

Chapter Title: Irreducible Pluralities: The Jewish Legacy of Franz Kafka

Chapter Author(s): David Suchoff

Book Title: Kafka and the Universal

Book Editor(s): Arthur Cools and Vivian Liska

Published by: De Gruyter

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvbkjt9v.12>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



This content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.



De Gruyter is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Kafka and the Universal*

JSTOR

David Suchoff

Irreducible Pluralities: The Jewish Legacy of Franz Kafka

In revisiting the Jewish reception of Kafka, I would like to begin with a story that Franz Kafka told Milena Jesenská, his Czech translator and lover. In this story, Kafka tells Milena of his own interest in the problem of “universal” definitions – those ways we categorize other people. The topic of Kafka’s story is the commonplace definitions that are used to distinguish Germans from Jews. The tale concerns Mathilde, the wife of Heinrich Heine, the greatest – we could say the most universally loved – German-Jewish writer before Kafka. “Next we come to Judaism,” Kafka tells Milena, after a sardonic discussion of Franz Werfel, “but then again, you should hear a pretty story from me once in a while.” The promise here is of pleasure, expressed in Kafka’s awareness that he is both defining and crossing a linguistic line: he is telling this tale about Heine’s family, after all, in response to Milena’s request to define his Jewish identity: and to do so, as one would say in the Jewish tradition, while standing on one foot.

“You ask me if I am a Jew,” Kafka reminds his correspondent, with his next line posing the question of his own singularity with a difference: as the “particular” that transforms its universal box into a liberating variety of terms. “Perhaps you were joking around,” is how he makes his opening, as he introduces his preferred and in a strict sense most essential approach to such questions of definition: “or perhaps you are asking whether I am one of those anxious Jews.” From the outset it is evident that Kafka’s answer proceeds in his characteristic fashion: he sets two popular, and limiting, notions of Jewish difference – laughter, and anxiety – in contact with one another. In terms of Kafka’s own bestiary, he moves forward like his “giant mole,” that creature difficult to discover: as an animal who works to establish covert passageways, and pleasurable, underground tunnels that connect two. Whereas the “anxious Jew” acts out uncertainty over his lack of fit with the “universal” and plays a predictable vaudeville role, the prospect that Milena was “just joking around” uncovers a different formulation: that Kafka took pleasure in his own Jewish difference, and viewed the “universal” less as a source of “paradox” or contradiction than as a repository of irreducibly plural perspectives and differences to be excavated and enjoyed.

Kafka first apologizes before telling the story of his Jewish identity: one reason for this might be that Milena is not herself Jewish and the story he is about to retell includes various stereotypes, some of which she may not know how to apply. But since, as Kafka writes elsewhere in an aphorism, “what is intended to

be actively destroyed must first of all have been firmly grasped,”¹ he recounts the tale in the following form:

Mathilde was constantly irritating [Meissner] with her outbursts against the Germans: they were spiteful, opinionated, overly clever, quibbling, and pushy – in short, an unbearable people. “You don’t know the Germans at all,” Meissner finally answered back. “Henry’s social circle here in Paris consists entirely of German journalists,” he told her, “and they are all Jews.” “Come on,” she responded, “you’re exaggerating, of course there might be a Jew here or there in the bunch. Take Seiffert, for instance.” “No,” said Meissner, “he is the only non-Jew.” “Really?” said Mathilde. “What about Jeitteles?” she asked, who was a strong, blond specimen of a man: “could he be a Jew?” “Of course,” said Meissner. But “Bamberger?” “Him too.” “Amstein?” “Just the same.” And so it followed as she went down the list of all his acquaintances. Finally, Mathilde became angry and said: “You’re just trying to make fun of me! Now you’ll try to top it off by telling me that ‘Kohn’ is a Jewish name, but Kohn is a cousin of Henry’s and Henry is a Lutheran!” (to this Meissner had no response).²

Kafka concludes by entertaining his future readers with this moral: “in any case, you don’t seem frightened of Judaism at all”: Mathilde is thereby redeemed from her role as the idiot of the Jewish family by her failure to master the terms that would place every individual in a universal box. In this failure to reduce Germans and Jews to their dominant paradigms, Mathilde becomes quite beautifully singular, as she makes a mockery of universally valid categories. Her wisdom therefore refers us neither to the philo-Semite, sometimes defined as an anti-Semite who likes Jews, nor to the Talmudic adage that all praise carries within it the seeds of its opposite by holding us to a pattern we can only fail to match. In her own inimitable fashion, Heine’s wife points us toward those multiple differences that fit no priestly definition – national, religious, or otherwise: she is, in other words, the potential *mensch* of the story, or the Jewish definition of the human being.

Why would Kafka – like Wittgenstein – highlight these multiple pleasures of the universal? The reason, as his own story about Heine suggests, was that such categories for identity had already reduced Jews, and other others, into a stage comedy of types that were much less enjoyable in his period. And by discussing “whether I am a Jew” with his translator, Kafka was raising the question of his reception as a Jewish writer with this negative – that is, reductive – form of

1 Franz Kafka, *The Blue Octavo Notebooks*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins, Exact Change, Cambridge 1991, 95; Franz Kafka, *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente II* [*Posthumous Writings and Fragments II*], ed. Jost Schillemeit, S. Fischer, Frankfurt/M. 1992, 133: “Was tätig zerstört werden soll, muß vorher ganz fest gehalten worden sein.”

2 Franz Kafka, letter to Milena Jenská, 30 May 1920, in *Briefe an Milena* [*Letters to Milena*], Fischer, Frankfurt/M. 1983, 93, my translation.

comedy in mind. Such acts of self-definition, for Kafka, were thus a special kind of pain: something less than a pursuit of philosophical meaning, yet also more profound, in that his writing cleverly internalizes and explodes the narrowness of national clichés. “You as a woman of Prague,” Kafka therefore tells Milena, “will not be so innocent.” For “innocent,” Kafka uses the German word *harmlos*: for while universal definitions can indeed inflict much *harm*, we are not so easily *los*, or rid of them, especially, as he means to relate to her, where the Jews are concerned. Joking, according to some definitions of humor, indeed sought to singularize this gift as a “Jewish” capacity (one often heralded in the Yiddish writers Kafka studied) to produce a literature of “laughter through tears.” However, Jewish literature, the baby in this quotation, should not be thrown out with the bathwater. For Kafka defined his own reception as a writer in these German Jewish terms. “Thoughts of Freud,” Kafka wrote in 1912, when reflecting on his story “The Judgment” (“Das Urteil”) but also on Max Brod and his *Arnold Beer: das Schicksal eines Judens* [*Arnold Beer: The Fate of a Jew*] (1912) and on Jakob Wasserman, who in 1918 would produce the classic *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude* [*My Life as German and Jew*] (1921).³ For just as Kafka was famously opposed to psychoanalysis, he regarded his peers as those German Jewish writers able to take deadening – and ostensibly universal – national definitions and make them come alive.

It would be the “universalist” Freud who, in 1927, defined “humor” as the ability of the ego to obtain pleasure from a painful situation.⁴ Kafka found this position through a Jewish doorway to the plural, and took it far from home. Scholars generally agree that Kafka would never have experienced his “breakthrough” to stature as a universal modernist writer without his having fallen in love, in 1911–1912, with the Yiddish theater he brought to Prague. In this same period, Kafka carefully read Meyer Pines’s *Histoire de la littérature Judeo-Allemande* [*History of Judeo-German Literature*], noting the following – one wants to say Freudian – description of Jewish writing and its unique European voice: in defining the style of Mendele, Pines states, “c’était un rire à travers des larmes,” that is, “it was a laughter through tears, more painful and full of sorrow than tears themselves.”⁵ This intensified feeling of sorrow, according to Pines, became the trigger

3 Franz Kafka, diary entry of 23 September 1912, in *The Diaries 1910–1923*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Joseph Kresh and Martin Greenberg with the cooperation of Hannah Arendt, Schocken Books, New York 1976 [1948], 213.

4 Sigmund Freud, “Humour,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, Hogarth Press, London 1961, XXI: 163.

5 Meyer Pines, *Histoire de la littérature Judeo-Allemande*, Jouve et Cis, Éditeurs, Paris 1911, 410.

that unleashed “this spirit of gaiety and good-natured openness” that Yiddish literature makes the reader feel. This quiet openness to multiple influences finds its surprising “father” figure, as he was called, in Sholem Aleichem, who borrowed the motto “laughter through tears” from the famous Chapter VII of Gogol’s *Dead Souls*. Yiddish, Kafka learned, was less than averse to lifting its pleasures from more “universal” European languages – that is, “great” literatures that had cornered the market on prestige. And so Kafka understood that, as follows from this version of Jewish tradition, “tears” could be cried with a hidden smile as Russian and other literary influences entered through the door.

Kafka expressed his joy at this discovery in his famous diary entry of 25 December 1911. There, Kafka outlines his concept of “small” or “minor” literatures, as French post-structuralist theory calls them, though his use of Jewish tradition deserves a more enjoyable description than that. A better name for the Jewish and universal Kafka would be post-pleasure-less: for in Yiddish and the new writing of modern Hebrew, he noted, the “antithesis between sons and fathers, and the possibility of discussing this,” appears in a new way: as the “presentation of national faults in a manner that is painful, to be sure, but also liberating and deserving of forgiveness.”⁶ “Pain,” in Kafka’s formulation, thus signals a process of liberation already underway. The “faults” of the nation – the signs of its struggles – were to be regarded as different forms of “universal” patterns as they emerged – and forgiveness as the art of an unbinding that set these multiple forms of energy free. Were Freud to be summoned from the dead to join a discussion, we might discover him sitting in the back of the room, in the same spot where a Talmudic parable places Moses: the position in Talmudic academies awarded to the worst readers of the Torah.⁷ If, in the tradition of Jewish commentary, the author of the Law itself – Moses, our Teacher – gets the cheap seats, then Freud should be similarly honored, albeit in Kafka’s perspective. Where Freud imagined a father killed by his sons – envious, no doubt, of the father’s Egyptian as well as Hebrew origins – Kafka saw a house with many mansions: “Abraham,” after all, means *Av Hamon* [אב המון], or “father of a multitude,” in the Hebrew text.⁸ In the Jewish tradition, the author of the Law sits at the back of the Talmudic Academy because

⁶ Kafka, diary entry of 25 December 1911, in *The Diaries*, 148.

⁷ *Babylonian Talmud*, Tractate Menahot 29B. For the text and discussion, see Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, *Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition, and Culture*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London 1999, 271–272.

⁸ See Genesis 17:5: “but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father a multitude of nations,” footnote b: [Abraham]: “understood as ‘father of a multitude.’” *Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia 1985, 23.

he is the “worst” student of his own text: because, as this Mosaic figure suggested to Kafka, the “universal” meaning of the father is more varied – and ultimately more marked by the traces of many nations – than the author himself could see.

In Kafka’s view, the “people” or “nation” suffers from uniformity because of the narrow roles accorded to “others”: like the odd woman or gay male, whose pleasures are judged a failure rather than as the new forms of reading and expression they actually are. In this respect, Kafka’s innovation re-discovered “forgiveness” as a Jewish pleasure: in his re-reading of Abraham and the binding of Isaac, for instance, it is the patriarch, who would impose his deadly form of universality on the son, who receives the honored position of Moses and is thus placed at the back of the class. “I can imagine,” Kafka wrote, “a different Abraham for myself.”⁹ Instead, Kafka’s original patriarch is re-imagined as an “old clothes dealer,” whose assemblage of a nation from different, cast-off sources was his grandest human quality of all. In this same spirit, Kafka identified what he called “the old story” – “universal” roles of father and son that he thought were deserving of “Verwandlung,” or transformation: that is, of being situated on a new stage for the German Jewish voice.

1 Paradox as Comedy: Kafka and Beckett

As Kafka recorded in a notebook, “universal” and “particular” were, as terms for the father-son struggle, already stale formulations: they constituted a staging that made one forget that a bad – because limiting – script was not the real thing. The problem, for Kafka, was therefore not that Freudian interpretation was Jewish; rather, it was that such interpretation was not Jewish enough in its ability to take pleasure from these vaudeville scenes. In this way, Adorno’s quip – that in psychoanalysis only the exaggerations are true – can be understood as his own version of Kafka’s reading of Freud.¹⁰ For “while psychoanalysis lays stress on the father-complex and finds the concept intellectually fruitful,” as Kafka wrote to Max Brod in 1921, “in this case I prefer another version, where the issue revolves not around the innocent father but the father’s Jewishness,” that is, a version where exaggerations are already implicit and waiting to have their truth values

⁹ Franz Kafka, “Abraham,” trans. Clement Greenberg, in *Parables and Paradoxes in German and English*, Schocken Books, New York 1946, 36–41, 41.

¹⁰ Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* [*Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben*], trans. E.F.N. Jephcott, Verso, London 1978, section 29, “Dwarf Fruit,” 49.

uncovered in the canonical text.¹¹ Kafka's reflections on Abraham, the original Jewish father figure, already envision, in 1918, this notion of "general" paternal authority as a displacement of actual life, its lively borrowings and trades – as a theater to be renewed. "It is as if," Kafka writes, "the back and forth between the general and the particular were taking place on the real stage, and, as if, on the other hand, life in general were only sketched in on the background scenery."¹²

Samuel Beckett's relation to English was similar in this respect to Kafka's feeling for German: both encountered languages that needed to be re-created, and each found his own way out. With English having reduced Irish culture to stereotype, Beckett's desire to break the hold of that language through humor is particularly evident in the Shakespearean sonnet presented in *Watt*, his final English novel. In this miniature poem that critics have discovered hiding amidst his prose, Beckett uses an English form to find his Irish voice. Repunctuating the prose sentence (and adding a rhyme scheme) yields the following poetic form:

The wacks, (A)
the moans, (B)
the cracks, (A)
the groans. (B)

The welts, (C)
the squeaks, (D)
the belts, (C)
the shrieks. (D)

The pricks, (E)
the prayers, (F)
the kicks, (E)
the tears. (F)

The skelps, (G)
and the yelps. (G)

With this sentence Beckett has in fact produced the most classic form of English poetry: the fourteen points follow the rhyme scheme of the Shakespearean sonnet, even as they scream against the English brutality that wears gentleman's clothes. The hatred of English becomes the pleasure of rejecting its most "British," and

¹¹ Franz Kafka, letter to Max Brod, June 1921, in *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston, Schocken Books, New York 1977, 286–289, 289.

¹² Kafka, *The Blue Octavo Notebooks*, 55.

thus most sickening, assumptions about his people: learning the language, in other words, begins when “life begins to ram her fish and chips down your gullet and you puke.”¹³

Beckett did eventually expel the English language, subsequently writing his greatest works in French. As Mark Nixon has noted, Beckett was, as early as 1931, when he published his “A Casket of Pralinen for a Daughter of a Dissipated Mandarin,” already conceiving of “waste” as a model for his literary products.¹⁴ This process intensified in the 1930s, when his final English works appeared; these were published in the journal *transition*, alongside early translations of Kafka and the first sections of Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*. Beckett’s “Casket” was quite alive: much in the spirit of Kafka’s story that begins “I Was A Visitor Among the Dead” [*Ich War Unter den Toten zu Gast*], where the underworld contains a “Jewish maiden” [*ein Judenmädchen*] who refuses to wear a shroud.¹⁵ Beckett likewise thought of national literary categories as deathly for the living force of literary creation: he sought, as he states in a German-language letter to Axel Kaun, “to bore one hole after another” [*ein Loch nach dem anderen in ihr zu bohren*] in what he called “official” language and literature.¹⁶ The only writing truly alive for Beckett – as Kafka’s Jewish figure already suggests – had re-opened the connections between different languages, to escape the living death of literature as separate and sealed-off national spheres. Beckett’s “Casket of Pralinen” therefore recognized the sweets of national literatures as productive of “memory’s involuntary vomit”¹⁷: the creation of canons that could not be swallowed, and whose tastes for the voices of other nations needed to be read anew. And it would be the remnants – those multiple differences – of this mother tongue that would speak with the greatest eloquence in Beckett’s French-language novel *Molloy*, an Irish name that combines “mother” with a recapture of his linguist “alloy.”

Kafka’s attitude toward German was quite similar, if his “Letter to the Father” (“Brief an den Vater,” translated as “Letter to His Father”), from 1921, is any guide. “Six months of German Studies,” Kafka recalls, followed by law studies

13 Samuel Beckett, *Watt*, Grove Press, New York 1953, 55, 44

14 Mark Nixon, *Samuel Beckett’s German Diaries 1936–1937*, Continuum, New York 2011, 58.

15 Franz Kafka, “Bei den Toten zu Gast” (“A Guest Among the Dead”), in *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa* [*The Stories and Other Selected Prose*], ed. Roger Hermes, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt/M. 2002, 354–356, 356.

16 Samuel Beckett, “German Letter of 1937,” in *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn, Grove Press, New York 1984, 51–55, 52.

17 See Samuel Beckett, “A Casket of Pralinen for a Daughter of a Dissipated Mandarin,” in Lawrence Harvey, *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1970, 278–283, 281.

at Prague's German university, had each given him the pre-Beckett experience of digesting a literary and legal language that was pabulum, especially from a German national point of view: "I was positively living, in an intellectual sense," Kafka notes, "on sawdust, which had, moreover, already been chewed for me in other people's mouths."¹⁸ In his discussion of the Jewish vernacular in Prague, Kafka notes that in Yiddish he found what he called the "youngest European language," that is, a memory of the translation roots which languages like German and Yiddish shared.¹⁹ He had thus discovered a multiple perspective on a German language whose myth of origin, like that of Beckett's English, he felt had been ruthlessly forced upon him. Whereas English claimed cultural priority in Ireland – and branded the Irish as comic imitators – French, for Beckett, exposed many of the pieces from which English was composed. And whereas German forced the "Jewish mother" into a cold, staged role as a would-be Christian – "the Jewish 'Mutter' is no mother," Kafka wrote – Yiddish exposed those holes, in Beckett's sense, between "official" and unofficial forms of the national voice.²⁰ The original German form of "we are," Kafka observed, had in fact become secondary: the earlier form was actually preserved in the Yiddish "mir seien," thus rendering the Yiddish, itself closer to middle high German, more "original" than standard German itself. Kafka therefore urges his audience in Prague to be wary not of Yiddish, their own deliciously varied language, but rather "of yourselves" for running from its multiple national embrace: "for we did not come to punish you," Kafka concludes.²¹

Beckett's English was much like Kafka's German in this respect, especially given Beckett's dislike for universals and the humor he attained by switching to French. Thus in *Molloy*, when the hero declares – first in French, and then in Beckett's English translation – that he was "born out of my mother's arse, if I am correct,"²² no Irish self-hatred or misogyny is involved. Beckett's object is English, his mother tongue: Molloy reminds us that he was, as the original French so aptly puts it, born "par le trou," – that is, "by the truth"; in other words, the "whole"

¹⁸ Franz Kafka, "Letter to His Father," trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins, in *The Basic Kafka*, ed. Erich Heller, Pocket Books, New York 1979, 186–236, 223.

¹⁹ Franz Kafka, "Einleitungsvortrag über Jargon" ["Talk on the Yiddish Language"], in Franz Kafka, *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente I* [*Posthumous Writings and Fragments I*], ed. Malcolm Pasley, S. Fischer, Frankfurt/M. 1992, 188–193, 189.

²⁰ Kafka, diary entry of 24 October 1911, in *The Diaries*, 88.

²¹ Kafka, "Einleitungsvortrag über Jargon," 190, 193, my translation.

²² Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*, trans. Patrick Bowles in collaboration with Samuel Beckett, in *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*, Grove Press, New York 1955, 12; Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*, Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris 1951, 20.

of English generalizations about the Irish should be expelled and treated as utter waste. The true “hole” – or “Loch,” as Beckett writes in his “German Letter of 1937” – is where original identity arrives already defaced by prejudiced attitudes: precisely that point where a multiple, trans-national channel of influence receives its sign. As in Kafka, however – who referred to “The Judgment” as a story that emerged “covered in filth and slime”²³ – birth imagery is used as the opportunity to re-imagine one’s native ground. And in a doubly original sense: Beckett reclaims the Irish tradition of scatological humor in this passage, using Kafka to explain that German and English notions of identity are indeed a pain in the behind, so to speak, and establishing a breakthrough from closed national attitudes to multiple-linguistic style. Hence Beckett’s allusion to the French version of Kafka’s diary entry, as provided by Max Brod in 1945.²⁴ One would, of course, very much like to say that *ceteris paribus*, or all other things being equal, Kafka’s Jewish attitude toward German works the same way as Beckett’s self-delivery from English, that is, via the courtesy of French. The point of humor, for both Beckett and Kafka, is precisely to discover the positive and multiple meanings of the different, in those many linguistic passageways that already inhabit the universal judgments of a more prestigious tongue.

Such is the “way out” described in Kafka’s “A Report to an Academy” (“Ein Bericht für eine Akademie”), a story published in Martin Buber’s monthly journal *Der Jude* [*The Jew*] in 1917. This tale – of an African ape who is captured, boxed, and shipped to Berlin by the German circus – is Kafka’s most Jewish story in this humorous sense, as it encourages the reader to de-identify with the German language the narrator has so carefully acquired. Little wonder, then, that Beckett’s “Premier Amour,” or first love – one of his first French compositions after the Second World War – would visit the grave of the “wild animal collector Hagen-

23 Kafka, diary entry of 11 February 1913, in *The Diaries*, 214. The passage reads: “the story came out of me like a real birth, covered with filth and slime, and only I have the hand that can reach to the body itself, and the strength of desire to do so.”

24 The quotation, from Kafka’s diary in French translation, reads: “car ce récit est sorti de moi comme par un véritable accouchement, couvert de souillures et de mucus.” See Max Brod, *Franz Kafka: souvenirs et documents* [*Franz Kafka, Memories and Documents*], trans. Hélène Zylberberg, Gallimard, Paris 1945, 149. Beckett’s final library contained the version cited here: a French translation of Brod’s *Franz Kafka: Eine Biographie: Erinnerungen und Dokumente* [*Franz Kafka: A Biography: Reminiscences and Documents*], Heinrich Mercy Sohn, Prague 1937. See Dirk Van Hulle and Mark Nixon, *Samuel Beckett’s Library*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2013, 239.

beck,” the “Führer,” or “leader,” of Kafka’s earlier tale.²⁵ The obvious Jewish, as well as African, paradox of Kafka’s story has always been that Peter, though he is the “animal” of the tale, is far more human than his German captors. Less obvious is how the similarity between Jews and Africans opens the vulgar stereotypes in which both were confined. Indeed, Arthur Holitscher’s *Amerika Heute und Morgen* [*America Today and Tomorrow*] – Kafka’s source for his novel *Amerika* – reports a conversation between the author and an African American he met on the streets of New York’s Tin Pan Alley: the young man informs him that “our fates share much in common: we negroes and the Jews!”²⁶ In this, the source for Kafka’s “ape” – who has been enslaved by his German captors and then carried over sea to Berlin – the African American from the vaudeville world effectively tells his Jewish friend: “We’re in the same boat!”

The African ape of “A Report to an Academy” is therefore deeply Jewish, though for exactly the opposite reason that Kafka scholars have traditionally suggested. The standard reception of the story regards Peter as “Jewish” because he is “assimilated” and “aping” German customs: the comedy of the story reveals more than one hole in the vaudeville reductions that the philosophic tradition has substituted for thought. Germans are of course the ostensible “apes” in this story, having assimilated stereotypes in unthinking fashion, thus constituting what Beckett termed the “*risus purus*,” or the laugh at that which is “unhappy.”²⁷ This purest laughter – in Beckett as in Kafka – occurs when one escapes from the highest – and also stupidest – concepts that give so much pain, and approaches the multiple forms of our common human ground. As Kafka’s narrator relates, with a broad range of cultural reference present in his voice, “The whole construction was too low for me to stand up in, and too narrow for me to sit down in.”²⁸ These Germans, he informs the reader, have also imitated a Jewish sage:

25 Samuel Beckett, “First Love,” in *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Short Prose 1929–1989*, ed. S.E. Gontarski, Grove Press, New York 1995, 25–45, 27. Kafka’s Red Peter recalls the “hunting expedition sent out by the firm of Hagenbeck – by the way, I have drunk many a bottle of good red wine since then with the leader of that expedition.” See Franz Kafka, “A Report to an Academy,” trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer, Schocken Books, New York 1972, 250–259, 251; Franz Kafka, “Ein Bericht für eine Akademie,” in *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa*, 322–333, 323: “Jagdexpedition der Firma Hagenbeck – mit dem Führer habe ich übrigens seither manche gute Flasche Rotwein geleert.”

26 My translation. The original German reads: “Unsere Schicksale haben ja viel Ähnlichkeit miteinander. Und dann kommen wir beiden aus Afrika, wir Neger und die Juden.” See Arthur Holitscher, *Amerika Heute und Morgen*, S Fischer Verlag, Berlin 1912, 365.

27 Beckett, *Watt*, 48.

28 Kafka, “A Report to an Academy,” 252.

their arrangement recalls a passage from Moses Maimonides, who himself had taken his definition of the African from the Aristotelian-Arabic philosophers of the middle ages. In this respect, one could say that in Kafka's fiction Jews have the potential to become the best kind of human animals: creatures so full of "variété" – a job that Peter is offered – that they break out of any German or Jewish cage.²⁹

2 Bite Your Tongue: Kafka's Jewish Multi-lingualism

In Kafka's "The Judgment," Georg Bendemann offers this tasty and ultimately open response to his father: "'You Comedian!' Georg could not resist the retort, realized at once the harm he had done and, his eyes starting in his head, bit his tongue back, only too late, till the pain made his knees give."³⁰ Georg's attempt at self-stifling is only the surface meaning of this phrase: when he "bit his tongue back" [*biß in seine Zunge*] the bite triggers a trembling gesture – "a *Beltschmerz*,"³¹ according to Beckett – that one feels when multiple meanings begin their transition to expressive form. A transfer and indeed a translation are acted out in this scene. First, the son indicates the staged quality of the father's angry performance – "You Comedian!" is reminiscent of the "transitional generation of Jews" as described in Kafka's "Letter to His Father": the vaudeville terms suggest how Jewish fathers of his generation would resort to Yiddish curses in their anger and rage.³² "Biting the Tongue" indicates a taste for the multiple in this respect – Kafka's translation of what in Yiddish has been called "Pronouncing the Magic Word *Kholile* and its Relatives."³³ Loosely translatable into English as "Horrors!" or "Perish the Thought," these "Kholile" expressions can be termed an opening to multiple pleasures: in Kafka's translation, "Kholile" appears in German where

²⁹ On Maimonides in Kafka's text, and "variété" as an allusion to connections between disparate national traditions, see David Suchoff, *Kafka's Jewish Languages: the Hidden Openness of Tradition*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 2012, 4.

³⁰ Franz Kafka, "The Judgment," trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*, 77–88, 86.

³¹ Samuel Beckett, "What A Misfortune," in *More Pricks Than Kicks*, Grove Press, New York 1972, 114–151, 118.

³² Kafka, "Letter to His Father," in *The Basic Kafka*, 186–236, 217.

³³ James A. Matisoff, *Blessings, Curses, Hopes and Fears: Psycho-Ostensive Expressions in Yiddish*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2000, 48–49.

the bite, or *biß*, in other words, opens our tastes to a series of trans-linguistic meanings, alive on the tip of the filial – that is, a complex and ramified tongue. For “it was not so long ago,” as Kafka informs his audience in Prague in 1912, that “the familiar colloquial language [*Verkehrssprache*] of German Jews [...] seemed to be a remoter or closer approximation to *Jargon*, and many nuances remain to this day.”³⁴

“Bite Your Tongue,” in this signal gesture, holds back: in a way that fully tastes the variety of the pleasure withheld: a good description of the richness that comes across in Kafka’s German style. In much the same fashion, the *Kholile* principle of Yiddish, as James Matisoff notes, is most often used sarcastically: telling us something is terrible – God forbid – as a way of admitting a fuller viewpoint and its pleasures. The saying about comedy that Kafka cites bites its own tongue in just this sense: – “a joke can, *kholile*,” lay waste to an entire world, when abhorrence, that is, is at the same time enjoying a more expressive voice: already tasting, as it were, the plural meanings of both the German and Jewish tongue.³⁵ As a model for reading Kafka, this “bite” in the “tongue” also offers a morsel of Kafka’s sense of humor, whose joys have been savored far too little in the reception he has received. Of this crime, however, Freud can certainly be forgiven, even in Kafka’s own Jewish terms, since Kafka exemplifies this version of recapturing the past by taking the father’s place in a more pleasurable way: in this case, in the small connections that Kafka draws between German and Jewish speech. In this minute instance, abhorrence already enjoys an expanded form of linguistic pleasure: namely, the “*biß*” that is already tasting, as it were, “a *bisl*” – a little bit, or bite, in English – of the meanings common to both the German and Jewish mouth.³⁶

Kafka’s Jewish reception could therefore be said to be lacking because – *Kholile!* – readers have taken such “Comedian!” moments in a singular way. Georg’s gesture also enacts a completion of Goethe’s “loosening one’s tongue” [*die Zunge los*].³⁷ *Kholile*, essentially a form of biting one’s tongue – that is, of

34 Franz Kafka, “An Introductory Talk on the Yiddish Language,” trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins, in Mark Anderson, ed., *Reading Kafka: Prague, Politics and the Fin de Siècle*, Schocken Books, New York 1989, 263–266, 266; Kafka, “Einleitungsvortrag,” in *Nachgelassene Schriften I*, 192.

35 Matishoff, *Blessings, Curses, Hopes and Fears*, 49

36 Kafka thus preferred books, as he wrote in 1904, “die einen beißen und stechen” – “that bite and stick.” See Franz Kafka, letter to Oskar Pollak, 27 January 1904, in *Briefe [Letters] 1902–1924*, Schocken Books, New York 1958, 27.

37 See Kafka, diary entry of 16 November 1910, in *The Diaries*, 28: “I’m reading *Iphigenie auf Tauris* [*Iphigenia in Tauris*]. Here, aside from some isolated, plainly faulty passages, the dried up

magically neutralizing a painful state of affairs, and thus enjoying the broadest secular tastes – enjoys a rich tradition in the Hebrew language. In the Hebrew Bible the root of the word for “horrors” in this Yiddish sense was deeply anti-theological from the start and appears in boundary-crossing forms that suggest the universal pleasure involved. Thus the same Hebrew root that means “desecrate, ruin, make unfit” – but also “to begin anew” – first appears in the Hebrew text when Abraham pleads with God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah; he tells God that destroying the cities would be an act of desecration: “Far be it from You” – literally *Kholila* – “to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty” (Genesis 18:25).³⁸ A related form of the word appears in Jeremiah 31:5, a source that Kafka alludes to in *The Castle* via the name of the character Jeremias, one of the two playful “assistants.” In the biblical book of Jeremiah, Hebrew accordingly gives a form of *khalel* and its “horrors” as a form of reaping joy: “men shall plant, and live to enjoy common things,” as the verse is translated in a version that highlights “Khol” – literally, “sand.” In modern Hebrew this everyday word now means “secular,” as opposed to a religiously narrow point of view. In this particulate and grammatical sense, “Khol” in the Hebrew of Jeremiah can be said to speak of the common and multiple soil from which all life grows and thus to offer a hint of the many differences in our language and of the lives that bear the most enjoyable human fruit.

Kafka’s humor performs a secular version of these Jewish linguistic pleasures. In his diary entry of 26 January 1912, he notes the “eastern Jewish habit of biting one’s lips” [*Ostjudische Gewohnheit des an den Lippen Beißens*] as being another model of such expansive linguistic control – such as when we taste meanings that are ready to explode.³⁹ This expressive potential well describes a figure like Kafka’s Odradek, in his aptly named “The Cares of a Housefather” (“Die Sorge eines Hausvaters”) (translated into English as “The Cares of a Family Man”), who gives forth “only the kind of laughter that has no lungs behind it.”⁴⁰

German language in the mouth of a pure boy is really to be regarded with absolute amazement. The verse, at the moment of its reading, lifts every word up to heights where it stands in perhaps a thin but penetrating light.” “Vom alten Bande löset ungern sich/Die Zunge los,” as Goethe’s Iphigenia says, “ein lang verschwiegenes / Geheimniß endlich zu entdecken” [Its ancient bands reluctantly my tongue Doth loose, a long-hid secret to divulge].

38 See Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, “חָלַל, חֲלִילָה,” in *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1968, 370.

39 Kafka, diary entry of 26 January 1912, in *The Diaries*, 174; Franz Kafka, *Tagebücher II: 1912–1914*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt/M. 1994, 25.

40 Franz Kafka, “The Cares of a Family Man,” trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*, 427–429, 428

In biblical Hebrew, “lip” designates what other languages call “tongue” – that is, a bit, as it were, of the language that helps the reader to discover the many senses of what Odradek’s breathless laughter might mean. “Safa” – “lip,” in English – in biblical and modern Hebrew also means “language”: and breath, forced through lips, teeth and tongue, shapes one’s voice, in what is known as pronunciation [*Aussprache*], or how a particular accent is given to the words brought to speech. In this spirit, it would be correct to say that what worries the “Housefather” of Kafka’s story is the peculiar accent of the son – Odradek – whose voice – like the meanings of his name – can be pronounced so many ways. That Odradek is also a figure from Jewish tradition is clear in the story: for while this creature looks like a “spool” for collecting many threads, he is also “star-shaped” and promises to be there “at the feet of my children, and my children’s children,”⁴¹ recalling the wording of many Hebrew prayers. Not surprisingly, this figure for the open future of the tradition provokes a *kholile* reaction – Žižek calls him an emblem of “castration”⁴² – that fearful reaction of the master toward the “lachen” or “laughter” of the son. That Odradek lacks “lungs” suggests a Hebrew vernacular that had long remained unspoken – except for the “Blätter” or dead “leaves” of tradition – while this same figure who remains “Od” – Hebrew, meaning “more,” “another,” or “differently” – names the potential of a language whose best days are still to come.

This “horror” at transformed future was not to be taken that seriously – at least in the sources Kafka knew. “The idea that he is likely to survive me I find almost painful” [*ist mir eine fast schmerzliche*], the Haus-Vater, or House-Father, declares – worrying his way to pleasure, like balabustas of every national taste.⁴³ A Talmudic story Kafka possessed – the debate over ritual purity known as “The Oven of Akhnai” – suggests the sources from which this humor drew.⁴⁴ Like much Jewish commentary, this parable was less concerned with purity than with how the Hebrew tradition could flourish in the actual world. And like Kafka’s father figures, Rabbinic authority initially turns the world upside down in its quest for interpretive judgment and control. A stream of water flows in reverse, a carob tree uproots itself one hundred yards from its place: all without convincing the academy of any single answer. And when “the very walls of the schoolroom

⁴¹ Kafka, “Cares of a Housefather,” 428, 429.

⁴² Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, MIT Press, Cambridge 2006, 121.

⁴³ Franz Kafka, “Die Sorge eines Hausvaters,” in *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa*, 343–344, 344.

⁴⁴ Baba Metzia 59b here is quoted from Jakob Fromer, *Der Organismus des Judentums* [*The Organism of Judaism*], Selbstverlag des Verfassers, Charlottenburg 1909, 118, my translation. The book was in Kafka’s library and is discussed in his diary.

began to topple” in support of Rabbi Eliezer, the decree that the answer “is not in heaven” settles the case. And what did the Holy one, blessed be he, do in that hour?” the prophet Elijah is asked at the end. “God smiled,” according to the text, then spoke the following words – “my children have defeated Me, my children have defeated Me” – For the superiority of our children – as all good parents know – is the most lasting Jewish pleasure of all.⁴⁵ For just as Latin lives on in English and German – “Vater”(“Father”) might be the best example – Odradek’s “laughter,” like the “rustling” of apparently dead linguistic “leaves,” suggests what Hebrew calls *kedusha* – the blessing of a life that thrives in new and unexpected forms “unto all generations” (Psalms 146:10).

Kafka’s Judaism was thus quite universal, in its own secular and different form. “The Messiah will come,” as Kafka wrote, “as soon as the most unbridled individualism of faith becomes possible – when there is no one to destroy this possibility and no one to suffer its destruction.”⁴⁶ This kind of Jewish expectancy is the reverse of a self-fulfilling prophecy that holds us back: for once we have discovered the many differences in ourselves, Kafka tells us, the idea of waiting for someone to liberate us can truly be left behind. As in a Jewish joke, Kafka’s messiah comes only when he’s no longer necessary: and so will he will appear in the figure of the nudnik when he finally arrives: the messiah is a pest who has been superseded – “no longer needed” – once we have become the multiple creatures that we are.⁴⁷ The way Kafka waited for this possibility was quite singular – a posture dramatized in my concluding passage, from Kafka’s “Investigations of a Dog” (“Forschungen eines Hundes”):

⁴⁵ Kafka’s story is likewise less concerned with the name of the father than with the meanings to be discovered in the name of the son. “Some say the word ‘Odradek’ is of Slavonic origin, and try to account for it on that basis,” Kafka begins his story of filiation: “others believe it to be of German origin, only influenced by the Slavonic,” indulging in a form of self-citation. For such was precisely the linguistic history of Yiddish, which, as Kafka told his Prague audience when lecturing on that language, was spoken in different versions – more influenced by German or Slavic sources – depending on whether the Jews lived in East or West. See Kafka, “An Introductory Talk on the Yiddish Language,” 266.

⁴⁶ Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, 81.

⁴⁷ In terms of a distinction between two kinds of messianism, in which a global – one would say, universal – form requires the destruction of existing arrangements, while a smaller form of the messianic spirit consists of the work of mending the world. The latter is known as *tikkun olam*: mending by discovering and accepting its openness to others, and establishing a universalism worth its name. Kafka’s messianic spirit would find its voice in his comic use of the former, as a screen for ultimately the more open form of the latter.

Our forefathers appeared threateningly before me. True, I held them to be responsible for everything, even if I dared not say so openly; it was they who involved our dog life in guilt, and so I could easily have responded to their menaces with counter-menaces: but I bow before their knowledge, it came from sources of which we know no longer, and for that reason, much as I may feel compelled to oppose them, I shall never actually overstep their laws, but content myself with wriggling out through these gaps, for which I have a fine sense of smell.⁴⁸

For the Kafka who called the “revolutionary” process a “continuous” one, such potential was ready to break out at any time.⁴⁹ “Certainly such freedom as is possible today is a wretched business,” Kafka assures us, “but nonetheless freedom, nonetheless a possession”⁵⁰ to discover the hidden openness of closed traditions to one another with the devotion of a research dog. As Kafka’s canine wisdom suggests, it is only these gaps in our legacies from the past that connect us and make us fully human – while allowing us to experience laughter, that animal in us all.

Works Cited

- Adorno, Theodor W., *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*. Trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1978).
- Anderson, Mark, *Reading Kafka: Prague, Politics and the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989).
- Beckett, Samuel, “A Casket of Pralinen for a Daughter of a Dissipated Mandarin,” in *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic*. Lawrence Harvey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970). 278–283.
- Beckett, Samuel, *The Complete Short Prose of Samuel Beckett 1929–1989*. Ed. S.E. Gontarski (New York: Grove Press, 1995).
- Beckett, Samuel, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*. Ed. Ruby Cohn (New York: Grove Press, 1984).
- Beckett, Samuel, “First Love,” in *The Complete Short Prose of Samuel Beckett 1929–1989*. Ed. S.E. Gontarski (New York: Grove Press, 1995), 25–45.
- Beckett, Samuel, “German Letter of 1937,” in *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*. Ed. Ruby Cohn (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 51–55.

⁴⁸ Franz Kafka, “Investigations of a Dog,” trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*, 278–316, 309–310; Franz Kafka, “Forschungen eines Hundes,” in *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa*, 411–455, 447–448.

⁴⁹ Kafka, Aphorism 6, in *The Basic Kafka*, 237; Kafka, *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente II*, 114.

⁵⁰ Kafka, “The Cares of a Family Man,” 316.

- Beckett, Samuel, *Molloy* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1951).
- Beckett, Samuel, *Molloy*, trans. Patrick Bowles in collaboration with Samuel Beckett, in *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (New York: Grove Press, 1955).
- Beckett, Samuel, *Watt* (New York: Grove Press, 1953).
- Beckett, Samuel, "What A Misfortune," in *More Pricks than Kicks* (New York: Grove Press, 1972), 114–151.
- Briggs, Charles Augustus et al., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).
- Brod, Max, *Franz Kafka, souvenirs et documents*. Trans. Hélène Zylberberg (Paris: Gallimard, 1945).
- Freud, Sigmund, "Humour," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), XXI 161–166.
- Fromer, Jakob, *Der Organismus des Judentums* (Charlottenburg: Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1909).
- Harvey, Lawrence, *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).
- Holitscher, Arthur, *Amerika Heute und Morgen* (Berlin: S Fischer Verlag, 1912).
- Kafka, Franz, "Abraham," trans. Clement Greenberg, in *Parables and Paradoxes in German and English* (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), 36–41.
- Kafka, Franz, *The Basic Kafka*. Ed. Erich Heller (New York: Pocket Books, 1979).
- Kafka, Franz, "Bei den Toten zu Gast," in *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa*. Ed. Roger Hermes (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002), 354–356.
- Kafka, Franz, "Ein Bericht für eine Akademie," in *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa*. Ed. Roger Hermes (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002), 322–333.
- Kafka, Franz, *The Blue Octavo Notebooks*. Ed. Max Brod. Trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins (Cambridge: Exact Change, 1991).
- Kafka, Franz, *Briefe 1902–1924* (New York: Schocken Books, 1958).
- Kafka, Franz, *Briefe an Milena* (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1983).
- Kafka, Franz, "The Cares of a Family Man," trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*. Ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 427–429.
- Kafka, Franz, *The Complete Stories*. Ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1972).
- Kafka, Franz, *The Diaries 1910–1923*. Ed. Max Brod. Trans. Joseph Kresh and Martin Greenberg with the cooperation of Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1976 [1948]).
- Kafka, Franz, "Einleitungsvortrag über Jargon," in *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente I*. Ed. Malcolm Pasley (Frankfurt/M.: S. Fischer, 1992), 188–193.
- Kafka, Franz, *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa*. Ed. Roger Hermes (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002).
- Kafka, Franz, "Forschungen eines Hundes," in *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa*. Ed. Roger Hermes (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002), 411–455.
- Kafka, Franz, "An Introductory Talk on the Yiddish Language," trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins, in *Reading Kafka: Prague, Politics and the Fin de Siècle*. Ed. Mark Anderson (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), 263–266.
- Kafka, Franz, "Investigation of a Dog," trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*. Ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 278–316.
- Kafka, Franz, "The Judgment," trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*. Ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 77–88.
- Kafka, Franz, "Letter to His Father," trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins, in *The Basic Kafka*. Ed. Erich Heller (New York: Pocket Books, 1979), 186–236.

- Kafka, Franz, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*. Trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Schocken Books, 1977).
- Kafka, Franz, *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente I*. Ed. Malcolm Pasley (Frankfurt/M.: S. Fischer, 1992).
- Kafka, Franz, *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente II*. Ed. Jost Schillemeit (Frankfurt/M.: S. Fischer, 1992).
- Kafka, Franz, *Parables and Paradoxes in German and English* (New York: Schocken Books, 1946).
- Kafka, Franz, "A Report to an Academy," trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*. Ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 250–259.
- Kafka, Franz, "Die Sorge eines Hausvaters," in *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa*. Ed. Roger Hermes (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002), 343–344.
- Kafka, Franz, *Tagebücher II: 1912–1914* (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994).
- Matishoff, James, A., *Blessings, Curses, Hopes and Fears: Psycho-Ostensive Expressions in Yiddish* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
- Nixon, Mark, *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries 1936–1937* (New York: Continuum, 2011).
- Pines, Meyer, *Histoire de la littérature Judeo-Allemande* (Paris: Jouve et Cis, Éditeurs, 1911).
- Rubenstein, Jeffrey L., *Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition, and Culture* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
- Suchoff, David, *Kafka's Jewish Languages: the Hidden Openness of Tradition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).
- Van Hulle, Dirk, and Mark Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985).
- Žižek, Slavoj, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).