

Cambridge University Press  
0521663148 - The Cambridge Companion to Kafka  
Edited by Julian Preece  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

THE CAMBRIDGE  
COMPANION TO  
KAFKA

Franz Kafka's writing has had a wide-reaching influence on European literature, culture, and thought. *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* offers a comprehensive account of his life and work, providing a rounded contemporary appraisal of Central Europe's most distinctive modernist. Contributions cover all the key texts, and discuss Kafka's writing in a variety of critical contexts such as feminism, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and Jewish studies. Other chapters discuss his impact on popular culture and film. The essays are well supported by a chronology of significant dates relating to Kafka and detailed guides to further reading, and will be of interest to students of German, Comparative Literature, and Jewish Studies.

JULIAN PREECE is Senior Lecturer at the School of European Culture and Languages at the University of Kent at Canterbury. He is the author (with Waldemar Lotnik) of *Nine Lives: Ethnic Conflict in the Polish-Ukrainian Borderlands* (1999) and *The Life and Work of Günter Grass: Literature, History, Politics* (2001).

Cambridge University Press  
0521663148 - The Cambridge Companion to Kafka  
Edited by Julian Preece  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

THE CAMBRIDGE  
COMPANION TO  
KAFKA

EDITED BY  
JULIAN PREECE  
*University of Kent at Canterbury*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 0521663148 - The Cambridge Companion to Kafka  
 Edited by Julian Preece  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
 Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
 Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa  
<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press 2002

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
 no reproduction of any part may take place without  
 the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2002  
 Reprinted 2003

*Typeface* Sabon 10/13 pt.    *System* L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> [TB]

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data*

The Cambridge companion to Kafka / edited by Julian Preece.

p. cm. – (Cambridge companions to literature)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 66314 8 – ISBN 0 521 66391 1 (pbk)

I. Kafka, Franz, 1883–1924. 2. Authors, Austrian – 20th century – Biography.

I. Preece, Julian. II. Series.

PT2621.A26 Z488 2002

833'.912 – dc21

[B] 2001043212

ISBN 0 521 66314 8 hardback

ISBN 0 521 66391 1 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2005

Cambridge University Press  
0521663148 - The Cambridge Companion to Kafka  
Edited by Julian Preece  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

For Pippa,  
Marianne, and Gabriel

## CONTENTS

<i>Notes on contributors</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiv
<i>Chronology</i>	xvi
Introduction: Kafka's Europe JULIAN PREECE	I
1 Kafka's writing and our reading DAVID CONSTANTINE	9
2 A psychoanalytic reading of <i>The Man who Disappeared</i> ANNE FUCHS	25
3 The exploration of the modern city in <i>The Trial</i> ROLF J. GOEBEL	42
4 <i>The Castle</i> ELIZABETH BOA	61
5 Kafka's short fiction RUTH V. GROSS	80
6 Kafka's later stories and aphorisms STANLEY CORNGOLD	95
7 The letters and diaries JULIAN PREECE	III
8 The case for a political reading BILL DODD	131
9 Kafka and Jewish folklore IRIS BRUCE	150

## CONTENTS

10	Kafka and gender DAGMAR C.G. LORENZ	169
11	Myths and realities in Kafka biography ANTHONY NORTHEY	189
12	Editions, translations, adaptations OSMAN DURRANI	206
13	Kafka adapted to film MARTIN BRADY AND HELEN HUGHES	226
14	Kafka and popular culture IRIS BRUCE	242
	<i>Index</i>	247

## CONTRIBUTORS

ELIZABETH BOA has taught German literature for more than thirty years at the University of Nottingham, where she is now professor. She is the author of *The Sexual Circus: Wedekind's Theatre of Subversion* (1987) and *Kafka: Gender, Class, and Race in the Letters and Fictions* (1996) and (with Rachel Palfreyman) *Heimat – A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890–1990* (2000). She is currently President of the Conference of University Teachers of German in Great Britain and Ireland.

MARTIN BRADY is a visiting lecturer and honorary research fellow in the German Department of King's College London. He wrote his PhD on the early films of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet and has published on the history of German film, Straub/Huillet, Arnold Schönberg, Robert Bresson, adaptations of Kleist, and Paul Celan. He is the translator of Victor Klemperer's *Language of the Third Reich. LTI: Lingua Tertii Imperii* (2000) and is active as a visual artist.

IRIS BRUCE is assistant professor of German and Comparative Literature at McMaster University, Hamilton (Ontario). She wrote a PhD on Kafka and the Jewish tradition at the University of Toronto and has since published a number of essays on Kafka and Judaism, Kafka and Nadine Gordimer, and Kafka in popular culture. She is presently completing a book entitled *Dates in Palestine: Kafka's Cultural Zionism*.

DAVID CONSTANTINE taught German language and literature, first at Durham, then at Oxford, before retiring in 2000. He is known as a translator (most recently, *Selected Writings: Heinrich von Kleist*, 1997), a scholar of the German Classical Age (*Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal*, 1984; *Hölderlin*, 1988), and a poet. His *Selected Poems* appeared with Bloodaxe in 1991. Since then he has published *Caspar Hauser* (1994) and *The Pelt of Wasps* (1998).

## CONTRIBUTORS

STANLEY CORNGOLD is professor of German and Comparative Literature at Princeton University. He is the author of *The Commentators' Despair: the Interpretation of Kafka's Metamorphosis* (1973), *Franz Kafka: the Necessity of Form* (1988), a novel entitled *Borrowed Lives* (1991), *The Fate of the Self: German Writers and French Theory* (rev. edn. 1994), and *Complex Pleasures: Forms of Feeling in German Literature* (1998). He has also translated 'The Metamorphosis' and is the editor of the Norton edition of that work (1996). He is currently completing a new study of Kafka, entitled *Lambent Traces*.

BILL DODD, reader in German Studies at the University of Birmingham, is the author of numerous books on Kafka, including student guides to *Der Prozess* (1991), *The Metamorphosis*, *The Trial*, and *The Castle* (1995), and *Kafka and Dostoyevsky* (1992). He also has many publications in the field of linguistics and was a co-author of *Modern German Grammar: a Practical Guide* (1996). He has recently been awarded a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship to investigate 'Sprachkritik, Nazism, and the German Conscience: the Career of Dolf Sternberger'.

OSMAN DURRANI taught German at the University of Durham for twenty-three years before his appointment to a professorship in 1995 at the University of Kent at Canterbury. He is the author of *Faust and the Bible* (1977), *Fictions of Germany: Images of the German Nation in the Modern Novel* (1994), editor of *German Poetry of the Romantic Era: an Anthology* (1986), and co-editor (with Colin Good and Keven Hilliard) of *The New Germany: Literature and Society after Unification* (1995). He has published on Kafka and Harold Pinter and written extensively on modern drama and prose. He is currently working on German popular music and cabaret.

ANNE FUCHS studied at the University of Konstanz, Germany, and is now senior lecturer in German at University College, Dublin. Her research focuses on the self and the other in modern literature, including travel writing. She is the author of *Dramaturgie des Narrentums: das Komische in der Prosa Robert Walsers* (1993) and *A Space of Anxiety: Dislocation and Abjection in Modern German-Jewish Literature* (1999). She has also edited (with Theo Harden), *Reisen im Diskurs: Modelle der literarischen Fremderfahrung von den Pilgerberichten bis zur Postmoderne* (1995) and (with Florian Krobb), *Ghetto Writing: Traditional and Eastern Jewry in German-Jewish Literature* (1999).

ROLF J. GOEBEL teaches German language, culture, and literature at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. In Germany he studied at the University of Kiel, in the US at Brown and Maryland. He is the author of *Kritik*

## CONTRIBUTORS

*und Revision: Kafkas Rezeption mythologischer, biblischer und historischer Traditionen* (1986) and *Constructing China: Kafka's Orientalist Discourse* (1997), as well as recent articles on Walter Benjamin, postcolonialism, and urban discourse. He is currently completing a book on the reconceptualisation of the flâneur in a postcolonial context.

RUTH V. GROSS is the author of *PLAN and the Austrian Rebirth* (1982) and editor of *Critical Essays on Franz Kafka* (1990). She has twice been President of the Kafka Society of America and is a member of the Editorial Board for the *Journal of the Kafka Society of America*. She teaches German at the University of Texas, Arlington, where she chaired the Department of Foreign Languages for seven years and is now Dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

HELEN HUGHES teaches German language, linguistics, and film at the University of Surrey. She wrote her PhD ('The Bureaucratic Muse') on prose style in the works of Adalbert Stifter, Kafka, Thomas Bernhard, and Oswald Wiener. She has published on contemporary cinema, Bernhard, Stifter and Robert Bresson, and the Austrian film-maker and artist, Valie Export.

DAGMAR C. G. LORENZ, a native of the Federal Republic of Germany, received her PhD in German and Master's in English from the University of Cincinnati. She has taught at Rutgers and, for many years, at the Ohio State University. In 1998 she joined the Department of German at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is the author of *Ilse Aichinger* (1981), *Franz Grillparzer: Dichter des sozialen Konflikts* (1986), *Verfolgung bis zum Massenmord* (1992), and *Keepers of the Motherland: German Texts by Jewish Women Writers* (1997). She is also the editor and translator of *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Austria* (1999) and currently serves as Editor of *German Quarterly*.

ANTHONY DROSTE NORTHEY was born in the US, grew up in Germany and Austria, and studied in Canada. He has been teaching German at Acadia University in Nova Scotia, Canada, since 1970 and since 1973 has been engaged in biographical research on Kafka. He contributed to the *Kafka-Handbuch*, edited by Hartmut Binder (1979), and is the author of *Kafka's Relatives: their Lives and his Writing* (1991), which has been translated into numerous languages, as well as of many essays in both English and German. From 1998 to 2000 he was President of the Canadian Association of German Teachers.

JULIAN PREECE teaches German and Comparative Literature at the University of Kent at Canterbury. His main research interests lie in German culture of

Cambridge University Press  
0521663148 - The Cambridge Companion to Kafka  
Edited by Julian Preece  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## CONTRIBUTORS

the second half of the twentieth century, especially contemporary literature. He is the author of *The Life and Work of Günter Grass: Literature, History, Politics* (2001) and (with Waldemar Lotnik) *Nine Lives: Ethnic Conflict in the Polish–Ukrainian Borderlands* (1999). From 1994 to 2000 he was co-editor of the Bradford Series of Colloquia on Contemporary German Literature.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Most of the chapters in this Companion were presented and discussed at a meeting of the contributors which took place in Prague in July 1999. We are grateful to the Zentrum Franze Kafky and the Austrian Culture Institute in Prague for inviting us to use their premises and to Kurt Krolop and Josef Čermák for their valuable comments.

Transatlantic collaborations of this sort are rare in German studies but made much easier nowadays by electronic communication. My task as editor has been greatly eased by the spirit of co-operation which has characterised this enterprise from the beginning and I would like to thank the contributors for that. My special thanks go to my colleague Osman Durrani whose contribution to the volume has been far in excess of his own chapter.

## ABBREVIATIONS

As one of the primary aims of this volume is to bring Kafka further into the orbit of the non-German speaker, all quotations from his writings are in English translation. Sometimes the contributors have preferred to translate themselves, sometimes they have used well-known published translations, which they have modified where appropriate. This variety of approaches has entailed a large number of cited German and English editions (for further clarification, see chapter 12, 'Editions, Translations, Adaptations').

When reference is made to German, the paperback version of the German critical edition has been used: Franz Kafka, *Gesammelte Werke in zwölf Bänden* (Collected Works in Twelve Volumes), ed. Hans-Gerd Koch (Frankfurt aM: Fischer, 1994):

- EL *Ein Landarzt und andere Drucke zu Lebzeiten*, vol. 1 (A Country Doctor and Other Texts Printed in his Lifetime)
- DV *Der Verschollene*, vol. 2 (*The Man who Disappeared*)
- DP *Der Proceß*, vol. 3 (*The Trial*)
- DS *Das Schloß*, vol. 4 (*The Castle*)
- BK *Beschreibung eines Kampfes und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, vol. 5 (Description of a Struggle and Other Posthumous Writings)
- BB *Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, vol. 6 (The Great Wall of China and Other Posthumous Writings)
- ZFG *Zur Frage der Gesetze und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, vol. 7 (On the Question of Laws and Other Posthumous Writings)
- DE *Das Ehepaar und andere Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, vol. 8 (The Married Couple and Other Posthumous Writings)
- TB1 *Tagebücher: 1909–1912*, vol. 9 (Diaries: 1909–1912)
- TB2 *Tagebücher: 1912–1914*, vol. 10 (Diaries: 1912–1914)
- TB3 *Tagebücher: 1914–1923*, vol. 11 (Diaries: 1914–1923)
- RT *Reisetagebücher*, vol. 12 (Travel Diaries)

## ABBREVIATIONS

The editorial situation with the letters is more complicated as only the first of a planned five volumes of correspondence has so far appeared:

*B2* *Briefe 1902–1912* (Letters 1902–1912), ed. Hans-Gerd Koch (Frankfurt aM: Fischer, 1999)

The following volumes are also cited:

*BF* *Briefe an Felice und andere Korrespondenz aus der Verlobungszeit* (Letters to Felice and Other Correspondence from the Time of his Engagement), ed. Erich Heller and Jürgen Born (Frankfurt aM: Fischer, 1967)

*BM* *Briefe an Milena. Erweiterte und neu geordnete Ausgabe* (Letters to Milena. Revised Edition), ed. Jürgen Born and Michael Müller (Frankfurt aM: Fischer, 1983)

*BI* *Briefe 1902–1924* (Letters 1902–1924), ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt aM: Fischer, 1958)

Apart from the diaries, which are only available in translations of Max Brod's editions, we have cited published translations which follow the revised critical edition of the fiction:

*TT* *The Trial*, tr. Breon Mitchell (New York: Schocken, 1998)

*GWC* *The Great Wall of China and Other Short Works*, tr. and ed. Malcolm Pasley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991)

*TOS* *The Transformation and Other Stories: Works Published During Kafka's Lifetime*, tr. and ed. Malcolm Pasley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992)

*M* *The Metamorphosis: Tradition, Backgrounds and Context* (New York: Norton, 1996), ed. and tr. Stanley Corngold

*D1* *The Diaries of Franz Kafka 1910–13*, ed. Max Brod, tr. Joseph Kresh (London: Secker and Warburg, 1948)

*D2* *The Diaries of Franz Kafka 1914–23*, ed. Max Brod, tr. Martin Greenberg with the co-operation of Hannah Arendt (London: Secker and Warburg, 1949)

*LF* *Letters to Felice*, ed. Erich Heller and Jürgen Born, tr. James Stern and Elisabeth Duckworth (New York: Schocken, 1973)

*LFPE* *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, ed. Max Brod, tr. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Schocken, 1978)

## CHRONOLOGY

- 3 July 1883 Birth of Franz Kafka in Prague, capital of the kingdom of Bohemia in the dual monarchy of Austria–Hungary. His parents, the fancy-goods merchants, Hermann and Julie Kafka, name him after the Habsburg emperor, Franz Josef.
- 1886 Death of Kafka’s brother Georg at fifteen months from measles.
- 1887 Birth of Felice Bauer in Silesia (Germany).
- 1888 Death of Kafka’s second brother Heinrich at seven months from meningitis.
- 1889 The Panama affair. Jewish financiers are blamed for the collapse of the Panama Canal project. Thousands of French investors lose their money. Kafka’s uncles Alfred and Joseph Loewy worked for the Panama Canal Company and feel the brunt of French anti-Semitism.
- 1889–90 The Dreyfus trial. After Alfred Dreyfus, a captain in the French army, is found guilty of passing military secrets to the Germans, France becomes embroiled in a bout of anti-Semitism, during which the loyalty of French Jews is called into question. The Dreyfus affair echoed through the decades in pre-Hitler Europe.
- 1889–92 Birth of Kafka’s three sisters, Elli, Valli, and Ottla, all of whom will perish in the Holocaust.
- 1893–1901 Kafka attends the Altstädter Deutsches Gymnasium (German Grammar School) in Prague.
- 1896 Bar-mitzvah; Theodor Herzl publishes *The Jewish State*, the book which founded the Zionist movement; birth of Milena Jesenská.
- 1897 Three-day anti-Jewish riots in Prague (the ‘December Storm’).

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1900 Publication of Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*; death of Friedrich Nietzsche.
- 1901 Kafka's first foreign holiday – to the German islands of Norderney and Helgoland in the North Sea – on completion of his *Abitur* (school-leaving certificate). Publication of Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*.
- 1901–6 Studies at the German University in Prague. After sampling courses in chemistry, art history, and German literature, finally settles on law and is awarded a doctorate after five years of study.
- 1902 Hugo von Hofmannsthal publishes 'Letter to Lord Chandos', arguably the most important single document in the *Sprachkrise* ('Crisis of language'), where he articulates a loss of confidence in words as a means of communication; Kafka meets Max Brod; correspondence with schoolfriends, Paul Kisch and Oskar Pollak.
- 1903 Journey to Munich.
- 1905 Failed revolution in Russia; Kafka spends part of the summer at a sanatorium in Zuckmantel, Austrian Silesia (now Poland).
- 1905–6 In order to qualify as a civil servant Kafka works for twelve months for no pay at the criminal courts.
- 1907–8 Employed at the Assicurazioni Generali in Prague.
- 1907–9 Correspondence with Hedwig Weiler.
- 1908 First publications of short prose pieces in literary journal; joins the Workers' Accident Insurance Institute, where he is promoted rapidly in his first five years and carries on working until 1922; Austria–Hungary annexes Bosnia–Herzegovina.
- 1909 The earliest date for surviving diary entries; journey with Brod to Brescia in northern Italy (September); publication of 'The Aeroplane in Brescia'.
- 1910 Journey with Brod to Paris (October); first journey to Berlin (December).
- 1911 Hears a lecture by Albert Einstein (May), whose *General Theory of Relativity* was published three years earlier; journey with Brod to Switzerland, northern Italy, and Paris (August/September); meeting with the Yiddish Theatre Troupe from Lemberg/Lwów (September); becomes closely involved with the running of the Kafka family's asbestos factory (autumn).

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1911–13 Beiliss affair in Russia unleashes wave of anti-Semitism which, like the Dreyfus trial more than twenty years earlier, washes over the neighbouring Habsburg lands. After the brutal murder of a young schoolboy in Kiev, the ‘blood libel’ against the Jews is revived once more. Mendel Beiliss is accused of murdering the boy to use his blood for ritualistic purposes. The Tsarist authorities know of his innocence but proceed with the prosecution; Beiliss is finally acquitted.
- 1912–13 First and second Balkan Wars.
- 1912 Kafka delivers ‘Introductory Lecture on Yiddish’ (February); hears lecture by the Czech Social Democrat František Soukup on America and meets his future publishers, Ernst Rowohlt and Kurt Wolff (June); journey with Brod to Leipzig and Weimar (July), first book, *Contemplation*, accepted for publication; meets Felice Bauer (August) and begins correspondence with her (September); writes ‘The Judgement’, ‘The Metamorphosis’, and most of *The Man who Disappeared* (September–December).
- 1913 Meets the Zionist writer and intellectual Martin Buber (January); continues intensive correspondence with Bauer whom he visits in March; announces engagement on his thirtieth birthday; begins correspondence with Grete Bloch; travels to Vienna, Venice, and Riva (September).
- 1914 Outbreak of First World War after the assassination of the heir to the Habsburg crown, Archduke Franz-Ferdinand, in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia–Herzegovina (28 June); Austro-Hungarian troops march east on Russia and south on Serbia, suffering heavy defeats on both fronts; Kafka breaks off engagement with Bauer after acrimonious meeting in Berlin (July); begins work on *The Trial*, writes ‘The Village Schoolmaster’, ‘In the Penal Colony’.
- 1915 Accompanies his sister Elli to the front in Hungary to visit brother-in-law (April); the German playwright Carl Sternheim donates his winnings from the Fontane Prize to Kafka.
- 1916 Holiday with Bauer in Marienbad (Marianski Lasne); work on short pieces for *A Country Doctor*; gives public reading from ‘In the Penal Colony’ in Munich (November).
- 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia; Balfour Declaration in favour of a Jewish state; writes ‘A Report for an Academy’

## CHRONOLOGY

- (April); begins to learn Hebrew (May); first signs of the tuberculosis which will kill him (August); final break with Bauer; recuperation with Ottla in rural Zürau; work on aphorisms.
- 1918–19 After the defeat of Germany and Austria–Hungary much of Central Europe is in the grip of revolution; Prague becomes the capital of independent Czechoslovakia; Kafka travels to Schelesen in Bohemia for a further rest cure (November–December).
- 1919 Divides his time between work in Prague and rest cures in Schelesen; engagement with Julie Wohryzek; meets Minze Eisner, writes ‘Letter to his Father’ (November).
- 1920 Rest cure in Merano; correspondence with Milena Jesenská begins (April).
- 1920–1 Rest cure in Slovakian Matliary; correspondence with Robert Klopstock begins.
- 1922 Assassination of Walter Rathenau, the German foreign minister, by right-wing anti-Semites; Kafka writes *The Castle* (January–August), ‘A Fasting-artist’ (May), ‘Investigations of a Dog’; retires from the Workers’ Accident Insurance Institute on grounds of ill health.
- 1923 Meets Dora Diamant in Müritz on the Baltic coast (August) and lives with her in Berlin during the great inflation until March 1924; writes ‘A Little Woman’.
- 1924 Writes ‘Josephine, the Songstress or: the Mouse People’ (March–April); dies in Vienna on 3 June and is buried in the Jewish Cemetery in Prague.

(See Roger Hermes et al., *Franz Kafka: eine Chronik* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1999).)