Reviews

Toni Bernhart, *Volksschauspiele: Genese einer kulturgeschichtlichen Formation*. Deutsche Literatur Studien und Quellen 31. Edited by Beate Kellner and Claudia Stockinger. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2019. 399 pp.

This volume originated in a 2017 *Habilitationsschrift* from Stuttgart (available in open access through de Gruyter's website), now expanded into a magisterial presentation of the *Volksschauspiel*, the Germanophone popular theater, as it has been created and studied in the scholarship, here offered by a scholar who is himself also a practicing playwright. The corpus of the *Volksschauspiel* includes popular theater of all genres, starting from the eighteenth century: the Viennese and southern Germanophone *Volksstück*, passion plays, the ritual plays of the Steiner Goetheanum, children's drama, and others. Toni Bernhart's *Volksschauspiele* focuses not only on these genres but also on how ideologies in aesthetics and literary studies have isolated them as somehow separate from serious art. The terms *Volksschauspiel, Volksstück*, and *Volkstheater* (9) are all in common use but need to be specified (as referring to theater history, the nineteenth-century Viennese stage, and a form of theater institution, respectively). Bernhart does so by reconstructing "die Genese der gattungstheoretischen Vorstellung des Volksschauspiels auf breiter Quellenbasis" (4)—what scholars have *done* to this corpus.

The volume's first part (Part A, one of three) ties the terminology of Herder's idea of *Volkspoesie*, a discussion engaged by Gottfried August Bürger, Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz, and a handful of less familiar voices. The corpus of what then became "people's theater" comprised translations of Shakespeare's comedies, "Tyroler Bauernkomödien," religious and mystery plays, and even *Dr. Faustus*, Hans Sachs, and Nicolai's Herder and Bürger

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parodies (16). That contemporaneous usage is confirmed by late eighteenth-century references from travel literature and other popular publications (*Volksschauspiel* even referred to cock fights). Bernhart finds two competing spheres of usage: "Volksschauspiel als (prä-)romantische Alternative zu gelehrter Literatur (Herder) und Volksschauspiel als didaktisches und kulturpatriotisches Institut mit oder ohne Betonung deutscher Spezifizität" (103).

Part B takes up the academic study of the *Volksschauspiel* to critique the discipline's ideologies. The nineteenth century sought to "establish and professionalize" the then-new philology (207). Scholars took up the "Bauernspiel," "Bauernkomödie," "Bauerntheater," and more to collect and establish a canon of main authors and texts. Bernhart again adds citations from contemporaneous sources about how the texts were performed and then how scholars dealt with them (with biographical reference). A huge plus for today's researchers is Bernhart's list of important nineteenth-century collections (167), with notes about each editor's motivations and biases.

Bernhart also draws on lexica, starting with Johann Christoph Adelung's dictionary, moving through the *Aesthetisches Lexikon* (1839) by Ignaz Jeitteles; the *Allgemeines Theater-Lexikon* (1842) by Robert Blum, Karl Herloßsohn, and Hermann Marggraff; and Johann Georg Krünitz's *Ökonomisch-technologische Encyklopädie* (1855). Each is carefully distinguished: Jeitteles focuses on Vienna, relying on August Wilhelm von Schlegel's poetics; Blum stresses how *Volksschauspiel* emerged as a derogatory term for "Zauberpossen, Spektakelstücke und Lokalsachen" aimed at local publics that created fertile soil for "Gemeinheit, Unsittlichkeit und Gesinnungslosigkeit" (147). Krünitz's *Ökonomisch-technologische Encyklopädie* devotes 336 pages to articles on "Volk," including "Volkstheater."

Part C starts with twentieth-century scholars who wanted to institutionalize "Volksschauspielforschung etwa nach dem Vorbild des 1914 gegründeten Deutschen Volksliedarchivs in Freiburg im Breisgau" (213). At the start, Josef Nadler's *Literaturgeschichte der deutschen Stämme und Landschaften* (1912 und 1918) differentiated "bairisch" and "tirolisch" *Volksschauspielen* (later informing National Socialist ethnology, 214). Several gems stand out. Bernhart's explanation of how and why Hofmannsthal used Nadler clarifies differences in the Nazi ideologies (expanded in a further section on Nadler's "geistesgeschichtliche Rassenkunde," 243, and how it stressed "Germanness"). Section 11.3 amplifies the ties between Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy and National Socialism (233), with a particular emphasis on

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Marie Steiner as a trained actress (239) and as an editor of the older texts being revised for pageants. Bernhart also reclaims an essay by Hans Moser, *Das Volksschauspiel* (1935), as an excellent overview of the textual traditions which holds up despite "einer mächtigen Schicht nationalsozialistischer Ideologisierung." Section 11.6 does similar work for Heinz Kindermann (261) and his "Deutsche Literatur in Entwicklungsreihen."

Chapter Twelve takes up the activist version of this tradition from the 1960s, tying *Das Neue Volksstück*, familiar from Horváth (267), to the Brecht-Lukács debates about these genres as potential political resistance (279) and to Adorno's "Reflexion über Hochwälder" (280), which he omitted from his own collected essays. Section 12.4 (284) turns back to scholars' rediscovery of the *Wiener Komödie* and the *commedia dell'arte* as a European tradition, as a "Protest gegen etablierte Gesellschaftsordnungen." Chapter Thirteen takes up the invention of "Die Alt-Wiener Volkskomödie" (289), a term achieving popularity around 1950, championed by Otto Rommel (290), who is remembered for collaborating with Nazi cultural ideals in making the *Volkstheater* a specifically Austrian phenomenon—what Johann Sonnleitner considers nostalgic at best (293). Later discussions are devoted to how Nestroy became a "Volksstückdichter" (294) and how Elfriede Jelinek uses pastiche in her own version of the socially critical anti-*Volksstück*.

The volume is accessible and beautifully produced, with a first-rate bibliography and index. It can be contested—where, for example, are Schnitzler and the Wiener Gruppe, with their Kasperl plays? But overall, this is a towering achievement: a critical review of an academic field that also sets important benchmarks for a new generation of work on an underserved body of literature.

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Piet Defraeye, Helga Mitterbauer, and Chris Reyns-Chikuma, eds., *Brussels 1900 Vienna: Networks in Literature, Visual and Performing Arts, and Other Cultural Practices*. Leiden, Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2022. 453 pp.

Metropolitan reality plays a key role in the study of modernity: the development of urban life in turn-of-the-century Europe affected literary and artistic movements across the continent and facilitated mobility and cultural

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exchanges in and through various networks. Research has highlighted the importance of the major European capitals in this regard, often strengthening the view of Paris as the centre of Europe's rapidly evolving cultural life at the end of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, other centers also existed and contributed significantly to the development of European modernism. In their edited volume *Brussels 1900 Vienna*, Piet Defraeye, Helga Mitterbauer, and Chris Reyns-Chikuma focus on the importance of networks, dispositions, and connections between Brussels and Vienna, seeking to deepen and extend the research that has been done on the internationalism of the Belgian-Austrian axis. As the editors emphasize in their highly informative introduction, the complexity of European development of the fine arts in modernity cannot be grasped through a binary, center-periphery model: relations and developments in literature, music, and the visual and performing arts ultimately take shape in "networks with many ties of diverse quality" (2). The central concept of the network informs the research perspective of the overall volume and several of its collected contributions, both on a thematic and methodological level.

The volume brings together sixteen contributions on various aspects of the Brussels-Vienna axis, which are divided into five sections. Besides the introduction, the volume also features a handy index with names, topics, and places. The first section ("Staging Modernisms") brings together research on key figures from European Modernism such as Maeterlinck, Hofmannsthal, and the retheatricalization movement (Anke Bosse), the critical reception of Maeterlinck's plays in Vienna (Sigurd Paul Scheichl), and the understudied reception of Schnitzler's plays in Belgium (Piet Defraeye). The second section ("Transpositions") focuses on aspects of reception and literary exchanges (Hubert Roland), Stefan Zweig's translations of Emile Verhaeren's poetry (Norbert Bachleitner), concepts of exoticism in Brussels and Vienna (Szilvia Ritz), and the relationship between Musil's novel *The Man without Qualities* and Art Nouveau (Aniel Guxholli). The third section ("Transformations") shifts the focus to visual arts and architecture, with contributions on the reception of Belgian art in the Viennese Secession (Inga Rossi-Schrimpf) and the role of the Belgian "other modernity" in Viennese art criticism (Sylvie Arlaud). Contributions on the understudied topic of child art, primitivism and partronage (Megan Brandow-Faller), on the Belgian symbolist painter Fernand Khnopff (Clément Dessy), and Frans Masereel's transnational visual narratives (Chris Reyns-Chikuma) also showcase the importance of

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the various transformations taking place in the arts at the time. In the fourth section ("Resonances"), the research focuses on Vienna and Brussels as cities of music, with contributions on *La Jeune Belgique* and Arnold Schoenberg's well-known *Pierrot Lunaire* (Alexander Carpenter) and the strong tradition of violin music in Brussels, Liège, and Vienna from the nineteenth century onward (Guillaume Tardif). In the final section ("Café and Psyche"), the contributions touch upon the broader cultural networks that inform the rapidly urbanizing societies in Brussels and Vienna, respectively, with a focus on fin-de-siècle café life in Vienna and Brussels (Hans Vandevoorde) and on the international expansion (and professionalization) of psychoanalysis through translated works of Julien Varendonck and Anna Freud (Birgit Lang). While the titles of some of the sections may conceptually overlap (transposition, transformation, resonances), the various case studies nonetheless showcase a broad, complex, and diverse panorama of Belgian, Austrian, and European art. The studied corpus covers the era from the late 1880s to the early 1930s and performs multiple crossings: it not only crosses political, national, and linguistic borders but is also fundamentally intermedial, involving among others magazines, translations of (literary) texts, performances, reproductions of art, concerts, exhibitions, and so on.

The strength of this voluminous study resides in its interdisciplinary perspective on the internationalist disposition of modernist art. The volume brings together research on literature, art criticism, architecture, cultural history, music, visual arts, theater, and psychoanalysis that highlights not only the complexity of the manifold connections between Brussels and Vienna but also the clear cosmopolitan traditions of both cities. In so doing, the editors clearly expand and deepen the existing (and limited) research on the Brussels-Vienna axis (e.g., Van de Kerkhove 1987, Culot/Pirlot 2007), which has often been situated in the context of cultural exhibitions and art festivals. The volume touches upon understudied and original aspects of the topic: psychoanalysis and translation, comparative perspectives on exoticism, coffee house culture, child art and primitivism, musical schools and the critical reception of plays in Austria and Belgium. Both the introduction and several contributions make a convincing (methodological) case to study cultural transfers as a network, beyond a classical understanding of influence and in line with recent developments in intercultural, transfer, and reception studies. The focus on (biographical, literary, theatrical, journalistic, urban, cultural) networks strongly emphasizes the crucial role of cultural transmitters and

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mediators, both individuals and institutions, and touches upon the media involved as well as on the importance of translation, both in a narrow and a broad sense of the term (e.g., the contributions by Roland, Bachleitner, Lang, Defraeye, etc.).

The edited volume presents original research on the connections and networks between Brussels and Vienna, taking into consideration both similarities and differences between the two capitals and within different fields. The study also posits interesting theses with regard to some of its case studies. In literature and the visual arts, for instance, several contributors (e.g., the essays by Roland and Rossi-Schrimpf) note an incomplete reciprocity and networking process, with Brussels being less influenced by Vienna than the other way around. Imagological myths on Belgium are historically contextualized and domestic differences (e.g., between the French- and Dutch-speaking parts of Belgium) are also taken into consideration, especially in the case of a delayed process of transfer, which the different reception of Arthur Schnitzler in the French and Flemish parts of Belgium clearly shows. Moreover, the Brussels-Vienna geographical axis is shown to be far from a binary construct, as the studied networks clearly showcase that several other metropoles (Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, London) are frequently involved. The edited volume on *Brussels 1900 Vienna* presents a significant contribution to the research field and establishes an ideal starting point for further research on the multilingual, interdisciplinary, and intercultural networks of Europe at the turn of the century.

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David S. Luft, *The Austrian Dimension in German Intellectual History: From the Enlightenment to Anschluss*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. X + 234 pp.

David Luft, Horning Endowed Chair in the Humanities (Emeritus) at Oregon State University, has again proven himself one of the premier contemporary interpreters of Austrian intellectual history. *The Austrian Dimension in German Intellectual History* is an altogether magisterial presentation of a new, expansive approach to the great final chapter of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's intellectual life.

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Luft begins by noting that the histories of Europe's nation-states simply do not accommodate a multilingual and multicultural region like Habsburg Central Europe. "National intellectuals," for example, are rarely seen as (at least) bilingual and bicultural—the precise status of many eminent names in a Habsburg monarchy never even seeking a single ethnic-national identity. Instead of contrasting "Austrians" and "Germans," Luft takes a broader view of Central Europe's German-language intellectual sphere. He begins with the late eighteenth century (before Prussia had claimed sovereignty over a united "German Reich") and situates an emerging Germanophone intellectual life in Cisleithania, the lands to the west of the Leitha River that became the Habsburg empire's heart after 1740: Bohemia and Austria (including Moravia).

Luft rejects the idea of a single "Austrian" intellectual history for this region, set over and against "German" or European thought. He does, however, find a culture of "creativity and imagination" culminating in the 1905 generation: "The unifying themes of this tradition are a positive attitude toward the Enlightenment and modern science, combined with a resistance to reductionism and ideological polarization, the emphasis on ethics and inner experience, and respect for unconscious energies and what we cannot control" (139). Thus, Luft finds in Cisleithania a mainline of intellectual interests sustained in the two Habsburg capitals: Prague (until 1618) and then Vienna (for the final three hundred years of Habsburg rule).

The book's first sections explain this map and how Austria and Bohemia became historically entangled, starting with the Holy Roman Empire. The Protestant Reformation brought the German language to the region. Bohemian resistance to the Habsburg Counter-Reformation led to the famous Defenestration at Prague (1618); the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620 saw the defeat of the Czech-Bohemian armies (Hussite Protestants) by Catholic-Imperial forces. This forced Bohemia under Habsburg rule.

After mapping the region's geography, Luft provides a timeline for Cisleithania's development, dividing it into four "modern" eras. The first was known as "Josephinism" (after Joseph II, son of Maria Theresa and the Holy Roman Emperor between 1765 and 1790, with his brother Leopold reigning for two years after that). A small group of state bureaucrats who were also intellectuals initiated a modern state. These ncluded Joseph von Sonnenfels (innovator in law and theater censorship), Joseph Dobrovský (contributor to establishing modern Czech and an advocate defining Bohemia as a joint

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German-Czech cultural space), and the van Swietens (two educational reformers).

Europe's disruptions—associated with the French Revolution, Napoleon, and their aftermaths—define the second era, between 1792 and 1866, marked by the conservatism of Metternich and the Congress of Vienna. This era's most significant Austrian figures are Stifter, Bolzano, and Grillparzer in letters, as well as historiographer František Palacký (part of the Czech revival) and Count Thun (of the University Reforms). The more familiar liberal era ran from 1867 to 1900, after the Austrian Empire became the dual monarchy in the Hungarian *Ausgleich*. The 1873 *Börsenkrach* braked its progress, feeding directly into growing antisemitism and nationalism among the Empire's ethnic-national populations. That liberal period nonetheless prepared the way for the final "Austrian" era beyond the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire proper: the era of modern intellectual life from 1900–1938/39, which was not an era of decline, as is sometimes thought, but rather one whose history has not been sufficiently appreciated.

In the next three chapters, Luft tracks three major streams of intellectual life running throughout Cisleithania's existence. Chapter Three introduces philosophy and its affinity with modern science, devoting sections to Bolzano, Brentano, Mach, Wittgenstein, and the Vienna Circle. Literature is the focus of Chapter Four, starting with Grillparzer and Stifter, Kraus, Musil, Broch, Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, and Kafka. Yet Luft reaches beyond this canon, also including Ferdinand von Saar and Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Ludwig Anzengruber, Peter Rosegger, and Leopold von Andrian. The final chapter is dedicated to Austria's other great legacies in the social sciences, especially cameralism (the sciences of state and practical government) and economics (Menger and Hayek), along with history and psychoanalysis.

Luft does not promise a complete narrative or even attempt one. What he does do is recreate a kind of "ordinary Austrian" horizon of expectation about what names are remembered by the lettered and in what contexts. The result is memorable, elegantly readable, and useful as an orientation to forces beyond treaties and wars. The text is carefully footnoted, with references to the important secondary literature. More importantly, unlike volumes such as Schorske's *Fin-de-siècle Vienna* or Judson's various histories, Luft's *Austrian Dimension in Intellectual History* recovers a region in productive chaos, worried less about personal reputations than about solving problems that implicate real people.

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Luft tells a story that we want to read, never burdened with minutiae but always motivated by trying to tell the reader *why the reader should care* about this Austria. The result is a volume that should be your first choice for recovering the breadth and depth of the "Austrian" culture that has been hijacked by nationalist history-writing.

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Gerhard Oberlin, *Kafka Verstehen: Text + Deutung*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2021. 284 pp.

Who among us is not excited at the promise of the title? *Kafka Verstehen* is the first entry in the series *Text + Deutung* by Gerhard Oberlin. (Subsequent entries so far take on Kleist and Rilke.) The volume contains a selection of Kafka's texts, each piece of prose followed by a short essay of commentary and explanation, as well as a longer essay by way of introduction. The selection of texts includes some of Kafka's most important stories: the collections *Betrachtung* and *Ein Landarzt* as well as three longer stories: "Das Urteil," "Die Verwandlung," and "In der Strafkolonie."

Understanding Kafka is no easy feat, and teaching Kafka entails a host of complications; any volume that offers a path forward is welcome. A selection of texts, gathered in one volume and supplemented by explanatory material, is immediately appealing for the teacher—I cannot be the only one—who has seen students struck dumb by Kafka, intrigued and curious, but simply unable to find a point of entry.

Yet this is not that book, and it is not entirely clear what the author seeks to add to the literature on Kafka, a body long since known to be, as W. G. Sebald put it, "hypertrophic." What Oberlin writes in the introduction and in the commentaries seems to struggle to conceive of its audience. It is neither the kind of factual and contextual information readers find in student editions from Suhrkamp or Reclam nor an invitation to consider less trodden points of view, as might be welcome for readers already familiar with the biographical and interpretive basics—books like Dietrich Krusche's *Kafka und Kafka-Deutung* or Roberto Calasso's *K.* come to mind in this category. Nor is it a purely scholarly treatment, offering well-developed readings together with the texts they discuss.

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The lack of clarity in purpose pervades the whole volume, and the reader will not make it far before the realization sets in that this will be no aid in understanding Kafka. Oberlin all but admits as much in the introduction, which does the reader no favors by relishing in complicating its own premise. "Da es um Verstehen geht, wäre zunächst zu fragen, was das eigentlich ist" (9), Oberlin writes at the outset. It may be conceptually sound to begin in such a reflective mode, but I would venture that a reader who picks up a book called *Kafka Verstehen* already has a pretty clear sense of what it would mean to understand Kafka and hopes for help from this book. Instead, that same paragraph builds to this supremely unhelpful conclusion: "Verstehen heißt letztlich *sich selbst verstehen*, und gelegentlich scheint bei Weitem nichts schwieriger als das" (9). The oracle at Delphi couldn't have put it better.

Having gotten that out of the way, the introduction picks up steam fast, beginning with a short treatment of Kafka's infamous deathbed directive, then proceeding to a catalogue of complex ideas. "Alle Kommentare sind als Anregungen zum Verstehen, als Denkanstöße gesetzt," we read (8). And the impetuses for thought come hard and fast: the categories of "mythology," "alienation," and "reality," hints at psychoanalytical treatments of the author, metaphysical questions, comparisons to Wittgenstein, hermeneutic circles, the boundaries of language, the figure of the clown—the list goes on, each an invitation to a framework for understanding Kafka, rather than a tool for actual understanding. The question that never goes away amidst all this is: doesn't Kafka himself already give us plenty of *Denkanstöße*? What value is added by these open-ended invitations?

Here are some examples of what this uncertainty about audience looks like. In the opening pages, Oberlin promises to use "eine Sprache, die man auch ohne Vor- und Fachwissen versteht" (8). This pronouncement is followed by remarkably many phrases in Latin and Greek, often without translation, throughout the book. Each story is followed by a treatment that resembles the introduction, but with particular attention to what the text in question called to mind for Oberlin. The tone and character of these motivational supplementary texts is exemplified in the beginning of the commentary to "Vor dem Gesetz":

> Das Gesetz als Größenfiktion, als das Unbedingte und Eherne, das die einen als unbestechliche Gerechtigkeit, das die anderen als unendliches Seelenbalsam, wieder andere als ozeanisches Gefühl

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> und schließlich manche als Gral, kosmische Macht, Inbegriff menschlicher Güte, Gott oder gar Teufel lesen. (267)

It is not incidental that this is a sentence fragment: this is commentary devoid of verbs, offering only a series of topics and inchoate metaphors for what lies behind this impenetrable door.

It is not easy to say where the pleasure lies in reading Kafka and what relationship that pleasure has to any coherent sense of understanding. One has the feeling that Oberlin knows that "understanding" does not belong at the center of the experience of reading Kafka, but that he has not yet worked out what does. Until then, we have the stories themselves.

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Karl Corino, *"Von der Seele träumen dürfen". Nachträge zur Biographie und zum Werk Robert Musils*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2022. 793 S.

Biographien sind, wenn sie sich Protagonist*innen der literarischen Moderne zum Gegenstand wählen, immer auch aufgefordert, die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit von Biographie mitzureflektieren, wurden doch gerade im Modernismus die Kategorien Subjekt, Individualität und Leben radikal in Frage gestellt. Dies gilt insbesondere auch für Robert Musil, bei dem "Leben" und "Schreiben" nicht nur faktisch, sondern ganz explizit poetologisch verflochten sind. So kann das Hauptwerk, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, auch als eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit dem Genre der Biographie gelesen werden, etwa wenn es die lange Tradition des Bildungsromans in Ulrichs "drei Versuchen, ein bedeutsamer Mann zu werden" im Schnellverfahren abwickelt, um dann mit Ulrichs "Urlaub vom Leben" einen postbiographischen Raum zu eröffnen, in dem die Frage nach der Erzählbarkeit des Lebens selbst zum zentralen Problem wird. Häufig zitiert wird in diesem Kontext eine Stelle aus dem *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, wo dem modernen Menschen attestiert wird, "mindestens neun Charaktere" zu haben, "einen Berufs-, einen National-, einen Staats-, einen Klassen-, einen geographischen, einen bewussten, einen unbewussten und vielleicht auch noch einen privaten Charakter" (12). Diese Diagnose, die auch als eine Auflösung des Biographischen ins Soziologische gelesen werden könnte, wird bereits in Corinos Maßstäbe setzender Musil-

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Biographie von 2003 angeführt, die mit ihren 2000 Seiten auch im Umfang die Materialversessenheit des Porträtierten selbst spiegelt.

Corino bringt seine beinahe übermenschlich anmutende Recherche- und Sammelarbeit, deren Ergebnisse neben der Biographie in zwei weiteren Musil-Büchern (*Robert Musil. Leben und Werk in Bildern und Texten* [1988]; und *Erinnerungen an Robert* Musil [2010]) ihren Niederschlag gefunden haben, in dem nun vorliegenden Band zu einem (zumindest vorläufigen) Abschluss. Bei den immerhin 800 Seiten umfassenden "Nachträgen" handelt es sich um bereits andernorts erschienene Texte und Aufsätze, die mit wenigen Ausnahmen in den zwei Jahrzehnten seit Erscheinen der Biographie verfasst und nun hier zusammengetragen wurden. Abgesehen von einer bereits 1972 geschriebenen Weiterdichtung des *Mannes ohne Eigenschaften* mit dem Titel "Clarissens Buße" sind die hier vorliegenden Texte durchweg der Fortführung jener detailversessenen Recherchearbeit gewidmet, die die Biographie zu einem weithin gelobten Standardwerk machte, ihr aber auch immer wieder den Positivismusvorwurf eintrug. So liefert der jetzt vorliegende Band etwa neue Einsichten in das Beziehungsdreieck zwischen Musils Mutter Hermine, ihrem Ehemann Alfred und einem gewissen Heinrich Reiter, identifiziert Musils Kinderfrau, oder weist anhand einer 2020 aufgetauchten Entlassungsurkunde nach, dass Musil sich 1914 nicht freiwillig zum Kriegsdienst meldete, sondern einberufen wurde. Entdeckungen, die hier und da zu neuen Nuancierungen Anlass geben, etwa in der Bewertung von Musils Kriegsbegeisterung, aber keine tiefgreifende Revision des Musil-Bilds auslösen werden. Die vielleicht spektakulärste Episode des Bandes betrifft dann auch nicht Musil selbst, sondern die Biographie des Sexualmörders Christian Voigt, der Musil als Vorbild für Christian Moosbrugger gedient hatte, wie Corino bereits 2003 überzeugend darlegen konnte. Der hier nachgedruckte Text geht nun der "unwahrscheinlichen Resozialisation" Voigts nach, der sich in 20 Jahren Einzelhaft autodidaktisch bildete und 1930 begnadigt wurde. Ein ungemein interessanter "zweiter Akt" in Voigts Leben, der aber keinerlei Spuren in Musils Werk hinterlassen zu haben scheint.

Auch andere Details aus Musils Leben, wie etwa seine photographisch dokumentierte Teilnahme an einem Prozess gegen den Studenten Martesa Alawi wegen Beleidigung des Shahs von Persien in Berlin, die wohl einer Bekanntschaft mit dem Strafverteidiger Alfred Apfel geschuldet war, entbehren der Beziehung auf Musils literarisches Lebenswerk und leisten jenen Kritikern Vorschub, die wie Roger Willemsen schon der

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Biographie eine ins Positivistische abdriftende Leidenschaft fürs Empirische unterstellten. Natürlich ließe sich auch hierzu ein passendes Musil-Zitat finden: Die psychologische Grundlage aller Forschung sieht Musil nämlich in einer "Trunksucht am Tatsächlichen", die er jenen Fachleuten unterstellt, die eben "niemals fertig werden", weil moderne Wissenschaft nur als Prozess ohne Abschluss gedacht werden kann.

Im vorliegenden Band verteidigt Corino seine Passion fürs Material auch immer wieder explizit gegen den Vorwurf, sich im Lebensmaterial des Autors zu verlieren, etwa, wenn er dem inzwischen verstorbenen Roger Willemsen erwidert, die Schulzeugnisse von Musils Mitschülern seien eben sehr wohl relevant, da es nur anhand ihrer Zensuren gelungen sei, die tatsächlichen Vorbilder für die Figuren Beineberg, Reising und Basini zu finden. Dass Corino den so identifizierten Franz Fabini mittels eines Fotos dann als einen "hübschen, ein wenig femininen Jungen mit sinnlichem Mund und großen, etwas (wenn man so sagen kann) schwülen Augen" (27) beschreibt, zeugt allerdings nicht gerade von kritischer Distanz zu Musils literarischer Konstruktion des Charakters im *Törleß*. Solche Passagen sind exemplarisch für die nicht immer ausreichend reflektierte Übertragung zwischen literarischer Figur und realem Vorbild, Held und Autor, oder auch Biograph und Schriftsteller.

Zwar will Corino seine Detektivarbeit explizit nicht als "reine Fleißaufgabe des Positivismus" verstanden wissen, sondern vielmehr als Beitrag zur Beantwortung der Frage, wie Musil der zeitgenössischen Wirklichkeit Material entnahm und "eventuell nach seinen poetischen Zwecken abwandelte" (32). Allerdings kommt eben dieser Aspekt in den hier gesammelten Texten kaum zur Geltung. Dabei ließen sich solche Bezüge vielerorts herstellen. So werden im Kapitel "Heimweg," einer poetologisch zentralen Reflektion im *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, "Kinderfrauen" mit ihren Geschichten als Vermittlerinnen einer "primitiv-epischen" Grundhaltung angeführt, deren Verlust in der Moderne die Erzählbarkeit des Lebens an sich in Frage stellt. Die Frage, wie sich eine zumeist oral überlieferte erzählerische Tradition zur Moderneerfahrung und ihrer literarischen Kodierung verhält, die etwa auch mit der Rolle der Amme in Freuds Wolfsmann in Verbindung zu bringen wäre, könnte eine interessante Perspektive für biographisch inspirierte literaturwissenschaftliche Neuansätze sein. Auch der Text zur Bedeutung des Bodybuildings in Musils Leben wird von der Forschung produktiv aufgenommen werden und geschlechterkritischen Lesarten, die

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bei Corino unter den Tisch fallen, weiteres Material liefern. Ausgesprochen interessant sind auch die Beiträge, die den berühmten "anderen Zustand" Musils in den Kontext konkreter Kriegserfahrungen stellen und sich als eine Art Gegenbild oder zumindest Variation zur These vom "Körperpanzer" aus Theweleits *Männerphantasien* lesen ließen. Die Verflüssigung des Selbst in Körperströmen wird hier nicht abgewehrt und auf ein zu vernichtendes Anderes projiziert, sondern "im männerbündlerischen Urlaub von der Ehe" (349), wie Corino treffend formuliert, zelebriert.

So liefern Corinos Recherchen auch in diesem Band wieder eine Fülle an Material für die Musilforschung, die ja bekanntermaßen auch scheinbar Abseitiges relevant werden lässt, wenn es in den richtigen Kontexten betrachtet wird.

Alwin Franke
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Edith Sheffer, *Asperger's Children: The Origins of Autism in Nazi Vienna*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2018. 320 pp.

Edith Sheffer, a historian of Germany and Central Europe at UC Berkeley, has provided an important book: *Asperger's Children*, a case study in the ideologization of institutions and institutional discourses. Its focus is physician Hans Asperger (1906–1980), who evolved the standard diagnosis of autism, and how a public welfare debate in Vienna fell under the influence of Nazi ideologies through a combination of opportunism and willful malfeasance.

Eugen Bleuler had introduced the term *autism* in 1911, but child psychiatrist Leo Kanner, a 1940s Austrian refugee working in the United States, specified in 1943 its most compelling cause: poor parenting, especially "refrigerator mothers." His essay cited Asperger's 1944 postdoctoral thesis, "The 'Autistic Psychopaths' in Childhood," which had drawn on Asperger's work at the Am Spiegelgrund pediatric psychiatric clinic in Vienna (a part of the Steinhof complex). There, German and Austrian social politics intertwined with the Nazi T4 euthanasia programs from 1940 until war's end. Sheffer, however, is less focused on Asperger's possible individual guilt than on how Vienna's extended medical and social welfare establishment assimilated to Nazi psychiatric standards under the Nuremberg Laws, when

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"two-thirds of all Vienna's 4,900 doctors and 70 percent of its 110 pediatricians lost their positions" (74), and many more emigrated, leaving a vacuum soon filled by Nazi ideologues.

The Steinhof Psychiatric Institute had opened in 1907 as a progressive institution (it still exists on the Baumgartnerhöhe, topped by Otto Wagner's church). Yet under pro-Nazi leadership after 1940 and the start of the T4 programs, Steinhof was implicated in at least 7,500 deaths, starting in that year with the deportation of over 3,000 patients to the gas chamber (probably Hartheim). That made room for the "Vienna Municipal Youth Welfare Institution" at Spiegelgrund. The 640 beds of Steinhof's youth ward retained a pediatric euthanasia unit even after T4 was abolished in 1941, ultimately responsible for almost 800 deaths. Red Vienna's 1920s positive response to the lingering effects of World War I and the depression had turned deadly.

Between 1923 and 1934, Vienna had innovated in social welfare, including building 380 apartment buildings housing 220,000 persons (a tenth of the city's population). Some measures were educational: Erwin Lazar's "Curative Education Clinic" (founded in 1911) had introduced innovations in the state school structure for social workers, teachers, and doctors; from 1918 to 1925, he consulted for the new Ministry of Public Health. Yet "social welfare" became in the 1940s a way to manage populations in increasingly normative ways. "Problem children" and school surveillance became boom industries, part of what Sheffer calls a "diagnosis regime" that "sort[ed] the population into categories, cataloguing people by race, politics, religion, sexuality, criminality, heredity, and biological defects" (15) that converged with Nazi eugenics.

Asperger, who had been a member of the Nazi youth movement, helped Red Vienna's "curative education" turn into "positive eugenics"—triaging individuals for *desirable* traits (25–27) while also facilitating eventual turns toward the negative eugenics of extermination. Lazar had distinguished physiological causes from social causes for a lack of "community competence" (*Gemeinschaftsfähigkeit*), but, as "community competence" turned into an ideology of "national community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*, 16) in Steinhof, poverty and child neglect came to be defined as a threat to the community. "By 1936, an average of twenty-one children a day were removed from families into Vienna's Child Foster Care Service" (33), and from there to Spiegelgrund and its regimented "therapeutic" regimen, and not infrequently to medical "research" (including twin research).

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By spring 1944, the city's Public Health Office had compiled a medical index that included 767,000 people (a quarter of the city's population). A staff of seventy went through "birth records, Youth Office records, medical records, police records, Steinhof records, Nazi Party records, and city registries of prostitutes and alcoholics" and identified 12,000 disabled children and 40,000 "difficult and psychopathic children from asocial families" (93). In this, "social disposition" or "sociability" became a call for social engineering: social workers convinced (or coerced) poor parents (especially single parents) into surrendering into orphanages or the welfare system the children that they could not care for "properly." The "unfit" children were then often referred on to Spiegelgrund, where they were tortured by harsh treatment, poisoned, or starved (with death certificates saying the cause of their deaths was "pneumonia"). Some parents had hoped to have their children fed until they could reclaim them (and tried to, some with extreme measures); others were glad to be rid of problem children, children with severe medical needs, or unwanted stepchildren. But the Viennese medical and social welfare establishment had evolved into a killing machine of the vaguely other, poor, or "unfit."

Sheffer's Asperger was at the very least a *Mitläufer*: in 1938, he had joined the National Socialist German Physicians' League, which persecuted Jewish doctors, and gave a lecture in which he defined "autistic psychopathy," anticipating his 1944 thesis. He defined autism in terms of "social connectedness" (*Gemüt*), here seen as an inability to join the (national) community or being "alien to the community" (*gemeinschaftsfremd*)—a definition applied to Spiegelgrund youth victims. This equation, moreover, seemed to have been a known fact: Sheffer reports that teachers after the war still used "Spiegelgrund" as a verbal threat to unruly children (216).

This book is a must-read as a model for history-writing of the Nazi era, especially for how to track pre- and postwar continuities that still need examination.

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Ursula Prutsch, *Wer war Fritz Mandl: Waffen, Nazis und Geheimdienste*. Vienna/Graz: Molden Verlag, 2022. 303 pp.

If Fritz Mandl is known to readers, it is most likely as Hedy Kiesler Lamarr's tyrannical first husband. But Mandl was much more than that—among other things, he was one of the wealthiest men in Europe as well as a major player in the munitions industry. Although of Jewish heritage he was labeled a Nazi agent by American intelligence during World War II. In fourteen gripping chapters, Ursula Prutsch places the life of this fascinating if somewhat unsympathetic figure within a larger historical context, beginning with the story of the emancipation of the Jews in Austria-Hungary and its meaning for Mandl's ancestors. She views his personal life and business dealings through the lens of turbulent events of the twentieth century and documents both unethical and illegal practices in the munitions and weapons industry.

Fritz Mandl was born in 1900, the son of a wealthy atheist industrialist of Jewish heritage and a Catholic mother. Mandl's parents did not marry until he was ten, and his "illegitimate" birth plagued him growing up. At the same time, he enjoyed all the advantages of wealth, which may have helped him remain in school despite poor grades. At the age of 24 he assumed the directorship of the Hirtenberger munitions factory that was in dire financial straits. Proving himself a shrewd factory owner, he often promoted his business transactions by circumventing the laws and selling munitions to third parties, who then sold them further. Trading with warring sides became a trademark practice of Mandl's. An admirer of Mussolini and an Austrian patriot, Mandl viewed Italian-type fascism as the means to protect Austria from the National Socialists. After an unsuccessful putsch attempt by the leader of the Styrian Heimwehr, Walter Pfrimer, in September 1931, Mandl reached out to the Italians for armed support. Having supported the Heimwehr and its leader, Graf Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, financially for many years, he worked behind the scenes to get them better armed.

Before the Anschluss Mandl had the foresight to diversify his holdings, which placed him in a much more favorable position than many other exiles. Having transferred 440,000 Pounds sterling from the factory to a private account in Switzerland, the magnate forced the National Socialists to negotiate with him to buy the factory, a rare occurrence indeed. In the hope of building up new business interests, Mandl settled in Argentina,

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where he soon fell under the surveillance of the North and South American intelligence agencies. Prutsch points to the 1944 article "Poison from Austria," in which the American journalist Francis Rufus Bellamy labels Fritz Mandl "one of the most sinister figures of the Western Hemisphere" and "Menace No. 1 to the peace of the Americas" (210). The man who had to flee Austria because of his Jewish heritage was now labeled a Nazi. The Americans placed him on a blacklist, which limited his travel and froze some of his assets for years. Although he had done business with Nazis in the past and was not disinclined to work with Nazis, Mandl certainly was not one. However, Juan Perón used the rumors to his advantage after Argentina declared war on the Axis to imprison Mandl as a Nazi sympathizer. After being taken off the blacklist, Mandl was allowed to return to Austria and regained control of the Hirtenberger factory in 1957. As a major employer in Austria, he was able to have the government look the other way when again he engaged in unethical and illegal practices. The scandals surrounding his firm did not cease with his death in 1977. Prutsch closes with the infamous Noricum affair in the 1980s when the Hirtenberger factory, then a subsidiary of VOEST-Alpine, was involved in the illegal sale of weapons to Iran.

Prutsch convincingly argues that Mandl's life story is compelling for many reasons. Indeed, this biography covers more than the life story of a major player in the munitions industry, who distanced himself from his Jewish heritage but was often labeled "the Jew" by external forces. Mandl's story also reveals Austria's role in international and domestic sales of the munitions industry and the ways in which laws can be circumvented for profit. Prutsch highlights the intertwining and sometimes contradictory roles ideology, politics, and personal connections played in Mandl's life as well as how he was perceived. The historian punches holes in a variety of myths surrounding the magnate, revealing for example that he was not a friend of Juan Perón, nor was he a Nazi agent who smuggled former Nazis into Argentina. Indeed, she demonstrates how his personal history was tied to global history through his business dealings, his political involvement, and his position as an exile in Argentina.

The variety of sources Prutsch draws on allows her to present such a full picture. Mandl's children gave her unlimited access to their father's archives, covering the years 1938 through 1950. In addition to this valuable source, which included personal and business documents, the historian examined other primary and secondary sources and used archival material from three

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continents—Europe, North American, and South America. A scrupulous interpreter of these myriad materials, Prutsch uncovers contradictions among them as she establishes the facts of Mandl's life and clears up myths. She paints a vivid picture of Mandl's complicated personal and business networks that he turned to for his many business endeavors. The many illustrations and photographs included in the volume complement and add to the depth of the life story. The result is a gripping narrative of a larger-than-life figure who defies easy definition. Ursula Prutsch's *Wer war Fritz Mandl* is an absorbing volume and a must-read for scholars of Austrian and exile history.

Jacqueline Vansant
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Janik, Allan. *Hitler's Favorite Jew: The Enigma of Otto Weininger*. New York: Simply Charly, 2021. 191 pp.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, Karl Kraus, Heimito von Doderer, Hermann Broch, Arnold Schoenberg, Elias Canetti, and numerous others in Austria; August Strindberg, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, and Italo Svevo elsewhere—these are only a handful of the artists profoundly influenced by Otto Weininger, who nonetheless is still often dismissed as a self-hating Jewish anti-Semite, a venomous misogynist, and a generally unbalanced fanatic. Weininger's suicide at an early age contributed further to the image of a disturbed crackpot trading in dubious, half-baked philosophical and psychological concepts of his own eccentric devising. In his lucid and helpful new study, Allan Janik confronts these distortions head-on, pointing out that mangled editions and clumsy translations have long fostered misunderstanding of the actual work, much of which was dismissed without even being read anyway, since "scholars" had already made their minds up that Weininger need not, indeed could not, be taken seriously. As Janik notes, goodwill is often lacking, especially to reconstruct the then-current state of the disciplines on which Weininger drew. It takes time and effort to clear away impeding misconceptions, and indeed, "We have to work hard to re-contextualize Weininger" (xiv), who is victimized by the prevalent error of being judged according to today's knowledge and insights, not within the framework of his own time.

Janik succeeds so well here, especially in linking Weininger to his culture

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at large, that his study is likely to remain definitive. Although in a different context, Martin Mosebach offers the helpful reminder that Vienna around 1900 was a hotbed of great and near-great minds devising new systems of order, new modes of understanding, new means of expression, new ways of seeing and hearing. Janik shows that Weininger was a full participant in these many-sided explorations and not the lone wolf or outlier he is made out to be. (Again, how could so many creative and analytical minds have been so fascinated by Weininger unless he were embodying currents and streams of thought in many disciplines?)

For instance, Janik demonstrates Weininger's full familiarity with psychoanalytic thought, knowledgeably participating in the prevailing discourse, aware that the future of the discipline lay with Freud (15–16). Weininger occupied a position at the center of philosophical thought, too, as a member of the Philosophical Society, regularly meeting with Ernst Mach, Ludwig Boltzmann, Sigmund Exner, and Friedrich Jodl, among others (11–14), and his presentations at the Viennese Sociological Society, even though he was still an adolescent, were greeted with esteem by specialists (12). Only in retrospect does the negative view of Weininger seem to have arisen; in his own day, and for a good many years after his death, he was regarded as a first-rate, formidable intellectual.

Another area of unfair disparagement is the glibly cited snap judgment that Weininger was a Jew filled with Jewish self-hatred and therefore not to be taken seriously on the basis of purported psychological imbalance. Janik skillfully challenges this irresponsible distortion in his excellent chapter on "Judaism and Anti-Semitism" (93–109), demonstrating that Weininger's views were shaped by Kant's moral thought, not by personal dimensions; he counters false assessments by citing Weininger's own understanding of Judaism (94–96) and even more by offering a nuanced discussion of the topic as treated in *Sex and Character* based on Peter Pulzer's *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (99–104). The four varieties of anti-Semitism Pulzer outlines are powerful and apt guides for understanding the subtlety and depth of Weininger's arguments.

Three chapters devoted to *Sex and Character* again present Weininger's thought against the backdrop of his culture and show how comprehensively that major work amalgamated and organized many areas of contemporary thought. The first of those chapters (38–56) is uniquely excellent in its discussion of "Early Sexology and the Theory of Plasms." No other treatment

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of the matter is this lucid; Janik has made a thorough study of the subject as understood in Weininger's day and presents his findings persuasively. The second chapter, "Towards a Psychology of Male and Female" (57–75), elucidates categories of biological and social gender norms in a way that is unexpectedly pertinent to discussions taking place today, while the third, "The Lot of Men and Women in Weininger's Moral World: What Is and What Can Be" (76–92), again places problems of gender, sexual expression, and legal constraints in a context that is just as relevant now as it was then. While this reviewer is by no means a specialist on Weininger, he has read the pertinent literature quite widely (few Austrianists can in good conscience bypass Weininger) and has found nothing like the range, the clarity, and the conscientiousness of Janik's treatment.

Especially provocative is the chapter on Weininger's life and work in the view of three very different figures—Hitler, Wittgenstein, and Joyce (117–33). The short concluding chapter on "Weininger's Legacy" (134–42) demonstrates again that this enigmatic, challenging figure can no longer be dismissed or belittled but rather belongs in the mainstream of Austrian and European intellectual discourse.

This is an outstanding study that takes first place among discussions of the topic.

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La Salle University

Evelyn Dueck and Sandro Zanetti, eds., *Mitdenken: Paul Celans Theorie der Dichtung heute*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2022. 181 pp.

In the introduction to *Mitdenken: Paul Celans Theorie der Dichtung*, the editors, Evelyn Dueck and Sandro Zanetti, discuss the theoretical basis of the poetic oeuvre of Paul Celan (1920–1970). His theories are explicated in various texts, notes, conversations, letters, and speeches, particularly those made upon receiving prestigious literary prizes. Analyses of these scattered texts offer no coherent overarching theory and only a few detailed interpretations of individual poems. Rather, they are exploratory pieces about Celan himself as a creator and his poetry in different eras, such as his own present, after the Shoah, and in light of an unforeseeable future. The development of his richly

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evocative thoughts on poetry from the end of the 1940s to the 1960s does not conclude in a closed or systematic theory. Accordingly, the essays collected in this book do not amount to an attempt to mold Celan's theories into one unitary message. Each scholarly author pursues a different line of analysis, and their conclusions are generally compatible rather than contradictory. All have a theoretical bent; the pieces vary in the degree to which these discussions incorporate lines of poetry within their arguments. Several of these authors enhance their essays with references to ideas of philosophers such as Derrida, Heidegger, and Adorno or more recent or contemporary poets or critics such as Osip Mandelstam, Ann Cotton, and David Wills.

The introduction presents a key concept of the volume, "Mitdenken," which is named in the title. The word is found in an early epigraph, taken from a 1958 letter by Celan: "Heißt es anspruchsvoll sein, wenn man sich—als Autor—wünscht, der Leser möchte mit dem Gedicht mitdenken?" (7). Dueck and Zanetti go on to say, "Zu dem, was wir 'mitlesen', 'miterfahren' und 'mitdenken' können, wenn wir Celans Dichtung lesen, gehören auch die zahlreichen Theorien im Bereich der Literatur, der Philosophie und der Kritik, die sich auf Celans Dichtung und nicht zuletzt auf deren Theorie eingelassen haben" (11).

This volume contains nine excellent essays by well-established scholars with international academic backgrounds. Although under 200 pages, the book is dense in content and thoroughly researched and documented. Because it is highly theoretical and emphasizes advanced, even erudite research and commentary, its most appropriate audience is Celan specialists rather than students or poetry lovers interested in a basic introduction to the work of Celan.

Among the subjects addressed are voice, the uncanny, the body, multilingualism, poetic language, openness, and laughter. A sense of the scope of the essays' contents may be provided here by highlighting a few discussion points. Among her other topics, Barbara Wiedemann emphasizes "Stimme," commenting, "Stimme ist von Celan immer positiv konnotiert, ist Ausdruck eines einmaligen Menschen mit seinem einmaligen Schicksal; Stimme ist das, was auch dann im Gedicht erhalten bleibt, wenn der Urheber aus seiner 'Mitwissenschaft' entlassen ist" (30). In a section of her essay, subtitled "Körper: Die Grundlage des Sprechens," contributor Yvonne Al-Taie writes, "Der Hiatus zwischen Sprache und außersprachlicher Wirklichkeit wiederholt sich im menschlichen Körper selbst und der doppelten Funktion

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einiger seiner Organe—Augen, Mund, Lippen, Ohr, Hände, Haut—, die in ihrer physiologischen Funktion sowohl die Grundlage der organischen Lebensprozesse bilden als auch der verbalen und nonverbalen Interaktion mit den Mitmenschen dienen" (62). Al-Taie presents and interprets several lines by Celan that incorporate significant mention of these body parts. Ralf Simon's piece on "Vielstimmigkeit" presents a close reading of *Stimmen*, Celan's cycle of eight poems. It also brings out Celan's poetic confrontation with Nazi crimes and his own experiences of them: enduring forced labor and grieving the murder of his parents in the Shoah. Simon identifies eight voices in the eight poems: traumatic cries, collective voices of the dead, voices heard by the poet, voices of the murderers named but not permitted to speak, voices of forced laborers, sympathy associated with the biblical Jakob's voice, voices of murder victims hearing the survivors, and finally "Das Gedicht ist: Keine Stimme, sondern Schrift als Narbe, als Fortschreibung der Traumalogik" (129). The title of Esther Kilchmann's contribution to the book is itself pertinent. It begins with a definition of poetry coined by Celan himself, "Dichtung—das ist das schicksalhaft Einmalige der Sprache" (77), echoed above by Wiedemann. Kilchmann comments on Celan's well-known knowledge of languages, his translation skills, and his remarkable knowledge of European literatures that have made him known as a transcultural and multilingual author.

Another author represented in this collection, Cory Stockwell, asserts that "it is very difficult to consider any one of his poems in isolation from the others, indeed from all the others. This is not to say that one cannot concentrate on a particular poem. [. . .] It is to say that even when one does so, one is simultaneously speaking of all the other poems, for this is the way the poems relate to one another, forming a grid, a network, a system of exchanges and relations between elements." He adds, "These features, I want to argue, constitute one of the aspects of Celan's writing that lends it its uncanny contemporaneity" (150). The fascinating phrase "uncanny contemporaneity" marks the end point of this review, but it might well serve as a starting point of a voyage of appreciation and discovery for a reader delving into the rich legacy of the poetry of Paul Celan.

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Axel Diller, *Literatur Kompakt: Thomas Bernhard*. Baden-Baden: Tectum Wissenschaftverlag, 2021. 238 pp.

For decades, Thomas Bernhard, both as a man and as a controversial writer, has been widely discussed in literary studies. Due to the scandals he repeatedly provoked during his lifetime, Bernhard was stigmatized as a *Nestbeschmutzer* and an *enfant terrible* because of his vocalized disrespect for his country. His works were criticized by many. For instance, Peter Handke once described his books as "criminal concoctions" ("sträfliche Machwerke"); others accused Bernhard of self-plagiarism, pointing to similarities in content and structure, as well as the interchangeability of content that revisited the same motifs and themes, to suggest that the writer essentially wrote only one novel over the course of his life.

In his newly published book *Thomas Bernhard*, Axel Diller undertakes a comprehensive examination of Bernhard's biography and literary works, concluding that Bernhard was one of the most successful German-speaking authors of the 20th century (204). For Diller, the performance and achievement of a writer should be judged independently of his personality. In his defense of Bernhard, Diller examines the nature and poetic construction of his prose and dramatic texts, confirming that Bernhard discovered and developed a unique literary language. Precisely because of this artistic language, Bernhard's works cannot be dismissed as "Schmähschriften eines mittlemäßigen Schriftstellers"; rather, they represent one of the great "Ausnahmeleistungen" of German-language literature since 1945 (5).

The book consists of seven chapters, including an extensive bibliography, a list of figures, and an index. The introduction poses the question "Nestbeschmutzer oder Weltliterat?," which helps Diller justify and underscore Bernhard's undeniable canonical status as a "(post)moderner Klassiker" (10) in world literature, a judgment that is echoed in the concluding sentences of the final chapter where he discusses the reception of Bernhard's works (204). A helpful five-page chronological table constitutes an independent chapter (II). Placed before the three main chapters (III–V), it summarizes Bernhard's life and lists all of his works and their publication dates.

The third chapter, "The Life and Works of Thomas Bernhard," occupies nearly half of the book. Drawing on Bernhard's biographical quintet, Diller extends the poeticity of Bernhard's autobiographical writings, a typical poetic

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design of Bernhard's that prioritizes the poetic over the factual. In other words, Bernhard's prose works—both autobiographical and fictional—are intended to describe his life not with factual accuracy or precision but rather in a programmatic narrative style that helps him convey central themes that he deems important, such as isolation, death, loneliness, war, illness, anxiety, and suicide.

Over the next chapters, armed with Bernhard's uniqueness of language and traumatic life experiences, Diller proceeds to examine Bernhard's dramatic and prose works. In order to demonstrate that Bernhard's works, informed by his unique literary language, are poetically and rhetorically "regelrecht virtuos" (14), Diller uses three dramas (*Der Ignorant und der Wahnsinnige, Der Theatermacher*, and *Heldenplatz*) and four fictional prose works (*Frost, Das Kalkwerk, Holzfällen*, and *Alte Meister*) to highlight Bernhard's dramaturgical and narrative techniques, such as exaggeration, intensive monological dialogues, and shrewd use of the comic and the absurd. Meanwhile, using the "all the world's a stage" approach, Bernhard cast artistically or philosophically active "Geistmenschen" who are isolated from their society, marked with illness, and suffering from a modern version of postwar *Weltschmerz*. While having no help to function within the power system in place and, therefore, unable to achieve perfection or self-realization, they deal with the loss of identity, self-extinction, and self-destruction through suicide and wrestle with loneliness and language skepticism. This exemplifies Bernhard's critique of the meaninglessness of art and of philosophy.

While taking into account the techniques, content, and the structure that define Bernhard's poetry, Diller also pays attention to the linguistic quality of his writing process. This can especially be seen in his attention to the poetic and linguistic nature of his prose and dramatic texts. This is in part the result of Bernhard's preoccupation with music.

A trained musician himself, Diller revealed his fascination with the musicality of Bernhard's work in his 2011 dissertation, in which he intensively investigated musical structures and the meaning and narrative function of music in Bernhard's later prose texts. In the current book, Diller not only looks into the formal analogy between music and language but also examines the other parallels linking these two artistic forms. For example, Bernhard's contrapuntal treatment of motif-like elements, the rotation of sentences around smaller linguistic units, the techniques of linguistic rhythmization, artistic variations through paraphrasing, and above all the intensive use of

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the rhetorical strategy of relentless repetition—all are reminiscent of musical structures and the formal principles of musical composition. Parallels to musical techniques are particularly in evidence in *Alter Meister* and *Der Untergeher*, where the syntactic design of the text mirrors the musical structure of Beethoven's "Sturm-Sonate" as well as Bach's famous *Goldberg Variations* and *The Art of Fugue*.

Diller's book places Bernhard and his works in an Austrian cultural, literary, political, and historical context. This sweeping approach is reflected in the extensive bibliography, which contains almost exclusively German-language sources. The focus on German scholarship, however, does not minimize Diller's contribution with this welcome addition to Bernhard scholarship. With respect to the format of the book, the marginal notes that provide a running summary of the content—a scholarly feature typical in German-speaking countries—help readers to quickly navigate the text. The book is well documented and provides many historical photos, but due to the use of parenthetical citations, the text is full of references to primary and secondary literature that can sometimes distract readers in their progress through the book.

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North Sichuan Medical College

Josef P. Mautner, *Ein nationalsozialistisch-katholisches Syndrom: Zugänge zum Werk von Thomas Bernhard*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2021. 135 pp.

In this compact yet powerful book, literary scholar and Catholic theologian Josef Mautner reveals the many ways that the novels of Thomas Bernhard revolve around the themes of National Socialism and Austrian Catholicism. For Mautner, the "National-Socialist-Catholic-Syndrome" is a way of describing the submerged, semi-subconscious, yet deeply powerful interplay of two totalizing ideologies on the formation and individual identities of mid-twentieth-century Austrians.

As has been noted in numerous books and reviews of Bernhard's writings, National Socialism, though almost never overtly mentioned, saturates the very atmosphere of his works, while Austrian Catholicism, especially in

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its more provincial or parochial varieties, forms both the foundation of his assumptions and receives the harshest of his ire. What Mautner adds to this story is an argument concerning the ways the two ideologies become inextricably tied up once National Socialism develops and takes hold in Austria, and what that union looks and feels like on the bodies, minds, and souls of Austrian youth. As Mautner writes, "Nationalsozialismus wie Katholizismus sind für [Bernhard] Ideologien, die den Menschen in seiner Individualität nicht gelten lassen, ihn vielmehr 'eingemeinden', zum 'nützlichen' Teil eines Kollektivs machen wollen" (8). Mautner continues: "In diesem Sinne möchte ich versuchen, die Verknüpfung von Katholizismus und Nationalsozialismus in Thomas Bernhards Werk als die krank machende Verbindung von zwei Symptom-komplexen darzulegen" (9–10).

Mautner then spends much of the introduction discussing the relationship between author and reader, specifically the way that Bernhard plays with the uncertainty of narrative and the relation of fictive elements in the text: "Immer wieder warden die LeserInnen bezüglich der Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehungen im Text verunsichert" (16). But he ends the introduction on a personal note. Mautner writes about how, earlier in his life (he was born in 1955), he had kept a distance between himself and Bernhard, mainly on religious grounds, but then slowly came to realize both the biographical and intellectual similarities between their two lives, andthat they shared a consternation at some of the more worrisome elements undergirding Austrian society. Bernhard, born in the Netherlands in 1931, lived in both Austria and Germany during the Nazi years before spending the remainder of his life in and around Salzburg. Mautner, two decades his junior, was likewise born into a family with a Nazi past and spent his youth in Catholic boarding schools in Salzburg. In reflecting on these shared boyhood experiences, Mautner came to recognize Bernhard's distinctive agglomeration of Catholicism and National Socialism. "Ich verbrachte meine Kindheit in einer nationalsozialistisch geprägten Familie und anschließend acht Jahre in einem katholischen Internat. [. . .] Im Wechselspiel zwischen Familie und Internat musste ich erfahren, wie gerade im Bereich der Erziehung und Schulbildung diese beiden—scheinbar gegensätzlichen Welten—dieselben Muster und Strukturen ausbildeten" (22). It isn't an easy biography to have. But it does provide Mautner with the kind of empathetic insight that makes him a uniquely thoughtful and interesting reader of Bernhard.

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Following the introduction, Mautner's work is divided into three main chapters. Chapter One focuses on Bernhard's early writings, including his first poems and his debut novel, *Frost* (1963). In these pages, Mautner argues that what began for Bernhard as "Gottesverzweiflung"—but was , Mautner believes, in many ways a deep, meaningful religiosity—can be seen as already afflicted by and critical toward the "syndrome." Though Bernhard's early poetry was received positively and understood as Christian, Mautner senses a break in the early 1960s, between an often-overlooked collection of Bernhard's poems entitled "Frost" and the debut novel a few years later of the same name. Mautner argues that Bernhard's decision to transform his prose style in that period—from one that imitated or derived from biblical and ecclesiastic liturgy to the modernist narratives with which we are all more familiar—marks a decisive shift in Bernhard's feelings about his place in the larger superstructure of Austrian Catholicism.

Chapter Two takes readers into Bernhard's autobiographical texts through the lens of Mautner's "syndrome." In this chapter, Mautner writes: "Der Fokus des Interesses liegt vielmehr [. . .] auf Bernhards spezifischer literarischer Perspektive: auf seiner hohen ästhetischen Sensibilität für die existentielle Situation der mit Leiden und Tod konfrontierten Menschen. Erst diese Sensibilität führt ihn zu einer Kritik an den seelischen Verheerungen, die Katholizismus wie Nationalsozialismus in analoger Weise den Menschen vor allem in ihrer Kindheit und Jugend zugefügt haben" (51). Mautner uses the first of these pages to unpack the aesthetics of Bernhard's autobiographical writings, commenting specifically on the way Bernhard balances the ever-present tension of fiction with nonfiction. Likewise, Mautner is interested in the way Bernhard conveys the impacts of the "syndrome" on young Austrians, not just the generation that grew up under Nazi rule but subsequent ones as well, all of whom were raised in a matrix where, whether at school or church, Catholicism and National Socialism could be impossible to disentangle. The end of the chapter examines Bernhard's writings on hospitals and hospital clergy. It is here, Mautner argues, that we see Bernhard fully identifying a unique type of "Catholic-National-Socialism," in the reflection of which Bernhard takes his clearest literary and intellectual steps away from Catholicism. If there is still so much toxic ideology at the final existential moments of suffering and death, then art must be allowed to find truth outside "alle Antworten und Sicherheiten einer katholisch ausformulierten Religion" (82).

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Chapter Three is a thoughtful reading of *Auslöschung* (1986), Bernhard's final novel. *Auslöschung* is clearly about National Socialism and its enduring effects in Austria. As Mautner nicely expresses it, "Geschichte ist für Bernhard nur durch diese mehrfache ästhetische Brechung hindurch wahrnehmbar—und somit keinesfalls als abgeschlossene, distanziert und neutral zu betrachtende 'Historie'" (88). National Socialism, then, is clearly a symptom in the maladies affecting postwar Austria. But the question for this chapter is about where Mautner sees the place of Catholicism, the symptom of National Socialism conjoining with the malady of provincial Catholicism to become an all-afflicting "syndrome." Here, the answer lies in the way Bernhard makes use of religious language and concepts throughout the novel, including his adaptations of "hell" and his meditations on time, utopia, and redemption. Mautner ends with a discussion of the novel's title, *Auslöschung*, the word itself being a disturbing palimpsest that emanates both a deeply mechanical and modern "extinction" to the metaphysical "obliteration," an elision that, as Mautner points out, perfectly straddles the mytho-politico-theological line of Nazism's war against the Jews.

Mautner concludes the book with a summary timeline of his main theme: the evolution in Bernard's writings of the "National-Socialist-Catholic-Syndrome." For anyone seeking something like an annotated bibliography that outlines Mautner's thesis, this is the place to begin. In the end, this little volume nicely accomplishes what it set out to do. For readers of Bernhard who sense a critique of Catholicism but do not have the historical or theological background to understand it themselves or for literature professors looking to highlight this angle of Bernhard's work in a broader graduate seminar, this book is an excellent introduction to the subject and demonstrates the importance in critical interpretation for combining close reading, literary reconstruction, and biographical context.

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Vahidin Preljević und Clemens Ruthner, Hrsg., *Peter Handkes Jugoslawienkomplex. Eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme nach dem Nobelpreis*. Identifizierungen 8. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2022. 340 S.

Als Peter Handke mit dem Nobelpreis bedacht wurde, konnte man Probleme voraussehen. Dieser Preis soll dem Testament Nobels zufolge an jene Person gehen, die auf dem Feld der Literatur "produced the most outstanding work in an idealistic direction" (https://www.nobelprize.org/alfred-nobel/full-text-of-alfred-nobels-will-2/). Ausgezeichnet wird also eine Person, nicht ein von ihr irgendwie zu trennendes Werk; und die idealistische Richtung beider ist vorgegeben.

Man kann dies eine "false canonization" nennen, was Handke tat und Slavoj Žižek zitierte: Der Preis für Handke habe dessen Verachtung für diesen Preis bestätigt (17). Handke betreffend gibt es indes heute zwei—relativ unversöhnliche—Lager. Die eine Seite betont die Bedeutsamkeit des Werks: Man könne angesichts derer zwar seine Auslassungen zu Serbien nicht gutheißen, aber diese seien dann eben nicht jenen Werken zuzurechnen, die Handke eigentlich ausmachen. Sie seien also nichts, was auch nur einen Schatten auf das Werk insgesamt würfe.

Die Gegenseite sieht Handke und damit auch sein Werk durch eine ganze Reihe von Äußerungen zu Serbien und Fragen der Politik kompromittiert. Keinesfalls sei Handke insgesamt ein preiswürdiger Schriftsteller, schon gar nicht nach den Kriterien Alfred Nobels; und es liege der Verdacht nahe, dass das, was die Serbien-Texte negativ auszeichne, schon die angeblich großen Texte präge.

Der vorliegende Band sollte diesen Dissens ausverhandeln. Beide Lager hätten Gelegenheit gehabt, zu zeigen, inwiefern Handke ein Großer oder ein vor allem Fragwürdiger sei. Diese Gelegenheit nahm aber bedauerlicherweise nur die Seite derer wahr, die das Problem erkennen. Die andere Seite schwieg, vor allem "drückte sich [. . .] der Leiter eines großen Literaturhauses, [. . .] nachdem er immer wieder polemisch in die Debatte eingegriffen hatte", zuletzt "vor ausformulierten Argumenten" (12), so der *Gruß* der Herausgeber an Klaus Kastberger. Der Verdacht, die Fehlurteile Handkes könnten etwas mit seiner Poetik zu tun haben, ist damit jedenfalls in diesem Band nicht widerlegt, womit die, die Handke bedingungslos loben—sich mit ihm "durch seine Schaffenskrise der 1980er Jahre [. . .] schleppte[n]" (9) und zu

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allem Fragwürdigen oder auch Empörenden schweigen Reflexionsmangel Wurstigkeit auszeichnen könnten.

Zunächst aber wird Handkes Werk und/als Position mit zweierlei Fragen konfrontiert: 1. "Kann [. . .] eine saubere Trennung von Poetik und Politik vollzogen werden" (11)—immerhin könnte wie angedeutet im Gegenteil die Überschreitung von "Diskursgrenze(n)" (11) Problem und ebenso ästhetische Strategie, die dann zu diskutieren wäre, sein—und 2. "können die vielen Balkanreferenzen [. . .] ohne den kommunikativen Kontext, in dem Handke sich auf dem Balkan scheinbar apolitisch bewegt, entschlüsselt werden" (11)?

Vahidin Preljević macht den Anfang, er zeichnet Handkes Obsession für ein jenseits aller Politik situiertes Paradies nach. Damit gerät dieser in die Kreise derer, die COVID-19 abtun und die eigentliche Gefahr in LGBTQ+ sehen—und Handke instrumentalisieren (20). Statt einer Arbeit an der Sprache und ihren Voraussetzungen raunt Handke; das "Sein wird [. . .] zum 'eigentlichen Subjekt'" (24), jedenfalls wäre das das Ziel dieses *Jargons der Eigentlichkeit*, den schon Jahrzehnte früher Adorno kritisierte. Als *Versuch*—immerhin ein Wort, das bei Handke titelwürdig ist—ginge das an, aber Handke zimmert eine "Geschichtslosigkeit" (28) daraus, einen Unsinn jenseits von Politik und allem, was politische Verantwortung sein könnte. So wird Srebrenica für Handke zum "Rachemassaker" (35), ein zweifacher Unsinn, der gedemütigte Eigentliche auf der serbischen Seite imaginiert, denen dann ein Recht auf jede Eskalation des erfundenen Zusammenhangs zukäme. Das Böse ist für Handke das Demokratische, das Konsensuelle, das, was nicht ethnozentrisch zu denken und nicht wildwüchsig ist, beispielsweise: Mitteleuropa. Der Balkan wird zum "fiktive(n) Modell einer zivilisatorischen Gegenwelt" (42), nicht im Sinne seiner Ab-, sondern seiner hochproblematischen Aufwertung.

Das erledigt den Schriftsteller Handke nicht, um eine erregte Cancel Culture oder ein "Sprech- und Schreibverbot für Handke" (54) geht es hier nicht, wie auch Steffen Hendel bemerkt. Aber es schränkt doch sehr ein, was sich zu Handke an Gutem sagen lässt: ein dauererregt Schimpfender, der von der Natur in einer einigermaßen dumpfen Pseudo-Phänomenologie deliriert, wobei ihm schöne Sätze oder Wendungen gelingen mögen. Alida Bremer resümiert, poetologisch sei Handkes Weg ein "Irrweg" (65), der wie seine Resultate "verbissen" von Handke und seinen Adepten "verteidigt" (82) wird—und doch nichts als ein Irrweg bleibt.

Das wird von den Beiträgen lückenlos dokumentiert—wie auch, wie fatal dieser Irrweg ist, wo er in Serbien als Apologie rezipiert wird, als eine,

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die wegen des Nobelpreises etwas gelten müsste: "Ihr seid nicht daran schuld" (105), das liest man aus den einschlägigen Texten Handkes dort, eine Rezeption, die das Ewiggestrige dort am Leben erhält und von Handke auch bewusst gefördert wird. Der sich apolitisch inszenierende Handke macht in Serbien Politik, was in der Handke-Forschung "kaum berücksichtigt" (106) oder verdrängt wurde, wie Paul Gruber an 33 Interviews des Dichters in serbischen Medien 1996–2020 nachweist.

Auch Clemens Ruthner kommt zu dem Schluss, der sich schon abzeichnet: Nach einem bedeutsamen Auftakt, der die *Publikumsbeschimpfung* (1966) sowie die Erzählung *Wunschloses Unglück* (1972) umfasst, habe Handke bald seinen "kanonischen Kredit" (147) aufgebraucht; dann folgten Texte, die eine "gediegene Langeweile" (147) entfalteten, vielleicht, weil Handke zu Zusammenhängen nichts zu sagen hatte, denen er naive Natureindrücke darum vorzog. Ruthner kommt darob auf den "viel größeren Schreibtischtäter [. . .] Martin Heidegger" und die erwähnte Kritik Adornos zu sprechen, Handke betreibe eine "autistische[n] Einfühlung" (148), so die vielleicht nicht ganz glückliche Formel Ruthners dafür, dass Handkes Empathie eher Soziopathie ist.

Eine "Ästhetik des Ressentiments" (213) nennt Wolfgang Müller-Funk das. Er weist "die programmatische Weltfremdheit" Handkes als früh angelegt nach, die "unübersehbare Misogynie", all das, was auf Handkes finale "politische[n] Dummheiten hinausläuft" (215). Die Sehnsüchte Handkes sind fragwürdig, selbst da, wo sie in der Idee gründen, Jugoslawien, das dann beliebig mit Serbien gleichgesetzt wird, sei—wie bei Joseph Roth die k.u.k. Monarchie—das schlechthinnige Bollwerk gegen den Faschismus gewesen, oder doch "die Zumutungen der Moderne" (so ein Gesprächspartner Handkes, 215), ohne jede Ambivalenz. "Stereotypie" (226) ist das Prinzip Handkes: Schlicht kurios ist ja, dass die Serben für Handke "Indianer" (245) sind, worauf auch Gerrit Althüser hinweist: ein kolonialer Begriff, passend zur "Tyrannophilie" (246) Handkes, der jedenfalls "nach allen nichtliterarischen Maßstäben [. . .] fehlgeht" (267).

Viel mehr, als hier wiedergegeben werden kann, wird in diesem Band gegen Handke vorgebracht, und gut belegt; spannend wäre es gewesen, wenn die aber absenten Apologeten Handkes seine dennoch bestehende Qualität nachzuweisen versucht hätten. Es mag Gründe haben, dass die Handke-Liebhaber es unterließen und lieber polemisch formulieren, teils im raunenden Ton Handkes selbst, vielleicht Nostalgien, vielleicht Interessenslagen, suspekt

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sind die Gründe wie der Dichter, den hier einmal seriös zu verteidigen die verabsäumten, die ihn sonst in Postings für unbedenklich erklären, wenn sie ihn nicht gerade eskapistisch interpretieren.

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Uta Degner und Christa Gürtler, Hrsg., *Elfriede Jelinek. Provokationen der Kunst*. Berlin: DeGruyter, 2021. 261 S.

Die elf spannenden Forschungsbeiträge im Buch sind (mit einer Ausnahme) das Resultat einer Tagung, die als Kooperationsprojekt unter dem Titel "Kunstpolemik-Polemikkunst" der Salzburger Universitäten Mozarteum und der Paris-Lodron Universität 2016 stattfand. Die meisten beitragenden Wissenschaftler*innen kommen aus dem deutschsprachigen Universitätsbereich, vornehmlich der Germanistik und Theaterwissenschaft. Der Band ist in drei Teile gegliedert, und die Beiträge variieren in ihrer Länge zwischen 11–40 Buchseiten. In der Einleitung formulieren die Herausgeberinnen ihr Ziel, nämlich das provokative, ästhetische Profil von Jelineks Texten der letzten Jahrzehnte genauer zu untersuchen, denn Jelineks Literatur habe "eine außergewöhnliche Provokationskraft gezeigt und fungierte in den letzten Jahrzehnten immer wieder als Unruheherd, von dem gewichtige gesellschaftliche Debatten ausgingen und der seinerseits immer wieder zum Gegenstand von Polemiken wurde" (1).

In Teil 1 (Provokationen der Poetologie) untersucht Juliane Vogel einen von Jelineks ersten Texten, *wir sind lockvögel, baby!* (1970) und geht auf die literarischen Schreibverfahren der Autorin ein. Jelineks Pop unterscheide sich von anderen Autor*innen der damaligen Zeit unter anderem durch eine andere Herangehensweise an Superhelden und eine andere Cut up-Methode. Konstanze Fliedls Beitrag setzt sich mit *Appendix* (2015) auseinander, den die Autorin mit anderen Texten als Zusatztext zu *Die Schutzbefohlenen* (2014) ins Netz stellte. Fliedl zeigt, inwiefern Jelinek sich auf Freud, Theweleit und Heidegger bezieht, und erklärt, wie die Bilderflut der neueren Medien das gesellschaftliche Miteinander und Jelineks Textproduktion verändert. Sie veranschaulicht, inwiefern Jelinek sich durch ihre Texte zur Kunstfigur entwickelte und Theatermacher in den Aufführungen einiger ihrer Stücke

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die Autorinnenfigur als Puppe und Maske darstellten. In Thomas Aeberhards Analyse geht es um *Bambiland* (2003), ein Text, den Jelinek als Reaktion auf den Irakkrieg im gleichen Frühling ins Netz stellte. Aeberhard untersucht den Theatertext in Relation zu Jelineks Essay "Ich will kein Theater" und deckt narrative Strategien auf, die zeigen, wie Jelinek ihre Theatertexte als Texte "für das Theater," "gegen das Theater" und "für eine Aufführung" konzipiert. Bei *Bambiland* handele es sich laut Aeberhard um eine "Selbstbehauptung der Theater*text*medialität" (73), die die Subjektivität dezentriert und anstelle der *dramatis personae* Sprache als intertextuelle Arbeit in den Mittelpunkt stellt, um zu zeigen, wie Mythen und Ideologien in unserer jetzigen Gesellschaft perpetuiert werden. Christa Gürtler beschäftigt sich mit Jelineks Text *Wut* (2015), den die Autorin nach den Anschlägen in Paris schrieb, bei denen siebzehn Menschen ums Leben kamen. Gürtler arbeitet heraus, wie Jelinek in ihrem Text kritisiert, wie Religion als "Mittel der Instrumentalisierung von Wut und Gewalt" (79) missbraucht wird, und gleichzeitig ihre poetische Wut über die Angriffe in eine produktive Polemik und Widerstand in literarischer Form umarbeitet. Gürtler setzt *Wut* auch in Relation zu Jelineks Essay "Sprech-Wut" (2005), und folgert, dass Jelineks Wut sich als Provokation der politischen und gesellschaftlichen Geschehnisse, als Störung und künstlerischer Eingriff lesen lasse.

Anne Fleig untersucht in Teil 2 (Angreifende Autorschaft) einige von Jelineks etwa 800 Essays im Verhältnis zum dramatischen Werk. Jelineks Angriff auf das Repräsentationstheater begann mit "Ich möchte seicht sein" (1990), eine Reaktion auf den Mythos des männlichen Regisseurs als Schöpfer hoher Kunst wie Tragödien, und Jelinek setzt diese in Relation zur weiblich-konnotierten Modeschau. Die Position der schreibenden Frau und der Autorin thematisiert Jelinek im Zuge von Foucaults Frage nach dem Autor auch in "Sinn egal, Körper zwecklos" (1997). Uta Degner bietet eine überzeugende Lektüre von Jelineks *Klavierspielerin* (1983) mit Blick auf den Wiener Aktionismus und zeigt, wie die Erzählerin ihrer Protagonistin Erika kaum Empathie gewährt. Degner weist auf Ähnlichkeiten in Kafkas und Jelineks Narrativen hin und verdeutlicht, wie lächerlich und grotesk die Figuren teilweise dargestellt werden. Diese Schreibstrategien seien eine Form des Widerstands gegen gesellschaftliche Zwänge, die eine Subjektposition im Sinne des Wiener Aktionismus erst erlauben, wenn es eine Selbstverletzung der weiblichen Hauptfigur gibt. Norbert Christian Wolf untersucht die Rezeption des Romans *Lust* (1989) im Umfeld journalistischer Veröffentlichungen,

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die *Lust* als weiblichen Porno beschrieben und Jelinek in den Medien als Domina darstellten. Während es Jelineks Anliegen war, zu zeigen, inwiefern Sexualität etwas Politisches ist und nicht etwas Unschuldiges, trugen die irreführenden Darstellungen in den Medien zu falschen Erwartungen auf Seiten der Leser*innen und Kritiker*innen und zum Rückzug der Autorin aus den Medien bei. Harald Gschwandtners Beitrag erforscht Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschiede zwischen Thomas Bernhards und Jelineks ästhetischem Literaturverständnis sowie Bernhards *Beton* (1982) und Jelineks *Das Schweigen* (2000). Beide empfinden laut Jelinek eine "unstillbare Wut" (187) auf Österreich, aber Bernhards misogyne Haltung und seine patriarchale Kulturposition weichen drastisch von Jelineks feministischer Perspektive ab, und das soziale und politische Engagement der beiden Künstler*innen erweisen sich als sehr unterschiedlich.

In Teil 3 (Provokation als Revision) untersucht Alexandra Millner die Entwicklungsgeschichte von Jelineks Nora-Texten: das Theaterstück *Was geschah, nachdem Nora ihren Mann verlassen hatte* (1979) und der Essay "Nach Nora" (2013), in denen die Autorin Feminismus, Kapitalismus und deren Verknüpfungen untersucht. Millner unterstreicht, dass für Arbeiterinnen "die Kategorie Besitz dominanter als Gender ist" (211), ohne jedoch eingehender auf marxistisch-feministische oder intersektionale Theorien einzugehen. Das Verschwinden von Noras Stimme im Essay illustriere "Jelineks Zweifel an der Möglichkeit transsozialer weiblicher Solidarität" (211). Jelineks Gesellschaftskritik zeige, dass nur diejenigen in Machtpositionen kommen oder darin bleiben, solange sie sich in den Medien eine Stimme erkämpfen. Silke Felbers Beitrag erforscht Jelineks Stücke in der Tradition der Klage in der attischen Tragödie. Die Autorin nutze diese Klagestrategien, um anti-demokratische Entwicklungen in einer Zeit des Neoliberalismus aufzuzeigen. In *Ein Sturz* (2009) und anderen Texten bediene sich Jelinek der Mehrstimmigkeit, des Chors und der Klage als Stimme gegen den Status Quo und als Methode, die Schwächen der Gesellschaft unter die Lupe zu nehmen und aufzuzeigen. Teresa Kovacs untersucht Parallelen zwischen Jelineks und Einar Schleefs Kunstverständnis, wie in Schleefs Inszenierung von *Ein Sportstück* (1998) und der geplanten Zusammenarbeit, die nicht durchgeführt werden konnte. Kovacs analysiert, wie Schleefs Fotos und Kontaktbögen ähnliche Kunstvorstellungen wie Jelineks Theatertexte aufweisen, nämlich Versuche, die *Koexistenz*, die laut Barthes die Vergangenheit und die Gegenwart miteinander verbindet, und den Stillstand des Körpers als

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Moment des Todes bzw. das Erlebnis des Todes künstlerisch vorstellbar zu machen.

Theaterwissenschaftler*innen, Germanist*innen und Kulturwissenschaftler*innen werden die Untersuchungen von Jelineks ästhetischem Profil außerordentlich aufschlussreich finden, denn die Herausgeberinnen Degner und Gürtler haben in diesem Band sehr wichtige und interessante Lektüren zusammengestellt, die die Forschungsarbeit an Elfriede Jelineks Texten und ihren künstlerischen sowie politischen Einfluss- und Stellungnahmen vertieft und weiterführt.

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Sieglinde Klettenhammer and Kurt Scharr, eds., *Was heißt Österreich? Überlegungen zum Feld der Austrian Studies im 21. Jahrhundert*. Klagenfurt: Wieser, 2021. 182 pp.

The cover image on this slender volume is striking, at least for those who know what they are looking at: It depicts the Mostar Bridge in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Blown up during the Yugoslav Wars before being reconstructed a decade later, the bridge has become a symbol for the cultural diversity that both unites and divides this region of Europe. So why was this image chosen to illustrate a volume on Austrian studies, a volume dedicated to the simple question: *Was heißt Österreich?* An answer can readily be found on the jacket, which explains that the doctoral program at Innsbruck University from which this volume emerged is dedicated to an understanding of "Austria" as "ein von unterschiedlichen Gesellschaften produzierter 'Kulturraum' entlang der Zeitachse ausgehend vom Heiligen Römischen Reich, über die Habsburgermonarchie bis in die unmittelbare Gegenwart der Zweiten Republik."

Diversity takes center stage in this stimulating volume, both in the cultural diversity of the region under investigation and in the disciplinary diversity of the field dedicated to its study. This is reflected in essays dealing with history, literature, art, music, and politics by authors based in Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Italy, Ukraine, and the United States. Although the volume emerged from a doctoral program, it features the

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work of more established scholars, most prominently Pieter Judson, as well as two non-academics (in the narrower sense), namely the essayists Dževad Karahasan and Jurko Prochasko.

The volume's fluid understanding of "Austria," which the editors elaborate in their introduction, reflects the postcolonial and transnational turn that has become so characteristic of Austrian studies recently. The interconnectedness of South/East/Central Europe, both historical and contemporary, is then explored by specific reference to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ukraine in the thought-provoking contributions by the above-mentioned essayists, who demonstrate not just the rich multicultural heritage of the former empires (Habsburg and Ottoman) enduring today—evident in forms both tangible, like architecture, and intangible, like post-migratory experiences—but also the lingering potential for conflict, as all too evident in growing tensions in Bosnia and the outright war that is currently ongoing in Ukraine.

Pieter Judson goes on to rebuke the enduring hegemony of antagonistic nationalist historiographies in the Habsburg successor states, calling for greater attention to be paid to the considerable continuities evident in all these states with the Habsburg administration of yesteryear and the supranational cultures it once engendered in the region. As such, this essay offers a summary of the closing arguments of Judson's recent magnum opus on the Habsburg Empire.

Dagmar Lorenz's contribution will be of particular interest to readers of this journal, as it offers an overview of the origins of the field of Austrian studies, locating these in the transnational space carved out by German-speaking exiles in North America from the mid-twentieth century onwards. Thus, she concludes, the field—for which notably no precise German-language equivalent exists (*Österreichstudien*?)—can only properly be understood by adopting a position straddling Central Europe and the Anglophone world, its genesis amongst formerly marginalized exiles moreover explaining the field's marked sensitivity to alterity and diversity. Lorenz's overview is notably heavy on literary studies, though this also owes to the original orientation of the field as she explores it here, which today encompasses many other areas of enquiry.

Yasir Yılmaz's contribution offers a compelling reversal of the imperial gaze, exploring the nomenclature applied to Habsburg Austria over the centuries by its archenemy, the Ottoman Empire. While the orientalism of western empires has been thoroughly explored, Yılmaz here shows

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how Austria was once contemptuously dismissed in Turkey as *Nemçe*, a loanword from the Slavic languages actually signifying Germany and thus denying Austria any validity as a political entity. While the key points of this contribution could probably have been summarized in fewer pages, Yılmaz's reversal of the imperial gaze is refreshing.

Matthew Rampley follows with a revisionist approach to the concept of modern art in Austria. Focusing particularly on the interwar period, he argues that the periodization of art history in accordance with political history—1918 being the key moment—along with nationalist historiographies on the one hand and an overly "orthodox" understanding of "modern art" on the other have tended to distort the manifest continuities and cultural fecundity that actually characterized the interbellum.

The volume closes with two musicological essays by Philip Bohlman and Ursula Hemetek, who each explore music as an expression of cultural diversity in Austria, both historically (as in Jewish folk music around 1900) or in the contemporary context (as in Romani folk music today).

While the postulation that Austria has always been a heterogeneous, transformative space best grasped through a postcolonial or transnational lens is hardly new, the various essays collected here offer an introduction as succinct as it is complex into the enormous geographic, cultural, and disciplinary variety that makes up Austrian studies today. One potential problem with this volume is that its general focus on identity discourses runs the risk of perpetuating rather than critically deconstructing these, as is evident particularly in the musicological contributions and their problematic claims about "ethnicity." The focus on the positive legacies of empires, especially Prochasko's essay, might at times seem like a tacit endorsement of imperialism, though perhaps this can also be read as a refreshing nuance on our understanding of the historical phenomenon of empire.

In any case, this volume will make enjoyable and insightful reading for any student of Austrian studies, finally underlining the dire necessity of destabilizing the narcissism of small differences that still proves so divisive in Europe today.

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Felix Salten, *The Original Bambi: The Story of a Life in the Forest*, translated and introduced by Jack Zipes, illustrated by Alenka Sottler. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2022. 162 pp.

The cover of this new translation of Felix Salten's Bambi by Jack Zipes imparts several competing messages. The title—*The Original Bambi*—steers prospective readers away from any lingering memories of the very popular Disney film that usurped Salten's vision. On the other hand, illustrator Alenka Sottler's frontal view of a long-lashed young fawn that graces the cover has not entirely let go of Disney's sugary interpretation. And although Salten did not intend Bambi to be a children's book, the bright green cloth binding of this Princeton University Press edition suggests otherwise.

Bambi, which first appeared in serial form in Vienna's *Neue Freie Presse* between August and October 1922, was then published by Ullstein in 1923 and by Zsolnay in 1926. The book proved to be extremely popular and in 1928 was picked up by Simon and Schuster as one of its first literary ventures. The English translation, which was done by the 29-year-old Whittaker Chambers (later renowned for his activities as a Communist spy and then fierce anti-Communist), was so successful that it became the initial choice of the newly created Book-of-the-Month Club. With the premiere of Disney's *Bambi* in 1942, however, both Salten's authorship and Chambers's role as the essential linguistic go-between were completely overshadowed. Now Professor Zipes, a translator of German folk and fairy tales, has taken the opportunity of the lapse of Chambers's copyright to re-introduce *Bambi* , hoping both to give Salten his due and to improve on Chambers' effort.

Aligning himself with those scholars who have seen *Bambi* as an allegory of the plight of the Jews, Professor Zipes opens his lengthy introduction with a comparison between the situation of the Jews in Austria and that of the animals in the forest. "As a Jew, [Salten] also knew what it meant to be pursued and killed. He knew how difficult it was to assimilate and play by the rules of a society that he and his ancestors had not created" (x). This is a far-fetched projection. *Bambi* was written in 1922 when Salten was one of Vienna's most popular and successful literary figures. And, surely, he did not know what it meant to be "pursued," if not killed, until the Anschluss sixteen years later.

This radical opening sets the tone of the concise biography of Salten's early years that follows. Zipes emphasizes his outsider role among the more

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privileged writers of the Griensteidl circle. His father's financial failures led to his having to grow up in a working-class district where he was often subjected to antisemitic bullying. Though he went out to work early and did not attend university, he was nevertheless publishing poems and stories before he was 20 and by 1894, age 25, was the theater critic of the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*.

Any biographer of Salten must wrestle with the essential contradiction between Salten's passion for hunting and his imaginative rendering of its threat to the animals themselves. Zipes hazards the guess that the careful stalking of prey required of a hunter gave Salten the insights into the real life in the forest as opposed to the idealized one of those who never ventured as far or as deep.

In 2015, Sabine Struemper-Krobb published a detailed critique of Chambers's translation and concluded that it "simplified the novel, especially by reducing its transcendental dimension." She suggested that this reduction made for a greater emphasis on the "private, secular character of the natural world" and hence led the way to Disney's "radical rewriting." Zipes quotes Struemper-Krobb's reservations in his introductions but adds his own provisos. Chambers, he insists, fails to "capture a Viennese style of writing [. . .] mistranslates idioms, omits phrases" (xviii).

In Bambi's Forest, Salten has the animals communicate in the same manner as the inhabitants of imperial Vienna. That is, like their human counterparts, they never forget what the social hierarchy demands of them. But can the nuances of those exchanges survive outside of their linguistic context? The formal *Sie*, for instance, is used even among quarreling jays. The male deer and elk, the aristocrats of the forest, are described by the lesser beasts as noble, distinguished, and imperious. They are treated with deference: even young Bambi apologizes for being too forward in questioning his superiors. The humor generated by the stratified Viennese discourse among the various species is dissipated in both the Chambers and Zipes translations by the lack of English equivalents.

Above all, honorific titles confuse. The male deer are princes, but Bambi's stately enigmatic mentor is distinguished by being described in the German as a "Fürst," that is as a ruling royal. That initial distinction is not made clear when in both translations he is called "the great Prince." Later in the text, Salten refers to him as "Der Alte," or "The Old One," out of respect for his surprising survival but also to distinguish him from the other princes. Nevertheless, Zipes translates this appellation as "the old Prince." There is

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also a hierarchy among the deer. A breed larger and more formidable than the one to which Bambi belongs are seen as "kings" but are also referred to with their German zoological title as "Hirsche" or, in the English, as "Elks." Both Chambers and Zipes lose their way in Chapter Thirteen when Bambi wishes to introduce the female deer Faline to "the old prince." They go to the place where he was last seen, but instead of Bambi's mentor appearing, one of the elks comes out of the bushes. "Dort schritt langsam and gewaltig DER HIRSCH durch die Büsche" reads the German. Zipes writes: "Soon the old prince appeared and marched slowly and powerfully through the bushes" (97). Chambers makes the same mistake: "The old stag [his version of "Der Alte"] marched slowly and powerfully through the bushes." With this confusion of identity, the rest of the chapter, which concerns Bambi's desire to make contact with his mighty relative while at the same time resenting his superiority, makes no sense at all in either translation.

The Original Bambi, with its mix of Habsburg niceties amid the brutalities of "a life in the forest," turns out to be a complex challenge for a translator.

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