This book explains how human beings can live more peacefully with one another by understanding the conditions of possibility for dialogue. Philosophically, this challenge is articulated as the problem of: how dialogue as dia-logos is possible when the shared logos is precisely that which is in question. Emmanuel Levinas, in demonstrating that the shared logos is a function of interhuman relationship, helps us to make some progress in understanding the possibilities for dialogue in this situation. If the terms of the argument to this point are taken largely from Levinas's 1961 Totality and Infinity, this book further proposes that Levinas's 1974 Otherwise than Being can be read as a deepening of these earlier analyses, delineating, both the conditions of possibility and impossibility for discourse itself. Throughout these analyses this book discovers that in Levinas's view dialogue is ultimately possible, only for a gracious subjectivity already graced by God by way of the other, but where the word God is inseparable from subjectivity as graciousness to the other. Finally, for Levinas, the facilitation of dialogue, the facilitation of peace, comes down to the subject's capacity and willingness to be who he or she is, to take the beautiful risk of a peaceful gesture offered to the other, and that peace, in this gesture itself. As Levinas himself puts it: “Peace then is under my responsibility. I am a hostage, for I am alone to wage it, running a fine risk, dangerously.” Levinas's philosophical discourse is precisely itself to be read as such a gesture.
The ancient doctrine of negative theology or apophasis—the attempt to describe God by speaking only of what cannot be said about the divine perfection and goodness—has taken on new life in the concern with language and its limits that preoccupies much post-modern philosophy, theology, and related disciplines. How does this mystical tradition intersect with the concern with material bodies that is simultaneously a focus in these areas? This volume pursues the unlikely conjunction of apophasis and the body, not for the cachet of the “cutting edge” but rather out of an ethical passion for the integrity of all creaturely bodies as they are caught up in various ideological mechanisms—religious, theological, political, economic—that threaten their dignity and material well-being. The book rethinks the relationship between the concrete tradition of negative theology and apophatic discourses widely construed. It further endeavors to link these to the theological theme of incarnation and more general issues of embodiment, sexuality, and cosmology. Along the way, the book engages and deploys the resources of contextual and liberation theology, post-structuralism, postcolonialism, process thought, and feminism. The result not only recasts the nature and possibilities of theological discourse but explores the possibilities of academic discussion across and beyond disciplines in concrete engagement with the well-being of bodies, both organic and inorganic. The volume interrogates the complex capacities of religious discourse both to threaten and positively to draw upon the material well-being of creation.

Bestiarium Judaicum
Jay Geller

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Publisher: Fordham University Press
DOI: 10.5422/fordham/9780823275595.001.0001
Item type: book

Given the vast inventory of verbal and visual images of nonhuman animals (pigs, dogs, vermin, rodents, apes, etc.) disseminated for millennia to debase and bestialize Jews (the Bestiarium Judaicum), this work asks: What is at play when Jewish-identified writers employ such figures in their narratives and poems? Bringing together Jewish cultural studies (examining how Jews have negotiated Jew-Gentile difference) and critical animal studies (analyzing the functions served by asserting human-animal difference), this monograph focuses on the writings of primarily Germanophone authors, including Sigmund Freud, Heinrich Heine, Franz Kafka, Gertrud Kolmar, H. Leivick, Felix Salten, and Curt Siodmak. It ferrets out of their nonhuman-animal constructions their responses to the bestial answers upon which the Jewish and animal questions converged and by which varieties of the species “Jew” were
depicted. Along with close textual analysis, it examines both personal and social contexts of each work. It explores how several writers attempted to subvert the identification of the Jew-animal by rendering indeterminable the human-animal “Great Divide” being played out on actual Jewish bodies and in Jewish-Gentile relations as well as how others endeavored to work-through identifications with those bestial figures differently: e.g., Salten’s Bambi novels posed the question of “whether a doe is sometimes just a female deer,” while Freud, in his case studies, manifestly disaggregated Jews and animals even as he, perhaps, animalized the human. This work also critically engages new-historical (M. Schmidt), postcolonial (J. Butler and J. Hanssen), and continental philosophic (G. Agamben) appropriations of the conjunction of Jew and animal.

Jews, in Theory
Sergey Dolgopolski

in Jews and the Ends of Theory

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Item type: chapter

This chapter focuses on Jews, political reason, and the concept of the human and the Jew, discussing the varieties of representation that play a role in perception, consciousness, and rationality. In this context, the figure of the Jew is presented as a type in European discourse, conceptually unrelated to ancient Jewish self-understanding and instead emerging as a fiction made necessary by the logic of Christian self-understanding. The chapter then considers Carl Schmitt's representation of representation, replacing it with a notion of authority embodied in Talmudic discourse, which can be called refutation of refutation. The desired result is an iterative refinement of collective memory as locus of the reasoning process by which ideas are given shared value, with the goal of restoring openness and inventiveness to tradition and eliminating mechanical transmission.
The educational philosophy of John Dewey and the contemporary constructivist learning theories that have evolved from his pragmatist perspective provide a foundation for guiding efforts to introduce higher education reforms that harmonize the three global missions of the university: teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and service to communities and society. A broad principle of Dewey's perspective is that useful knowledge is the unity of abstraction and application (i.e., praxis). Useful knowledge is constructed in communities of inquiry when learners in classrooms and participants in university-community partnerships engage in dialog to solve meaningful problems. Core concepts and practices consistent with pragmatism and constructivism are explored (e.g., participatory democracy, dialogic discourse, project-based learning, service learning, participatory research) in the context of efforts to enhance the quality of communication across cultural barriers in both the classroom and the community.
be seen to have always exceeded the boundaries of Christian thought and experience, inhabiting and determining other religious traditions' conceptions of divine and/or creaturely reality in ways internal to their own distinctive histories? On the other hand, the book interrogates the possibilities of various discourses on pluralism by putting them in a very particular and concrete pluralist context. Religious pluralists, comparative theologians, and scholars of religious studies are place alongside and put into conversation with theological and doctrinal work carried out within the (albeit broadly conceived) normative thread of the Christian trinitarian tradition. To what extent can pluralist discourse collect within itself a convergent diversity of orthodox, heterodox, postcolonial, process, poststructuralist, liberationist, and feminist sensibilities while avoiding irruptions of conflict, competition, or the logic of mutual exclusion?

Ego Sum
Jean-Luc Nancy

Published in print: 2016 Published Online: September 2016 Publisher: Fordham University Press
Item type: book

Published in 1979, Ego Sum challenges, through a careful and unprecedented reading of Descartes’s writings, the picture of Descartes as the father of modern philosophy: the thinker who founded the edifice of knowledge on the absolute self-certainty of a Subject fully transparent to itself. While other theoretical discourses, such as psychoanalysis, have also attempted to subvert this Subject, Nancy shows how they always inadvertently reconstituted the Subject they were trying to leave behind. Nancy’s wager is that it is by returning to the moment of the foundation of modern subjectivity, a foundation which always already included all the possibilities of its own exhaustion, that another thought of “the subject” is possible. By paying attention the mode of presentation of Descartes’s subject, to the masks, portraits, feints, and fables that populate his writings, Jean-Luc Nancy shows how Descartes’s ego is not the Subject of metaphysics, but a mouth that spaces itself out and distinguishes itself. This “subject” speaks but he is not the speaking subject or the subject of the utterance; he is not even the neuter, impersonal ça of ça parle; it is a mouth that opens and says, in turn: dum scribo, larvatus pro Deo, mundus est fabula, unum quid.
Against the “Attack on Linking”: Rearticulating the “Jewish Intellectual” for Today
Martin Land

in Jews and the Ends of Theory
Published in print: 2018 Published Online: May 2019
DOI: 10.5422/fordham/978082323282005.003.0011
Item type: chapter

This chapter begins by tracing the assertions that link the predominance of Jews in critical discourses to Jewish marginality to a 1919 essay by Thorstein Veblen. Veblen does not argue that creativity and innovation thrive on the margins but, rather, that marginal groups like the Jews are better able than their European contemporaries to hold to a position of detachment and alienation from tradition and received wisdom, transforming their marginality into a critical perspective from which they are able to question, as it were, both themselves and the European social and economic systems. Recent critics of Veblen have pointed at his blindness toward the cultural and economic characteristics of Jewish communal life. In their critique, however, they take the disproportionate success of American Jews as their prime measure, supplanting Veblen's intellectual value with monetary value. From this perspective, Jews are no longer marginal but, on the contrary, central to the ever-expanding social order of capital.

Metapragmatics, Toposforschung, Marxist Stylistics
Boris Maslov

in Persistent Forms: Explorations in Historical Poetics
Published in print: 2015 Published Online: May 2016
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Item type: chapter

This contribution comments on three of Veselovsky’s theoretical insights (pertaining to genre theory, motif migration, and the socio-psychological nature of style), each time considering them in light of more recent theoretical developments. In particular, the perspective of Michael Silverstein’s linguistic anthropology helps to shed light on cross-culturally dispersed varieties of text (corresponding to the familiar division between epic, drama, and lyric), thus delimiting and adumbrating the domain of the properly historical consideration of genre. The second case study focuses on different theorizations of inherited elements of discourse (motif, topos) in Veselovsky and Curtius. Finally, the issue of a worldview’s formal correlates, important in Soviet Marxist stylistics, is
tackled with reference to the use of free indirect discourse in Pushkin’s Bronze Horseman.

**The Unconstructable Earth**
Frédéric Neyrat

in *The Unconstructable Earth: An Ecology of Separation*

Published in print: 2018 Published Online: May 2019
Item type: chapter

In chapter 13 Neyrat summarizes a variety of conceptions of of the Earth conceived from various actors, from the early founding thinkers of the environmental and ecology movements in the United States such as Aldo Leopold and John Muir to more recent scientific conceptions of the Earth as a cybernetic living organism proposed by the celebrated scientist James Lovelock and his Gaia theory or Carolyn Merchant’s conception that each part of the ecosystem contributes to the health of the entire ecosystem as a whole. Neyrat goes on to show that what he terms minoritarian discourses refuse to consider the Earth as something that is mechanical in any way and that it is a living organism in its own right. These minoritarian discourses are in complete contrast to the variety of geo-constructivist discourses that today see the Earth as something technologically manageable.

**Rousseau: Vital Instinct and Pity**
Pierre Macherey

in *Systems of Life: Biopolitics, Economics, and Literature on the Cusp of Modernity*

Published in print: 2018 Published Online: May 2019
Item type: chapter

This essay examines the contradictory development of the concept of pity in Rousseau’s work. In the Discourse on the Origin of Inequality (1754), pity exists in the form of a vital instinct, namely the instinct of self-preservation. As a spontaneous and automatic identification with one’s fellows in the state of pure nature, prior to the establishment of the distinction between self and other, it furnishes the vital basis for society as well as for the concept of right. It is also independent of any calculation or moral reasoning and does not rest on a decision or an act of will. Eight years later, in Emile, pity, far from existing spontaneously,
must be learned, which in turn requires the use of reason on the part of the pupil. The discrepancy between the different accounts of pity signals less a change of position than the complexity of Rousseau’s notion of nature. Against Hobbes and Locke for whom the state of nature remains ever present in potential if not actual form, Rousseau argues that nature gives rise to a history whose progress negates the origin, which is lost forever. In the case of pity, reason in making a case for pity is the means by which pity in its original existence is rendered unknowable. The disjunction between the two accounts of pity in Rousseau’s work expresses the disjunction between natural and civilized man, between man acting at the behest of life and rational man, self-interested and solitary.

A Neo-Heideggerian Critique of Technology
Albert Borgmann

in Pragmatism as Post-Postmodernism: Lessons from John Dewey
Published in print: 2007 Published Online: March 2011
Item type: chapter

This chapter discusses Albert Borgmann’s neo-Heideggerian critique of the ways in which contemporary men and women interact with technology. He suggests that a move beyond that he calls "the device paradigm" in order to consider "focal things and practices", about which we are able to communicate by means of what he calls "deictic" discourse. Borgmann's solution to the problem of obscured focal things and practices is to enter technology under two columns: one is the bad part of technology and the other is the good part.

Asylum Speakers
April Shemak

Published in print: 2010 Published Online: September 2011
Item type: book

Offering the first interdisciplinary study of refugees in the Caribbean, Central America, and the United States, this book relates current theoretical debates about hospitality and cosmopolitanism to the actual conditions of refugees. In doing so, the author weighs the questions of truth value associated with various modes of witnessing to explore the function of testimonial discourse in constructing refugee subjectivity in New World cultural and political formations. By examining
literary works by such writers as Edwidge Danticat, Nikl Payen, Kamau Brathwaite, Francisco Goldman, Julia Alvarez, Ivonne Lamazares, and Cecilia Rodríguez Milanés, theoretical work by Jacques Derrida, Edouard Glissant, and Wilson Harris, as well as human rights documents, government documents, photography, and historical studies, the book constructs a complex picture of New World refugees that expands current discussions of diaspora and migration, demonstrating that the peripheral nature of refugee testimonial narratives requires us to reshape the boundaries of U.S. ethnic and postcolonial studies.

Hegel's Orient, or the End of Romanticism
Rodolphe Gasché

in The Stelliferous Fold: Toward a Virtual Law of Literature's Self-Formation
Published in print: 2011 Published Online: January 2012
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Item type: chapter

The fascination of early romantics with the Orient was in some respects biased. However, their prejudices cannot simply be retraced to crude national and colonial interests, since, as Said remarks in Orientalism, this would mean to ignore the extent to which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact. Nor can the romantics' image of the Orient be derived from their submission of the object Orient to a discourse of knowledge, which Said, in the aftermath of Foucault, characterizes as a discourse of power. Such an assertion would ignore the extent to which the discourse of knowledge is constituted in advance by what it is said to subjugate. It is this intimacy, complicity, and solidarity between the Orient and the discourse of knowledge, which is intended to develop in this chapter.

Introduction: Toward a Physiognomic Epidemiology of the Fetishized Jew
Jay Geller

in The Other Jewish Question: Identifying the Jew and Making Sense of Modernity
Published in print: 2011 Published Online: January 2012
DOI: 10.5422/fordham/9780823233618.003.0001
Item type: chapter

This chapter introduces terminology and methods that will be used throughout this study. It offers working definitions of Judentum,
antisemitism, Jewish-identified individuals, fetish, modernity, and the morphemic/orthographic/semantic/phonemic field. It also describes a physiognomic epidemiological method, a technique for mapping the emergence and distribution of as well as the interrelationships among particular Jewish-associated morphemes and images in German-language verbal and visual texts. The chapter depicts a European modernity characterized by the emergence of medical/biological and national/evolutionary/colonial narratives and accompanying authorizing discourses by which truth was identified and rendered visible on the body—specifically, the body of “the Jew” and the techniques practiced upon it (e.g., circumcision). It situates the socio-politico Jewish Question in Germanophone lands within the unresolved crisis over whether or not Jewish-identified individuals should or could be integrated into the dominant society.

Go Figure
Judith H. Anderson and Joan Pong Linton (eds)

Published in print: 2011 Published Online: September 2011
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Item type: book

This book addresses theories of the figure and practices of figuration ranging from classical rhetoric and biblical exegesis to semiotics, psychoanalysis, and socio-politics. Situating theory in history, the essays in this volume focus on verbal and visual texts from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and they explore science, sacramental poetics, romance and lyric narrative, and the natural world in still lifes, prayer, parasites, and politics. They engage the work of poets, painters, storytellers, and playwrights. While the theories that inform them are many and various, they share a point of reference in the work of Jean-François Lyotard, who theorizes the co-presence in language of the figure and discourse: Lyotard's figure relates to discourse as image emerges in description, as sense accompanies signification, and as energies shape texts from within. The original essays invited for the volume show how figurual energies and forms inhabit both texts and the practices that produce them — how figures are fundamentally in play in the making of subjects, societies, traditions, and institutions.
1. Introduction: An Ethics of Betrayal

Crystal Parikh

in An Ethics of Betrayal: The Politics of Otherness in Emergent U.S. Literatures and Culture

Published in print: 2009 Published Online: March 2011

This introductory chapter sets out the purpose of the book, which is to investigate the structures of knowledge and feeling upon which betrayals depend, through which traitors are forged, and which these acts of betrayal transform. In particular, the book reads betrayals as performances of social difference in the context of Asian American and Latina/o racial formation and literary and cultural production. By adopting an ethical mode of inquiry to read what are described as “parables” of betrayal, this book asks what the possibilities and limitations of minority discourse are with respect to projects of democracy and social justice for “the Other.” It is argued that betrayals can perform a cultural critique of the social conditions by which the minority subject comes into being and of the possibilities for agency and transformation available to that subject once it has come into being. An overview of the subsequent chapters is presented.

2. Late Arrivals: An Ethics of Betrayal in Racial and National Formation

Crystal Parikh

in An Ethics of Betrayal: The Politics of Otherness in Emergent U.S. Literatures and Culture

Published in print: 2009 Published Online: March 2011

This chapter investigates betrayal as a matter of diasporic difference in racial and national formation. It reads paradigm shifts in U. S. ethnic studies and critical race theory to transnational and diaspora studies as an ethical betrayal of claims to citizenship and the formation of the minority American subject. By closely reading two Asian American works, Frank Chin's The Chickencoop Chinaman and Gish Jen's Mona in the Promised Land, which seem singularly concerned with claiming (Asian) American national identity, it argues that minority discourse remains responsible for the Other who has been foreclosed at its very inception.
In their injunctions to think “other-wise,” these narratives pose the ethicopolitical project as an interminable and irrecusable process that the texts, in conversation with one another, enact.

2. Original Plurality: The Terms of Discourse

Jeffrey Dudiak

in The Intrigue of Ethics: A Reading of the Idea of Discourse in the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas

This chapter presents Levinas's idea of discourse, as proposed in the pages of Totality and Infinity, as providing a description of the conditions of possibility for interparadigmatic dialogue, that is, for engendering a dialogue in situations where the common logos that would mediate a dia-logos cannot be effectively located, and thus cannot perform its mediatory function. Following Levinas's own definitions, the chapter defines discourse as “an original, non-allergic, ethical relationship with alterity productive of a meaning capable of founding communal meaning.”. The exposition follows the elements of this definition in dealing with the way in which the separated terms requisite for discourse (the relation as “non-allergic”) are, for Levinas, evinced, first, in the ethical separation (transcendence) of the other from the same and from the system that, as the same, it operates; and secondly, in the separation of the same from any system of totality.

3. Discourse as the Condition of Possibility for Dialogue

Jeffrey Dudiak

in The Intrigue of Ethics: A Reading of the Idea of Discourse in the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas

This chapter continues the discussion began in Chapter 2, which stated that the separated terms requisite for discourse are, for Levinas, evinced, first, in the ethical separation (transcendence) of the other from the same and from the system that, as the same, it operates; and, secondly, in the separation of the same from any system of totality. The chapter explores how the existence of these distinct and separated terms opens
up the possibility for discourse as an “original,” “ethical” relation; how, from out of this relation, the common logos (required for dia-logos) is produced; and how the possibility of dialogue as dia-logos is therefore, and remains, rooted in the original relation of discourse.