of a liaison in a world still very much defined by religion underlines the key metaphor of this story, which is the physical mobility of all, with the coach transporting the Traveler and the others being the great leveler in society. This is the Enlightenment ideal writ large. Buy a ticket, pay a fee, and you can go where you want and be whomever you care to
be—with, of course, built-in and unspoken limitations. Here we have a set of core underpinnings of the Enlightenment, what modern historian James Joll has called in another context “unspoken assumptions”: you can become what you wish to be and go where you wish to go, unless there is a supervening qualification. But equality exists only among equals. Indeed, after the play was published in 1754, Göttingen theologian Johann David Michaelis complained in print that the problem with Lessing’s image of the Traveler was that such a version of the Jew as a German gentleman could never exist. Michaelis believed firmly that the Jews were a people of the desert, frozen in their nature as a “southern people.” No first-class coach ticket to London, Paris, or Berlin could change that.

In 1940, the National Socialists redid this scene of the cosmopolitan or at least nomadic Jew in their most successful antisemitic film, Veit Harlan’s Jud Süss. There, too, a Jew disguised as an eighteenth-century gentleman enters a coach with a young German woman and beguiles her with tales of travel across the world and through society. He is Joseph Süss Oppenheimer (played by Ferdinand Marian), who has tricked Karl Alexander, the Duke of Wurttemberg (played by Heinrich George), into giving him a pass so that he can enter the city of Stuttgart, forbidden to the Jews for more than a century. When we first see Oppenheimer, he appears as a ghetto Jew, with beard and side locks and the clothing associated with the ghetto. He is promising the duke economic support for frivolities such as a ballet that his economic councillors have denied. In the next scene, Oppenheimer is transformed into a traveler, clad like a gentleman, and is rescued from the side of the road after a coach accident by Dorothea Sturm (played by Kristina Söderbaum in all her blond glory). They enter the gates of the city after the guard checks that “Herr Oppenheimer, from Frankfurt” is on the list of those permitted to enter the city. As they enter the town in her coach, the naive young woman asks where he has traveled. He answers that he has been to Paris, Versailles, London, Rome, Madrid, Lisbon. When she asks where he feels most at home, he replies “Everywhere.” And when she asks, “Have you no home?,” he says that “the world” is his home. Everyone except the young woman, whom he will eventually rape, recognizes him as a Jew despite his attire and his entry into Stuttgart. She is amazed to learn that he is a Jew, pointing out that he was admitted through the city gates without question. After he is confronted and revealed as a Jew, it is strongly suggested that he take the next coach out of the city, since Jews were not allowed, even if they arrived by coach. Indeed, when Süss’s machinations permit the nomadic Jews to enter the city, they stream in on foot, clearly dressed as Jews. Mobility—the ultimate sign of cosmopolitanism for the National Social-
ists—is a curse, allowing Jews, with their essential gift of mimicry, to infiltrate and economically exploit German society.

The Enlightenment anxiety about mobility or its lack and the inability or ability of Jews to become cosmopolitan haunts the eighteenth century because it is the public means of demonstrating the social mobility associated with becoming cosmopolitan. The various courts from the seventeenth century on had proto-cosmopolitan Jews—the so-called Court Jews (Hoffaktoren) such as the real Joseph Süß Oppenheimer in Stuttgart, Meyer Amschel Rothschild at the Court of Wilhelm I of Hesse, and Daniel Itzig at the court of Frederick the Great. In the time they were seen as simultaneously inhabiting the world of these pocket principalities as well as the more global world of “Jewish” finance. The 1906 *Jewish Encyclopedia* labeled these men “cosmopolitan” when ruminating on the declining world of the Jewish bankers: “Of more recent years, non-Jewish financiers have learned the same cosmopolitan method, and, on the whole, the control is now rather less than more in Jewish hands than formerly.” Court Jews such as the Rothschilds are seen as typical of a “mobile, cosmopolitan minority people [that] had a genuine advantage in that early stage of banking.” The major difference is the acknowledgment of economic as well as social mobility and the ability to move anonymously across borders and boundaries. But the Enlightenment enabled not only Jews but also members of a new, burgeoning economic class, the bourgeoisie, including (Jewish and non-Jewish) women, to be more mobile and therefore at least superficially cosmopolitan.

After Lessing wrote his play about travel and cosmopolitanism, he met the young factor of a Berlin silk weaving firm, Moses Mendelssohn, who came to fulfill Lessing’s idealization of a cosmopolitan Jew. Critics today speak, for example, of “Moses Mendelssohn’s religious cosmopolitanism” or quote Mendelssohn’s rejection of any improvement of the “human race” in light of the fact that only individual humans can move toward Enlightenment. Yet Mendelssohn’s account of his life in Berlin is hardly that of someone who has a cloak of invisibility because of the cosmopolitan nature of the society into which he has entered. Mendelssohn becomes Lessing’s embodied Jew: Mendelssohn is, as he himself would have said, an individual struggling with his own Enlightenment, but he becomes a living metaphor for Jewish adaptability and the new and contradictory cosmopolitanism advocated by the avant-garde.

Mendelssohn left Dessau for Berlin in 1743. When asked at Berlin’s Rosenthaler Gate why he wanted to enter the city, he supposedly answered, stammering in pidgin German, “Learn.” The sentry’s log for that day in October 1743 notes, “Today passed through the Rosenthaler Gate six oxen, seven pigs,
one Jew”—not a cosmopolitan view but one that in this provincial capital was
typical of the attitude toward mobility in the early eighteenth century. Mendels-
sohn’s life in Berlin was always tenuous. He avoided getting involved, for ex-
ample, in a 1771 public debate between Lessing and Swiss preacher Johann
Kaspar Lavater about Mendelssohn’s own potential for conversion. (If Men-
delssohn is really so smart, Lavater claimed, Mendelssohn should recognize the
truth of Jesus as preached by Charles Bonnet and convert or refute Bonnet.)
Even in 1763, when the king of Prussia, Friedrich II (Frederick the Great), con-
ferred on Mendelssohn the status of “a Jew under special protection,” he was
still not guaranteed the right to unrestricted residence. He remained unrooted in
a national identity but not, as he observed, in a religious one.

Mendelssohn wrote a 1784 essay on what it meant to “enlighten.” He
seems to look for universals here, but they are always universals in the context
of what came to be called Realpolitik. Thus, he notes that human enlighten-
ment can often come into conflict with the demands of citizenship. Here, the
question of public political cosmopolitanism—that is, the rational plurality of
systems of law—and the private sphere of belief overlap. Mendelssohn’s dis-
cussion of political identity implies economic identity: in a state dominated not
by economic classes but by inherited status, the role of the bourgeoisie re-
mained invisible. Indeed, the idea of “enlightenment” is fragmented: Frederick
the Great’s political enlightenment does not completely mesh with the claims
of Lessing and others as to what Enlightenment demands.

If we are to examine these debates about the Jews as the touchstone of
cosmopolitanism in the Enlightenment in general and specifically within the
German-language Enlightenment, then the two conflicting definitions of the
Jews must first be separated. First, the Jews are a people who ascribe to a par-
ticular religious belief and practice and who at least potentially can freely fol-
low their beliefs in the new, Enlightened world of the European nation-state.
Second, the Jews are seen as the concrete manifestation of the exploitative
force of capital, and their rise parallels the establishment of such states.

Theologian and essayist Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) is torn be-
tween these two poles. In his Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind
(1784–91), he defines the nation as “a group of people having a common origin
and common institutions, including language”; the nation-state represents the
union of the individual with the national community; each people is unique;
polyglot entities are “absurd monsters contrary to nature.” The Jews must
join the body politic by integrating their linguistic practice into that of the
of Moses are properly of Palestine, outside of Palestine there can be no Jew”
(H, 351). Yet “a time will come when no person in Europe will inquire whether
a man be a Jew or a Christian. Jews will live according to European laws and
contribute to the state” (H, 486). Nevertheless, “each nation has its center of
happiness in itself, like every sphere its center of gravity” (H, 486), he writes
in Also a History of Mankind (1774). In his Theological Letters (1780–81), he
approvingly quotes a remark by François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon,
Archbishop of Cambrai, that was later evoked by the Abbé Gregoire (and virtu-
ally every other Enlightened commentator on cosmopolitanism), “I love my
family more than myself; more than my family my fatherland; more than my
fatherland humankind.”

Yet for Herder, the status of the nation, of the fatherland, lies at the core
of any and all questions of individual identity and thus individual happiness.
The nation in question is not a racial entity but rather a linguistic and cultural
one. (Indeed, in the Ideas and elsewhere, Herder rejects the concept of a bio-
logically defined race.) For Herder, Jewish emancipation was anathema as it
precluded any form of total cultural assimilation. His opposition was the ex-
ception to the rule that, according to Isaiah Berlin, stressed the primacy of
communal belonging and the diversity of the other ethnolinguistic communi-
ties and their rootedness in historical and geographical environments. Her-
der’s views reflect those of the time as expressed by Johann Georg Schlosser in
the critical poem “Der Kosmopolit” (1777): “It is better to be proud of one’s
nation than to have none.” Are the Jews a nation or merely wandering cosmo-
politans? If a nation, can or should they become part of another nation? Or
are they a threat, as Johann Gottlieb Fichte notoriously stated in his 1793 pam-
phlet, A Contribution to Correcting Judgments about the French Revolution:
“In nearly all the nations of Europe, a powerful, hostile government is growing,
and is at war with all the others, and sometimes oppresses the people in dread-
ful ways: It is Jewry!” The Jews are a “state within the state,” incapable of any
integration and thus damned to wander the world.

According to Herder, writing in the Ideas for a Philosophy of the History
of Mankind, even if the Jews had stayed “in the land of their fathers, and in the
midst of other nations, . . . they would have remained as they were; for and even
when mixed with other people they may be distinguished for some generations
downward” (H, 36). The “more secluded they live, nay frequently the more they were oppressed, the more their character was confirmed” (H, 36). In fact, he suggests that ideally, “if every one of these nations had remained in its place, the Earth might have been considered as a garden, where in one spot one human national plant, in another, another, bloomed in its proper figure and nature” (H, 36). The movement of peoples interferes with the natural function of language in defining people. But the reality of history is that almost every people on earth, as Herder points out, “has migrated at least once, sooner or later, to a greater distance, or less” (H, 36). The impact of this migration is shaped by the “time when the migration took place, the circumstances by which it was occasioned, the length of the way, the previous state of civilization of the people, the reception they met with in their new country, and the like” (H, 36).

And yet Herder sees the origin of “the coining of money” as one of the contributions of the “many little wandering hordes” in the Middle East, “according to the Hebrews” (H, 317). As the Jews spread across Europe “in the manner that they spread abroad as a people,” they held its nations in thrall thanks to their command of money. They did not invent usury, Herder states, but “brought it to perfection” (H, 335). The Jews move among and across the nations like everyone else, yet Herder is happy to quote from Kant’s lectures on practical philosophy: “Every coward is a liar; Jews, for example, not only in business, but also in common life.”

Contemporary “moral” philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum most often cite Kant as the central thinker on cosmopolitanism in the German Enlightenment and beyond, citing his essay, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (1784), with its answer to Herder’s romantic speculation on the nature of man, and later his *Perpetual Peace* (1795). Kant’s 1784 argument is teleological—only among the European states, rooted in a universal cosmopolitanism, is there even the potential for a true civil society; theocratic non-European states entirely lack that potential. The end goal of history is a perpetual peace defined by a cosmopolitan order. In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant contends that the “use of the right to the earth’s surface which belongs to the human race in common” will “finally bring the human race ever closer to a cosmopolitan constitution.” This belief is rooted in the idea that an innate rule of hospitality to the stranger, the Greek idea of *xenia* (guest-friendship), defines the cosmopolitan, for “cosmopolitan right shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality” (PP, 357). Hospitality is defined here as “the right of a foreigner not to be treated with hostility because he has arrived on the land of another” (PP, 357–58). This is the central theme ascribed to the physical as
well as social mobility of the Enlightenment Jew, which is quite different in the
practice of the time. This is not yet Jürgen Habermas’s understanding of civic
cosmopolitan in the transnational sense of a global community. Habermas’s
view answers Kant’s assumption that the state not only exists but guarantees
xenia. It is not, as many commentators have claimed, a version of Kant’s re-
writing of the Golden Rule as his categorical imperative; rather, it invests in the
state the ability to monitor the central cosmopolitan rule of hospitality. This
may mean monitoring claims on the ability to cross (state or social) boundaries
with impunity.

Kant refers to this right in a 1784 footnote concerning the Jews. He notes
that we are bound by our sources in any argument concerning the historical
record for the nature of the state, for “outside it, everything else is terra incog-
nita; and the history of peoples outside it can only be begun when they come
into contact with it. This happened with the Jews in the time of the Ptolemies
through the translation of the Bible into Greek, without which we would give
little credence to their isolated narratives” (UH 118). The Jews are included in
Kant’s view, but only as a peripheral people, and even then only as mediated
through the Greeks.

For Kant, the question of the Jews is only partly a question of the meaning
of Judaism as a historical religion, for “Judaism is properly speaking not a re-
ligion at all.” Kant sees religion as available to the rational mind, with spec-
cific religions drawing on revelation for their internal coherence. Kant is not
anti-Jewish in terms of his attitude toward Judaism as a religious practice per
se; he sees Jews, like Christians and Muslims, as potentially having a rational
religion. But their self-imposed isolation, combined with their universal pres-
ence, disqualifies them as true cosmopolitan citizens. In his view, as Pauline
Kleingeld argues, “cosmopolitan egalitarianism trumps cultural pluralism,” at
least as far as religious practice is concerned.

When Kant, like Herder, looks at the Jews not as a religious practice but
as a force of capital, his view is radically different. In his Anthropology (1798),
Kant footnotes his view of the Jews and money:

The Palestinians living among us have, for the most part, earned a not
unfounded reputation for being cheaters, because of their spirit of usury
since their exile. Certainly, it seems strange to conceive of a nation of
cheaters; but it is just as odd to think of a nation of merchants, the great
majority of whom, bound by an ancient superstition that is recognized by
the State they live in, seek no civil dignity and try to make up for this loss
by the advantage of duping the people among whom they find refuge, and
even one another. The situation could not be otherwise, given a whole na-
tion of merchants, as non-productive members of society (for example, 
the Jews in Poland). So their constitution, which is sanctioned by ancient 
precepts and even by the people among whom they live (since we have 
certain sacred writings in common with them), cannot consistently be 
abolished—even though the supreme principle of their morality in trading 
with us is “Let the buyer beware.” I shall not engage in the futile undertak-
ing of lecturing to these people, in terms of morality, about cheating and 
 honesty. Instead, I shall present my conjectures about the origin of this 
peculiar constitution (the constitution, namely, of a nation of merchants).

Kant’s image of the Jew is the Jew in Poland, the Jew as the cosmopolitan 
nation of usurers spread throughout Europe. We could claim, as the Encyclo-
pédie does, that this is a mere prejudicial continuation of medieval attitudes 
toward the Jews and money, but the dichotomy between Kant’s understanding 
of cosmopolitanism and his more complex discussion of Judaism as a religious 
system is belied by his representation of the Jew as merchant. Capital is central 
to his differentiation.

Nonetheless, Kant’s notion of a rational religion held a strong appeal for 
the proponents of the Jewish Enlightenment, the Haskalah, who would argue 
from the 1790s onward for the universal core of Jewish religion. In so doing, 
these maskilim (followers of the Jewish Enlightenment) laid the foundation for 
the later perception of ancient Judaism itself as a forerunner of the cosmopoli-
tan, a perception that twentieth-century Jewish cosmopolitanist writers would 
 promote. Mendelssohn, the father of the Haskalah, had argued that rational and 
therefore transcendental truths, which may be a force for individual good, may 
come in conflict with the demands of citizenship. This is echoed in Jerusalem 
(1783), where he clearly distinguishes between the absolute obligations of the 
individual to the state and the persuasive power of religion on the individual: 
the state can order and punish, while religion should only educate and per-
suade. How this works out within the world of the mobile Jew in the real 
Prussian state is reflected in Mendelssohn’s short essay on “what is the best 
constitution for the state.” As in Jerusalem, he echoes John Locke and the cen-
tral notion of that a tolerant modern state can mandate some actions and punish 
those who violate these mandates, but the state cannot command individual 
conscience. The boundary between religion and the state is manifest, but the 
idea of religion is limited by the state’s obligations to respect the dictates of 
individual conscience that do not violate the mandates of the state. The cosmo-
politan thus is bound by the dictates of the local, not the universal, in terms of
the state; religion, however, allows the cosmopolitan to have access to religious belief that transcends the local.

In this context of the ideal state, Mendelssohn not only reflects Montesquieu’s notion that each state can be good for its own citizens as each reflects the needs and desires of the citizenry but simultaneously dismisses the idea of nomadism as compatible with an understanding of Enlightened culture. Mendelssohn dismisses the role of European Jews as “service nomads,” to use Yuri Slezkine’s transhistorical concept—that is, a group, like the Chinese in Southeast Asia, whose role was mainly the delivery of goods and services. Yet haunting Mendelssohn’s views is also the Enlightenment image of the stigmatized Gypsies, defined by their perceived impermanence in society and their perpetual mobility, adding nothing of value to civilization. Mendelssohn saw the Jews as rooted in the Enlightened, Greco-Roman (read: German) world of eighteenth-century intellectual culture, a location that assured individual happiness. “Should the Greeks and the Romans have not lived like the Bedouins?” he asks, answering, “NO! The progress to a higher bourgeois perfection was the intent of Divine providence that determined these human beings; that it was more appropriate for their happiness than that simple nomadic life, that for a few millennia had assured the happiness of the Bedouins.” Irrespective of the fall of the ancient world, it was inappropriate for them, for all kingdoms must eventually fall. Kant later observed the natural tension between a human desire for what comes to be called privacy and the fact that human beings “have an inclination to associate with one another because in such a condition they feel themselves more human, more in a position to develop their natural predispositions” (PP, 21). Mendelssohn sees the form of that association as reflected in the nature of the state. Not nomadic wanderings for the new European but rather the fixity of empire and city-state. Borders, not pastures; high urban culture, not the tents of wandering shepherds.

In what may be the first volley fired by modern racial antisemitism in Germany, Carl Wilhelm Friedrich Grattenauer, hiding behind a pseudonym, “the Voice of a Cosmopolitan,” published Against the Jews (1803), bringing together all of the earlier charges against these nomads from the Orient, “The Jew in general, the Jew everywhere and nowhere.” Grattenauer’s book is a riposte to Dohm’s 1781 On the Civil Improvement of the Jews, which demanded true reform within the Jewish community before emancipation but saw emancipation as the goal. Dohm implicitly accepted the local notion of a cosmopolitanism defined by the standards of European (read: Protestant) society, which became the benchmark for the integration of Jews into the Prussian body politic. He was opposed by the universal cosmopolitanism espoused by
diplomat and thinker Wilhelm von Humboldt, who argued for a universal model of the citizenry in which the Jews should be accepted as individuals, not as the idealized form of the Jew theorized by Protestant writers such as Lessing in his *Nathan the Wise* (1775).⁴¹ For Humboldt, Jews constituted a community of believers, analogous to the one of the Christians, not a national entity analogous to the Germans. Prussian minister Leopold Freiherr von Schrötter had made the same argument in his 1808 draft for a new constitution for the Jews in Prussia, which sought to transform Jews into “useful citizens” and to which Humboldt had been asked to respond.⁴² Enlightenment “tolerance” might suffer the Jews as a collective, but admitting Jews as individuals into a new idea of the nation-state demanded an acknowledgment and acceptance of individual differences.⁴³ “This is the voice, according to Grattenauer, of the true cosmopolitan, not that of Jewish mendicants and merchants such as Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing’s model Jew, “who extort their claims of their rights of citizens to inflict damaging interest on innocent Christians” (G, 2). They are not truly cosmopolitan; they are, according to Grattenauer—who defines himself as the true cosmopolitan—in the end merely Jews using this claim for their own pernicious ends.

**Writers in Coaches**

The assumptions about cosmopolitanism’s roots in the nation were reiterated in the late-eighteenth-century emergence of Romantic cosmopolitanism, which argued that Germans represented the cosmopolitan nation per se. As August Wilhelm Schlegel wrote in his 1804 *Vorlesungen über schöne Litteratur und Kunst* (Lectures on Belles Lettres and Art), “Universality, cosmopolitanism is of truly German nature”; consequently, the German language would soon become “the common means of communication among the educated nations.”⁴⁴ In a religious variant of this argument, Friedrich Novalis claimed in his 1799 *Christianity in Europe* that Germans would lead the restoration of European unity to the Christian commonwealth that had existed during the Middle Ages.⁴⁵ Over the nineteenth century, these ideas of a specifically German national and religious cosmopolitanist mission were transferred to the Jews in writings by both Jewish and non-Jewish authors. Acculturated German-speaking Jews in particular saw this special mission as yet another imagined point of convergence between German and Jewish culture.

But the idea of mobility as a means of representing the flexibility of Enlightenment attitudes toward the Jews as both cosmopolitans and newly
integrated citizens of the nation-state can be seen most clearly in the work of a minor yet engaging Jewish writer, Ephraim Moses Kuh (1731–90). A frequent guest in Mendelssohn’s home, Kuh was one of the first Jewish poets to write in German. He was one of the *maskilim* who also understood (as did their bourgeois non-Jewish contemporaries) that mobility implied a universal cosmopolitanism.

Mendelssohn equated Judaism with “natural religion” (that is, rational religion) and argued that Jewish ritual practice was merely another logical means of following the same rational path as Christianity and other religions. His disciple, David Friedländer, saw conversion to a rational form of Christianity (one that did not embrace the divinity of Christ) as a pathway for charging his readers to abandon the generalities about the Jews and their lack of decorum and the threats that such a lack implied to the society in which they lived. The “stronger,” he noted, had a duty “to extend an arm to the weaker” and “say ‘let us be friends.’” Indeed, stressing the corrupt nature of the manner by which Jews worshipped and acted only exacerbated hatred of the Jews.

Moses Ephraim Kuh was born in Breslau in 1731 to traditional Orthodox parents. His education followed a pattern common among the *maskilim*. Coming from a merchant family of some means, he was introduced to Western letters only after an intense Jewish education that, according to biographer Moses Hirschel, comprised “scholastic dogmatics, sophistic hypothesis, artificial subtleties, and other such nothings.” Such a traditional rabbinic education provided Kuh with an extremely good command of Hebrew and the Talmud. His teacher was, however, a disciple of the German Enlightenment who also introduced Kuh to German rationalist philosophy. Trained as a bookkeeper, Kuh was interested in foreign literature, especially British and French belles lettres. After much effort, he learned German, even though he felt that German lacked the elegance and grace of either French or English, a view shared by many others of his time, including Frederick the Great. Kuh went to Berlin in 1763, after the death of his father, ostensibly to assume the position of bookkeeper in his uncle’s gold and silver business. However, his primary reason for going to Berlin was to seek out the company of the new generation of German Enlightenment thinkers, among them Mendelssohn and Lessing. Under their tutelage, Kuh for the first time turned seriously to the pursuit of German letters. He mastered the highly artificial style of the mid-eighteenth century, with its elaborate rules for prosody patterned after an impression of classical poetry. His German quickly became polished under the direction of Karl Wilhelm Rainier, a friend of Lessing’s and Mendelssohn’s and editor of *The German Museum*, a periodical that printed Kuh’s early poetry. All the while Kuh was
spending his inheritance on “good works”—supporting Christian as well as Jewish students, giving money to almost anyone who asked for it—with a sense of generosity that sprang from his newly found position in the German Enlightened community.

In 1768 Kuh left Berlin and undertook the classic European voyage to Italy. He toured the Netherlands, France, Italy, Switzerland, and the German states in the manner of any Enlightened traveler of the late eighteenth century. Accompanying him on this long and arduous trip were three huge trunks full of books, the treasures of British, French, German, and Latin letters. On his return to Berlin in 1771, an incident completely altered his life. Jewish merchants were forced to pay a duty when they crossed any of the innumerable borders between the petty German states. But when Kuh crossed the border into Saxony, he refused to acknowledge his identity. As one of Kuh’s contemporaries described a decade later, he “dared to travel . . . as a simple human being and merchant without admitting to the customs officials his faith. He was discovered and had to pay duty, not on goods, but on the oldest faith in the world, a duty amounting to several thousand dollars.”

When Kuh reached the border at Sachsen-Gotha, his coach was again stopped by customs authorities. They asked whether anyone had anything to declare, and Kuh did not answer. They then asked whether any passengers were Jews. Again Kuh did not answer. After asking some more questions, the guards identified Kuh as a Jew, although he was dressed as a gentleman, much as Lessing’s Traveler must have been dressed. How could the guards have known that Kuh was a Jew? It must have been through his accent. As a native Yiddish speaker who learned German fairly late in life, he probably spoke with a Yiddish accent. Language was the key to Kuh’s unmasking as a counterfeit, as a Jew in intellectual’s dress. Stripped of his money and his clothes, Kuh was forced to fall back on his non-Enlightened Orthodox family in Breslau. In one of the very few biographical poems written during the resulting madness, Kuh recapitulates his experience at the border:

**The Customs Official in E. and the Traveling Jew**

**Official:** Hey you, Jew, you have to pay three dollars.

**Jew:** Three dollars? So much money? Why, sir?

**Official:** You ask me? Because you’re a Jew.

If you were a Turk, a heathen, an atheist,

We wouldn’t want anything from you.
But as a Jew we must collect from you.

**Jew:** Here is the money! Does your Christ teach you this? (Kuh, 1:187)

The customs official’s tone—he addresses the Jew in the familiar—is that of the state addressing the Jew. But the official’s harsh tone clearly represents a response to the Jew having identified himself as a Jew. Kuh’s refusal to identify himself resulted in the confiscation of all his money and goods. The poem replays the situation, but rather than undergoing the humiliation of being revealed to be a Jew and being forced to turn to his family for aid, the Jew in Kuh’s poem wins the confrontation. Unlike Martial’s open-ended epigrams, this one concludes with the lesson the writer needs to have his readers draw from his text. True Christians do not—cannot—act like the customs official, like the state. But, of course, they do, and their brutality exceeds that of the situation portrayed by Kuh.

After returning, impoverished, to his family in Breslau, Kuh began to write compulsively, poem after poem. His depression concerning his state, a depression that his contemporaries described with the fashionable eighteenth-century term *melancholia*, turned to mania. Kuh’s madness, which his contemporaries saw as the result of “his thankless treatment by mankind,” turned into a sense of being persecuted by the traditional Orthodox community in Breslau. He saw in his poetry, in his ironic comments, the reason for their hatred of him. Calling on his rights as a citizen of Prussia, he began to attack the Breslau Jewish community for persecuting him.

The attacks on the Breslau Jewish community caused Christian missionaries to take a strong interest in Kuh, who appeared to be a perfect subject for conversion, and they launched an intense attempt to bring him into the Protestant fold. However, Kuh’s belief that the Breslau Jews were persecuting him did not induce him to desire conversion, and he rejected the Protestant advances. His shattering experience at the Saxon border had revealed to him the limitations of the Christian world. He wrote another epigram aimed at the conversion of Elector August II of Saxony to Catholicism to obtain the Kingdom of Poland-Lithuania in 1697. This poem mirrors Henri IV’s 1593 statement that “Paris was worth a mass” when he converted to Catholicism:

*The Polish Jew, Who Became a Christian*

A great noble, who is not threatened by anything
Denies his religion
To aspire to a new title, a new throne:
And I—lacking roof and bread—
You mock with bitter laughter. (Kuh, 1:157)

He withdrew as much as possible from any contact with human beings, becoming phobic when approached by anyone. The form of his phobia was not unexpected. He saw all strangers as religious fanatics out to rob him of his freedom of conscience or, indeed, to murder him. Under close supervision by hired nurses, he saw them as members of this same conspiracy. He began to fixate on the danger that he felt from members of the Prussian garrison in Breslau, seeing in this uniformed authority a force that intended him bodily harm. This force was personified in the Prussian monarch, Frederick the Great, who stated in 1740 concerning Huguenot and Catholic toleration, that “in my kingdom everyone can be blest, according to their fashion.” The state was Frederick II, and Frederick II was toleration epitomized—except, of course, when Johann Georg Sulzer wanted to have Mendelssohn join the philosophical department at the Prussian Academy of Sciences in 1771. That effort took equality too far.

The notion of physical movement as an index for social movement is revolutionary within the German Enlightenment. Friedrich Schiller’s 1782 drama, The Robbers, certainly presents the conflict between the Moor brothers, the good economic revolutionary and the conservative advocate of the status quo, around Karl Moor’s new occupation as a robber. He, unlike Lessing’s highwaymen, is a noble thief, as one of his confederates recounts:

RAZMANN: The other day we were told at a tavern that a rich count from Ratisbon was about to pass through, who had gained the day in a suit worth a million of money by the craftiness of his lawyer. The captain was just sitting down to a game of backgammon. “How many of us are there?” said he to me, rising in haste. I saw him bite his nether lip, which he never does except when he is very determined. “Not more than five,” I replied. “That’s enough,” he said; threw his score on the table, left the wine he had ordered untouched, and off we went. The whole time he did not utter a syllable, but walked aloof and alone, only asking us from time to time whether we heard anything, and now and then desiring us to lay our ears to the ground. At last the count came in sight, his carriage heavily laden, the lawyer, seated by his side, an outrider in advance, and two horsemen riding behind. Then you should have seen the man. With a pistol in each hand he ran before us to the
carriage,—and the voice with which he thundered, “Halt!” The coachman, who would not halt, was soon toppled from his box; the count fired out of the carriage and missed—the horseman fled. “Your money, rascal!” cried Moor, with his stentorian voice. The count lay like a bullock under the axe: “And are you the rogue who turns justice into a venal prostitute?” The lawyer shook till his teeth chattered again; and a dagger soon stuck in his body, like a stake in a vineyard. “I have done my part,” cried the captain, turning proudly away; “the plunder is your affair.” And with this he vanished into the forest.51

But for Schiller, the role of the robber is not unblemished. Lessing’s robbers were simply peasants turned villains; Schiller’s seem to be revolutionaries manqué. Yet the social mobility of the newly cosmopolitan Jews makes the calling of the revolutionary suspect. Moritz Spiegelberg, the hidden Jew as bandit, seduces and corrupts. That he is a Jew is clear. Schiller shows Spiegelberg’s duplicity by having Spiegelberg deny his Jewish identity—exactly what the nomadic Jew does. The character refers to himself as having been “miraculously born circumcised” yet advocates circumcision for all others.52 His denial of the religious origin of his circumcision is a comment on the nature of the Jew, seen, at least by Schiller, as mendacious.53 He claims that all of the robbers should become Jews and therefore become truly cosmopolitan:

SPIEGELBERG. (jumping up). Bravo! Bravissimo! you are coming to the right key now. I have something for your ear, Moor, which has long been on my mind, and you are the very man for it—drink, brother, drink! What if we turned Jews and brought the kingdom of Jerusalem again on the tapis? But tell me is it not a clever scheme? We send forth a manifesto to the four quarters of the world, and summon to Palestine all that do not eat Swineflesh. Then I prove by incontestable documents that Herod the Tetrarch was my direct ancestor, and so forth. There will be a victory, my fine fellow, when they return and are restored to their lands, and are able to rebuild Jerusalem. Then make a clean sweep of the Turks out of Asia while the iron is hot, hew cedars in Lebanon, build ships, and then the whole nation shall chaffer with old clothes and old lace throughout the world. Meanwhile—54

Schiller may have been a revolutionary in terms of the rising bourgeoisie, but his engagement with Jewish emancipation was limited, except perhaps on a literary level, as he admired Lessing’s Nathan the Wise as a drama.55 Here the
robber as nomad dominates the portrait of the Jew as mock revolutionary. Lessing’s Jerusalem in *Nathan the Wise*—the space where the Abrahamic religions can resolve conflicts—becomes Spiegelberg’s cosmopolitan Jerusalem.

Later in the nineteenth century, emancipated Jews became obsessed with Schiller’s life and work as the embodiment of revolutionary change; however, his view of the Jews here, at least in Spiegelberg, falls very much within the paradigm of the dangers of Jewish mobility. Karl Moor may be a noble Robin Hood, but Spiegelberg is clearly nomadic only in the most negative sense that he is a man of the world. This prefigures Humboldt’s claim in his comments on the 1808 draft for the inclusion of the Jews in a new state constitution that among the primary qualities that defined Jews were their “nomadic life often subordinate to foreign power,” their “religious practice, which often does not even rest of true belief,” and their “pattern of self-isolation.” These problems were to be ameliorated by their inclusion in the Prussian state not as a religious community but as individuals. Even Spiegelberg had a chance to become a valuable member of the Prussian state if he shed those qualities that had isolated him from the true body politic.

Spiegelberg is not the ideal of that most cosmopolitan of eighteenth-century poems, Schiller’s “On Joy” (“An die Freude”) written in 1785 and published in Schiller’s periodical *Thalia* the next year (and revised again in 1803 in the version best known to readers and listeners). Following Beethoven’s highly abridged setting emphasizing the early stress on universal brotherhood, this text becomes in the twentieth century the anthem for global cosmopolitanism.

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Joy, beautiful sparkle of the gods,
Daughter of Elysium,
We enter, fire-drunk,
Heavenly one, your shrine.
Your magics bind again
What custom has strictly parted.
[1785 version: What custom’s sword has parted.]
All men become brothers
[1785 version: Beggars become princes’ brothers.]
Where your tender wing lingers.
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Spiegelberg may have been one of the nomadic beggars who become princes’ brothers in *The Robbers*, but by 1803 he is replaced by the claim that “all men become brothers.” Schiller’s poetic cosmopolitanism was focused on the national and when it spoke of a universal meant only the idea of primus
inter pares. He may have espoused a pantheistic cosmopolitanism, but it had a religious veneer that defined who is among the equals, who gets to travel inside the carriage, who can cross borders.

Schiller’s anxiety about the meaning of cosmopolitanism and the Jews was not limited to his early drama and his rather crudely cosmopolitan Spiegelberg. In 1790, Schiller wrote an essay on the origins and nature of the Jews, “The Legation of Moses.” Martha Helfer has provided a close and detailed reading of this essay, which is important because Schiller placed it as the lead essay in *Thalia*.\textsuperscript{59} Schiller picks up two strands from the Enlightened discourses about Judaism: that it is a rational religion (and thus the basis of a rational Christian and Islam) and that it is thus the underlying causal structure for the Enlightenment itself. In spite of such claims, the Jews and the Enlightenment pose major problems for Schiller. The Jews are inherently corrupt as a consequence of their persecution (in Egyptian exile and then, by extension, in Christian Europe), and in contrast to the mid-eighteenth-century arguments of Enlightened thinkers such as Dohm, that corruption is irrevocable. They are “the coarsest, most malicious, most depraved people on earth, made savage by three hundred years of neglect, made despondent and embittered by slavish oppression, debased in their own eyes by an inherited infamy that clung to them, enervated and lamed to all heroic decisions, through such a long-standing dumbness finally case down almost to the level of the animal.”\textsuperscript{60} In addition, they are infected by leprosy, which mars their bodies as well as their souls and poses a danger to the people around them.

In Egyptian slavery, these Jews also maintained their essential nature, however. They “lived segregated from the Egyptians, segregated both in their choice of living quarters and in their nomadic status, which made them the abhorrence of the native inhabitants of the country and excluded them from all participation in the civil rights of the Egyptians” (S/H, 40). They become a nation within a nation (Schiller anticipates Fichte’s 1808 “Addresses to the German Nation”), for “such a segregated mass of people at the heart of the realm, made idle by its nomadic lifestyle, who kept themselves very precisely and had no common interest whatsoever with the state, could be dangerous in an enemy attack, and could easily be tempted to avail themselves of the state’s weakness” (S/H, 41). Moses, filled with a “bloody hatred” against the oppressors in Egypt, marks the Jewish soul, which he “carried with him into the Arabian desert. His mind was full of ideas and plans, his heart was full of bitterness, and nothing distracted him in this unpopulated desert” (S/H, 50). In the desert, then, the nomadic spirit of the Jews, their self-segregation, and Moses’s anger and bitterness coalesce into the character of modern Jewry.
This theme of the nomadic mobility of the Jews quickly became part of the Enlightenment representation of the Jew. *Poet and Merchant (Dichter und Kaufmann)* (1839), the second novel by Bertold Auerbach (1812–82), Germany’s first popular Jewish novelist, retells Kuh’s life story. (Auerbach had previously published essays on Kuh’s life and writing in 1836.) Set in the time of Mendelssohn (as indicated in the subtitle to the 1855 revision) among the Jews of Breslau, the novel opens with Jews gathered at an inn, having “wandered there begging from city to city, from village to village,” on foot. It was rare, Auerbach notes, that such Jews “were able to raise themselves out of this life of a gypsy [Zigeunerleben]” (A, 2). Persecution in the midst of civilized Europe has reduced them to the nomadic state of their ancestors in the “Arabian desert” (A, 3). Yet on the Sabbath, they entered into the community of Jews wherever they were. In a bow to Kantian cosmopolitanism, Auerbach writes that these wanderers “were called by the name ‘Guests’ which quickly took on a pejorative meaning” (A, 2). For Auerbach (A, 38) the Jews are the barometers of humanity—their treatment enables one to judge the nature of the state—friendship, toleration, and emancipation. Into this world comes Kuh, whose life as an artist is part of his family’s claim on bourgeois rather than nomadic identity, but his experiences in Enlightened Europe force him to return to Breslau in tatters. The notion of the wandering Jew discomfits Auerbach, for Jewish cosmopolitanism represents the absence of a grounded Judaism, a Judaism as a confession rather than as an ethnic or tribal identity. Wandering, not traveling by coach as a full member of society, remains anathema to Auerbach. As late as 1872, he despaired at the thought that large numbers of Romanian Jews would emigrate to America: “This very thought of a mass emigration evokes something gypsy-like among the Jews. . . . We are rooted where our parents and ancestors lie in their graves.” In this view, Jews were neither nomads nor cosmopolitans but members of a national cultural community.

Auerbach quotes from Kuh’s poetry throughout the novel, well before the character meets Lessing, who sees in Kuh the new Jewish poet. Kuh has exemplary adventures with Enlighteners of all strands—Lavater and Mendelssohn as well as the Jewish physician-playwright Elcan Isaac Wolf and the Jewish Kantian Salomon Maimon—as Auerbach places his character in the context of this new, rooted, German Jewry. Another wanderer, Venetian adventurer Giacomo Casanova, introduces Kuh to the Prussian Court disguised as an Italian count, but the mask is ripped from him and he is revealed as merely Rabbi Ephraim. Stripped of all his possessions, he returns to Breslau, and Auerbach labels him a new Werther, Goethe’s mad lover. Ritchie Robertson has noted that Kuh’s descent into madness may be Auerbach’s attempt to judge the im-
possibility of such integration in terms of the Enlightenment. From the standpoint of the early nineteenth century, however, the novel argues that the new cosmopolitan Jew is seen always as the nomadic Jew. Poet and Merchant may be a novel of modernization and therefore not of integration, as Jonathan Skolnik argues, but the litmus test for modernization is whether the nomadic can be transformed into the cosmopolitan. Auerbach’s character returns in much the same state as the begging Jews who open the novel, and his decline into madness is the price paid for his cosmopolitanism as poet and traveler. Michael A. Meyer’s claim that the Enlightenment caused Jewish identity to become “segmental and therefore problematic” is at least supported by Auerbach’s reflections in the 1830s.

Some newly emancipated (and culturally active) Jews may have interpreted the new nationalism as incorporating this viewpoint because the older idea of the nation espoused by Herder and others seems to be strangely mired in an agrarian—indeed, prelapsarian—utopia. This older conception is distinct from the rootless nomadic existence represented by the Jews but is also the antithesis of the modern city, which the Jews equally come to signify. The Enlightenment viewed the new eighteenth-century mega-metropolis—London, Paris, Vienna, Frankfurt, Milan—with particular horror. The modern metropolis is the haunt of the Jews in the form of the Rothschilds, the avatars of capitalism, and contemporaries came to see the Rothschilds as both nomads and city dwellers. Thus, the limits of cosmopolitanist benevolence are quickly reached, as when Friedrich von Müller recounted his September 23, 1823, exchange with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe concerning the recent law that permitted marriage between Jews and Germans: Goethe became “violently enraged,” prophesying the “worst and most frightful consequences,” particularly the “undermining of all moral feelings of families that rest in religious feelings.” He sought to prevent such marriages from enabling a Jewess to become Oberhofmeisterin in his court. Goethe stated that “those abroad must believe in bribery to understand the passage of this law; who knows whether the all-powerful Rothschild is responsible for it.” In the end, all corruption flows from the cities and has its roots in capital. The implicit cosmopolitan who crosses borders here is the Jew who violates the taboo of sexual contact and social boundaries.

In imagining his ideal society, Goethe reifies the modern city-state in complicated ways, removing from it such things as intermarriage. While Goethe would come to represent the cosmopolitan for nineteenth-century Europe, he is much more focused on the particularist local than on the global. Today, of course, we remember primarily Goethe’s universalism and his claims about
world literature (Weltliteratur). Although Jewish writers later claimed Goethe as their hero, Goethe’s idea of a cosmopolitan art and indeed a world literature made no specific reference to the Jews. In 1801, for example, he wrote,

> It is to be hoped that people will soon be convinced that there is no such thing as patriotic art or patriotic science. Both belong, like all good things, to the whole world, and can be fostered only by untrammeled intercourse among all contemporaries, continually bearing in mind what we have inherited from the past.\(^{68}\)

In other words, society is defined not by adventurous expansionism but rather by the space of the garden. “Hier oder nirgend ist Amerika!,” Goethe had written in *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* (1795–96): “I will return, and in my own house, my own orchard, in the midst of my own people, I will say: ‘Here or nowhere is America.’”\(^{69}\) The orchard metaphor also appears in Goethe’s reading of the “Decalogue in His Two Important yet Unasked Biblical Questions” (1773), where he calls the Jews a “a wild, unfruitful stock that stood in a circle of wild, unfruitful trees”\(^{70}\) Likewise, in his paean to the emigrants driven from revolutionary France, *Hermann und Dorothea* (1796–97), he uses similar imagery in his description of the cosmopolitan, *Der Weltbürger*:

> Ne’er would I censure the man whom a restless activity urges,  
> Bold and industrious, over all pathways of land and of ocean,  
> Ever untiring to roam; who takes delight in the riches,  
> Heaping in generous abundance about himself and his children.  
> Yet not unprized by me is the quiet citizen also,  
> Making the noiseless round of his own inherited acres.\(^{71}\)

Such views of the ideal state, with the German rooted, as always, in an agrarian, precapitalist society, dominate the conservative view of the nation. Indeed in *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, the mysterious Society of the Tower that silently but powerfully shapes Wilhelm’s education comes to replace the romantic world of the blind and mad harper, Augustin, and his daughter, Mignon. The harper, a nomad whom people might even think to be Jewish, is marginalized; the members of the Tower Society give expression to some explicitly antisemitic sentiments and are the new wanderers, investing in America and Russia, never staying in one place.\(^{72}\) Rootedness is the antithesis of those “untiring to roam,” but in Goethe’s sense, the modern Jew, whom he time and again defines as the transgressive wandering merchant, is also not a
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real cosmopolitan. He is merely a usurer, unlike the wandering members of the Society of the Tower, who are not motivated economic concerns.

Traveling in a coach certainly seems a natural place for the converted though still very Jewish poet Heinrich Heine, at least when he wrote Germany: A Winter’s Tale (1844) in Paris about returning home to Hamburg in 1843. Heine had positioned himself carefully against the German nationalism of Friedrich “Turnvater” (Father of Gymnastics) Jahn. In 1810, Jahn had declared that “a nation without a state is a dead, floating chimera like the nomadic Gypsies and Jews. A state and Volk together create a Reich, but the power of the Volksthum preserves it.” Nomads cannot have any sense of national identity; they are zombies because “they have died and yet are not dead, they continue in this corpse life like a madman’s horrific double,” damned to eternal wandering. In The Romantic School (1833), Heine bemoans such abandonment of what he considers the German contribution to the Enlightenment, “that universal brotherhood of man, that cosmopolitanism which our greatest thinkers—Lessing, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, Jean Paul—and all German scholars have always revered,” simultaneously evoking the antisemitism of such German nationalists as Jahn and Fichte.

In exile in France since 1839, when his works were banned in the German-speaking states, Heine’s ironic voice in Germany: A Winter’s Tale is that of the German poet returning to the land of his birth to be healed:

The German heart within my breast
Is suddenly ailing;
There’s but one doctor, in the North,
Who’ll cure it without failing.

His cures are famous, his cures are fast,
They are world-wide renowned;
Yet, I confess, I already dread
The mixtures he will compound.

Heine’s disease is the classic illness cured by travel home in the nineteenth century, the disease of Swiss soldiers abroad first described in the late seventeenth century by Johannes Hofer—homesickness. By the time of Heine and the German Romantics, especially Jean Paul in Selina (1819), homesickness has become a metaphor for creativity. Travel away from home causes it; travel home cures it—even travel back to Germany.

If Heine’s identity, to again evoke Meyer, is segmental and therefore prob-
lematic, his voice is neither. He writes in this and other texts of the 1840s as a German-language poet resident in France, a model for the European cosmopolitan since the days of Rousseau’s friend, Friedrich Melchior, Baron von Grimm. Yet the disease from which he suffers is not purely a German one. Heine’s ironic tone speaks elsewhere of a disease carried not by Germans distant from their homes but by cosmopolitan Jews, even in Germany, when they travel. In his 1842 poem on the founding of the Hamburg Jewish hospital, “Das neue israelitische Hospital zu Hamburg,” Heine channeled Schiller’s view of nomadic Jews and disease:

A hospital for the poor and weary Jew,
For sons of man that suffer three-fold ills;
Burdened and band with three infirmities;
With poverty, disease, and Judaism!
The worst of all has ever been the last,
The Jewish sickness of the centuries,
The plague caught in the Nile stream’s slimy vale,
The old unwholesome faith that Egypt knew.\(^{77}\)

The anticosmopolitan disease of the German is nostalgia for a specific rooted space; for the Jew, the nomadic wanderer, travel is marked by the disease, religion, brought from the Middle East.

But in 1844, as Heine parodies the nostalgic German longing for his Heimat, he quickly reaches a border, like Kuh, but for Heine it is the Rhine boundary of the new German Customs Union. As early as 1828, Heine had written about the border between France and the German states in Jewish terms: “Paris is the new Jerusalem and the Rhine is the Jordan, that separates the promised land of freedom, from the lands of the Philistines.”\(^{78}\) He is stopped and searched at that border between civilization and the Philistines (in the sense that Matthew Arnold later adapts the usage), not as a Jew but as a potential revolutionary:

The Prussian customs searched my trunk,
Looking for hidden treasures.

They sniffed everything, rummaged through
Shirts, pants and handkerchiefs, for hidden
Needle-point lace or for gems,
And for books that were forbidden.
You fools that search inside my trunk!
There’s nothing for you to find:
The contraband that travels with me,
Is hidden in my mind.

Here the travelling cosmopolitan is not humiliated by being revealed as Jew, for his contraband is his poetic and therefore most dangerous gift. He concludes the poem with a restatement of the dangerousness not of the Jewish cosmopolitan but of the cosmopolitan poet’s calling:

Have you ever heard of Dante’s hell,
With its frightful verses and rhyme?
Whoever the poet imprisons there,
No God can ever free on time.

No God, no Saviour can deliver him
From those flames that burn.
Beware! O king and better behave,
For soon may well be your turn!

Heine sarcastically comments that the Customs Union also demands a unity of German spirit and thought, quite different from his own self-conscious sense of a fragmentary German and Jewish and cosmopolitan sensibility. Such is Theodor Adorno’s reading of “Heine’s Wound,” where Heine represents the damaged sensibility of those “today, after the destiny that Heine felt has actually been fulfilled, everyone has at the same time become homeless; everyone is, in their being and language, just as damaged as the outcast was. His word is representative of theirs: there is no other homeland than a world in which nobody else would be cast off, that of a truly liberated humanity.” Yet Heine’s response to his world is hardly the sort of reaction that we see in Kuh or indeed in Auerbach’s retelling of Kuh’s life. Rather, Heine’s response constitutes an acknowledgment that the neutral claims of cosmopolitanism were always rooted in the parallel claims of national identity.

The metaphor of the cosmopolitan poet has him traveling outside on a coach beyond the border through the German states. Despite the dirty, uncomfortable, and unpleasant journey, the traveler is buoyed by the fresh air of the “fatherland”:

The fare from Cologne to Hagen costs
Five Prussian thalers six groschen.
As the coach was full, I had to use
The trailer that was open.

The coach-wheels ploughed in mud,
In a late autumn morning dark and grey;
A sense of well-being pulsed through me,
Despite the bad weather and the way.

It is the air of home again,
That my glowing cheek could feel!
Even the filth on the country-roads
Carried my fatherland’s appeal!

The fatherland is reached through the coach, and the further the poet travels, the less he suffers from homesickness. Riding on the outside of the coach, he appears merely to be a traveler, like all of the others. His Germanness reflects his sense that his national identity is but one more form of camouflage that enables the cosmopolitan to move invisibly across borders. But his goal is Hamburg and his very Jewish mother:

And when I reached my mother’s place,
She trembled with an immense joy;
She clapped her hands and cried:
“My sweet and darling boy!

Thirteen years must have elapsed,
Since I last saw you, my sweet!
Surely, you must be starving,
Just say, what would you like to eat?

I’ve got some fish and some goose,
And lovely oranges after that.”
Then give me some fish and some goose,
And lovely oranges after that.

For Heine, the movement across borders is a question of taste—in every sense of the word, from that of food to that of politics.80

“My dear child! What are your views now?
Is your addiction still strong
For political matters?
To which party do you belong?"

The oranges, dear little mother,
Are good; I swallowed their sweet juice
With true delight. On the other hand,
For their peel, I have no use.

The cure for homesickness is ironic distance from the role of the dutiful son. Heine’s Jewishness, unstated but omnipresent in the poem, makes the metaphor of travel even more ironic. In retrospect, the fact that Heine is confined to his “mattress grave” in his Paris apartment after 1849 makes the link between disease, travel, and identity even more telling.

Heine’s ironic cosmopolitanism rooted in the very fragmented nature of a Jewish identity in the diasporic Enlightenment is very much paralleled by that of Karl Marx in the early 1840s. Heine’s long if not epic poem was published in installments first in Vorwärts!, a radical periodical funded by Franco-Jewish composer Giacomo Meyerbeer to which Marx and many other German radicals in Paris, among them Friedrich Engels and Georg Weerth, contributed. According to Eleanor Courtemanche, Marx was in a dialogue with Heine in 1843–44 regarding the nature of true cosmopolitanism, which she calls “economic cosmopolitanism.” Courtemanche notes that “Marx’s ‘Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law’ argues that Germany must accomplish a difficult backward somersault (“salto mortale”) over the dialectical boundary of the Rhine to transcend the impasses of French politics and British industrialism” (Co 58). For her, “both Heine and Marx transformed their critique of Prussian autocracy into a more generalized cosmopolitan radicalism, though Heine’s aestheticism is sometimes confounding to Marxist critics” (Co 58). In the end, “Marx’s engagement with the German tradition of Nationalökonomie is complex: while he critiques the Prussian nationalist use of free trade theories, the internationalism of his economic vision brings him closer to the British classical tradition of Smith and Ricardo than to German romantic protectionists like Friedrich List” (Co 58).

Courtemanche mentions but does not highlight the fact that for Marx, baptized as a child in Trier, did not see such an economic cosmopolitanism in a neutral manner any more than Heine did. If the word Jew does not appear in Heine’s nostalgic trip back home (even though its echoes are present throughout the text), Marx’s works of the time focus clearly “On the Jewish Question,” written in 1843 and published in 1844 in the forerunner to Vorwärts!, the German-French Yearbooks (Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher). In October
1843 Marx had moved to Paris, thus associating himself with Heine and the other Jewish liberals who lived there and wrote in German. Contemporaries—both allies such as the coeditor of the *German-French Yearbook*, Arnold Ruge, and ideological opponents such as Eduard Müller-Tellering—saw Marx’s writings as the product of a Jew. Marx was linked in the popular mind with other “Jewish” radical writers such as Moses Hess, who advocated an eclectic anarchosocialism that interested the young Marx. Indeed, Marx evidently used an unpublished essay by Hess in formulating his answer to theologian and historian Bruno Bauer’s 1843 book, *On the Jewish Question*. Bauer had argued that the Jews had to abandon their sectarianism to become truly emancipated in the modern secular state. The strength of the association between Bauer and Hess, between the idea of the Jew and the radical, is evident not only in Hess’s unpublished paper but also in Marx’s essay “On the Jewish Question,” which constitutes his first attempt to deal with materialist categories of history and to counter the idea of the cosmopolitan Jew as a model for the new world citizen.

Hess later explicitly rejected the idea of a Jewish cosmopolitanism in his *Rome and Jerusalem: The Last National Question* (1862). There, he advocates for a Jewish national state using his early engagement with Marx’s concept of the Jew as a psychological category and rejecting an economic cosmopolitanism that is not tied to a Jewish national identity, even to the exclusion of emancipation: “Even the rationalistic Mendelssohn did not know of a cosmopolitan Judaism. It is only in modern times that, for the purposes of obtaining equal rights, some German Jews denied the existence of Jewish nationality. Moreover, they have convinced themselves, contrary to the fact that the further existence of Judaism will not be at all threatened by the elimination of its innermost essence.”

While in the 1840s Hess’s views were much less articulated in regard to a Jewish national identity, he and Marx had already clearly rejected the idea of the cosmopolitan Jew.

Marx’s “On the Jewish Question” can be read in this complex matrix of striving to provide an understanding of the Jews and their world within the highly esoteric world of his sojourn in Paris. “On the Jewish Question” rejects the abstractions in which Bauer clothed his argument but accepts much of the basic structure of that argument. Marx agrees with Bauer’s characterization of the nature of the Jew and of the Jews’ lack of a place in the historical process and with his rejection of Jewish particularism. But most important, Marx accepts Bauer’s view of Judaism as a cult of egoism. Marx reflects Ludwig Feuerbach’s heightening of Kant’s refusal to see Judaism as a religion. In 1841, Feuerbach labeled Judaism a gastronomic cult, since Jews perceive the world through their stomachs. Indeed, when Heine evokes
his mother’s kitchen, he is turning such claims into a claim for a nostalgic Jewish past (and repast). Marx offers his own reading of the nature of the Jew based on Bauer and Feuerbach.

As Jonathan Sperber has noted in his superb biography of Marx, “During the mid-nineteenth-century debate on Jewish emancipation, their theological position was politicized. It was used to condemn Jewish economic practices as self-interested, immoral, and exploitative, and to assert that individuals tied to a self-centered and particularist faith could not act as citizens of a wider polity, along with people not sharing their religion.” Indeed, that had been the theme of Bauer’s essay, which depicted Judaism as “particularist and self-centered.”

For Marx, modernity reflects the “secular cult of the Jew” that articulates their egoism. True emancipation for “our age” would be the “emancipation from haggling and money.” Western society has already become Judaized in that it has accepted the role of money as the basis for social order. Thus, the Jews have emancipated themselves in turning society into a cult of money. “The god of the Jews has been secularized and has become the god of the world. Exchange is the actual god of the Jew. His god is only the illusion of exchange” (M, 68). This illusion is the Jew’s answer to the creativity of the non-Jewish, Western world:

What lies abstract in the Jewish religion, a contempt for theory, art, history, man as an end in himself, is the actual, conscious standpoint, the virtue of the money man. The species relationship, the relationship of man to woman, etc. becomes an object of commerce! Woman is bartered. (M, 68)

Marx bases his argument on the difference between economic and civil emancipation within the modern (German Christian) state. He concludes by seeing that state not as German Christian but as Jewish. And the Jewishness of that state is manifested in the language (“haggling”), the aesthetics (“contempt for theory, art, history”), and the sexualized nature of the Jew (“Woman is bartered”). Marx sees his own life—his recent marriage to his noble Protestant wife; his writing, especially this essay; and his poetic creations—as the antithesis of this image of the Jew. He sees himself not as a bookkeeper but as a creator of books. And he sees himself as the antithesis of the money Jew: in the “practical Jewish spirit, Judaism or commerce,” the this-worldliness of the Jew is manifest. Marx’s economic determinism begins, then, with the pun inherent in the German use of the concept Jew, a term that by analogy had come to mean commerce in the vilest and basest sense.
For Marx, this is the transformation of the settled world of the European Protestant into the wandering world of the cosmopolitan Jew. If Goethe admonishes his reader that “America must be HERE (In Europe) or nowhere,” Marx sees the New World as a model for mobility and transformation. He quotes Thomas Hamilton’s *Men and Manners in America* (1833) regarding the nature of economics in the new United States:

The devout and politically free inhabitant of New England is a sort of *Laocoön* who makes not the least effort to escape from the snakes that enlace him. *Mammon* is his idol, they adore him not with their lips alone but with all of the strength of their body and soul. In their eyes the world is nothing but a Stock Exchange and they are convinced that here on earth their only vocation is to become richer than other men. The market has conquered all their other thoughts, and their one relaxation consists of bartering objects. When they travel they carry, so to speak, their wares or their display counter about with them on their backs and talk of nothing but interest and profit. If they lost sight for a moment of their own business, this is merely so that they can pry into someone else’s. (M, 66)

The new American has become the wandering Jew, at least as a metaphor. According to Marx,

This is no isolated fact. The Jew has emancipated himself in a Jewish manner, not only because he has acquired financial power, but also because, through him and also apart from him, *money* has become a world power and the practical Jewish spirit has become the practical spirit of the Christian nations. The Jews have emancipated themselves insofar as the Christians have become Jews. (M, 66)

This is the cosmopolitanism of capitalism. It is the world of the *Hofffaktor* now read as the model for all modern states and actors. And on this point, Marx quotes Bruno Bauer, whom he otherwise rebuts:

The Jew, who in Vienna, for example, is only tolerated, determines the fate of the whole Empire by his financial power. The Jew, who may have no rights in the smallest German state, decides the fate of Europe. While corporations and guilds refuse to admit Jews, or have not yet adopted a favorable attitude towards them, the audacity of industry mocks at the obstinacy of the material institutions. (M, 66)
Jewish cosmopolitanism is destructive because it is the spirit of capital. Marx adds a further implication to the idea of Jewishness. “On the Jewish Question” responds to an essay that posits the rhetoric of the Jew as immutable until converted into Christianity; Marx, however, sees all of Christianity as already converted into the basest nature of the Jews. But he also sees Bauer’s argument as reflecting the type of attack lodged against the writings of Jews or those labeled as Jews. The Enlightenment rejection of religion as a litmus test for citizenship or, indeed, for national identity has been reversed:

Man emancipates himself *politically* from religion by banishing it from the sphere of public law to that of private law. Religion is no longer the spirit of the state, in which man behaves—although in a limited way, in a particular form, and in a particular sphere—as a species-being, in community with other men. Religion has become the spirit of *civil society*, of the sphere of egoism, of *bellum omnium contra omnes*. It is no longer the essence of *community*, but the essence of *difference*. (M, 54)

Marx adapts Bauer’s rhetoric to criticize that world with which, by implication, Bauer has associated Marx—the world of Jewish cosmopolitanism. For Marx, the Jew is that internal cosmopolitan who turns all into the search for profit.

Over the first half of the nineteenth century, the nomadic state of the Jews, past and present, set them apart from the universalist Enlightenment idea of the cosmopolitan. The rootless state of the nomadic Jews, which is seen as originating in their biblical wanderings through the desert, renders them essentially different from the rooted cosmopolitanism of Christian Enlightenment thought. Thus, like Goethe, Bismarck opposed intermarriage with Jews in the 1847 *Landtag* debate on civic emancipation although in 1869 he advocated for virtually full emancipation. His reason was clear at both moments. Jews had “no real home, . . . they are generally European, cosmopolitan, nomads. [But] there are good honest people among them.” Most writers see the Jews’ rootless nomadism as the source of their mental and spiritual corruption in modernity or at least as marking their character is ways different that others in the Enlightened world of the nineteenth century.

**Jews Writing Their Own Cosmopolitanism**

J. G. Herder’s *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1784–91) had provided a rather standard Enlightened Protestant theological reading of the
Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh*) that presented the Jews as a nomadic people. Whether or not this account was ever historically true, the texts assembled into what Christians called the Old Testament are clearly the product of city-states. Whether or not the Jews were just one of “many little wandering hordes” (H, 51), as Herder describes them, the Old Testament, at least in Genesis, represents a nostalgia for a simpler time and space that came to be defined in the Enlightenment as “nomadic.” Herder lists all of the innovations of these nomads, including the invention of “trade by weight and measure”—capitalism (H, 52). Herder sees the Jews as one of the “cultures” of the ancient world, but the Jewish *Volksggeist* that defined the rise of protocapitalism. Given that Herder probably coined the term *nationalism* (*Nationalismus*), Jewish cosmopolitanism came to define its antithesis.

In Herder’s *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* (1782–83), the Jews’ cultural corruption began with their diasporic dispersion. Whereas ancient Hebrew had matched the sublimity of Arabic, rabbinical Hebrew began to distort “the genius of [Hebrew’s] original structure” as “this unfortunate people was dispersed throughout the world” (SHP, 163). In contrast, Herder argues, biblical Jews had in their previous nomadic state in the Holy Land produced an authentic and sublime culture tied to their own land, which they roamed. The pure spirit of biblical poetry reflects the close relationship with nature resulting from this genuine nomadism and even prefigures the modern Enlightenment: “The poetry of the Hebrews belongs under the open sky and, if possible, in the light of the early dawn. . . . Because this poetry was itself the dawn of the enlightenment of the world” (SHP, 172).

In *Letters Concerning the Study of Theology* (1819), Herder went even further, arguing that the incomplete history of the Jews was the stuff of universal poetry and that it anticipated the future history of humanity at large. The analogy here between Jews and Germans—both of them peoples without a nation-state in the age of nationalism—is implicit. The history of the Jewish teachings, which then found their universal mouthpiece in Christianity, represents “the most encompassing plan for all *humanity* and certainly *that which develops our whole, earthly labyrinth.*”

Although the Jews no longer figured in Goethe’s concept of world literature, Jewish writers from the mid-nineteenth century onward increasingly invoke the notion of world literature to argue for the universal nature of Jewish literature. In this viewpoint, a truly cosmopolitan Jewish culture emerged in the diaspora, particularly Islamic Spain, when the Jews encountered European culture. Once estranged from its “original soil” of Asia, Michael Sachs argues, Judaism was forced to adapt to a new course that brought it into contact with
new cultures and forms of knowledge. This tendency had been present even during antiquity, for “Judaism as a divine institution . . . has been an open eye to the world at all times.” Yet this cosmopolitan spirit came to full fruition only in the medieval Spanish diaspora, with its “rich cultural life,” which finally “severed European Jews’ connection with Asia.”

Leopold Zunz’s Zur Geschichte und Literatur (On History and Literature), also published in 1845, develops a full-fledged argument for Jewish literature as world literature. Rooted in antiquity and at the same time closely aligned with Christianity and the medieval sciences, Jewish literature is both universal and particular: indeed,

it is supplementary to general literature. Its peculiar features, themselves falling under universal laws, are in turn helpful in the interpretation of general characteristics. . . . If the aggregate results of mankind’s intellectual activity can be likened unto a sea, Jewish literature is one of the tributaries that feed it.

The Christian diaspora, however, had caused Jewish culture to remain stagnant and even regress. Unlike Islamic Spain, which was culturally and linguistically connected to the scientifically advanced Islamic world, Christian countries lacked a common lingua franca, and so did the Jews in these countries. Furthermore, Christian cultures of the time were far inferior to the Jews’, for “the literature of each nation hardly yet deserved to be called such, and their lesser developed cultures were no match for their congenital Jewish counterpart.” Medieval Spain, in contrast, enhanced both the particular and the universal nature of Jewish culture. Here, Jews became once again a national entity and had a common language, Arabic, that again mediated between them and the world.

In Judaism and Its History (1865), Abraham Geiger similarly stresses the universal potential of ancient Judaism’s ability to “behold the innermost nature of Human Morality,” which he assumed to be universal. Ancient Greece had proved itself “the most talented nation of Antiquity, which was distinguished by noble culture and exercised the most profound influence upon the development of the whole human race” (JH, 23). The Jews, in their encounter with Greek culture and language, had adopted many of its traits without abandoning their religion. By being open to new influences while maintaining their particular practices, the Jews once again emerge as mediators between cultures. In the third volume of this work, Geiger even claims that the cosmopolitan spirit represented the essence of ancient Judaism. In contrast to other ancient peo-
ple, which had seen themselves as “the perfect embodiment of humanity” (JG, 2), Judaism, despite maintaining its ethnic particularity, had continually “striven beyond the nation” (JG, 3) and “toward entire humanity” (JG, 4).100

Taking this idea even further, Moritz Steinschneider claims that the cosmopolitan core of Jewish tradition persisted from biblical times through modernity in his 1872 *Ueber die Volksliteratur der Juden* (On Jewish Popular Literature). Like Geiger, Steinschneider argues that the consistent trait of Jewish culture lies in the Jews’ role as mediators and translators of the other cultures with which they come into contact:

The Jews, however, had long since become polyglots even before their Bible was published as a polyglot, that is, in many languages . . . , and since that time Jews never stopped being their own translators and that of other nations.101

Once in exile, Steinschneider argues, the Jews compensated for their exclusion and seclusion from and in life through lively literary exchanges, which nourished in them the seed of the cosmopolitanism that the prophet’s universal promise had planted in the Jewish awareness.102

This cosmopolitan potential, literary scholar Gustav Karpeles argues in his 1886 *Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur* (History of Jewish Literature), reached fruition in Islamic Spain. Jewish literature had already evinced its universal nature in the ancient homeland, for “the cradle of human culture is also the cradle of Jewish literature.”103 Through medieval Jewish writers such as Yehuda ibn Gabirol, Yehuda Halevi, and Moses Maimonides, Islamic Spain had produced “all greatness and beauty . . . in world poetry” (GJL, 447). This account reflects the special status attributed in the circles of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Studies of Jewry) to medieval Spanish Jewish culture as the locus of Jewish cultural authenticity in the diaspora. Like others writing in this vein, Karpeles sees the great cultural and scientific achievements of the medieval Spanish Jews coming to fruition in the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. After centuries of Jewish cultural destitution in the German-speaking lands, he claims, the rise of *Wissenschaft* has led to the cosmopolitan renewal of German-Jewish literature as one stream leading “into the vast sea of world literature” (GJL, 429).

For most nineteenth-century Christian writers, however, ancient Judaism’s nomadism had impeded any significant cultural developments and set
Jews aside from the civilized nations. Literary historian and Orientalist Richard Gosche argued for the essentially antithetical nature of nomadism and genuine literature in his 1870 *Idyll and Village Tales in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*: “Culture and Nomadism must be contrasted against one another. This rupture is most evident in various verses of the *Song of Songs*.”\(^{104}\) Solomon’s songs, however, remained but a brief interlude in the stunted development of a genuine Jewish culture, which failed altogether when ancient Jewry lost the struggle for its homeland.

At the close of the nineteenth century, French philosopher Ernest Renan (1823–92) saw in the Jews the survival of “nomadic instincts” and the “nomadic nomos” in modern times, while René Guenon wrote of the “perverse nomadism of the Jews.”\(^{105}\) In a widely translated 1883 lecture, Renan stressed both the mixed racial nature of the Jews and their important contributions to the progress of humanity at large. Although Renan saw only Hinduism and its progeny, Buddhism, as well as Christianity and Islam as “universal religions” because they could be found across different races, the Jews emerge as a both particularist and universalist force in Renan’s claim that the prophets “made this cult of Yahweh into the universal religion of the civilized world.”\(^{106}\) Subsequently, “the whole world entered in” (JRL, 92). Conceded Renan,

> The Israelite race has rendered the world the greatest services. Assimilated to different nations, in harmony with diverse national units, it will continue to do in future what it has done in the past. By its collaboration with the liberal forces of Europe, it will make an eminent contribution to the social progress of humanity. (JRL, 100)

As Renan expanded in his 1887 *History of the People of Israel*, the Jews’ catalytic nature had emerged only in their encounter with other cultures. During antiquity, “the Semitic shepherd” and “nomad Semite” had been among “the first to conceive sentiments of order and the pride which is born of self-respect, . . . contribut[ing] in a certain measure to morality.”\(^{107}\) But they had mostly kept to themselves to maintain their “purity of blood” (HPI, 1: 14). This limited racial predicament had been reflected in their stunted language and cultural imagination. At the same time, the limited imagination of these “Semitic hordes” (HPI, 1: 11) had led them to create the purest religion because they were least inclined toward superstition. This, Renan contended, had been a blessing for humanity at large: “And yet these ancient patriarchs of the Syrian desert were in reality corner-stones for humanity. . . . Judaism, Christianity, and Islamism all proceed from them” (HPI, 1: 51). For Renan, however, ancient
Judaism delivered only the raw ingredients for a universal narrative of humanity, most likely as a consequence of Judaism’s limitations. The great homogenizing force was Rome, an idea that was developed in the cosmopolitanist works of such twentieth-century Jewish writers as Stefan Zweig and Lion Feuchtwanger. Argued Renan,

The world, before it was ready to accept Hellenism and Christianity, had to be prepared and made smooth, so to speak. A great humanizing force had to be created—a force powerful enough to beat down the obstacles which local patriotism offered to the idealistic propaganda of Greece and Judea. Rome fulfilled this extraordinary function. Rome, by prodigies of civic fortune, created the force of the world, and this force in reality served to propagate the work of Greece and the work of Judea, that is to say, civilisation. Force is not a pleasant thing to contemplate, and the recollections of Rome will never have the powerful attraction of the affairs of Greece and of Israel; but Roman history is none the less part and parcel of these histories. (HPI, 1: x)

In his two lectures on *Babel and Bibel* (1902–3), German Orientalist Friedrich Delitzsch further underlined Renan’s argument about ancient Jewry’s lack of cultural imagination. According to Delitzsch, biblical lore itself was devoid of any authenticity. Ancient Israelites had merely borrowed and in so doing corrupted and destroyed the creative imagination originally present in these stories. Merely the YAHVE faith itself was genuinely Israelite in origin, and it displayed the limitations of the Semite’s nomadic mind. Jews and Jewish culture thus emerged as the particularist paradigm and thus implicitly as the antithesis of the cosmopolitan universal:

> Even the Yahwè-faith, by which, as under a banner, Moses bound together in unity the twelve nomad tribes of Israel was, and continues to be, with kinds of human limitations: . . . above all, with Israelite *exclusiveness*.108

Theology and ideology merge here in the debates in the public sphere (if they were ever separate), and civil society becomes the contested ground for the Jew as imagined nomad. As Jewish writers in the German-speaking world reflected on their rootedness as cosmopolitans, the world of fiction became a thought experiment for conservative German writers, who imagined how this process would play out in their fictive Germany.109 In Wilhelm Raabe’s antisemitic novel, *The Hunger Pastor* (1864), the arch-Jew Moses Freudenstein
points out that being German is a garment easily discarded, and he transforms himself into an immoral and corrupt Frenchman, Théophile Stein. As Freudenstein becomes a European, in his Jewish identity is equally easily discarded:

I have the right to be a German when I so desire it and the right to give up this honor at any given moment. We Jews are indeed the true cosmopolitans, Weltbürger by the grace of God, or if you will, by God’s ungraciousness. From the creation to the 10th of Ab in 70 AD we have lived in extraordinary circumstances and after the destruction of the Temple this remained for us, if in a somewhat different manner. . . . Since they stopped murdering us as well-poisoners and the murderers of Christian children, we are much better off, than all of you, however you want to call yourselves, you Aryans: Germans, French, English. . . . My friend Harry Heine in Paris remains, in spite of his white catechist’s robe, a true Jew, for whom all the baptismal water, all the French champagne and German Rhine wine could not wash the Semitic blood out of his veins.¹¹⁰

These dismissals of cosmopolitanism mirror the ranting about Jewish exceptionalism in Gustav Freytag’s best-selling Debit and Credit (Soll und Haben) (1855), one of Raabe’s evident models. Freytag’s novel presents the conflict between the rootless and dishonest Jewish father and his son, whose rejection of his parentage and desire for total assimilation leads inevitably to his suicide. As George Mosse has noted, such novels were immensely popular (Freytag’s had more than fifteen different editions within a few years after publication) and populated the libraries of Jewish households throughout Germany.¹¹¹ Such views were further developed in a series of best-selling anti-Semitic novels from Adolf Barthels’s The Dithmarchers (1898) to Josefa Berens-Totenohl’s Der Femhof (1934).

For such writers, the nation-state is predicated on citizens who are rooted in place and do not wander the world, and it must defend itself against outsiders who seek to enter. A state that manages this can accomplish great things, as Renan proclaimed in an 1882 lecture, “What Is a Nation?” He defined the nation by the desire of a people to live together, which he summarized with what has become an oft-cited phrase: “having done great things together and wishing to do more.”¹¹² But this idea became a commonplace by the 1920s, echoed by thinkers such as Carl Schmitt in his dichotomy of “friend and foe” in The Concept of the Political (1927). Schmitt argues that the potential for conflict between nation-states defines them. In “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego” (1921), another early twentieth-century Jewish thinker stated succinctly,
Every time two families become connected by a marriage, each of them thinks itself superior to or of better birth than the other. Of two neighbouring towns each is the other’s most jealous rival; every little canton looks down upon the others with contempt. Closely related races keep one another at arm’s length; the South German cannot endure the North German, the Englishman casts every kind of aspersion upon the Scot, the Spaniard despises the Portuguese. We are no longer astonished that greater differences should lead to an almost insuperable repugnance, such as the Gallic people feel for the German, the Aryan for the Semite, and the white races for the coloured.  

But the symbolic meaning of such contrasts between the rooted and the cosmopolitan defines the identities of the members of each collective. Aryan and Semite (however each is defined) define the other. The rooted versus the cosmopolitan is part of this symbolic language of nomadism and the agrarian world.

Over the second half of the nineteenth century, the idea of exclusivity closely bound to the nomadic came to shape the Jewish interest in cosmopolitanism. The idea declined after 1848, when assimilation became the dominant paradigm, rejecting both the nomadic and the cosmopolitan in favor of the national. In response to this new nationalism at the close of the nineteenth century, Jewish nationalism was recuperated in the form of Zionism and in the extraordinary expansion of antisemites’ charges of permanent Jewish nomadism. Jewish cosmopolitanism became a third force, torn between essential definitions of the Jew as a national citizen (German or Zionist) or a modern nomad. The antisemite defined the Jew as an impossible candidate for true citizenship because of his nomadic nature, proven by his desire to return to the desert in the Zionist project. This is hammered out most clearly not in Imperial Germany but in the complex world of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where modern Zionism is formulated.