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Traditionen jüdischen Denkens in Europa.**

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paperback.

Essays in this volume, which is based on a 2010 symposium in honor of Bernd Witte's retirement from Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, address timely questions of great importance for European Jewish Studies and European Jewry: Can Europe still provide a true home for Jews? Should Jewish culture be regarded as inherently European due to its transnational, cosmopolitan nature and its implicit rejection of various nationalisms? To what extent is it possible to locate traces of Jewishness in the exegetical methods, multilingualism, and translations of writers with Jewish backgrounds?

Together with Bernd Witte's introductory essay, the chapters in the first part (by Bernd Witte, Vivian Liska, Rita Calabrese, Sibylle Schönborn) shed light on European Jewish writers from 1770 to 1914. Witte's introduction sets a negative tone for the book: he presents Jewish perspectives on Europeanness from Moses Mendelssohn to Moritz Goldstein, ominously concluding (echoing historian Tony Judt) that there is "kein Europa der Juden mehr," and that Europe is no more than a mere "Totenhaus" for Jews (19). In a different essay on Homer and Moses, Witte compellingly argues that the origins of many strains of anti-Jewish sentiment can be found within the works of German Classicism. Shifting from Classicism to Romanticism, Liska and Calabrese efficiently summarize the critical reception of *salonnières* Rahel Varnhagen and Dorothea Schlegel, with special attention to Margarete Susman and Hannah Arendt. Whereas Liska underscores the

productive tension inherent in Arendt's notion of the pariah, Calabrese points to Arendt's castigation of Dorothea and her father, Moses Mendelssohn, for raising Dorothea as "too European." In an insightful discussion of Franz Kafka's *Der Verschollene*, Schönborn argues that Kafka's manuscript alterations in 1914 reflect the mass migrations of Jews displaced by the First World War. Schönborn characterizes Kafka's Nature Theater as the anteroom to a third space, the "Nicht-Ort" of the Jewish tradition in Western Europe (86). In a similar vein, Vera Viehöver's essay (in part three) reads Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt's understanding of Kafka's world as one in which "der Konjunktiv nicht existiert" and where everything comes too late (187).

The essays in part two (by Stephan Braese, Vittoria Borsò, Daniel Hoffmann, Irene Heidelberger-Leonard, Sonja Klein, Karl Ivan Solibakke) deal with an impressive variety of works produced outside of Germany in the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust. Braese deftly grapples with controversial figure George Steiner to suggest that the legacy of Jewish Europeanness is necessary for constructing histories of Europe. Hoffmann demonstrates how Prague poet Franz Baermann Steiner reconceives a sense of post-Shoah time through ironic references to the Shehecheyanu prayer, which is usually recited to mark joyous occasions. In her discussion of Imre Kertész and Jean Améry, Heidelberger-Leonard locates the Jewishness of both writers in "Nicht-Identität," a state of existence branded by the Holocaust (143). Klein argues that the alienating effect of Paul Celan's *Meridian* focuses not on the Jewish Other, but rather advocates for tolerance of the Other broadly conceived.

Three essays in the book's third part (by Michele Cometa, Claas Morgenroth, Ulrich Welbers) pay homage to Witte's scholarship in their respective treatments of

theorists Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. For Cometa, Lukács's friendship with Martin Buber led to a messianic belief in the coexistence of tragic and "untragisch" (epic) drama, the latter evocative of a "Zeit ohne Religion" and "das Nichtsein Gottes" (202). In an analysis of Benjamin's 1931 essay "Karl Kraus," Morgenroth points to the politically engaged nature of all modern writing. Finally, Welbers positions Lévi-Strauss as the "Sinn-Negierer par excellence" whose anthropological theories build on the methodologies of Talmudic commentary, yet simultaneously reject religion and God at the level of conscious perception (228).

Answers provided in *Traditionen jüdischen Denkens in Europa* are mostly negative; these essays largely confirm Witte's view that Europe is no longer a place for Jews. For many of the contributors, Jewish culture exists in exile from Europe and belongs nowhere; Jewishness is rooted in the condition of not being a non-Jew; religion and God have become uncertain constructs. Whereas the experiences and theories of prominent Jewish figures are perceived here as critical to the construction of post-War history and time, they are not regarded as constitutive of a Jewish European present or future. Ultimately this volume, which would have benefited from additional copyediting, provides a disjointed sketch of disparate traditions of Jewish writing. As a whole, it inspires critical reflection but is likely to leave the reader unsatisfied and in search of what is missing.

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