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# “In Quest of *Du*”

## Dialogue in Kafka and Agnon

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*“In Quest of Du” is a literary comparative analysis of how dialogue in several Jewish literatures (in Hebrew, German and Aramaic) forms presence, concealment and attachments. By carefully reading the exchange between Abraham and Isaac in Genesis, the priest and Josef K. in The Trial, the rabbi and the tsaddiq in “The Hidden Tsaddiq” and several liturgical verses between the prayer and his addressee, God, the article suggests new theoretical insights for understanding performance in literature, and through that, the poetics and ideological deficiencies of Jewish literature. Alongside these dialogues, the article also explores literary and linguistics approaches to pronouns and their presence, German-Jewish philosophy of dialogism and its resonance in the work of Levinas and Derrida, delving again into literature’s ability to forge links by way of dialogues, but also into dialogue’s limits.*

Aber das Ich vergeht in dem Du.

—OCTAVIAN IN *DER ROSENKAVALIER*

### AN INTIMATE DIALOGUE: YIELDING TO THE OTHER

I explore in what follows the boundaries of dialogue, as well as its role in establishing intimacy, providing concealment, and forging attachments through a comparative reading of the ninth chapter of Franz Kafka’s *The Trial*, S. Y. Agnon’s story “Hatsadiq hanistar” (“The Hidden Tsadiq”) and several liturgical and philosophical excerpts from the Jewish tradition. “The Hidden Tsadiq” is part of Agnon’s *magnum opus A City in Its Fullness*, the subject of Alan Mintz’s last book. In the spirit of the recent interest in this (until recently) seldom analyzed work by Agnon occasioned

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by Mintz's important introduction to the work for English readers, I will unravel the intertextual affiliations of selected excerpts from "The Hidden Tsadiq" in terms of their use of dialogue. My focus on dialogue will be both in relation to the classical dialogue of the biblical Akedah and the hidden dialogism in the Kaddish prayer. I hope to do more than just show how intertextual allusions create a basis for understanding the Jewish condition as an acutely interlocutory act. My analysis aims to explore the way verbal interaction provides a theatrical *mise-en-scène* that draws from tradition, fluctuates between Hebrew and Aramaic, and enacts concealment and revelation of speech between interlocutors. By analyzing the remarkable pronominal usage in these texts, I also suggest interpretative possibilities for two of Jewish modernism's canonical authors, Kafka and Agnon, whose central position in Jewish modernism in two different languages helps me to engage with the question of the process of identification, by which the declaration of someone's identity inevitably leads to his demise, while anonymity, by contrast, maintains his identity as the sum of his traits.<sup>1</sup> Via close readings and meditation on the valence of dialogue within the modern Western literary tradition, I argue that Jewish literature is an embodiment of Jewish history, an exploration of revelation and its associated death. According to Emmanuel Levinas's approach to Agnon, Jewish literature's formalism is what enables its vital dialogism, which surpasses death through the continuation of discourse as such. What consolidates itself as intrinsically Jewish is the exhibition of speech as address, a pure performance with no content or conclusion other than the moment of exchange itself.

Although fragmented and incomplete, Kafka's most renowned novel, *The Trial* ([1914] 1925), unfolds a narrative of development through the behavior of its protagonist, Josef K. Initially opposed to the outrageous trial to which he is subjected, despising it wholeheartedly, K. becomes resigned to and complicit in its dire implications for his life. The plot's turning point is the scene where K. tries to write his plea, an act that shows a kind of yielding.<sup>2</sup> It ends with the remarkable sentence, "today K. was no longer hampered by feelings of shame; the plea simply had to be drawn up."<sup>3</sup> "No *longer* hampered" means that he had been ashamed all along (up to this point in the story). The scene shows that K. is subjected to change, and that, after being so confident in the beginning, he becomes less and less secure. From this point onward, and especially in the encounter with the priest toward the very end,

K. will turn to his discussants—all of whom are representatives of the court—in a way that shows him genuinely desperate for help.

This sense of resignation sets up the dialogue between Josef K. and the priest, a unique dialogue in the novel because of the extensive, attentive exchange between the two interlocutors in a discourse that elaborates on philosophical questions that both seem to take seriously. This exchange is exceptional because it is less ironic than the novel's other dialogues and, unlike them, does not reflect K.'s many struggles, which normally oscillate between omnipotence and impotence. These observations are not self-evident and will be substantiated in a step-by-step manner, but, for the sake of what follows, I seek simply to consider the plausibility of such a reading. For example, if we compare this dialogue with the previous discussion between K. and the painter Titorelli (which focuses, among other things, on works of art), here in the cathedral the narrator does not interrupt, while in the previous discussion he refers constantly to K.'s impatience and suspicion toward the painter.<sup>4</sup> K. thus seems to be talking to the priest out of genuine respect, and not from the standpoint of self-interest or in an ambitious attempt to gain some advantage, as happens in almost every other dialogue in the novel. In the cathedral, the two men also engage in an interpretation of a work of art—in this case, the famous parable, "Before the Law" (published separately in the Zionist journal *Selbstwehr* in 1915), something we discover only through their utterances (without remarks by the narrator). This thoughtful exchange displays their mutual curiosity toward each other's ideas.

*The Trial* is a dialogical novel in the strictest sense. It contains numerous dialogues, beginning with the two guards' paranoid dialogue with Frau Grubach and continuing with dialogues occurring in almost every scene, not to mention the dialogical structure within the voice of the narrator himself (who also performs the muted dialogue with the vice president, a figure utterly wordless in the novel).

The dialogue with the priest begins with a long depiction of the speech act of naming, which effects the subject as he oscillates between acknowledgment, affirmation, and refusal.<sup>5</sup> After the priest calls the name—"Josef K!"—an entire paragraph is devoted to K.'s hesitations as to whether to turn his head or continue walking to the three small, dark wooden doors that would lead him outside the cathedral.<sup>6</sup> In this moment of interpellation, the name is being used as a performative speech with

the sole purpose of reasserting identity (in case the subject has forgotten that he is the accused Josef K).<sup>7</sup>

What prompts K.'s eventual response is the silence that follows: Had the priest called him again, he would have gone farther away. But, because the priest called him only once, he decides to turn his head a little and look at the source of the call.<sup>8</sup> Through K's submission to naming (following many examples in the Bible; recall Lot's wife in particular), the scene becomes a remarkable depiction of how the name and the self become entwined, and this almost deterministic view of language is in many ways what lies behind Kafka's achievement as a whole. (Think also of the famous story "In the Penal Colony" [1919], where the subject bears his verdict on his body.) Immediately after K. hesitates, we are given a flashback in K.'s mind to his childhood, when he used to enjoy the process of identifying himself, because, back then, no one knew in advance who he was.<sup>9</sup> In Agnon's story "The Hidden Tsadiq," which I will soon examine, the same reluctance to identify oneself is itself what creates identity.

Stylistically, the dialogue emphasizes the speech of the interlocutors and diminishes almost to nothing the role of the narrator. It is as if we are in a theater: "said the priest," "said K.," etc. This kind of mimesis is familiar to any reader of Hebrew prose, from the Bible through the short haggadic stories, through eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Hasidic stories, and up through Agnon. Dialogues are salient in all his major works, among them "Fernheim," "The Hill of Sand," ("Giv'at haḥol") and "Covering the Blood," ("Kisuy hadam") to mention a few. For Kafka, by contrast, this emphasis on verbal exchange is rather unusual.<sup>10</sup>

The scene with the priest displays a change in the depiction of the protagonist, who now seems not as unruly as formerly and obeys immediately when the priest asks him to abandon his sightseeing guide.<sup>11</sup> And then, in this private talk between K. and the priest, not only does the latter address the former as he would normally address his flock, using the second person and direct pronouns (*ibr* for plural, *du* for singular), but K. himself responds the same way:

*"Wie stellst Du Dir das Ende ([des Proceßes]) vor?," fragte der Geistliche.  
"Früher dachte ich es müsse gut enden," sagte K., "jetzt zweifle ich daran man-  
chmal selbst. Ich weiß nicht, wie es enden wird. Weißt Du es?"*

“How do you think it ([the trial]) will end?” asked the priest. “At first I thought it must turn out well,” said K., “but now I frequently have my doubts. I don’t know how it will end. Do you?”<sup>12</sup>

Normally, Josef K. conforms to the accepted rules of discourse in German between people who do not share intimate relationships and uses the third-person pronoun *Sie*. The priest’s use of the second-person pronoun is easily understood: his task is to create a sense of intimacy between him and his congregation. Josef K.’s form of address via the second-person pronoun abolishes the linguistic paradigm governing the relationship of a priest with a member of his community, adopting instead a mode of speech suited for close friends or family members.<sup>13</sup>

Apart from K.’s desire to establish intimacy with the priest, one can discern here a direct poetic move by the implied author. Such textual intimacies appear regularly in German holy Scriptures, which address God in daily prayers and in psalms as *Du*. Kafka was invested in the Bible, and he seemed to have a firm command of the Hebrew language, so it would be natural that, in this passage, which some scholars have identified as a talmudic dialogue, the intimate “you” of liturgy and Scripture would be used.<sup>14</sup> It appears that the same Josef K., whose voice we encountered through locutions in quotation marks, has now been transformed into a lyrical voice that almost coalesces with that of the author, who brings to his discourse the liturgical style of the psalms.

The discussion between K. and the priest culminates in K.’s zealous quest for the truth and the priest’s efforts to restrain it by revealing to him what is necessary (*notwendig*) and mandatory (*Pflicht*).<sup>15</sup> After the priest cries, “Can’t you see two steps forward?” the narrator adds that this exclamation originated in someone who cares, who is worried about his companion’s fall.<sup>16</sup>

Following this interaction, the next paragraph opens with a sentence that will repeat in the chapter—“Both were now silent for a long time”—a phrase even more succinct in the German: “Nun schweigen beide lange.”<sup>17</sup> Some version of this phrase will return to accompany mutual silence or mutual walking or, at the end, to punctuate a silenced walk:

*Sie gingen nebeneinander im dunkeln Seitenschiff auf und ab...*

They went side by side up and down the dusky aisle...<sup>18</sup>

*Sie schwiegen ein Weilchen*

They were both silent for a little while<sup>19</sup>

*Sie gingen eine Zeitlang schweigend weiter, K. hielt sich eng neben dem Geistlichen ohne in der Finsternis zu wissen wo er sich befand.*

They went up and down for a while in silence, K. attaching himself to the priest, ignorant in the dark of his whereabouts.<sup>20</sup>

The first and last citations serve as a kind of anaphora, occurring at the opening of paragraphs. The silence of the narrator, who does not interrupt, shows the two men's intense attentiveness in their exegetical and almost liturgical discourse.

The end of their debate is indecisive, a draw or *teiqu*, as defined in talmudic quarrels among rabbis. K. sustains his perspective of the absolute truth, a view of extremes, of either-or; the priest, for his part, pronounces a concluding statement that has become one of the most quoted and debated sentences in the novel: "one must not accept *everything* as true, one must only accept it as necessary."<sup>21</sup> K. views this dictum as a sad, depressing statement, representing a world defined by lies.<sup>22</sup> In doing so, he cannot succumb to what is blurry and relative. The priest lets him have the last word, while K., for his part, allows the priest to guide him out of the dark. Although it seems that K. ends his time in the cathedral in a state of denial, referring once again to the Italian colleague, he remains with the priest and admits to himself that, after this experience of softness and gentleness (*Zartgefühl*), he might as well stay.<sup>23</sup>

The cathedral serves as a caressing heterotopia where yielding to and converging in the Other is possible, a state of mind that K. eventually chooses to deny himself. The dialogue creates a tension in the plot that correlates with the idea of dialogue as such, of exchange of words; the time of the story and the time of the discourse coalesce and reveal what is actually at stake in this discussion made up of short and obscure utterances: the rare and acute moments of attentiveness that suggest succumbing to the other. This dialogue offers Josef K. the possibility of devoting himself completely to the moment when his struggle for truth, indeed his struggle for knowledge (*vis-à-vis* his trial), for gaining advantage, will be suspended. K.'s character is depicted in its shortcoming: it insists on knowing and

simultaneously shows only the limits of knowledge. This, perhaps, is the essence of K.'s ordeal. The possibility that he will relinquish his striving for truth arises here by way of a complete immersion in dialogue and a consequential merging of the parties, but his quotidian and cautious beliefs call him back to denial (demonstrated by his insistence on meeting the Italian colleague).

This dialogue is suffused with allusions to many dialogues in the Bible, especially to the discussion between Abraham and his son Isaac before the binding of the latter. Erich Auerbach uses the Akedah to compare the two traditions anchored in Western literary culture, those of the Homeric epic and the biblical story, and praises the latter for its unusual capacity to create silence by not disclosing to the reader any points of exposition or details that are not essential to the development of a highly dramatic plot.<sup>24</sup> Here are parts of the Akedah following Martin Luther's German translation, with which Kafka was familiar and that readers of Auerbach have contemplated for over half a century:

And it came to pass, after these things, that God did tempt (*versuchte*) Abraham, and said (*sprach*) unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am (*und er antwortete: hier bin ich*) [...] and they went both of them together (*und gingen die beiden miteinander*). And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I (*hier bin ich*), my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering (*Got wird ihm ersehen ein Schaf um Brandopfer*): so they went both of them together. (Genesis 22:1–8)

Much like what transpires in the cathedral, the speech's content is only secondary to the dialogical connection itself, suffused with a mute alertness and concentration. The information we readers are given, as well as the idea behind the walking together, are unclear in both cases: the door or the way out, the purpose of the darkened journey in the cathedral, and the purpose of the walk itself, attached to the absence of the offering on the biblical Mount Moriah. The same properties of the dialogue in *The Trial* are to be found here, and one should also pay attention to Kafka's sophisticated use of the preterite tense, much like Luther used it. In both



cases we find a process of subjection, in both senses of the word (of being subjected to, and of becoming a subject) being made through naming (Abraham! Josef K.). We find intimate dialogue and a lack of expository details, which are kept hidden (the trial's verdict, the death by binding), and we find a report made by the author about the joint walk. Regardless of how we choose to interpret Josef K., the cathedral scene is remarkable in its use of dialogue as a means to enable the possibility of relinquishing the trial from *The Trial*, if only for a moment.

### THE PRONOMINAL FORM: A PERSON, A BODY

The biblical scene provides another example of a special use of the pronominal form of address. Although it, too, expresses a direct and indicative speech of presence, the characters do not utter their pronouns: there is no “you.” Instead, the use of the pronominal form of address is unique and poetic: there are the deictic cries (“Abraham!” “My Father!” “My son!”). There is the recognition/identification and announcement of a willingness to serve (“here I am”) which in the Hebrew consists of one word, the only word Auerbach quotes in Hebrew, *hinneini*.<sup>25</sup> Finally, there is the strange address, suddenly shifting to the third person—“God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering”—in Luther’s version even closer to the Hebrew, which stresses: “God will show *him* a lamb for a burnt offering.”<sup>26</sup>

The third-person address is very rare in Hebrew, and I think it reasonable to say that nowhere else in the Bible is there such an address as this one between Abraham and Isaac. By answering via the third person, Abraham is able to simultaneously answer and not answer. He discloses the drama, the secret, the fact that this walk for the purpose of an offering is highly unusual, while still not giving his interlocutor a full answer. But, even more than that, the choice of third-person address exposes the strength of the content of what should be said (what will be called *énoncé* by French thinkers such as Levinas or Michel Foucault, differentiating it from the entire situation of saying), as well as its terrible implications—so terrible that they cannot be uttered using the second person, as this would be too violent: “God will show you a lamb for a burnt offering.”

Turning now to Agnon: “The Hidden Tsadiq” is a somewhat generic title, which he gave to more than one story in his vast oeuvre. The one I will consider

here is "The Hidden Tsadiq" in his most monumental volume, *A City in Its Fullness*, published posthumously in 1973 and only recently published in English translation in a selective and annotated version.<sup>27</sup> This volume, arguably Agnon's greatest achievement, although it has met with scant attention from scholars, can be seen as a chronicle, a novel (if indeed the "city" of its title, Buczacz, should be interpreted as its protagonist), or simply an anthology of stories devoted to the city where Agnon was born in Galicia, whose Jewish community was exterminated in World War II. The literary convention Agnon uses in this particular story relates to a Hasidic legend (based on talmudic sources) that proclaims a belief that there are thirty-six righteous ones in the world, who exist only through their (concealed) lives; the world, in fact, exists only because there are thirty-six of them living at any given time. Their hidden identity as righteous guarantors of the world's existence relates to their everyday professions, normally involving laborious work (in our case, a heater repairman), and their mission is brought to an end after their identity is exposed, at which point they die (resulting in the births of new hidden *tsadiqim*).

Our story has two protagonists: the great rabbi who represents Torah (law) and truth, and who discovers the concealed identity of the particular *tsaddiq*, who represents grace. After political ordeals in his hometown, the rabbi goes to live at his relative's apartment in the city of Buczacz, where he meets the building's heater repairman and notices his peculiar movements, which remind him of the Tannaim and the Amoraim. He also notices another trait of this special workman, who never utters a word in the sacred language before preparing (the Hebrew word is *matqin*, which also means "repairing") his tongue first with Aramaic, a language which rests "between the sacred tongue and the profane."<sup>28</sup>

After the rabbi bares his forehead due to a headache, the *tsadiq* starts laughing, and thus their dialogue commences. Like the dialogues in Genesis and in Kafka, this exchange is based on phrases, with almost no intervention on the narrator's part; a rhythm of small, intense utterances is created in a way that reveals very little, because we, the readers—much like the characters themselves—are eager for information that can eventually be delivered only by the other (intrinsically other also to the reader, unlike the omnipotent narrator). Here we also find a special usage of the pronominal form of address, as the rabbi interrogates the *tsadiq* about his laughter using the second person, and the latter replies in the third person: "I

saw in *his* forehead that he practices well the mitzvah of Tefilin.”<sup>29</sup> After that, the rabbi himself uses the second person but in the plural (as the Latin *Vos* or what used to be the English “You”): “I do not see but You do [...] I have already realized who You are.”<sup>30</sup> This form of address is so rare in Hebrew that I dare to argue that it exists primarily in the genre of Hasidic tales and perhaps only in stories of *tsadikim*.<sup>31</sup> Like Hegelian master-slave dialectics, the rabbi discloses his short-sightedness but also ends by admitting that he knows and recognizes something.<sup>32</sup> In this power relation, it is unclear who occupies the vantage point of seeing and knowing.

The biblical text presents an interesting oscillation between God’s speech to Moses and the people of Israel, in second-person plural, in the first chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, in the very famous phrase “You have seen,” itself based on Exodus 19:4. But this form is rather common in situations where God or his representative addresses his flock. In Agnon, by contrast, the plural form is used not to address the general people, but to speak intimately to a single person. A reasonable explanation would be that this Hebrew usage imitates European forms of distinction between *vous* and *tu* that are normally used as forms of politeness, and to distinguish between the public and the private. But, in our story, it possesses an inherent function bound up with the plot, because this dialogue deals with the process of uncovering. The use of the plural form of address means that each and every utterance is in fact comprised of two speeches: one addressed to the exposed persona of the addressee (the repairman) and another to his hidden identity (the *tsadiq*).

Like the dialogue in the cathedral, here, too, the speech continually points toward a reality that is multilayered, one made up of text and subtext. The outcome of the minimalist prose used to effect the story’s *mise-en-scène*, as in *Genesis* and *The Trial*, the speech addresses both the revealed and the concealed and implies subtexts, which, on another and deeper layer, refer to death, the outcome of all three dialogues.<sup>33</sup>

After the moment of recognition, the rabbi decides to accompany the *tsadiq* and compels him to make another confession, the lethal effects of which he is unaware. The dialogue continues according to the characteristics I have outlined, and here the narrator enters:

They walked together as one and did not say a thing. This one because of the end of the verse which starts with "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's"; and this one because of the beginning of the verse which ends with "but the earth hath he given to the children of men"[...] They walked together and kept silence.<sup>34</sup>

The narrator appears only to create silence and co-presence within the work. He does so via a manifestation of speech that exists only in the minds of the characters, who complete the same verse of Psalm 115:16: "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (KJV). The intent of the verse is God's glorification for giving the earth to humans, but another layer of interpretation yields the reading that God's revelation is restricted. This is evident in the chiasmic divide of the biblical syntax, which the story re-creates in each of the interlocutors, who only *think* of the verse's other half but keep it muted. The muted dialogue, which consists of the broken verse, creates the possibility of completion and division at the same time. This movement is heading toward absolute otherness, what Jacques Derrida tried to unravel in his study of the binding of Isaac. The descriptive speech of the verse from Psalms becomes a performative (and muted) utterance by taking the chiasmic form and turning it to a genuine second—that is, doubled—form of address; it turns the verse into a dialogue between its own parts.

Only this form of a dialogue between two people, using the second person, which in Hebrew grammar is referred to as a body (*guf sheni*, literally "second body" form of address), enables reconciliation and an irreconcilable gap at the same time. Like intensive and attentive dialogues in our daily lives, which we share with a person (and a body), we never really know to what extent we really reach out to one another, what we share and know with and about the other. Here, only the narrator tells us that the two share the very same verse, but they do so separately.

Their dialogue continues as they reach the hidden tsadiq's home, which also appears to be concealed:

And he said to the craftsman, "Tell me, through what merit do you possess this radiance?" The craftsman sighed deeply and said: "eikhdain

itb'lish hai gavra itgalin matmorohi,<sup>35</sup> as that man is exposed, his secrets are uncovered[...]"

The great rabbi repeated: "I will not let You go, until You tell me how You merited such radiance."

The craftsman lowered his eyes and answered him: "If I have any merit, it is because I make heaters." The great rabbi cried in wonder, "Because he makes heaters?" Said he, "Because I repair old heaters." The rabbi repeated and asked, "And for that alone?" The craftsman added, "And because I build new heaters." Said the rabbi: "But there are many others who make heaters, and were not granted what You were granted."

Said he, "It is on account of the fact that every heater I make, I do with effort that it will be done properly, so it will bring warmth to the people and they will not be displeased from creation."<sup>36</sup>

Here again: the anaphora of the silenced walk, the careful attentiveness between the interlocutors that is effected by the peculiar use of forms of address, and the small role played by the narrator. Again, the second-person plural form is used only by the rabbi, apparently because of the double persona of the tsadiq. And, again, one can sense that the hidden, insinuated subtext concerns an approaching death—the binding of Isaac, the execution of Josef K.—and here the death of the tsadiq whose anonymity has been shattered. Such dialogical moments are themselves part of a process of identification, in which one party almost coerces the other to identify himself. Here in "The Hidden Tsadiq," the speech act of revealing and identifying is an especially long and complex interpellation of someone whose righteousness and virtue are part and parcel of his anonymity.<sup>37</sup> In "Tehillah," one of Agnon's most celebrated stories, when the narrator discovers who Tehillah really is, she then knows that her death has been timed, which clearly suggests that she is one of the thirty-six *tsadiqim*.<sup>38</sup> The fatal utterance of interpellation—*Hinneini*, "Josef K."—is made here via a sentence that occurs in Aramaic, a tempered language between the sacred and the profane.

Traditionally, Aramaic is referred to as *lashon targum*—that is, a tongue of translation—because it is not as sacred as Hebrew but also not as profane as other languages. Here, it literally becomes a translation of two allegedly different verses from the Bible, that were composed in Hebrew. This is a rather strange maneuver

because the story is written in Hebrew; the translation is given without any indication by the narrator, who does not mention that this crucial utterance is almost identical to the Aramaic translation of the first verse in the book of Obadiah (and might also be a variation on the Aramaic translation of Job 30:18).

The tsadiq is mildly paraphrasing a well-known gemara, b. Baba Qamma 3b, which also deals to some extent with a person who is able to inquire and with the theme of revealing and, unlike Agnon, explicitly relates to the Aramaic as a secondary translation. Even within the rather flexible rabbinic rhetoric, such carelessness is questionable. The fatal utterance is an important feature of Agnon's oeuvre, which I have explored in depth elsewhere.<sup>39</sup>

Without exploring in depth the aforementioned verses of Obadiah and Job, it is clear that what the tsadiq actually says in this sentence has a tautological meaning: as the man is being exposed, so are his secrets. This, in my understanding, means that he negates the possibility of identification. Instead, he only hints at his identity, which is itself based on non-identity; that is, his anonymity.<sup>40</sup> The tsadiq implies that identity as such has fatal implications and, when completed, as in the process of naming, can bring death. Rather than naming or giving full definition, the story focuses many times on the peculiar and virtuous bodily gestures of the tsadiq's labor, and it also ends by saying that his righteousness was granted to him because everything he made was done properly.<sup>41</sup> The story negates the importance of normative identity markers in favor of deeds, which constitute a person's virtues, while the process of yielding to identification brings death. Identity as such seems impossible: there is only the sum of one's work in the world, and the story suggests a reversal by which identification is the process of ending one's identity and approaching an end, whereas anonymity enables life, continuation, and hence identity. Identity is thus bound to anonymity, surprising as it might seem. But, if we recall K.'s flashback to his childhood after he is named by the priest, identity seems the result of not knowing, of an Other whom we approach without prejudice.<sup>42</sup>

## THE SECOND, THE DOUBLE, THE PLURAL: COMMUNITY AND ALIENATION

Before turning to a significant usage of the second-person pronoun in Hebrew liturgy, it is important to mention how deep the interest in Hasidism ran for Kafka

and his Prague circle of intellectuals: it was a key part of their involvement with questions of alienation in modern society, the role of Judaism in their Western context, and their general view of the limits of enlightenment and rationalism.<sup>43</sup> The reading suggested here of *The Trial*, especially the scene in the cathedral, sheds light on Kafka's immersion in the space between alienation and attachment, something which occurs very powerfully in Hasidic stories and in "The Hidden Tsadiq."

In Hebrew liturgy, the plural form "You" is very rare; if it occurs at all, it is used only by God in reference to his followers; the deity is customarily addressed in the singular "you." Yosef Heinemann has shown that even use of the plural form by the *sha'ts* (the cantor or prayer leader) to address his congregation was unacceptable, because it suggests that the speaker is exempting himself from the public.<sup>44</sup> Heinemann mentions only one prayer that uses that form, the prayer of *ta'aniyot* (fasting), and for some reason he does not mention one of the most frequent prayers in the Jewish calendar, the Kaddish (the Jewish requiem), one of the few prayers that Jews voice in Aramaic.

The Kaddish is based on a very interesting form of address, communicated from the people to God not via the second-person pronoun but, as in Genesis ("God will show him a lamb"), using the third-person pronoun: "May his great name be exalted and sanctified in the world which he created according to his will." This uncanny address (instead of "May your great name...") suggests a descriptive speech that is one-sided; having no addressee, it involves no dialogue. Yet, in the middle of the prayer, the pronoun or person (or body) changes to the second form of address, in the plural: "during your lifetime and during your days" (*beḥayyeikhon uvyomeikhon*). Here, the addressee, or the referent, is the audience. This change, I suggest, turns the first descriptive prayer of Kaddish into a performative speech act for the community, whose function as the addressee enables a dialogue between the speaker (the cantor) and his community, not with God but *about* God. The Kaddish, so it seems, is not a prayer but more like a concealed script of exchange between two parties who share a testimony about a third party (God) and his inaccessibility. This is why Aramaic, a language of in-between, of concealment (that, according to tradition, even the angels do not understand), is being used here, for this prayer about the *name* of God is about that which is "above and beyond all the blessings, hymns, praises and consultations that are uttered in the world." This discourse of

insinuations—using an indirect approach to speech and prayer—makes us aware of this liturgy's nature: it is not a direct prayer to God but a referential talk *about* prayer, as if from the outside.

In all the passages we have seen, the movement runs from the common to the uncommon form of address, which is what creates a special alertness in all those dialogues in Jewish literature, regardless of which particular move was made (between the second-person pronoun and the third, or between the singular form and the plural). Émile Benveniste has discussed at length the question of pronominal forms of address, which have no lexical definition—How can we define "I"? Or "you"—but at the same time always refer to what is most particular, the specific interlocutor. In his words: "How could the same term refer indifferently to any individual whatsoever and still at the same time identify him in his individuality?"<sup>45</sup> This, I believe, is what makes dialogue between two people (again, the second body) so loaded, essentially connected with a move toward the other and so generally intense. Such are the moments of devotion between a parent and child, as in Genesis (between God the father and Abraham, and between Abraham and Isaac), or in any discourse of love and care between two persons. Benveniste stresses that the change in the form of address is what ensures the presence of the I and the You; or, in accordance with Hebrew grammar, engenders their irreconcilable bodily presence.<sup>46</sup>

The ability of literature to reflect, via the use of the third-person pronoun and dialogue, formed a dialogical philosophy among mainly German-Jewish thinkers at the beginning of the twentieth century. Shmuel Hugo Bergman, himself a member of the aforementioned Prague circle, lucidly delineated this strand of thought, which began in Søren Kierkegaard's understanding of the Akedah, of which Kafka was well aware. As Kierkegaard contends, Abraham's belief is something that cannot be mediated and therefore cannot find expression in descriptive speech.<sup>47</sup>

Some of those thinkers, like Ferdinand Ebner and Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, opposed German Idealism for its use of utterances such as "The I exists" or Descartes's famous *Cogito ergo sum*, for, as we saw in Benveniste, the I and You can never be generalized.<sup>48</sup> In liturgical speech, the phrase by which I confirm myself cannot be the initial utterance but is always a response to a previous naming that had been achieved by calling my name.<sup>49</sup> This position is also what informs Franz Rosenzweig's understanding of the name as the thing by which continuity is



promised, the assurance that yesterday will become today and today become tomorrow; here, too, there is no need to articulate some hidden presence as philosophers try to do.<sup>50</sup>

Rosenstock-Huessy understood literary-biblical form not as merely decorative but as an essential outcome of the ritual situation: the second half of a given verse comes as an answer from the community to the first half, which had been proclaimed solely by the cantor.<sup>51</sup> This divide is almost identical to Agnon's variation on the psalm's chiasmic verse in "The Hidden Tsadiq," and both hint that the paradigm of dialogue stands behind this literary structure. Thus, more than just interpellation, descriptive verse turns here into a performative dialogue.

### THE SPEECH OF RELATION AND THE SECRET

The last dialogical thinker Bergman discusses is Martin Buber, who regarded famous utterances in the Bible as the epitome of strong dialogical moments: the encounter between Jephthah and his daughter, for example, or David's address to Jonathan in his lament on the latter's death. All are forms of address that Buber defines as "exclusive." He expands the tension between the relation *Ich-Es* (I-It), which initiates and delimits the world of knowledge and experience (*Erfahrung*), and the relation *Ich-Du* (I-You), which initiates the world of relationship (*Beziehung*), which is always in relation and hence "exceptional."<sup>52</sup> In all the examples I have brought here—in Genesis, Kafka, and Agnon, in moments of submission to relational contexts by way of uncovering the concealed (which only maintains their concealment)—there is no knowledge or information about the world, nor are there philosophically descriptive or constative statements about truth or falsehood. There is only the discovery of someone in relation to someone else, hence these moments demand that the subject devote himself to a complete immersion in attachment and relinquish his striving for knowledge. Joseph K.'s perpetual struggle does not allow him this kind of renunciation because of his insistence on an absolute division between truth and falsehood and his constant belief that the situation he is in should be different (specifically, that the meeting with the Italian colleague should have happened as planned). Granted, K. does not yield easily to dialogue, but the moment of attentiveness nonetheless occurs in the exceptional dialogue with the

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priest in the cathedral. All these dialogues show the limit of reason and its dependence on abstractions (which we then might possess as knowledge), because ultimately the other always remains concealed in the surface of his body (*guf*), whereby his enigma is maintained (and, in fact, Hebrew grammar refers to the third person with the same word used for *tsadiqim: nistar*, "hidden").

In his explorations of speech acts, Derrida, like Buber, opposes the categorical imperative and contends that even the feeling of love is never to be found as a feeling, but only in the temporal relation established when the phrase "Je t'aime" is uttered.<sup>53</sup> In *The Gift of Death*, Derrida explores the Akedah, and this essay is another endeavor on his part to understand speech acts in literature.<sup>54</sup> Derrida's challenging essay is a defense of the secret and the enigmatic in Western society, mounted via the deconstruction of silence (which seems more necessary than ever today, in our exhibitionistic era of social networking). In unraveling silence in literature, Derrida continues within a long tradition in literary criticism, which we encountered in the work of Auerbach, on the origin and heritage of the biblical story that avoids providing us with information.

Derrida contends with Kierkegaard's knight of faith, whose trial consists of keeping silent in the face of a non-ethical divine command, of obeying it without mediation with the outside. Like the hidden *tsadiq*, Joseph K., Tehillah, and also Menashe Haim, the protagonist of Agnon's famous story *And the Crooked Shall Be Made Straight*, the knight of faith attests to his own limits, to an inherent anonymity that enables identity as a continual process that never reaches completion. Yet Derrida doubles Abraham's secret by adding that Abraham has to maintain silence not because he shares God's secret but because he does not.<sup>55</sup> Only *because* the secret stays a secret must he adhere to it.

The speech act that becomes the leitmotif in *The Gift of Death* is the asking of forgiveness; indeed, it seems that "sorry" is perhaps the most performative utterance there is, because it contains no referential content but is almost a reflex, a spasm. In his reading of Kierkegaard's Abraham, Derrida proclaims that forgiveness is an aporia, because it is always about that which is unforgivable and hence impossible.<sup>56</sup>

By engaging with the forgiveness offered by God after the great biblical flood, the performative statement of the rainbow leaves us with the secret, because the question arises: can God ask for forgiveness—that is, ask it from himself? If so,

can we ask forgiveness from ourselves, or is it even possible to ask it *not* from ourselves?<sup>57</sup> Such an opaque utterance, understood as part of a dialogue with ourselves, highlights the great enigma of speech acts that are based on relationship (*Beziehung*), which cannot claim knowledge, reference, or even experience (*Erfahrung*). The same mystery inheres in Abraham's odd answer, "God will show him a lamb for a burnt offering," which culminates, according to Derrida, in literature's refusal to answer, beyond and above human discourse, without adhering to truth or falsehood.<sup>58</sup>

In the service of his argument, Derrida uses the famous letter Kafka wrote to his father in 1919 (published in 1952), which becomes a dialogue toward its end, as the father, in the voice of the son (the author), answers the latter's accusations, castigating the son as a parasite even for his writing of this very letter. For Derrida, this is an example of how, by way of internal dialogue, Kafka refers to literature, because the torrent of blame that ends the letter in fact mounts an accusation against literature's ability to create interlocutors whose existence is doubtful.<sup>59</sup> Which voice captures Hermann Kafka, if there is one: the one in the letter or the one outside of it?

Indeed, there are many examples of Kafka's unique use of dialogue, as well as his vibrant engagement with the Akedah (primarily seen in his letter to Robert Klopstock).<sup>60</sup> One of Kafka's earliest commentators, Werner Kraft, whose interpretation was valued by Walter Benjamin,<sup>61</sup> meticulously summarized Kafka's prose as a rhythmic exchange of word and answer (*Wort und Antwort*), question and explanation, doubt and conciseness, so that this traditional textual exchange will never arrive to conclusion or a claim ("ohne daß allerdings in diesem Kreislauf ein Abschluß realisierbar wäre").<sup>62</sup> Kraft's reading is pertinent to all the exchanges of discourse brought up here, for it understands this exchange not as a vehicle or a means but as the prime occurrence itself.

Rosenzweig's reading of Song of Songs, which highlights the relation between the literal-secular and the allegorical-religious interpretations of the biblical text, offers an outstanding illustration of this exchange of words. For him, there is no division between the two precisely because the I and Thou of humans is the same I and Thou that exists between humans and their deity; because Song of Songs is immanent (erotic and humane), it is also transcendental.<sup>63</sup> This view is also relevant to Rosenzweig's engagement with translating the lyrics of the acclaimed medieval

Hebrew poet Judah Halevi, which emphasizes these features of the sacred tongue, of the natural rhythms in its use of pronouns and syntactic structure.<sup>64</sup>

Kafka expanded dialogue using the second-person form of address in many texts in which, as in *Letter to His Father*, the two interlocutors occur within the same person. Not only does a lengthy fragment from *The Zürau Aphorisms* contain a particularly long dialogue, but the two voices in it also talk about precisely the possibility of hearing voices and countervoices (*Gegenstimme*) within the self.<sup>65</sup> No doubt this exerted an influence on his interesting manner of using pronominal speech. It is also important to mention the way he insisted on the neutral form (*es*, "it") instead of the masculine form (*ihn*, "him") when, in *The Metamorphosis* (1915), Gregor Samsa's sister addresses him as the vermin, thereby deepening the social alienation of the third-person form.<sup>66</sup>

Foregrounding of the textual exchange informs Levinas's remarkable reading of Agnon, which stresses that Agnon's oeuvre is above all a pursuit of literature itself. By operating within the framework that differentiates the "said" as closed content (*énoncé*) from the "saying" as the fluid flow of texts, utterances, and their contexts (*énonciation*), Levinas treats Agnon's work as a very real endeavor of resurrection, through the use of tradition's textual formalism, for example, with signifiers such as "Diaspora," and "Land of Israel."<sup>67</sup> Jewish literature's formalism is what enables its vital dialogism, which surpasses death through the continuation of discourse as such. If we understand it purely from its content, see it only by way of its references to the world, we risk making it an object in the Buberian relation of *Ich-Es*.<sup>68</sup> In this way, Levinas understands this heritage as something that cannot be equated with Western humanism, in which literature is only a reference to human and his or her destiny, which is a means and not a thing in itself: "Agnon's anguish [...] is not over the end of traditional Jewish life, but over the possible end of the literature that could bring it back to life, before the crisis of western humanism."<sup>69</sup> As in *The Gift of Death*, all the Jewish writings I have examined here have exhibited address or dialogue as pure performance, with no content or conclusion other than the moment of exchange itself. As in *hinneini*—Auerbach's use of Hebrew without translating it into German, much like Agnon's use of Yiddish or Aramaic—the speech acts in these dialogues are like short pauses, caesurae that enable us as bodies who are there before the complete other, before God or someone else to whom we

address ourselves. According to Auerbach's interpretation, *hinneini* means "behold me here—with which, to be sure, a most touching gesture expressive of obedience and readiness is suggested" (*hier siehe mich—womit freilich eine überaus eindringliche Geste suggeriert wird, die Gehorsam und Bereitschaft ausdrückt*).<sup>72</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 The literature on Agnon and Kafka is vast and includes American and Israeli scholars such as Baruch Kurzweil, Gershon Shaked, Arnold Band, and Robert Alter, to mention only a few. For an up-to-date work, see Omri Ben Yehuda, *Mah a' idkha? Pe' ulot dibbur bekhitvei Franz Kafka veShai ' Agnon* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 2019).
- 2 Franz Kafka, *Der Proceß* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1994), 133.
- 3 Franz Kafka, *The Trial*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Modern Library, 1964), 160 and Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 133.
- 4 Kafka, *Trial*, 171–72. It is also important to notice that, when meeting someone from the court, as with Titorelli himself, K. usually suffers from tightness of breath and thus he is normally in hurry, in contrast with his meeting with the priest.
- 5 I am using here, as in what follows, the distinction between descriptive, or constative, speech, which is a reference to knowledge or argument about the world that normally can be claimed as true or false, and performative speech, which "does things with words," made by John Langshaw Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).
- 6 Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 221–22.
- 7 Eyal Dotan, "Preface," in *State Ideological Apparatuses*, ed. Louis Althusser, trans. Ariella Azoulay (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2003), 94.
- 8 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 222.
- 9 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 222.
- 10 He did experiment with this kind of dialogue in his early novella *Description of a Struggle* (*Beschreibung eines Kampfes*, [1909] 1912), but he normally tends toward either long monologues, even in works based on dialogue such as "In the Penal Colony" or *The Castle* ([1922] 1926), or stories in which the storyteller himself is an active and dramatic voice within the narrative, such as "The Burrow" ([1923–24] 1928).

- 11 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 233.
- 12 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 23. and Kafka, *Trial*, 264.
- 13 I thank Arno Dusini of Vienna University and Dafna Mach of Hebrew University for supporting me in this interpretation.
- 14 On Kafka's investment in the Bible, see Bertram Rohde, *Und blättert ein Wenig in der Bibel: Studien zu Franz Kafkas Bibeletüre und ihre Auswirkungen auf sein Werk* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2002). The remark on Kafka's command of Hebrew is based on my impression when I looked at the facsimiles of the letter he wrote to his Hebrew teacher, Puah Manchel. The matter is, of course, debatable and there are scholars (among them Dan Miron) who have opposite views. Many scholars (such as Karl Erich Grözinger and Saul Friedlaender, to mention only a couple) relate to the chapter as a talmudic dialogue. Later, I will address Werner Kraft, one of the earliest commentators to characterize the exchange of Josef K. and the priest as a talmudic exchange.
- 15 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 233.
- 16 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 224 and Kafka, *Trial*, 265–66.
- 17 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 224.
- 18 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 225 and Kafka, *Trial*, 267 (author's translation based on the translation of the Muirs).
- 19 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 230 and Kafka, *Trial*, 277.
- 20 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 234 and Kafka, *Trial*, 277 (author's translation based on the translation of the Muirs).
- 21 Kafka, *Trial*, 276 and Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 233.
- 22 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 233.
- 23 Kafka, *Der Proceß*, 234.
- 24 Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literaturen* (Tübingen and Basel: Francke, 1946), 10.
- 25 Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 11.
- 26 The rabbinic commentary (cited in Rashi on Genesis 22:8) reads the verse not as a third-person address but more referring to God himself, in terms of “God will find a burnt offering.”
- 27 Shmuel Yosef Agnon, *A City in Its Fullness*, ed. Alan Mintz and Jeffrey Saks (New Milford, CT: Toby, 2016). “The Hidden Tsadiq” is one of the few stories not to

- be included in this translation. I hope my work to be a continuation of Mintz's readings in these stories, which suggest a careful close reading in a step-by-step manner that comments on the work of storytelling itself. Alan Mintz, *Ancestral Tales: Reading the Buczacz Stories of S. Y. Agnon* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017), 179–88 deals at length with another prominent feature in Agnon's prose and especially in *City in Its Fullness*: the long dramatic monologue, which consists also of stories within stories. Mintz's reading of the story "In Search for a Rabbi" is of special relevance to what follows, because he addresses the themes of anonymity, secrecy and the uncovering of identity by means of a very condensed dialogue between two great rabbis: R. Avraham and R. Mordechai (the latter is another incarnation of a hidden tsadik, although not addressed so by the narrator).
- 28 Shmuel Yosef Agnon, *'Ir umelo'ab* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1999), 228. All translations of the Hebrew are mine.
- 29 Agnon, *'Ir umelo'ab*, 228.
- 30 Agnon, *'Ir umelo'ab*, 228. Because English no longer distinguishes between "you" and "thou," I have maintained the use of "you" but use a capital letter to indicate the use of its plural form.
- 31 The Hebrew form of address in rabbinic literature seems not to have been sufficiently studied. It is clear that this form is relatively new (as it is not found in talmudic texts) and comes from European influences, especially Yiddish, which uses *ibr* extensively. The aural usage of the form is quite common in orthodox circles in our days. In Agnon's literature it is rather rare.
- 32 Agnon, *'Ir umelo'ab*, 228.
- 33 Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- 34 Agnon, *'Ir umelo'ab*, 230.
- 35 This sentence is in Aramaic in the original.
- 36 Agnon, *'Ir umelo'ab*, 230–31.
- 37 It is worth mentioning Nitza Ben Dov, *Agnon's Art of Indirection: Uncovering Latent Content in the Fiction of S. Y. Agnon* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), whose title shows the importance of this kind of latent speech in Agnon's fiction.
- 38 I thank Jeffery Saks for pointing this out, as well as the motif of the heater that appears in "Thilla" as well (and also in *A Guest for a Night*). See also Mintz's reading of "In Search of a Rabbi" in Mintz, *Ancestral Tales*.

- 39 Ben Yehuda, *Mah a' idkha*. Often this utterance is pronounced in a different language, as in "Two Sages Who Were in Our City" (1946), where the narrator does not even bother to translate for the reader the meaning of the fatal phrase in Yiddish. However, it is worth mentioning a dialogue from a little fragment Agnon included in his anthology *Sefer sofer vesippur (A Book, a Writer, and a Story)*, which also deals with an intensive dialogue between two distinguished rabbis, who use the plural second-person form as well as the third-person singular. In this anecdote, "The Dream's Letter," a replica in Aramaic a leitmotif; see S. Y. Agnon, *Sefer, sofer vesippur*, Jerusalem: Schocken, 2000: 307–9. This story lacks all the virtues of Agnon's prose (he published it only in this anthology), but this kind of dialogue clearly provided him with inspiration.
- 40 In his interpretation of one of Agnon's greatest achievements, the novella *And the Crooked Shall Be Made Straight* (1911), which gained him his fame in the German-speaking world after it was published in book form in German prior to any other language, Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis 1923. 2 Halbband 1917–1923* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 320 argued that the protagonist, Menasche Haim the beggar, is in fact a hidden tsadiq. This fascinating interpretative direction is entirely unknown to Israeli critics of Agnon because Scholem's diaries were not translated into Hebrew. I support Scholem's view also because, in that story, at the very end and before death, Menasche Haim is addressed via the plural second-person pronoun.
- 41 Scholem, *Tagebücher*, 234.
- 42 My interpretation here also evokes Derrida's understanding of Jewish exemplarity as that which unsettles identity. Jewish identity is only a claim, an outbidding that always marks not being identical with itself. See the discussion of Derrida, after the work of Dana Hollander, in Vivian Liska, *German-Jewish Thought and Its Afterlife* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 130.
- 43 Zohar Maor, *Torat sod Hadasah: Ruḥaniut yetsirah vele' umiut beḥug Prag* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2010), 134.
- 44 Joseph Heinemann, 'Iyyunei tefillah, ed. Avigdor Shinan (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1981), 67.
- 45 Émile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics* (Miami, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971), 226.
- 46 Benveniste, *Problems*, 226.
- 47 Shmuel Hugo Bergman, *Hafilosofiah hadialogit meKierkegaard 'ad Buber* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1974), 100.



- 48 Bergman, *Hafilosofiah*, 194.
- 49 Bergman, *Hafilosofiah*, 196–97.
- 50 Bergman, *Hafilosofiah*, 212.
- 51 Bergman, *Hafilosofiah*, 192.
- 52 Martin Buber, *Das dialogische Prinzip* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1984), 10.
- 53 J. Hillis Miller, *Speech Acts in Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 167.
- 54 Derrida referred to speech acts in many places in his work, the most prominent of which is his *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988).
- 55 Jacques Derrida, *Matat mavet*, trans. Michal Ben-Naftali (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2008), 135–36.
- 56 Derrida, *Matat*, 36
- 57 Derrida, *Matat*, 149.
- 58 Derrida, *Matat*, 149.
- 59 Derrida, *Matat*, 145.
- 60 Franz Kafka, *Briefe* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1995), 333–34.
- 61 Walter Benjamin, *Benjamin über Kafka* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1981), 51.
- 62 Werner Kraft, *Franz Kafka: Durchdringung und Geheimnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968), 71–72.
- 63 Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Universitätsbibliothek, 2002), 222. Song of Songs in Agnon and generally in Israeli culture received a careful examination in Ilana Pardes, *Agnon's Moonstruck Lovers: The Song of Songs in Israeli Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013).
- 64 Galili Shahar, *Gufim veshemot: Keriyot besifrut yehudit Hadashah* (Tel Aviv: 'Am 'Oved, 2016), 269–278.
- 65 Franz Kafka, *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente 2* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1990), 85.
- 66 Reiner Stach, *Kafka: Die Jahren der Entscheidungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2002), 218.
- 67 Emmanuel Levinas, *Proper Names* (London: Athlone, 1996), 11.
- 68 Levinas, *Proper Names*, 27.

- 69 Levinas, *Proper Names*, 15.
- 70 Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 10–11.; translation from Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 9.