

# Kafka And The Yiddish Theater Its Impact On His Work

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*Kafka's Last Trial: The Case of a Literary Legacy* Infobase Publishing

This book contains the diaries of the well-known Franz Kafka during the period 1910-1913, and would make a valuable addition to the bookshelf of anyone who is a fan of his works.

*Yiddish Theatre* Univ of Wisconsin Press

In 1911, Franz Kafka encountered the Kaiser Panorama: a stereoscopic peep show offering an illusion of three-dimensional depth. After the experience, he began to emulate the apparatus in his literary sketches, developing a style we might call "stereoscopic," juxtaposing, like the optical stereoscope, two images of the same object seen from slightly different perspectives. Isak Winkel Holm argues that Kafka's stereoscopic style is crucial to an understanding of the relation between literature and politics in Kafka's work. At the level of content, the stereoscopic style offers a representation of the basic order of a specific community. At the level of form, the stereoscopic style is structured as the juxtaposition of two dissimilar images of the same community. At the level of function, finally, the style provokes a reconsideration, and perhaps even a reconfiguration, of the social order itself. With insights from literary studies, philosophical aesthetics and political theory, *Kafka's Stereoscopes* offers a detailed but highly readable argument for the relevance of Kafka's literary works in today's political reality.

**Landmark Yiddish Plays** State University of New York Press

This major new study explores the historical and literary context of Kafka's writings and links them with his emerging sense of Jewish identity. Emphasized throughout is Kafka's concern with contemporary society, his distrust of its secular humanitarianism, and his yearning for a new kind of community: one based on religion. Robertson points out that in Kafka's early writing, social themes as well as psychological and moral ones are prominent but that in the later fiction many allusions and images are drawn from Jewish history and tradition. His aphorisms-whose significance has been overlooked until now-are interpreted as a coherent and profound meditation on religion and society and as the intellectual framework for much of the fiction.

*Kafka Goes to the Movies* Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG

These are also the years of Kafka's fascination with early forms of Zionism and the Yiddish theater despite his longing to be assimilated into the minority German culture in Prague; of his off-again, on-again engagement to Felice Bauer; of his long friendship with Max Brod; and of the outbreak of World War I, a war whose horrors Kafka's own writings sometimes seemed to prefigure."--BOOK JACKET.

**A Friend of Kafka, and Other Stories** Vintage

This volume contains the lectures delivered at an international conference in Israel devoted to the topic of Franz Kafka (1883-1924) and Zionism. Kafka's interests in Hebrew, Yiddish, and Jewish Nationalism and his various relationships to his Zionist friends and his participation in Jewish national and Zionist-related activity are explored from a number of different critical vantage points. Likewise, his writings are considered within the specific framework of Jewish nationalism and Zionism.

[Kafka and Cultural Zionism](#) Modern Library

My dissertation is about authority, respect, and their absurd and meaningless nature as demonstrated through Kafkas works and the U.S. situation comedy, Seinfeld. Both draw on traditions of Yiddish theater and Jewish humor. Central to this tradition is the undermining of authority through humor. This deflation of authority through a mode of humor that works with the absence of meaning then yields the related interpretive question of who has the authority when it comes to the reading of a work? My central claim will be that Kafkas works demand (and refuse) interpretation. The same might be said despite obvious differences of Seinfeld, where characters are constantly seeking social

recognition or stability, only to be absurdly undermined. Episodes of Seinfeld demonstrate similarities with Kafkas humor in that both represent an unfulfilled promise, that is to say a deferral of the inevitable. I question the canonical respectful interpretation of Kafka, arguing for a more playful and open interpretability. Laughing at Kafka is to draw from Seinfeld like making out during Schindlers List. This is at the heart of Jewish humor in that there is no proper response to Kafkas work. Laughter is the recognition of the absurdity of authority.

*When Kafka Says We* W. W. Norton & Company

From one of our most thought-provoking and admired writers, a brilliant, beautiful, and sometimes heartbreaking group of stories based on a circle of real people who are held together by love of their friend Franz Kafka. The sequence opens with Max Brod, Kafka's friend and literary executor, telling us about Kafka and Dora Diamant, their love growing stronger even as Kafka is dying of tuberculosis. Kafka talks with Brod about forgiving the Angel of Death, but Brod wonders if Franz is really talking about Brod's forgiving Kafka for the predicament he's put him in, having instructed Max to prove his love for Franz by burning the work Brod most admires: Franz's unpublished stories. Next there is a brief interlude—perhaps a lost Kafka story, or is it a story about a lost Kafka story which is perhaps itself masquerading as one of the things that in anger Brod neither burned nor published? The story that follows tells of Dora's marriage to the militant German Communist Lusk Lask and his attempt to break the hold of the angelic Kafka on his wife's imagination by giving her a daughter. We watch this family in its move to the Soviet Union to escape Hitler, and as Dora and her daughter flee the Soviet Union to escape Stalin, leaving Lusk behind in the Gulag. Later, when Lusk tries to connect with his daughter again, the Angel Kafka seems once again to stand in his way, a force in his daughter's life that seemingly destroys as it sustains. In the last story we meet Milena Jasenska, another of Kafka's lovers, and Eva, the woman who, after surviving Stalin's camps, meets Milena in a Nazi concentration camp and is reborn in this hell through her love for her, though perhaps trapped there in memory because of that love as well. By the end, these moving love stories with Kafka as their presiding ghost have told the calamitous story of Europe in the Century of the Camps. Imbued with a gravitas and dark irony that recall Kafka's own work, these stories nonetheless also bear the singular imaginary stamp and the keen psychological and emotional insight that have marked all of Jay Cantor's fiction.

**Kafka and the Yiddish Theater** Madison : University of Wisconsin Press

After Franz Kafka died in 1924, his novels and short stories were published in ways that downplayed both their author's roots in Prague and his engagement with Jewish tradition and language, so as to secure their place in the German literary canon. Now, nearly a century after Kafka began to create his fictions, Germany, Israel, and the Czech Republic lay claim to his legacy. Kafka's Jewish Languages brings Kafka's stature as a specifically Jewish writer into focus. David Suchoff explores the Yiddish and modern Hebrew that inspired Kafka's vision of tradition. Citing the Jewish sources crucial to the development of Kafka's style, the book demonstrates the intimate relationship between the author's Jewish modes of expression and the larger literary significance of his works. Suchoff shows how "The Judgment" evokes Yiddish as a language of comic curse and examines how Yiddish, African American, and culturally Zionist voices appear in the unfinished novel, *Amerika*. In his reading of *The Trial*, Suchoff highlights the black humor Kafka learned from the Yiddish theater, and he interprets *The Castle* in light of Kafka's involvement with the renewal of the Hebrew language. Finally, he uncovers the Yiddish and Hebrew meanings behind Kafka's "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse-Folk" and considers the recent legal case in Tel Aviv over the possession of Kafka's missing manuscripts as a parable of the transnational meanings of his writing.

[Kafka's Narrative Theater](#) Syracuse University Press

CONTENTS.- D. Pinski: Abigail, Forgotten souls.- S.J. Rabinowitsch: She must marry a doctor.- S. Ash: Winter, The sinner.- P. Hirschbein: In the dark.

[The Rise of the Modern Yiddish Theater](#) New York : Gordian Press  
 Publisher description

[Kafka's Jewish Languages](#) Rowman & Littlefield

David A. Brenner examines how Jews in Central Europe developed one of the first "ethnic" or "minority" cultures in modernity. Not exclusively "German" or "Jewish," the experiences of German-speaking Jewry in the decades prior to the Third Reich and the Holocaust were also negotiated in encounters with popular culture, particularly the novel, the drama and mass media. Despite recent scholarship, the misconception persists that Jewish Germans were bent on assimilation. Although subject to compulsion, they did not become solely "German," much less "European." Yet their behavior and values were by no means exclusively "Jewish," as the Nazis or other anti-Semites would have it. Rather, the German Jews achieved a peculiar synthesis between 1890 and 1933, developing a culture that was not only "middle-class" but also "ethnic." In particular, they reinvented Judaic traditions by way of a hybridized culture. Based on research in German, Israeli and American archives, *German-Jewish Popular Culture before the Holocaust* addresses many of the genres in which a specifically German-Jewish identity was performed, from the Yiddish theatre and Zionist humour all the way to sensationalist memoirs and Kafka's own kitsch. This middle-class ethnic identity encompassed and went beyond religious confession and identity politics. In focusing principally on German-Jewish popular culture, this groundbreaking book introduces the beginnings of "ethnicity" as we know it and live it today.

[The Diaries of Franz Kafka](#) Taylor & Francis

Known for depicting alienation, frustration, and the victimization of the individual by impenetrable bureaucracies, Kafka's works have given rise to the term Kafkaesque. This encyclopedia details Kafka's life and writings. Included are more than 800 alphabetically arranged entries on his works, characters, family members and acquaintances, themes, and other topics. Most of the entries cite works for further reading, and the Encyclopedia closes with a selected, general bibliography.

[Kafka Schocken](#)

The story of the international struggle to preserve Kafka's literary legacy. Kafka's Last Trial begins with Kafka's last instruction to his closest friend, Max Brod: to destroy all his remaining papers upon his death. But when the moment arrived in 1924, Brod could not bring himself to burn the unpublished works of the man he considered a literary genius—even a saint. Instead, Brod devoted his life to championing Kafka's writing, rescuing his legacy from obscurity and physical destruction. The story of Kafka's posthumous life is itself Kafkaesque. By the time of Brod's own death in Tel Aviv in 1968, Kafka's major works had been published, transforming the once little-known writer into a pillar of literary modernism. Yet Brod left a wealth of still-unpublished papers to his secretary, who sold some, held on to the rest, and then passed the bulk of them on to her daughters, who in turn refused to release them. An international legal battle erupted to determine which country could claim ownership of Kafka's work: Israel, where Kafka dreamed of living but never entered, or Germany, where Kafka's three sisters perished in the Holocaust? Benjamin Balint offers a gripping account of the controversial trial in Israeli courts—brimming with dilemmas legal, ethical, and political—that determined the fate of Kafka's manuscripts. Deeply informed, with sharply drawn portraits and a remarkable ability to evoke a time and place, Kafka's Last Trial is at once a brilliant biographical portrait of a literary genius, and the story of two countries whose national obsessions with overcoming the traumas of the past came to a head in a hotly contested trial for the right to claim the literary legacy of one of our modern masters.

[New York's Yiddish Theater](#) University of Chicago Press

The Animal in the Synagogue explores Franz Kafka's sense of being a Jew in the modern world and its literary and linguistic ramifications. It falls into two parts. The first is organized around the theme of Kafka's complex and often self-derogatory understanding and assessment of his own Jewishness and of the place the modern Jew occupies in "the abyss of the world" (Martin Buber). That part is based on a close reading of Kafka's correspondence with his Czech lover, Milena Jesenska, and on a meticulous analysis, thematic, stylistic, and structural, of Kafka's only short story touching openly and directly upon Jewish social and ritual issues, and known as "In Our Synagogue" (the title—not by the author). In both the letters and the short story images of small animals—repulsive, dirty, or otherwise objectionable—are used by Kafka as means of exploring his own manhood and the Jewish tradition at large as he understood it. The second part of the book focuses on Kafka's place within the complex of Jewish writing of his time in all its three linguistic forms: Hebrew writing (essentially Zionist), Yiddish writing (essentially nationalistic but not committed to Zionism), and the writing, like his, in non-Jewish languages (mainly German) and within the non-Jewish religious and artistic traditions which inhered in them. The essay deals in detail with Kafka's responses to contemporary Jewish literatures, and his pessimistic evaluation of those literatures' potential. Essentially, Kafka doubted the sheer possibility of a genuine and culturally tenable compromise (let alone synthesis) between Jewishness and modernity. The book deals with topics and some texts that the flourishing, ever expanding Kafka scholarship has either neglected or misunderstood because most scholars had no real background in either Hebrew or Yiddish studies, and were unable to grasp the nuances and subtle intentions in Kafka's attitudes toward modern Hebrew and Yiddish literature and their paragons, such as the major Zionist Hebrew poet H.N. Bialik or the Yiddish master Sholem Aleichem.

[Kafka's Narrative Theater](#) Routledge

A collection of critical essays on Kafka and his work arranged in chronological order of publication. *The Diaries of Franz Kafka 1910-1913* Ariadne Press (CA)

Offering snapshots of a pivotal era in which the Jews of Europe made the transition from a traditional to a more modern world, the Yiddish plays translated and collected here wrestle with issues that

continue to concern us today: changing gender roles, generational conflict, class divisions, and religious persecution. In their introduction to the volume, Joel Berkowitz and Jeremy Dauber place the plays in the context of the development of modern drama and Yiddish drama and examine their treatment of social, political, and religious issues. The many ways in which the plays address these issues make them transcend their own time, exciting a new generation of readers and theatergoers. [Kafka and the Yiddish Theater](#) University of Pennsylvania Press

Can one speak of Kafka's heroes as "characters"? If so, why is it so hard to define their characteristics? If not, how is the reader persuaded to accompany them on their existential journeys, accepting their behavior as falling within the realm of human logic? This study argues that Kafka's fiction has two conflicting premises: the subjective impossibility of human existence, foreclosing all hope of "meaning" in individual actions; and the ordered structure of human thoughts which assign meaning to the smallest event and analyze endlessly the behavior of other people. Kafka's characters are always, either potentially or actually, moving in both directions at once, earnestly building up a continuous logic to their actions while skeptically dismantling their own pretensions to existence. The device of the circumscribed narrator, congruent with the hero, knowing only what the hero knows, yet not identical with him, enables Kafka to contain both fundamental tendencies in a single sentence. Although Kafka is widely read, his works seem to give rise very easily to misconceptions; this study is designed primarily to facilitate an intelligent reading of Kafka. Without imposing answers of its own, it seeks to foster an awareness of the problems of perspective and presentation which Kafka engages.

[Review \[of\] Kafka and the Yiddish theater: its impact on his work](#) Schocken

Jewish Book Award Finalist: "Turns the fascinating life of Avrom Goldfaden into a multi-dimensional history of the Yiddish theater's formative years." —Jeffery Veidinger, author of *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire* In this book, Alyssa Quint focuses on the early years of the modern Yiddish theater, from roughly 1876 to 1883, through the works of one of its best-known and most colorful figures, Avrom Goldfaden. Goldfaden (né Goldenfaden, 1840-1908) was one of the first playwrights to stage a commercially viable Yiddish-language theater, first in Romania and then in Russia. Goldfaden's work was rapidly disseminated in print and his plays were performed frequently for Jewish audiences. Sholem Aleichem considered him as a forger of a new language that "breathed the European spirit into our old jargon." Quint uses Goldfaden's theatrical works as a way to understand the social life of Jewish theater in Imperial Russia. Through a study of his libretti, she looks at the experiences of Russian Jewish actors, male and female, to explore connections between culture as artistic production and culture in the sense of broader social structures. Quint explores how Jewish actors who played Goldfaden's work on stage absorbed the theater into their everyday lives. Goldfaden's theater gives a rich view into the conduct, ideology, religion, and politics of Jews during an important moment in the history of late Imperial Russia.

[Kafka, Zionism, and Beyond](#) State University of New York Press

In the early decades of the twentieth century, a vibrant theatrical culture took shape on New York City's Lower East Side. Original dramas, comedies, musicals, and vaudeville, along with sophisticated productions of Shakespeare, Ibsen, and Chekhov, were innovatively staged for crowds that rivaled the audiences on Broadway. Though these productions were in Yiddish and catered to Eastern European, Jewish audiences (the largest immigrant group in the city at the time), their artistic innovations, energetic style, and engagement with politics and the world around them came to influence all facets of the American stage. Vividly illustrated and with essays from leading historians and critics, this book recounts the heyday of "Yiddish Broadway" and its vital contribution to American Jewish life and crossover to the broader American culture. These performances grappled with Jewish nationalism, labor relations, women's rights, religious observance, acculturation, and assimilation. They reflected a range of genres, from tear-jerkers to experimental theater. The artists who came of age in this world include Stella Adler, Eddie Cantor, Jerry Lewis, Sophie Tucker, Mel Brooks, and Joan Rivers. The story of New York's Yiddish theater is a tale of creativity and legacy and of immigrants who, in the process of becoming Americans, had an enormous impact on the country's cultural and artistic development.

[Kafka and the Yiddish Theater](#) Columbia University Press

"Went to the movies. Wept. Matchless entertainment." So wrote Franz Kafka in one of his diaries, giving us but one hint of his little-known passion for the cinema. Until now, Kafka aficionados have been left to speculate about which films moved Kafka so powerfully and how those films might have influenced his writing. With *Kafka Goes to the Movies*, German actor and film director Hanns Zischler draws on years of detective work to provide the first account of Kafka's moviegoing life. Since many of Kafka's visits to the cinema occurred during bachelor trips with Max Brod, Zischler's research took him not only to Kafka's native Prague but to film archives in Munich, Milan, and Paris. Matching Kafka's cinematic references to reviews and stills from daily papers, Zischler hunted down rare films in collections all across Europe. A labor of love, then, by a true man of the cinema, *Kafka Goes to the Movies* brims with discoveries about the pioneering years of European film. With a wealth of illustrations, including reproductions of movie posters and other rare materials, Zischler opens a fascinating window onto movies that have been long forgotten or assumed lost. But the real highlights of the book are those about Kafka himself. Long considered one of the most enigmatic figures in literature, the Kafka that emerges in this work is strikingly human. *Kafka Goes to the Movies* offers an absorbing look at a witty, passionate, and indulgently curious writer, one who discovered and used the cinema as a place of enjoyment and escape, as a medium for the ambivalent encounter with modern life, and as a filter for the changing world around him.

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