

Exile and Modernism

Theoretical and Methodological Reflections on the Exile of Artists in the 1930s and '40s

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The exile of artists in the 1930s and '40s was first discovered, alongside the Third Reich and the Holocaust, as a subject of research in the humanities, including art history, in the late 1960s. Apart from debates over the significance of political or nonpolitical works of art produced in exile and their role in establishing a positive German national identity during the Third Reich, many of the interpretive approaches since then have been determined largely by biographical accounts. It should be noted, however, that some artists were inscribed into art history (or the so-called canon) because of their personal fates as Jews or the politically persecuted. Consequently, the work of art is often treated as a direct document of the individual's biography.

Subjectivity and identity did indeed play a large role in many works of art of the 1930s and '40s. Max Ernst, for example, continued in exile to represent himself as Loplop (from 1929 to 1932 onward), an anthropomorphic bird, which also appears in his autobiographical writings. The continuity of

his identity before and during exile is also emphasized in his first, more detailed, autobiographical text, "Some Data on the Youth of Max Ernst, as Told by Himself" (1942), written in exile in the United States. In it, the bird functions as an alter ego of Max Ernst in the sense of an individual mythology, though it now contributes to making exile habitable (or homey). In his painting *Surrealism and Painting* (1942), he depicts himself as a motherly, birdlike figure clasping and protecting other, smaller bird figures.¹ In addition to its theme of a retreat into the private realm that compensates for geopolitical displacement, as it were, this painting has also become known as one of the first uses of the drip technique.² Others, such as George Grosz, for example, arrived at ambivalent self-portrayals in exile that may be seen as aesthetic expressions of individual and artistic self-doubts. The associated questioning of a homogeneous and confident self-identification is clear in the drawing *Self-Portrait* (1937), in which canvases and perhaps a mirror are interlocked in complex ways, such that they cannot be distinguished from one another.³ Despite Grosz's more conventional self-portrayal—his gaze is turned to the viewer or reflected in the mirror—the artistic "I" is depicted as completely fragmented by the complicated spatial refractions. Without a doubt, these works have a biographical quality. But because they mediatize subjective identities in multilayered ways (or filter them through art), they should not simply be treated, as was often done in the past, as direct and unmediated evidence of biographical experiences.

Following reunification of the two German states in 1990, Ernst Loewy called for a paradigm shift in exile studies.⁴ He advocated for historicizing the narrative of exile to liberate it from a renewed entanglement in the construction of a now united German identity. Instead, he preferred approaches intended to study the hybridization of different cultures, by which he suggested that processes of acculturation and mixed identity formations could methodologically offer new knowledge. Over the past decade the social history of art, which is practiced especially in the United States, has produced studies that focus on social, cultural, and political contexts in order to attain new historical insights.⁵ It often emphasizes an examination of the institutional conditions of art in exile, and of the larger network of the art world—and thus also intercultural exchange. Usually, the question of the politicization of the exile art world also plays a role, that is, the willingness of artists, collectors, gallerists, art historians, and art institutions in the countries of exile to take public, antifascist political positions. It is, of course, beyond doubt that such historical studies not only significantly altered and enriched the state of knowledge about artists in exile but also led to many nuanced insights that have permitted a more precise picture of this historical moment and its production of art. Nevertheless, there are hardly any studies that go beyond the biographical and iconographical to contribute to an understanding of a specific, perhaps eclectic aesthetic in exile, and to analyze how these works of art in exile could be inscribed into the history of modernism.⁶

For that reason, in my reflections on art in exile of the 1930s and '40s, on the one hand, the connection to artistic modernism should serve as a guideline and, on the other, the existential conditions of exile as formulated in theories of exile should function as a theoretical system of reference. No doubt modernism and exile have much in common, but there are also obvious oppositions that contribute to complicating our understanding of modernism, or even forcing us to revise it. In principle, modern art is often conceived as reflexive of an experience of crisis, specifically with regard to advancing technological modernity and its violent effects, so that aesthetic modernism shares with art in exile one of its most important dispositions. Likewise, it is possible to establish a connection between the experience of mobility, of the rapid change of all previous experiences in exile, and movement and speed as symptoms of modern life. Whereas, on the one side, central means of expression are complicated paintings, photographs, sculptures, and films that annul the stable and static Newtonian coordinate system of three-dimensional space by means of, for example, an aesthetic of simultaneity (futurism) or relativity (cubism), on the other side, there is modernism itself, which lost its stable and unchanging place in society through its hermeticism, among other things. With regard to exile, the philosopher Vilém Flusser wrote in 1984,

In exile everything is perceived to be undergoing change, and the expellee perceives absolutely everything as a challenge to himself to be changed. In exile, where the blanket of habit has been pulled off, the expellee becomes a revolutionary, even if only to the extent that he is able to live there.⁷

The crucial thing is that, according to Flusser, the experience of mobility and the constant change is tied to inauthenticity. Boris Groys, too, was calling attention to the migrant's lack of authenticity, albeit with reference to the situation in Germany in the 1990s, when he wrote,

But an asylum seeker is decidedly unromantic. He is no longer authentically Turkish or authentically Chinese, because by living in Germany he has culturally removed himself from his own country. [...] Accordingly, the asylum seeker can be interpreted as a dialectical synthesis between... norm and deviation from the norm, between the native and the foreign.⁸

The attribution of an alienating—that is, inauthentic—experience of existence and subjectivity is one of the central themes of aesthetic modernism, namely, long before it found itself actually and involuntarily geopolitically displaced.

In connection with the experience of exile that Flusser described as linked to constant change and mobility, it should be noted that, for some exiles, especially those who had emigrated from France, such as Fernand Léger and André Masson, a temporary stay was being planned from the outset. As a result, historical exile, specifically the emigration of the 1930s and '40s, qualifies frequently as a state of waiting. Whereas modernity was mobile and oriented toward the future, exile was often distinguished by a pausing of time. In that context, one can explore the

question of whether and how these conditions were implemented aesthetically. Can one assert that, in the works of art by the artists in exile from Paris, the so-called progressivity and constant change of artistic modernism came to a standstill, despite the experience of a forced change in location? In what follows, I will discuss this by exploring the example of the surrealists' aesthetic reception of Native American art.

It is widely known that the surrealists among the exiles from Paris—André Masson, André Breton, Max Ernst, and also Chilean artist Roberto Matta Echaurren—developed a great interest in Native Americans. Among other things, they attended the exhibition *Indian Art in the United States* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1941, regularly visited the American Museum of Natural History, and traveled in search of traces of Native American peoples; for example, Max Ernst went to Arizona, New Mexico, and California. Last but not least, they were also enthusiastic collectors of Native American works. In 1946 Max Ernst and Barnett Newman helped organize the opening exhibition of the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York, *Northwest Coast Indian Painting*, which in part included the artists' own collections.⁹ It is also widely known that the often violent myths, so-called primitive rituals, and primal subject matter depicted in these Native American works especially fascinated the American artists of the New York School—Jackson Pollock, Clyfford Still, and Barnett Newman—the “mythmakers.” A context was recorded in the Native American paintings that would lead to the development of a new, genuinely American, formal artistic language that triggered a final break with the historical culture of the West, and specifically—after the systematic mass murder of the European Jewry—with the failed culture of the European Enlightenment.¹⁰ By contrast, the search of European modernists for the exotic Other, which insured a separation of history and traditions, was supplemented in exile by a romantic imagination of America. Unlike the American artists, the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, while in exile in New York, was interested solely in modern aesthetic sensibilities. He compared Native American works of art to the most innovative artistic qualities of European modernism, which he believed he had found in the works of Pablo Picasso, for example.¹¹ The surrealists' interests in creative inspiration, the irrational, the exotic, and the “primitive” overshadowed debates that could have led to intercultural, historical, or anthropological insights.¹²

This relationship to indigenous American culture is articulated visually most clearly in several paintings by André Masson, especially *The Seeded Earth* and *Meditation on an Oak Leaf*, both from 1942. These abstracting, mythologizing landscapes are aesthetic implementations of nature as experienced by Masson in his new, temporary residence in New Preston, Connecticut. Because the Iroquois had once lived there, Masson's surroundings become a fruitful source for his imagination. Masson, who spoke no English, created his own American myth of the archaic and original. Shortly before his return to France in

1945, he summed up his “idea of America.” “Nature: the might of nature—the savagery of nature.... There is a rich American mythology awaiting exploitation. [...] Perhaps I am temperamentally better fitted to understand the life of the pioneers, their struggle with the elements.”¹³ Both paintings are characterized by intense color that is untypical of Masson. He himself traced this artistic practice back to surrealist automatism, but that is rather improbable.¹⁴ The resulting paintings resemble abstracted ideograms (especially *The Seeded Earth*), and the nascent bio- or zoomorphic figures evoke natural forces that are at once uncivilized and violent. One is struck by a very dark, almost black ground, over which luminous colors with three-dimensional qualities have been applied. At the same time, Masson’s lines often adopt the form of a membrane, and the one in *Meditation on an Oak Leaf* recalls an umbilical cord. In these so-called telluric, earthbound paintings, one can observe oval forms that are often intertwined and changing, calling to mind germination and growth, which suggests a creation myth, though the grimacing faces and the uncanny effect of the colors also evoke allusions to violence and death. In contrast to other contemporaneous paintings in which Masson addressed traditional Western myths—of Pasiphae or Theseus, for example—which thematize violence as an extreme and elemental human experience, these pictures, which are indebted to American nature and Native American culture, are about genesis, growth, and archaic myths of creation. The paintings certainly also point to Masson’s state of waiting, since they are not really about America and its prehistory, but are rather visualizations of an image of America imported from Europe. Seen together, these paintings suggest analogies to a not-yet-civilized nature, which has been characteristic of the French imagination of America since Chateaubriand.¹⁵ To present new beginnings, the artist used abstracted movement as a formal characteristic. In this way, Masson linked his state of waiting to a dialogue that prioritizes growth, change, and genesis or rebirth—that is, characteristics that determine both the experience of exile and modernity itself.

In very different ways, one can also read Fernand Léger’s paintings as mediatizing the conditions of his experience of exile, which was also tied to both movement and change. He shared not only Masson’s intention to return to France as quickly as possible but also a fascination for their host country that was marked by European ideas. Léger declared,

*In this country there is a definitely romantic atmosphere in the good sense of the word—an increased sense of movement and violence. This is a melodramatic country, for all its clear skies.*¹⁶

In contrast to Masson, however, it was America’s popular culture, youth, and pronounced modernity that he was enthusiastic about. This is expressed in his paintings of female cyclists. In them he tried to assimilate the “luminous, electric intensity” of the American metropolis, especially New York.¹⁷ In the art historical literature, therefore, the geometric bands of color as seen, for example, in *Les belles*



Fig. 1. Fernand Léger, *Les Belles Cyclistes*, 1944, oil on canvas, 73.6 x 91.4 cm, collection Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University in St. Louis, gift of Charles H. Yalem, 1963. Photo: Kemper Art Museum. Courtesy of Pictoright Amsterdam 2019.

cyclistes (1944) (fig. 1), are often compared to the neon lights of Broadway.¹⁸ As Léger himself explained in 1952,

*In 1942, when I was in New York, I was struck by the advertising projectors on Broadway that sweep the street. You... are talking to someone, and suddenly he turns blue. Then the color passes, another arrives, and he turns red, yellow. That color, the color of the projector, is free, free in space.*¹⁹

Above and beyond, Léger attributed the intensification of his palette to the influence of America.²⁰

By employing geometric bands, Léger at once emphasizes and fragments the cyclists' bodies. Moreover, he complicates the spatial relationship between the individual athletes. The reciprocal penetration of bands of color and volumes makes the rendering of space even more complex; foreground and background of the painting enter into an ambiguous, oscillating relationship. In this way, Léger employs movement as an abstract pictorial device whereby the space itself is presented as unspecified, since it is not apparent whether a landscape or a city scene is depicted. The isolation of figure from surroundings as well as individual body parts and their fragmentary spatial integration is reflected in an aesthetic form that also strictly separates color from figure. Although one might have expected Léger to present the viewer with a scene from an American metropolis that testifies to his fascination with his host country, he communicates his exile experience of change and spatial mobility, and also his waiting status and continued attachment to his homeland, France, by employing abstract, complicated, and hermetic modernist pictorial means. We do not see figures that can be deciphered as American women but, on the contrary, emotionless, standardized women are exposed to us frontally, or we to them. Their bodies are stylized, and individual body parts even depicted as isolated from one another. Nevertheless, they touch each other, primarily through arms and hands. This representation, considered together with the deindividualized faces, suggests Léger's hope for a collective society that, after the end of the war, would tackle the material, social, and political reconstruction of France.

In this context it should be pointed out that voluntary migrants, such as the Swiss photographer Robert Frank, took a considerably more realistic approach to American society and their adopted home. In his famous and historically controversial series *The Americans*, captured on a trip through America in 1955–1956, photographs that demonstrate a European imagination of America are combined with images, which engage very critically with the existing sociopolitical reality.²¹ Whereas several of the photographs celebrate classical icons of American consumer culture by depicting diners, drive-in cinemas, and domestic cars, others reveal the dark sides of America, such as racism and poverty. In contrast to the temporary émigrés from France, whose image of America remained unchanged, Frank, following realistic conventions, illuminates an

America in which—despite its postwar status as a political and cultural democratic world power—social inequities were part of daily life.

It should be noted that Léger and Masson, despite very different aesthetic concepts and artistic strategies, thematized in their artworks the view of an outsider who is shaped by his native culture, even though both artists expressed the experience of mobility and change by means of complex modernist creations, namely abstract forms of spatial movement.

In the context of theories and real effects of globalization, which brings with it worldwide networking and homogenization, today's exile research frequently addresses the question of the degree to which migration and exile can also be understood as driving forces of artistic production, that is to say, whether it is possible to make a constructive connection between exile/migration and assimilation, hybridity and creativity.²² In the past, both exiles and theoreticians have repeatedly doubted this. Referring to Georg Lukács's conception of transcendental homelessness as a characteristic of the modern novel, the postcolonial critic and theorist Edward Said, in his central essay "Reflections on Exile" (1984), granted the exile the right to refuse belonging.²³ He called exile "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted."²⁴ Moreover, Said described exile as the core experience of the modern and postmodern eras, since, over the course of the entire previous century, totalitarian and authoritarian regimes forced millions of people into exile, who are now dispersed across the entire world. Said, who grew up in a refugee family in Palestine after 1948, describes exile as an impact event, as it was recently theorized by Anne Fuchs. She writes, "In the simplest terms, impact events can be defined as historical occurrences that are perceived to spectacularly shatter the material and symbolic worlds we inhabit."²⁵ According to Fuchs, such periods of political upheaval that turn the world upside down are tied to violence, but also to new beginnings. At the same time, an "impact event" is manifested by its enduring afterlife in material representations and mnemonic documents of excess and exaggeration, which demonstrate an amplification of the real. Similarly, Said emphasized "willfulness, exaggeration, overstatement" as characteristics of artworks produced in exile.²⁶ Very much like Fuchs, he argued that "exile cannot be made to serve notions of humanism. On the twentieth century scale, exile is neither aesthetically nor humanistically comprehensible."²⁷ With respect to an art of exile, this means that aesthetic creations can never do justice to the actual event, and are distinguished by radical exaggerations.

Already in the 1940s, the Jewish exile and philosopher of the Frankfurt School, Theodor Adorno, addressed exile as a inconsolable, damaging, and alienating experience. In his book *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, he

asserted that “the house is past,” and “it is part of morality [today] not to be at home in one’s home. [...] Wrong life cannot be lived rightly.”²⁸ Despite Adorno’s and Said’s extremely negative judgments of the individual experience of exile, which is marked by a fundamental loss and rift, that does not mean that the exile could not be creative and productive under such conditions. Compared to Adorno, Said adopted a standpoint characterized more by ambiguity. For, in “Reflections on Exile,” Said also asks: “If true exile is a condition of terminal loss, why has it been transformed so easily into a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture?”²⁹ Elsewhere, he writes,

*Seeing ‘the entire world as foreign land’ makes possible originality of vision. Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is contrapuntal.*³⁰

The contradictory positions of isolation, disorientation, and loss, on the one hand, and assimilation, transcultural exchange, and creativity, on the other, play central roles within the modern and postmodern discourse on exile. There are also voices that turn this dichotomy upside down. The cultural studies scholar Caren Kaplan, for example, inverts the antithetical relationships in Said’s sense when she makes isolation in exile responsible for an increase in creative productivity, while viewing assimilation as an experience that leads to a reduction in artistic creativity.³¹ This theoretical model compares the experience of exile to the existing concept of the modern artist as someone living on the margins of society, a position that not only makes artistic creativity possible but also promotes a critical attitude toward society. These notions of exile and modernism combine the progressive creativity and artistic reflexivity that accompany a certain outsider status, or maybe better, a condition of not-being-at-home.

Perhaps the most radical example of a homeless aesthetic from the 1940s was created by Marcel Duchamp, with his design for the exhibition *First Papers of Surrealism*, which he realized at the Whitelaw Reid Mansion (Madison Avenue and 50th Street) in New York in 1942. The ambiguous title of the exhibition, which was organized by André Breton, can be read both as a reference to the immigration papers of the surrealists, thereby underscoring their status as homeless, and as a reference to the first and decisive collective appearance of the surrealists in the “New World.” It should be noted, however, that Breton included in the exhibition European artists in exile, artists who had remained in Europe, and young American artists. What seems at first like a virtual and real cultural exchange and transatlantic cooperation, quickly turns into the opposite of that when taking the exhibition architecture into consideration. Duchamp used around one mile of his famous sixteen-mile-long string to stretch out a labyrinth through the exhibition. The result of this excessive spatial intervention was that neither the works of art of the Americans nor those of the

Europeans could be experienced aesthetically. Duchamp's intervention can be understood as a critical as well as distinctly political thematization of the homeless, fragmented, and disorienting nature of life in exile—as, for example, T. J. Demos has done.³² He writes, “Duchamp's installation in fact forced artists to experience their displaced status firsthand in the disorganized and disorganizing space of his installation and in the disorientation of their objects in that space.”³³

The string stretched out like a labyrinth refers metaphorically to many borders and obstacles; at the same time, it recalls visual frames, albeit ones that prevent the possibility of seeing, perceiving, and being. As Demos comments, the fascination of the European surrealists with the uncanny (the unhomely) transformed in exile into the experience of real homelessness. Duchamp's installation thus can be understood as an aesthetic of homelessness, and in line with Adorno's “damaging,” that forcefully visualizes the concept of a contextless and consequentially mobile modernism, as articulated by Rosalind Krauss with reference to the ready-made.³⁴ It should be emphasized that this is not just a symbolic or metaphorical act, but that the visitors to the exhibition were actually violently prevented from seeing the works of art. Duchamp's radicality is manifested in exactly this form of a new realism. His violent design is, like many of his other works, not unambiguously graspable and, going beyond an interpretation of homelessness, associatively triggers a whole series of other possible readings. Is Duchamp revoking aesthetic perception and creative experience in the face of exile? Is he implying that a productive exchange between European and American artists will not occur? Or is he suggesting that avant-garde art, like that of surrealism, has fallen on a ground in America that is not yet fertile for a successful reception of modernism? Notwithstanding all these different interpretive strands (which are merely hinted at here), it should be emphasized that the installation *First Papers of Surrealism* made an important contribution to an aesthetic of exile that conveys the experience of loss and disorientation in a radical and experiential way.

The philosopher Vilém Flusser, who died in 1991, proposed a substantially more positive assessment of exile and its effect on artistic productivity. In 1939 he fled Prague, which had been occupied by the National Socialists, and went into exile in England and then Brazil. Much later, in 1984, he conceived exile/emigration/migration without differentiation as both a creative striving and a suffering, but without using the term “isolation.”³⁵ He observed, “If he is not to perish, the expellee must be creative.”³⁶ Flusser (probably without really having read Said) adopted the latter's positive assessment of exile, the aspect of originality, and developed it further. Whereas Said's essay is simultaneously dominated by his negative assessment of exile as the experience of not belonging and of loss, Flusser saw these as positive qualities. Accordingly, he wrote that “we migrants [are] a window through which our native people may see the world.”³⁷ He proposed the thesis that what is created in exile

results from a dialogic process, which can lead to the creation of a new or different culture. In Flusser's words, "What develops on... arrival is a cracking open of the 'self' and an opening up to others. A togetherness."³⁸ This togetherness is, however, not necessarily described as a constructive experience. Since

*the dialogic spirit that characterizes exile may not be one of mutual recognition; it is mostly polemical and even murderous. This is because the expellee threatens the singularity of the settled inhabitants, putting it in question by his own foreignness. [...] Exile, no matter the form, is the incubator of creativity in the service of the new.*³⁹

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If we adopt Flusser's thesis, the question arises whether and how works of art—very much in contrast to Duchamp's *First Papers of Surrealism*—are capable to thematize exile as assimilation and cultural exchange. Dialogical approaches and hybrid aesthetic forms are, in the first instance, incompatible with traditional concepts of artistic modernism. Especially the influential American art critic Clement Greenberg insisted from the later 1930s onward on a development of art that is specific to its medium and therefore purist, which is manifested, for example, in the paintings of Jackson Pollock and their hermetic subject matter. In such canvases, above all as result of eliminating the difference between figure and ground, as well as through the physical and actionist thematization of the painting process itself, painting becomes identical with itself.⁴⁰ In contrast to this "pure" painting (which did not emerge historically until the mid-1940s), a number of European artists in American exile preferred figurative or semi-figurative forms of expression.

For example, George Grosz, whose figurative paintings, watercolors, and drawings of the 1930s and '40s repeatedly illustrate war and violence in the form of exploding and burning landscapes, is repeatedly cited in the art historical literature as a classic example of an artist who did not assimilate. However, his American work from 1932 onward clearly demonstrates a dialogue with the culture and art scene of his host country. Many of his letters and texts—for example, "Amerikanische Umgangsformen" ("American Manners"),⁴¹ from his first years in exile—document his intensive engagement with his host country, about which Grosz had already been very enthusiastic in the Berlin of the Weimar Republic.⁴² Between 1932 and 1934 alone, Grosz produced several hundred sketches, drawings, and watercolors depicting his new environment.

Socially critical themes, such as unemployment and the representation of black Americans, exist alongside street scenes of New York, remote landscapes, and dramatic paintings that apocalyptically evoke war and destruction. Some paintings are based on precise observations of his new surroundings, for example, *Waiting for the Job* (1934), while others are more expressive and atmospheric, such as

New York (1934) and *Dunes of Cape Cod* (1938), whose gloomy, premonitory, and dramatic mood points more to events in Germany than to the American present. Still other works reveal metaphoric and narrative concepts, such as *A Piece of My World II* (1938): a nightmarish war scene in which cinematographic actionism appears to be mixed with art historical models such as Albrecht Altdorfer. Last but not least, there are also examples that illuminate Grosz's interest in modernist experimentation, as demonstrated by the watercolor *Manhattan*.⁴³ This formal and thematic heterogeneity reflects a hybridity in which, on the one hand, American, often contradictory, practices blend with European influences. On the other hand, the topology and sociopolitical reality of the host country mingle with contemporaneous political events in Germany. Connections can be established to the conservatively oriented American regionalists, such as Thomas Hart Benton and John Steuart Curry, as well as to the successors to the Ashcan School, the so-called Fourteenth Street School. The paintings of the latter—Reginald Marsh for example—depicted the dense and energetic urban life of America. In New York, Grosz's work was exhibited by the rather populist-oriented gallery, Associated American Artists, whose program also included the regionalists, for example. Quite unlike the surrealists and the emergent abstract expressionists, the circle around Grosz was not interested in modernist explorations, which in reflexive ways analyzed the formal means of art, but rather in a narrative-oriented or hybrid modernism that is more accessible. Importantly, Grosz did not allow himself to be pinned down to one movement or one particular style. From work to work and from theme to theme, different cultures and aesthetic approaches are combined. Flusser's thesis that the cultural dialogue between homeland and host country leads to something new and necessarily hybrid cannot be dismissed by means of Grosz's work. Yet the results are precarious, because they did not mobilize a new artistic discourse, but rather remained an exception.

In conclusion, it can be said that firstly, exile as an experience of crisis, caused by, among other things, homelessness and geographic and psychological disorientation, manifested itself in radically exaggerated aesthetic forms. This is particularly true of Duchamp and his "aesthetic of homelessness," which can also be characterized, following Adorno and Said, as the non-representability of the exile experience. Modernism, avant-garde shock tactics, and exile combine here to produce a new form of installation art, and it is impossible to imagine twentieth-century art without it. Secondly, the simultaneous and antagonistic experience of exile as both mobility and a state of waiting led to aesthetic solutions that articulate movement abstractly and without direction. In these works and in contemporaneous interviews of Masson and Léger, attempts at assimilation can scarcely be found at all, but rather imported notions about the host country, which underscore the state of waiting. Thirdly, attempts to assimilate found expression in a narrative modernism that, as in the case of Grosz, raises complex questions. Is this the end of aesthetic modernism, or do we need to revise our concept of modernism, which is tied to innovation, new

artistic forms, and a certain hermeticism? Since transnational processes of artistic transfer between Europe and the United States in the 1930s and '40s were very heterogeneous, so were the different aesthetic adaptations of the exile experience. As a result, a more differentiated picture of modernism is established. Although many if not all exiles adopted a hybrid identity in one form or another, there are hardly any examples of a truly hybrid aesthetic. This validates Kaplan's theory in which the isolating experience of exile is tied to creativity, that in significant works of exile art resulted in a new aesthetic, whereas Flusser's thesis of dialogical creativity was rarely taken up.

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1. Illustrated in Werner Spies, ed., *Max Ernst*, exh. cat. (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1992), 247.
2. Ernst claimed authorship retrospectively, and thus his central influence on the emergence of American abstract expressionism, with which, according to Serge Guilbaut, the United States established itself as a cultural world power. Max Ernst, "Autobiographie" (1975), in Werner Spies, ed., *Max Ernst: Retrospektive*, exh. cat. (Munich and Berlin: Haus der Kunst and Neue Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1979), 121–202, 171. Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 101–163.
3. Illustrated in Stephanie Barron and Sabine Eckmann, eds., *Exiles + Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler*, exh. cat. (New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1997), 291.
4. Ernst Loewy, "Zum Paradigmenwechsel in der Exilliteraturforschung" (1991), in Loewy, *Zwischen den Stühlen: Essays und Autobiographisches aus 50 Jahren* (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1995), 261–274.
5. Keith Holz, *Modern German Art for Thirties Paris, Prague, and London: Resistance and Acquiescence in a Democratic Public Sphere* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Shulamith Behr and Marian Malet, eds., *Arts in Exile in Britain*,

- 1933–1945: Politics and Cultural Identity (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005); Barbara McCloskey, *The Exile of George Grosz: Modernism, America, and the One World Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).
6. One exception is T. J. Demos, *The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).
 7. Vilém Flusser, *The Freedom of the Migrant: Objections to Nationalism*, ed. Anke K. Finger, trans. Kenneth Kronenberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 83.
 8. For a discussion of nonauthenticity as a characteristic of the immigrant, see Boris Groys, "Der Asylant in ästhetischer Hinsicht," in *Deutschsein? Eine Ausstellung zu Fremdenhass und Gewalt*, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1993), 92–97, 93.
 9. James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," in Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 215–251, 238, 239. See also Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 169, 170, 173, 185, 186.
 10. W. Jackson Rushing, "The Impact of Nietzsche and Northwest Coast Indian Art on Barnett Newman's Idea of Redemption in the Abstract Sublime," *Art Journal* 47, no. 2 (1988): 187–195.
 11. Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," 242.
 12. "Few of those around Breton (with the possible exception of Max Ernst) had any systematic interest in ethnological science." *Ibid.*, 239.
 13. James Johnson Sweeney, "Eleven Europeans in America," *Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 13, no. 4–5 (1946): 2–39, 3.
 14. André Masson, *Le plaisir de peindre* (Nice: La Diane française, 1950), 138.
 15. Cf. André Masson, in Sweeney, "Eleven Europeans in America," 3.
 16. Fernand Léger, quoted in Sweeney, "Eleven Europeans in America," 13.
 17. Fernand Léger, "Découvrir l'Amérique," *La voix de France* (May 15, 1942), 9. "Nous autres réfugiés, il faut s'absorber dans cette atmosphère, tenir le plan dans cette intensité lumineuse électrique; on brûle la vie ici."
 18. Matthew Affron, "Fernand Léger in New York, 1940–45," in Barron and Eckmann, *Exiles + Emigrés*, 184–189, 186.
 19. "En 1942, quand j'étais à New York, j'ai été frappé par les projecteurs publicitaires de Broadway qui balayent la rue. Vous êtes là, vous parlez avec quelqu'un et tout à coup, il devient bleu. Puis la couleur passe, une autre arrive et il devient rouge, jaune. Cette couleur là, la couleur du projecteur est libre : elle est dans l'espace." In Dora Vallier, "La vie fait l'œuvre de Fernand Léger: Propos de l'artiste recueillis par Dora Vallier," *Cahiers d'art* 29, no. 2 (1954): 133–175, 156. Translation in the text by Steven Lindberg.
 20. Sweeney, "Eleven Europeans in America," 13–14.
 21. Sarah Greenough, "Introduction," in *Looking In: Robert Frank's The Americans*, ed. Greenough, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2009), XIX–XXI.
 22. One of the most important and influential of these texts is Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994). See also Flusser, *The Freedom of the Migrant*. See also Marwan M. Kraidy, *Hybridity, or The Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005); Helmut Anheier and Yudhishtir Raj Isar, eds., *Cultural Expression, Creativity and Innovation* (London: Sage, 2010).
 23. Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile," in Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 173–186, 181.
 24. *Ibid.*, 174, 171.
 25. Anne Fuchs, "The Bombing of Dresden and the Idea of Cultural Impact," in *Cultural Impact in the German Context: Studies on Transmission, Reception, and Influence*, eds. Rebecca Braun and Lyn Marven (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), 36–57, 37–38.
 26. Said, "Reflections on Exile," 182.

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27. Ibid., 174
 28. Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1974), 39.
 29. Said, "Reflections on Exile," 173.
 30. Ibid., 186.
 31. Cf. her analysis of this modernist interpretation of exile: Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1996), 27–65.
 32. T. J. Demos, "Duchamp's Labyrinth: *First Papers of Surrealism*, 1942," *October* 97, no. 137 (2001): 91–119.
 33. Ibid., 107.
 34. Ibid., 117.
 35. Flusser, *The Freedom of the Migrant*, 81.
 36. Ibid. Although Flusser has been influenced in part by materialism—he writes, for example, that "human beings may be explained in terms of their natural and cultural contingency" (ibid., 21)—his theory has, nevertheless, contradictorily, been influenced by existentialism. "The question of freedom is no longer one of coming and going but one of remaining foreign, of remaining different from others." Ibid., 86.
 37. Ibid., 15.
 38. Ibid., 86–97.
 39. Ibid., 87.
 40. Clement Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoön" (1940), in Francis Francina, ed., *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate* (London: Routledge, 2000), 60–68, 68.
 41. George Grosz, "Amerikanische Umgangsformen," *Querschnitt* 13, no. 1 (January 1933): 16–19.
 42. Birgit Möckel, "'A Little Yes and a Big No': George Grosz in Amerika," in *George Grosz: Berlin, New York*, ed. Klaus Peter Schuster, exh. cat. (Berlin: Nationalgalerie, 1995), 283–297, 285, no. 30.
 43. Illustrated in ibid., 442, no. 133.