

“Man darf nicht sagen...”.
Kafka’s 1906 fragment *Über ästhetische Apperception* („On Perception“)

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Inspired by Scott Spector’s analysis of the Prague Circle, this article investigates how Kafka’s fragment “On Perception” (“Über ästhetische Apperception”) might be viewed as a product of the dialogue between Brod and Kafka. After surveying how Kafka scholars have framed and tried to apply Kafka’s early text on aesthetics, the article shows Kafka’s work refuses to engage with the powerful anti-Jewish tropes of aesthetic theory around 1900 (Weininger) and instead develops literary themes and techniques that anticipate many aspects of Kafka’s later literary production.

Franz Kafka’s earliest known writing on aesthetic theory came to light very late. The three page, double-sided, handwritten text was discovered by Max Brod, he says, as he sorted through old papers. It was first published in 1965 in *Die Zeit*, with an introduction by Brod¹. Kafka’s text is untitled and it is usually referred to in the scholarly literature in German as “Über ästhetische Apperception” or by the opening words “Man darf nicht sagen...”; in English it is most often referred to as “On Perception,” and I will use that title henceforth in this article. Brod presents Kafka’s text as a critical response to a two-part article by Brod, “Zur Aesthetik,” that was published in the journal *Die Gegenwart* in February 1906². In his article, Brod builds upon the theories of Arthur Schopenhauer, Johann Friedrich Herbart and Wilhelm Wundt to argue that apperception presents the essence of the beautiful, whereby the

¹ M. Brod, “Ungedrucktes von Franz Kafka”, in *Die Zeit*, p. 22 October 1965, <http://www.zeit.de/1965/43/ungedrucktes-von-franz-kafka>. Reprinted in M. Brod, *Der Prager Kreis*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 1966, pp. 94-95 and F. Kafka, *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente I*, ed. M. Pasley, S. Fischer, Frankfurt a.M. 1993, pp. 9-11 [in the following notes, I will refer to this edition as NSF, with corresponding volume numbers, translations from the German will be my own].

² M. Brod, “Zur Aesthetik”, in *Die Gegenwart* 69 (17.2.1906 and 24.2.1906), pp. 102-104, pp. 118-119. Kafka apparently responds only to the first section on Brod’s text. See NSF I:A, 36 and the overview by J. Heinz in *Kafka-Handbuch: Leben-Werk-Wirkung*, eds. M. Engel and B. Auerochs, J.B. Metzler, Stuttgart 2010, pp. 137-138.

beautiful can be redefined as “the new”³. Kafka’s “On Perception” develops his objections to Brod’s article in five lettered sections, “a” through “e.” Brod frames Kafka’s text as something that wavers between his letters and his literary texts, and his introduction to “On Perception” notes features of both: Kafka’s fragment lacks a salutation, closing, or signature, but it sometimes uses direct address and seems “on its way to becoming a letter”. On the other hand, for Brod, Kafka’s “academic” organization of his thoughts and the shape and order of his handwriting strokes are evocative of Kafka’s early story “Beschreibung eines Kampfes” (“Description of a Struggle”).

Kafka’s early text on aesthetic theory is thus fundamentally bound up with his creative dialogue with Max Brod, but what kind of relation might Kafka’s fragmentary text assert? What questions does their dialogue address?⁴ In his introduction to “On Perception,” Brod notes that their mutual friend Felix Weltsch joined Kafka in his objections to Brod’s positions in “Zur Aesthetik”. Kafka’s fragment might thus also be analyzed as part of the wider set of issues that formed the fabric of the “Prague circle” and its discourse. The historian Scott Spector has argued that the Prague Circle’s aesthetic and political concerns are deeply rooted in the complex cultural, political, religious and linguistic situation of their generation of German-speaking Jews, growing out of their position as urban intellectuals in an era of territorial nationalism. Spector also asserts that it is a reduction and an ideological imposition for critics to posit a binary between the “aesthetic” and “political” concerns of Brod, Kafka and the other Prague Jewish writers and to see Brod’s work in particular as a development “towards” a recognition of the primacy of Jewish identification and politics over “purely” artistic concerns⁵. For the Prague Circle, art, language, and politics were deeply intertwined. Spector’s book doesn’t offer a detailed analysis of Kafka’s “On Perception”, but can we follow

³ M. Brod, “Ungedrucktes,” p. 1. For a discussion of Brod’s “Zur Aesthetik” and its relation to his early literary work, see G. Vassogne, *Max Brod in Prag: Identität und Vermittlung*, Max Niemeyer, Tübingen 2009, pp. 19-24.

⁴ See the reflections by R. Robertson, “The Creative Dialogue between Brod and Kafka” in Mark H. Gelber, *Kafka, Zionism, and Beyond*, Max Niemeyer, Tübingen 2004, pp. 283-296.

⁵ S. Spector, *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka’s Fin de Siècle*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles 2000, especially pp. 61-67.

his lead to ask whether the sort of connections he posits might be legible in this early Kafka text? In the following, I will analyze Kafka's "On Perception", after first surveying some of the ways that critics have tried to apply his text. I will then offer suggestions for further possibilities to understand Kafka's work and to situate it in the historical context of German-Jewish writing around 1906.

A number of scholars have investigated Kafka's relation to the philosophical and psychological thought currents that were influential in Prague and in the wider German-speaking world before WW1. The two most in-depth studies have been Judith Ryan's *The Vanishing Subject: Early Psychology and Literary Modernism* (1991) and Arnold Heidsieck's *The Intellectual Contexts of Kafka's Fiction: Philosophy, Law, Religion* (1994); both authors connect "On Perception" with Kafka's early literary works, as well as with the works of the "breakthrough" period and beyond⁶. Whereas in his introduction to Kafka's "On Perception", Max Brod asserts that it is misguided for scholars to associate Kafka with the "Brentano School" that was dominant in Prague (Brod stresses instead the significance of Schopenhauer for Kafka), both Heidsieck and Ryan nonetheless give evidence for the impact of Brentano's thought on Kafka. Heidsieck offers detailed accounts of the range of theories that Kafka was exposed to during the early 1900s and that he discussed with Brod and other Prague intellectuals in the "Louvre Circle" between 1902 and 1905. Heidsieck then suggests several interpretive frameworks to demonstrate how Kafka incorporated these various theories of perception as he crafted his modernist literary style. Heidsieck argues that Brentano's theory of the dynamic of perception, apperception, and fatigue can elucidate passages in "Description of a Struggle" (defined here briefly, for Brentano "perception" is what is taken in by the senses, "apperception" is the conscious processing of sensory

⁶ J. Ryan, *The Vanishing Subject: Early Psychology and Literary Modernism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1991 and A. Heidsieck, *The Intellectual Contexts of Kafka's Fiction: Philosophy, Law, Religion*, Camden House, Columbia S.C 1994. Heidsieck's book incorporates sections of earlier essays, which offer more detailed passages on Kafka's "On Perception". See also A. Heidsieck, "Physiological, Phenomenological, and Linguistic Psychology in Kafka's Early Works", *The German Quarterly*, 62, 4 (1989), pp. 489-500 and A. Heidsieck, "Kafka's Narrative Ontology", *Philosophy and Literature*, 11 (1987), pp. 242-257.

impressions based upon existing impressions, and “fatigue” is one factor – the essential narrowness of consciousness is another – that explains how apperception can falter and ideas and impressions thus blur or fade⁷). Heidsieck suggests further that Brentano and Alexius Meinong influenced Kafka’s “Das Urteil” (“The Judgement”): for example, in sections that reveal things about the ways that impressions are processed (where Georg Bendemann is careful not to trouble his friend in Russia with new impressions of home); in the character of the friend in Russia as an “intentional object” that can have qualities without existence; and in the general lack of consistency in perspective which characterizes Kafka’s literary work⁸.

Interestingly, Judith Ryan does not discuss Kafka’s “On Perception” in her 1991 study of early psychology and literary modernism. Ryan does offer convincing evidence for the relevance of some of Brentano’s theories for Kafka’s work, namely: (1) the idea that we only have knowledge of things through “inner perception,” which Kafka identified as a “dream-like state”; (2) the view that consciousness is not layered; and (3) the denial of “metaperception,” the idea that we can perceive ourselves perceiving⁹. Ryan interprets Kafka’s “Description of a Struggle” as an illustration of the influence of empiricist thought on the writer’s works. In another essay from 2003, Ryan points specifically to “On Perception” as an example of Kafka’s skepticism regarding the concept of apperception, which he describes as a “safety railing” [*Geländer*] to which Brod clings¹⁰. Ryan then continues on to illustrate how uncertainty in perception is a central feature of “Description of a Struggle”. Although Ryan is skeptical of some of Heidsieck’s interpretations¹¹, both authors see empiricist psychology and aesthetic theory as a background against which Kafka’s literary texts can be more deeply appreciated.

⁷ A. Heidsieck, “Physiological, Phenomenological, and Linguistic Psychology”, p. 493.

⁸ A. Heidsieck, “Physiological, Phenomenological, and Linguistic Psychology”, pp. 493, 498 and A. Heidsieck, *Intellectual Contexts*, pp. 33-34.

⁹ J. Ryan, *The Vanishing Subject*, pp. 100-114, here p. 101.

¹⁰ J. Ryan, “Kafka Before Kafka: The Early Stories”, in J. Rolleston, ed., *A Companion to the Works of Franz Kafka*, Camden House, Rochester, New York 2003, pp. 61-84, here p. 64.

¹¹ J. Ryan, *The Vanishing Subject*, 245 N5.

Other scholars have used Kafka's early aesthetic reflections in "On Perception" as a springboard to develop interpretations of the author's major later works of the "breakthrough" period and beyond. Mark Anderson notes how Kafka's 1906 reflections on apperception show a longstanding concern with «the apparent groundlessness of material reality, that is, with *things in motion*»¹². For Anderson, Kafka's 1906 insistence to Brod that «perception is not a state but a movement» prefigures Kafka's radical literary experiment in his America novel, which merges a sensitivity understanding of the social and sexual destabilization in capitalist modernity (everything contained in one of Kafka's key terms, *Verkehr* [traffic]) with an awareness of the unsettling potential that comes with a deeper understanding of our basic mental processes.

Todd Presner, in his 2007 book *Mobile Modernity*, builds upon Mark Anderson's insights and uses "On Perception" to develop his own reading of Kafka's America novel. For Presner, Kafka's understanding of aesthetic apperception as a "movement," rather than a "state" offers a framework to interpret Kafka's *Der Verschollene* (*The Man Who Disappeared*) as a text which mobilizes a modern experience of time and space for social critique:

Space and time are no longer absolute categories from which to demarcate events, actions, or plots—let alone secure the space of the 'nation' or the time of 'history'—but are rather a relative function of an observer's mobility from within an ever more densely linked and, at least for Karl [Rossmann], oppressive system of power.¹³

Presner sees Kafka's thoughts on perception and art as supportive of his larger thesis, which celebrates the emancipatory promise of modernity expressed through tropes of motion, as "dialectical spaces of connection, encounter, exchange" that can rise above fixed notions of territory, history, and nation, which are understood as constraints on freedom.

¹² M. Anderson, "Kafka and New York: Notes on a Traveling Narrative", in A. Huyssen and D. Bathrick, *Modernity and the Text: Revisions of German Modernism*, Columbia University Press, New York 1989, pp. 142-161, here pp. 143-144. Reprinted in M. Anderson, *Kafka's Clothes: Ornament and Aestheticism in the Habsburg Fin de Siècle*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1992, pp. 98-122.

¹³ T. Presner, *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains*, Columbia University Press, New York 2007, p. 98, see also p. 113 and p. 311 N95.

The most extensive application of Kafka's "On Perception" to his major literary works is Stanley Corngold's *Complex Pleasure* (1998)¹⁴. Corngold provides a detailed discussion (and near-complete English translation) of "On Perception", which he uses as a "lever" to interpret Kafka's America novel, with additional remarks about *Der Prozess* (*The Trial*) and *Das Schloss* (*The Castle*). Like Anderson and Presner, Corngold also views Kafka's 1906 fragment as a perceptive theoretical formulation of modernity. Corngold draws upon Anson Rabinbach's *The Human Motor* to argue that Kafka's remarks to Brod, which frame fatigue as a primary factor in the interruption of the "aesthetic apperception", thus reference a defining feature of modern life for thinkers including Nietzsche, Huysmans, and Weber¹⁵. By contrast, Heidsieck shows that, in an 1886 essay critiquing Wundt for failing to distinguish apperception (as conscious judgement) from attentiveness (as willed focusing), Anton Marty (Kafka's philosophy professor) discusses fatigue as one of several waking states (others include boredom, disinterest, prejudice, and distraction) that can inhibit apperception as much as sleep and dreams¹⁶. The point is that Heidsieck suggests that the dynamic of fatigue and apperception Kafka learned from Marty is a timeless psychological constant rather than a modern historical condition. Corngold, on the other hand, sees Kafka's observations as distinctly modern and he goes on to argue that Kafka's critique of Brod in "On Perception", together with its productive literary application in Kafka's America novel, outline a theory of experience (or, more precisely, the impossibility of pre-modern "experience" in modernity) which invites comparison with Walter Benjamin's thought, specifically Benjamin's notion of distraction (outlined in "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit" ["The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"]) and his theory of the "shock effects" that demolish a modern psyche's ability to form experience (elaborated in "Über

¹⁴ S. Corngold, *Complex Pleasure. Forms of Feeling in German Literature*, Stanford 1998, pp. 121-138 (Chapter 6 "Rapture in Exile: Kafka's 'The Boy Who Sank Out of Sight'"), especially pp. 125-129.

¹⁵ S. Corngold, *Complex Pleasure*, pp. 126-127, 225 N22. See A. Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*, Basic Books, New York 1990.

¹⁶ A. Heidsieck, "Physiological, Phenomenological, and Linguistic Psychology", pp. 493-494.

einige Motive bei Baudelaire” [“On Some Motifs in Baudelaire”)]¹⁷. Corngold’s concluding insight is to show how Kafka’s thoughts on apperception (in the 1906 fragment, literary works, and diary entries) move beyond traditional aesthetics and its concern with objects in the phenomenal world, in order to also illuminate a distance between language and objects, and to show that our inward selves, our essences, our souls are as ungraspable as the commodified objects in the world, for they exist in a negative symbiosis with one another¹⁸.

Most recently, Paul North has developed Corngold’s line of thought even further, to interpret Kafka’s later work. In his 2011 book, North relates Kafka’s aesthetic critique in “On Perception” to his late story “Der Bau” (“The Burrow,” composed 1923-24)¹⁹. For North, the interruptions of apperception to which Kafka is attuned in his 1906 fragment form the background to an understanding of “The Burrow” as revelatory of contrasting modes of thought: «obstinate, intensive thinking» versus «primal distraction»²⁰. North sees distraction as «a counterpoint to thinking» and understand Kafka’s response to Brod as a refutation which leads to the development of «not thinking or distraction as the proper experience of art»²¹.

The critical approaches discussed above have sought to discern in Kafka’s “On Perception” insights into specifically modern aspects of experience and to show how these are operative in Kafka’s literary texts. With these approaches in mind, I would like to discuss in the following some aspects of Kafka’s 1906 text that have thematic resonance with other works by Kafka and which may reveal aspects of his historical context and his dialogue with Brod and the Prague Circle. In the first section of “On Perception” [“a”], Kafka objects to Brod’s assertion that only new ideas awaken aesthetic pleasure. It follows,

¹⁷ S. Corngold, *Complex Pleasure*, p. 131.

¹⁸ Ivi, p. 137.

¹⁹ P. North, *The Problem of Distraction*, Stanford University Press, Stanford CA 2012.

²⁰ P. North, *The Problem of Distraction*, p. 76. See also North’s discussion of apperception and Kafka’s fragment pp. 86-94, 98-99, 149, 158, 162-168, 172-174. In his more recent study, focused on the “Zürauer Aphorismen” (“Zürau Aphorisms”, written 1917-1918), North discusses Kafka’s understanding of apperception as the foundation for a critique of Kantian of a unified subject that transcends cognition. See P. North, *The Yield. Kafka’s Atheological Reformation*, Stanford, Stanford CA 2015, pp. 41-42, 73-74.

²¹ P. North, *The Yield. Kafka’s Atheological Reformation*, p. 86.

then, in “b)”) that Kafka asks how we can explain or distinguish the concept of “aesthetic apperception”, for we can take pleasure in newness that is not limited to the experience of art: we can delight in news or a new discovery. In “d)”) Kafka questions whether there is any distinction between the “aesthetic” person and the “scientific” person (NSF I, 10). Corngold rightly sees Kafka’s thoughts in “On Perception” as a questioning of the distinctiveness of art objects from any other object in the world (because works of art exhibit, in Corngold’s moving formulation, «the spiritual muteness of commodities in random circulation»)²². Kafka’s “On Perception” might thus be seen as a demythologization of art, with an awareness that our experience of art is indistinguishable from our experience of the everyday. This might be productively connected with the numerous Kafka texts which highlight radical challenges to boundaries between art and our quotidian world: for example, in “Die Verwandlung” (“The Metamorphosis”), with Gregor Samsa’s framed clippings from illustrated magazines; or Kafka’s “Hungerkünstler” (“A Hunger Artist”) and his sideshow non-art. Indeed, the meaty sensory example that Kafka chooses in section “c)”) of “On Perception” to illustrate the dynamic of fatigue, pleasure, and apperception – that we can say we are tired of veal today without saying that veal is a dish we no longer favor – might be seen on a continuum with the Hunger Artist and his rejection of food and the body, as well as something related to Kafka’s own dietary practices (including the rejection of meat and of foods that were not basic and natural) and the way he referenced these as a metaphor for the minimalism and purity he aimed for in his writing practices²³.

In section “c)”) of “On Perception”, Kafka develops his view of our experience of art, which is not differentiated from our general conditions of experience. Kafka argues that the idea of the “new” (Brod’s category for the beautiful) depends on the condition of fatigue. Yet Kafka’s understanding of (aesthetic) experience takes up the dynamic of fatigue, not to celebrate the new as the beautiful, but to show the inherently difficult conditions for any

²² S. Corngold, *Complex Pleasure*, p. 121.

²³ See the discussion of these issues in M. Anderson, “Anorexia and Modernism, or How I Learned to Diet in All Directions”, in *Discourse* 11 (1988), pp. 28-41.

experience of the beautiful, of art. In the first place, for Kafka the very idea of the “new” fades away when we consider that everything is always “new” to the (modern) spectator: «every object is defined by a continually changing temporality and illumination....and we thus always encounter it in a different place». Kafka then follows with his veal example, to show that “fatigue” does not necessarily mean that pleasure is absent, only that it is not experienced in the present. To understand the experience of art, Kafka writes, we must understand apperception as a “movement” [*Bewegung*] rather than a “state” or “condition” [*Zustand*]. Brod’s mistake, Kafka asserts, is to try to resolve the fundamental instability of the object and our perception of it. Aesthetic pleasure, Kafka asserts, is a fleeting feeling that occurs in a moment of tension; it is a feeling that quickly fades. Objects “hover” briefly in our consciousness, rising above our fatigue, but they are off balance. Kafka describes the “movement” of apperception thus: «A bit of noise emerges, and in between this feeling of pleasure [*Lustgefühl*] is cornered, but soon everything settles in its cave-like resting places». This scenario invites comparison with Kafka’s literary miniatures such as “Prometheus” or “Das Schweigen der Sirenen” (“The Silence of the Sirens”): danger (even violence) and indifference are each equally plausible forces which shape a process that seems in the end to be a non-event, or something that never actually takes place, but that nonetheless comes to rest in a stone-like stasis and silence. Taking up Brod’s suggestion to examine Kafka’s “On Perception” for its affinity with both his letters and his literary texts, we might thus understand this not only as a work of theory with which to unlock other, explicitly literary texts, but as itself a literary working through of a philosophical issue.

The final section in Kafka’s fragment should also be analyzed for its literary structure. In “e)”, Kafka turns a critical eye to the concept of apperception. In his view, apperception «is not an aesthetic concept». Kafka then proceeds with an invented anecdote to illustrate the concept of apperception. Kafka creates the persona of a man from foreign parts, someone with no sense of local feeling [*ganz ohne Ortsgefühl*] who comes to Prague and wants to write to Brod. If he asks Brod for his address and learns it, then apperception is accomplished (in the way that science is comprehended). But

should he want to visit Brod, he would have to ask passersby again and again for directions at every corner, he could never do without them. Under such conditions, apperception is impossible. Kafka imagines himself tiring of the journey, resting in a cafe house, even giving up the visit. Yet apperception is said to remain elusive. Kafka's example prefigures a number of literary images that Kafka will later take up: the man from a foreign place in "Vor dem Gesetz" ("Before the Law"), "In der Strafkolonie" ("In the Penal Colony"), "Das Schloss" ("The Castle"), and other tales, of course, but also literary miniatures such as "Eine kaiserliche Botschaft" ("An Imperial Message"), where the human crowds, like the helpful Prague pedestrians in "On Perception", seem to exist to bear witness to the non-arrival of a message, to bear witness to apperception as a message from the world that is never received.

In the final paragraph of "On Perception", Kafka takes issue with several turns of phrase used by Brod in his essay on aesthetics. Where Brod writes «that explains itself without forcing the matter», Kafka counters that Brod compels his reader to «hold onto the concept of apperception like a handrail». He further complains about a logical slight of hand whereby Brod presents as a conclusion a proof that needs to be demonstrated. Kafka's final objection to Brod – this is where the text breaks off – centers on Brod's phrase «one instinctively resists» [«Man hütet sich instinktiv»]. Kafka comments that «this sentence betrays it all» [«der Satz ist ein Verräter»]. What could Kafka mean with this? Brod's introduction to "On Perception" claims that Schopenhauer was a greater influence on Kafka's thought than Brentano and the very first lines in section "a)" show that Kafka uses Schopenhauer's framework of the world as representation [*Vorstellung*] and will [*Wille*], which is the sphere of instinct. Schopenhauer's understanding of apperception is a critique of Kant: apperception is not a transcendent position for a unified subject, but rather something rooted in instinct, in the human organism, in the will. For Schopenhauer, apperception is the will moving towards self-consciousness, not transcendental idealism, but a «transcendental realism»

which presumes the «independent reality of the world of experience»²⁴. Kafka's "On Perception", however, tells a decidedly non-triumphalist story of apperception, which seems to fail when it comes to the elusive art object or with human connections. "Instinct" is noted not as a vital source of power and consciousness, but in a moment where it reflexively protects itself.

It is worthwhile to contrast Kafka's dialogue with Brod on perception with their notorious Austrian-Jewish contemporary, Otto Weininger. Kafka only seems to have directly referenced Weininger in 1921, although his 1903 work *Geschlecht und Charakter* [*Sex and Character*] was certainly widely discussed²⁵. Weininger's ideas on apperception, modernity, and identity form a stark contrast to Kafka. Weininger's misogynist and anti-Semitic characterizations (i.e. «Jüdisch ist der Geist der Modernität»²⁶) rest upon a brutally conservative application of Kantian aesthetics. For Weininger, the Aryan, male subject alone can achieve apperception and thus possess memory. "Woman" (he infamously trades in such absolutes) is incapable of apperception (which in his understanding is the foundation for art and culture) because of her embodied existence, her instincts²⁷. "The Jew" is for Weininger equally incapable of apperception as the condition of the "intelligible" subject, but due to what he understands as the degenerate historical condition of modernity, which Weininger understands as a capitalist rationality that reduces everything to exchange and that is inimical to the sovereign individuality he lauds. Brod's understanding of apperception has precisely the opposite aim as Weininger, that is to formulate an aesthetic of the modern that sees a recognition of the new as central to our basic mental processes as humans. Kafka's objections to Brod in "On Perception" are nonetheless part of the same project of giving form to our experience of the

²⁴ My understanding of Schopenhauer here is based upon F. C. Beiser, *Weltschmerz: Pessimism in German Philosophy, 1860-1900*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016, pp. 39-40.

²⁵ See G. Stieg, "Kafka and Weininger", in N. A. Harrowitz, B. Hyams, *Jews & Gender: Responses to Otto Weininger*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia 1995, pp. 195-206.

²⁶ O. Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, Wilhelm Braumüller Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung, Wien 1920 (19th edition), p. 440.

²⁷ Here and in the following I draw upon the excellent discussion in C. Achinger, "Allegories of Destruction: 'Woman' and 'the Jew' in Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*", in *The Germanic Review*, 88, 2 (2013), pp. 121-149.

modern world. Kafka arrives at this through a critique of apperception and the presumptions of Kantian ideas of a unified subjectivity. Without directly engaging Weininger, Kafka provides an alternative narrative. Whereas Brod may seek to redefine apperception in order to claim it as the common property of all who would engage aesthetically with the world, Kafka's notes to Brod embolden us to let go of the certainties of subjectivity and of the myths of apperception, to pay attention to our instincts and the ways they defensively seek to protect themselves. Like Kafka's description of the movement of apperception, his 1906 fragment also leaves things at a standstill, settled in their hollowed out resting places. But Kafka's thoughtfully worded images remain and they perhaps smile silently at his later literary elaborations.