

Reviews

Clemens Ruthner, *Habsburgs "Dark Continent": Postkoloniale Lektüren zur österreichischen Literatur und Kultur im langen 19. Jahrhundert*. Kultur—Herrschaft—Differenz 23. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, 2018. 401 pp.

Clemens Ruthner's 2018 book *Habsburgs "Dark Continent"* is a must-read, not only for its insights into the final century of Austria-Hungary but also for its portrayal of the legacies of postcolonial studies, within and beyond Europe. It is a capstone for almost two decades of interesting work by a group instigated by Ruthner and Wolfgang Müller-Funk, along with many other Central Europeanists (many of whom had contributed to the website "Kakanien Revisited"), and resting on an almost encyclopedic knowledge not only of postcolonial studies but also such European scholarly movements as imagology, which works on identities and politics.

The first section, "Instrumentarium," comprises three chapters addressing in theoretical and historical terms how postcolonial studies of Central Europe can challenge the entire paradigms of international scholarship.

The first uses Kafka's *In der Strafkolonie* (1914) as exemplifying Austria's colonial cultural repression (20). The scholarship on Kafka is here confronted with what has been done in German and Austrian studies inspired by postcolonial studies and orientalism studies (including reservations about using the terms at all). His goal is ultimately not just simply to claim a space for Austrian on this scholarly map but also to use the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a case study challenging colonial-imperial studies by requiring a different toolset (32).

Ruthner's second chapter follows up on that challenge with a magisterial

review of the literature about scholarly uses of terms like *colonization*, *colonialism*, and *postcolonialism*, guided not only by theories of cultural studies but also approaches from the social sciences and history. His goal is to broaden the problematic of colonialism by Austria-Hungary's "inner colonies"; to do so, he bolsters his questioning with reference to a broad survey of Balkan studies on the *Befindlichkeit* of the Balkans, suggesting how research can only understand the empire by inquiring about the orientation and attitudes of the colonized—that colonialism needs to be conceived as a dialogue (50). His compendium of significant scholarship is philosophically nuanced and astute in asking how historical and cultural data can be reread, relations of self and others emerge in an internally divided ethnic region, and otherness might be represented.

The third chapter turns back to literary and cultural texts as functioning transculturally against their (post-)colonial backdrops. Ruthner again stretches traditional boundaries to exemplify how these texts can be illuminated using theoretical frameworks (from New Criticism through imageology) and what limits one encounters. U.S. scholars may be particularly interested in how imageology deals with national stereotyping, and the tenth section offers virtually a textbook on postcolonial analyses (103).

The book's second, longer section takes up "Fallstudien" from "Austrian literature," starting with a common research design addressing "colonial desire" in "contact zones," but then expands greatly on Susanne Zantop's initial contribution to German colonial studies and Ulrich Bach's work on colonial encounters. The three following chapters offer detailed postcolonial readings of Grillparzer, Peter Altenberg, and Kubin in dialogue with Herzmanovsky-Orlando. Grillparzer is interrogated as staging traumatic contacts between "civilized" Greeks and the "barbaric" inhabitants of Colchis, using Derrida and Spivak to unfold the work as addressing cultural differences within the Habsburg Empire and the ethnic hierarchies in them; Altenberg's "Ashantee" is read as a psychodiagnosis of Altenberg's own postcolonial encounter with the "Aschanti-Neger" exhibited in the zoo in the Vienna Prater (1896). Alfred Kubin's only novel, *Die andere Seite* (1908/09), is addressed as satire on the fall of the Habsburg empire in colonial central Asia.

Ruthner's third section brings in more varieties of postcolonial readings, this time working out from the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina to challenge theory. After asking about "k.u.k. Ersatzkolonialismus?" and reviewing the various arguments about Habsburg as a colonial power, Ruthner adduces

historical archives and textual corpora that preserve images of Bosnia-Herzegovina at moments of historical stress—as responding culturally to three “occupations” of Bosnia’s culture. Of particular note are his sections on “Volkgruppen’ und ihre Benennungen” (270) and “Architektur der Unterschiede” (287), which show how ethnic difference is constructed in official and public minds. A significant model for dealing with nonliterary texts is also provided by his engagement with the *Kronprinzenwerk*, an important national survey (301).

His conclusion returns to the question of Habsburg’s “Dark Continent,” tying the individual case studies to their implication as paradigms for cultural studies research on contact zones. His *Ausblicke* chart courses into the future, asking us to differentiate postcolonial and postimperial cultural contexts and to shift attention from overseas to internal colonies like Ireland. The volume’s extensive bibliography is organized by areas, making it not only a bibliography of record for scholarly work but also a critical resource for graduate teaching that includes but is not limited to Anglo-American scholarship.

Habsburgs “Dark Continent” charts how postcolonial studies (and Central European studies) might move into a new era. It should be translated into English as a model of how to assemble data and analyze both nonfiction and literature in historically and culturally responsible ways, questioning imperial power and colonial oppression but illuminating networks of relations as opposed to oppression alone. It leaves its predecessors in the dust and should be read not only by Austrianists and Germanists but also by anyone in cultural studies—an example of how scholarship and research design should meet.

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Hans-Harald Müller, ed., *Otmar Schissel von Fleschenberg–Bernhard Seuffert: Ein ungewöhnlicher Gelehrtenbriefwechsel aus der Germanistik am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Germanistische Reihe 89. Innsbruck: Innsbruck UP, 2018. 128 pp.

Some review copies are like foundlings: They show up on one’s doorstep, orphaned, unclaimed, unwanted, begging to be taken in by someone willing to review them. There is a certain risk involved in accepting responsibility for such a foundling. All the more so when one’s training is in political theory and

the book in question is an “ungewöhnlicher Gelehrtenbriefwechsel” between two long-dead *Germanisten*, taking up questions of academic literary theory. But even such an unprepossessing foundling as this needs someone to love and review it, so I shall do my best to do justice to this one—a volume that proved, in fact, more interesting than I might have anticipated.

The readership for this volume is likely to be small, consisting primarily of specialists in literary theory and interpretation and historians of German and Austrian academic institutions. It contains a relatively brief correspondence, covering a period from 1907 to 1924, between Otmar Schissel von Fleschenberg, who after early training in *Germanistik* would eventually go on to work primarily on late antiquity and Byzantine studies, and one of his professors, Bernhard Seuffert, an influential *Germanist* during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, known especially for his work on Christoph Martin Wieland. The vast bulk of the correspondence is from the younger Schissel; of the ninety-seven items included, fully eighty-seven are from his pen, while only ten items (typically also of less substantive interest) stem from Seuffert.

The chief interest of the volume—helpfully situated and explained in an introduction and afterword by the book’s editor, Hans-Harald Müller—lies in Schissel’s efforts to develop a new form of literary interpretation focused solely on a work’s internal stylistic and rhetorical qualities, what he calls a “Literaturtheorie” as distinguished from a “Literaturgeschichte.” (For the distinction, see especially letter 28 in the collection; along with this letter, the most important for tracing Schissel’s theoretical development are 13, 14, 17, 30, 31, 35, 41, 45, and 88.) The former he describes as “synthetisch” and “analytisch”; the latter is “historisch-romantisch,” “genetisch,” or sometimes simply “dilettantisch.” Schissel’s goal is to analyze a work solely in terms of its formal qualities, drawing heavily on concepts from classical rhetoric, and in this way to develop a science of literary interpretation that applies to any work, regardless of its origins in time and place. In a passage crediting Seuffert for having helped set him on this path, Schissel gives an especially clear statement of his objectives:

Sie waren es ja doch, der meinem antiken denken, das sich vom neuplatonisch-romantischen anderer fachgenossen unbefriedigt fühlte, das ihm gemäße arbeitsgebiet erschloss, der mich ein kunstwerk als in sich vollendetes product verstehen und untersuchen

lehrte, eine scheinbar selbstverständliche forderung, dass man ein kunstwerk als solches und nicht als historisches detail in einer großen kette kultureller erscheinungen betrachte, um ihm gerecht zu werden; dass man auf die erkenntnis der inneren, seine ästhetische wirksamkeit hauptsächlich bedingenden form das hauptaugenmerk lenke und nicht auf die geschichte des zufälligen stoffes. (Letter 17, p. 38)

As Müller points out in his afterword, this goal is noteworthy for its anticipation of *werkimmanente* interpretive methodologies that would gain prominence only several decades later, in the mid-twentieth century.

Most of the interpretive theorizing in this series of letters occurs in its first half, in letters written between roughly 1909 and early 1914. After that, the focus shifts to a pair of somewhat different topics that are probably of less general interest. First, the elder Seuffert had recruited Schissel to edit some volumes in the critical edition of Wieland's works that he was overseeing. A number of letters thus discuss problems associated with this editorial work, such as Schissel's efforts to locate reliable texts and relevant secondary literature as well as to be paid for his work. As they progress, and Schissel's own interests shift more markedly toward classical rhetoric, these problems increasingly have to do with his lack of interest in the project, which by the volume's close has become quite distant from his own research agenda (such that he ultimately abandons some of the volumes that had been assigned to him). This evolution of Schissel's research relates to the second topic that emerges: his efforts to win approval for modifications of his academic appointment, as he seeks to shift from *Germanistik* to rhetoric to comparative literature, presaging what would ultimately be the move to Byzantine studies. Müller's introduction nicely describes these efforts, drawing attention in particular to what at the time was an unconventionally interdisciplinary request to lecture on comparative literature.

As one expects in a volume of correspondence, certain peripheral themes occasionally attract attention and contribute to the book's appeal. Here, for example, we get a glimpse of the profoundly hierarchical and deferential—not to say flatteringly servile—character of student-faculty culture in the Austrian and German academy of a century ago. (In the past, I have offered my students, after graduation, the opportunity to call me by my first name; since reading this volume, however, I have decided that they should address me,

not only while undergraduates but in perpetuity, as *Ehrenwerte Magnifizenz*.) We also witness the evolution over time between a teacher and his former student, as it gradually grows into one of respectful collegiality. The contrast in temperaments on display here is particularly beguiling. Schissel is often polemical, fiery, antagonistic, and contemptuously dismissive of colleagues. Although we have relatively few documents from Seuffert, we sense in him a more moderate and restrained personality, exercising what appears to be a kind of patient mentorship of his former student, despite occasional provocations.

In summary, while the readership for this volume is likely to be modest, it provides an intriguing portrait of a neglected but influential figure in *Germanistik* from the early twentieth century, and it should be of value especially to those interested in the historical development of *germanistische* literary theory.

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Elana Shapira, ed., *Design Dialogue: Jews, Culture, and Viennese Modernism/ Design Dialog: Juden, Kultur, und Wiener Moderne*. Vienna: Böhlau, 2018. 475 pp.

In this ambitious and beautiful book, Elana Shapira and a team of scholars, architects, and curators seek to understand the relationship between Jews, Judaism, the city of Vienna, and design in the century before World War II. Divided into five sections (“Narrating Jewish Emancipation,” “A Jewish Renaissance—Opening Doors,” “Feminist Manifestos—Women Designing Emancipation,” “Designed and Un-Designed Identities,” and “‘In Dialogue’—Cultural Networks”), the essays address a diverse array of topics including public architecture and urban planning; interior design and decoration; schools, teachers, and networks of students and artists; and the newly imagined gendering (that is, the emergence of a feminist discourse) of symbols, spaces, and objects. In twenty-three insightful essays, the volume’s contributors engaged with the question of how nineteenth- and twentieth-century Viennese Jews went about fashioning a particular “modern” aesthetic that was unique to their identity and position as both recently emancipated urban migrants and members of an ancient religious/national tradition long

established in Europe but ultimately—perhaps, somewhat, quite a bit, “yes, but”—from “the east.”

The overarching intellectual project of this volume is argued for clearly and persuasively by Shapira in her introduction: “How can [a history of] design contribute to an understanding of Jews’ relationship to their social being and surrounding in Vienna, past and present?” (11). The essays in this volume, Shapira writes, set out to “explore the intricate relationships between buildings, designs, written text and people/networks and how they informed each other in the process of fashioning modern identities with concrete Jewish Viennese identifications” (23).

Which, of course, leads to the questions of who are “Jews” and what is “Jewishness” (as this volume understands them) in Viennese modernity? In many ways, the nature of these terms remains somewhat undertheorized throughout these essays, although the through lines among a majority of the authors centers on identity formation in relation to increasing civil emancipation. On the whole, contributors use the terms *Jew* and *Jewish* as they please, mostly without problem. Yet as Shapira describes in her introduction, Viennese Jewry in the century before World War II was immensely and continuously self-reflective. It was Jewish “choices regarding which architects and patrons to collaborate with as well as their active co-production in building, designing, and shaping a new Viennese cultural language that actually defined the Viennese Jews’ sense of belonging” (12), she writes. Throughout the volume, one gets the sense (correctly, I believe) that the authors all agree that “being Jewish” was something deeply valuable and genuinely important for almost everyone involved, from patrons to artists to activists. At a moment when it seemed (almost) possible to forsake the particularity of Jewishness for something like cosmopolitanism, many influential Jews in Vienna did no such thing. This volume demonstrates how design (in all its guises) allowed Jews to experiment with new expressions of Jewishness in a uniquely Viennese way.

So what, then, is “modernism”? In some cases, it seems to be merely a temporal arbiter (*modern* denoting from the early nineteenth century through the Anschluss). In other cases, it is philosophical (*modern* denoting Jewish self-awareness coupled with emancipation). In a different context, such an open-ended definition would pose a problem for the thematic coherence of the various essays, since one does not usually think of the Orientalist fantasy of the Leopoldstadt Temple (essay by Katharina Schoeller, 41–57), designed

by Ludwig Förster, the preeminent architect of the Vormärz, as part of the same “modernism” that motivated the refined simplicity of interiors by Ernst Plischke, one of the leading members of the New Building movement during the interwar period (essay by Eva B. Ottillinger, 413–26).

Here, however, the looseness works just fine, for it allows individual authors the historical space to investigate broader themes relating Jewishness to modernism and also makes for some very interesting juxtapositions. For example, a discussion of the color palette employed in Sigmund Freud’s office (essay by Eric Anderson, 161–75) is preceded by an exploration of the possibilities of creating a “Jewish national style” as part of the early Zionist movement (essay by Markus Kristan, 143–59). Or in another section, back-to-back essays highlight the important connections and gendered nuances of two influential (though quite distinct) Jewish teachers of design, Emilie Bach in interior design (essay by Rebecca Houze, 111–128) and Carl König in architecture (essay by Christopher Long, 129–42). Importantly, unlike other scholarly ventures of this nature, Shapira and her coauthors do not neglect religion in their discussions of Jewish Vienna, keeping built religious culture squarely in view.

In the end, any reviewer would be remiss for not mentioning the sheer beauty of the book itself. Shapira and the design team at Böhlau have created a marvelous object in and of itself. The volume has thick and glossy pages as well as a clarity to the photographs (both color and black-and-white) that I have rarely seen. They have also included what I think is a thoughtful and innovative two-color typeface—black for articles, burnt orange for titles, abstracts, and note numbers. And they have even included a bookmark ribbon. For scholarship about Judaism and design in Viennese modernism, this volume will become the essential reference.

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Michael Woll, *Hofmannsthals Der Schwierige und seine Interpreten*.

Göttingen: Wallstein, 2019. 436 pp.

Readers looking for an introduction to Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s *Der Schwierige* will not find it in Michael Woll’s volume. Woll’s book presupposes familiarity, and though its title seems to restrict focus to a single play, its range

of issues presents a comprehensive analysis of Hofmannsthal's work against the complete history of his critical reception. To verify Woll's range, specialists are invited to think of any topic in Hofmannsthal scholarship, and it will be covered here—the author's purported modernism versus his traditionalism (343–44), his aesthetic philosophy (345), his political views (throughout), the supposed naiveté of his "Ganzheitsvorstellungen" versus his acceptance of the "Ideal des Scheiterns" (32); his modes of adaptation and intertextuality (39–44); and so on.

Conceding that there can never be scientific objectivity in literary criticism, Woll functions as a mediator, reporting with balance instead of taking sides. On the topic of so-called "Artistenphilologie," for example (381–84), Woll notes that Hofmannsthal was one of those writers who was also a noted literary critic (like W. H. Auden or T. S. Eliot) and that this rather patrician attainment has opened him, like the others, to accusations of elitism or "Esoterik," whereas Hofmannsthal in fact placed his work in the service of a "Gemeinde." If Woll leans in any direction here, it is to bear out the thesis that Hofmannsthal repudiated hermeticism early on.

Woll allows the evidence to speak for itself. The book is clearly organized but demands attention. It is in exactly the density that the value of Woll's contribution emerges. He achieves nothing less than an all-encompassing approach that places in context the complete history of Hofmannsthal criticism. He examines four levels of comment and reflection: First, the "allegemeine Geschichte, die sich häufig als *politische Geschichte* zeigt" (12) (essential in pondering Hofmannsthal's political and social conservatism); the next, deeper level of "*Disziplinengeschichte*, die die Entwicklung von Germanistik und Literaturwissenschaft betrifft" (12); then "*Autorenforschung*," based not "auf der Konstruktion der Autorenidentität," but rather „ „auf der Beschreibung ihrer Eigenschaften" (12); finally, "die *Interpretationsgeschichte* eines einzelnen Werkes" (13). Respecting these layers eliminates the arbitrariness of unchecked individual interpretation. Woll's requisition of them all yields a discussion that for once can really be called *Wissenschaft*. If commentators balance their own readings against these levels, he argues, then they can "im Dialog mit der Wissenschaftsgeschichte und mit Hilfe der wiederholten Kritik der eigenen Position [. . .] der Hybris entgehen, die darin läge, mit der eigenen Interpretation ungebrochen als einzig richtige Stimme für 'das Werk' sprechen zu wollen" (15–16).

Not that Woll is presenting anything so neutral as a routine

Forschungsbericht with no insight of his own. He furnishes a full account of the scholarship but also advances a thesis of his own, testing it against the full range of previous discussion. In sum, Woll proposes that every work contains a voice articulating Hofmannsthal's own standpoint (in *Der Schwierige*, Hans Karl Bühl but not Helene Altenwyl) while avoiding the apodictic by negotiating polarities that force examination of any view in light of its opposite—the resolution of Helene as against Kari's vacillations or the insufferable cocksureness of Neuhoff contrasted with the title character's excessive lability. Compassing polarities can only yield irony, the stance that best expresses at least two things at once.

Woll lucidly articulates the nature of Hofmannsthal's universal irony here; think only of the way in which Lord Chandos decries the insufficiency of language in some of the most splendidly rhetorical and emotionally immediate prose in German. Woll does his thesis justice by including a chapter (Chapter 3) that could seem like a departure but that advances his effort to link individual reading to the critical history. After delineating his approach in Chapter 1 (11–29), he presents his own interpretation of *Der Schwierige* in Chapter 2 (31–76), testing its postulates against the comprehensive “Geschichte der Interpretation” in Chapter 4 (157–373).

Chapter 3 (“Gattungsreflexion in Perspektiven: Hofmannsthals Essays”) underpins Woll's insights by examining the deployment of irony through essays like “Die Ironie der Dinge” (334–37), the observations in *Ad me ipsum*, and above all a brilliant reading of *Ariadne auf Naxos* (125–47). Noting mainly the layers of irony in the libretto and Hofmannsthal's ideas about the nature and purpose of comedy, Woll cites the author's fleeting note in *Ad me ipsum* about the similarities between Kari Bühl and Lord Chandos to ground his findings in the author's own work against the backdrop of the critical history. It is that third, seemingly digressive chapter that ties Woll's work together, bridging the gap between his own reading (Chapter 2) and the larger context (Chapter 4).

Woll handles his fourth chapter with particular skill. He reviews the history of scholarship and commentary, including the feuds and the differing approaches, without ever forgetting that discussing these complex movements within the discipline is not an end in itself but needs to point back to the work being interpreted. While informing us on a subject as relatively narrow, for example, as why Richard Alewyn declined participation in the definitive critical edition (300–304), Woll never allows minutiae to obscure the overall

view. Again and again, he gets the proportions right between the small and the large, the detail and the whole. This ability is also manifest in his fifth chapter (“Reflexion: Zukunft der Autorenforschung”), which examines the critical tradition outside the German-speaking world but sensibly confines itself to major commentary in English and French. Here again, the representativeness of his particulars prevents sprawl. Woll’s book is in its range and clarity nothing less than a one-stop encyclopedia of insight into Hofmannsthal’s art and its reception.

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Costas Despiniadis, *The Anatomist of Power: Franz Kafka and the Critique of Authority*. Translated by Stelios Kapsomenos. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2019. 165 pp.

In this compelling study Costas Despiniadis focuses on Kafka’s affinity with anarchist concepts and thinkers such as Peter Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and Max Stirner, and he documents the author’s contacts with anarchists in Prague. An important aspect of the study is Kafka’s deep-seated aversion to power and authority in his life and his works. Emphasizing Kafka’s critique of power and its representative institutions, Despiniadis identifies reflections of anarchist theory in *The Castle*, *The Trial*, *Amerika*, *The Metamorphosis*, “In the Penal Colony,” and “The Burrow,” and he makes evident correlations between Kafka’s imagination process and the views held by anarchist authors such as Arthur Holitscher (*Amerika heute und morgen*), Otto Gross, Martin Buber, and Max Stirner.

In disagreement with mainstream Kafka research and psychoanalytical and metaphysical approaches in particular, Despiniadis applies the lens of critical anarchism to show the social and political aspects of Kafka’s work and interests. Scholars, he notes, tend to minimize or obscure these dimensions. Even after Canetti’s and Theweleit’s seminal studies on Kafka’s attitude toward power and authority, Kafka’s preoccupation with systemic power in different guises continues to be ignored. As a case in point, Despiniadis mentions the opposition to Klaus Wagenbach, who in his critical studies takes Kafka’s anarchist propensities seriously and examines them in depth.

The Anatomist of Power, tightly structured and thoroughly researched,

identifies anarchist patterns in conjunction with the anticapitalist and anti-authoritarian agenda that informs Kafka's narratives. Despiniadis highlights relevant statements in Kafka's writings and draws on Gustav Janouch's controversial *Conversations with Kafka*, among others, to document Kafka's attitude toward anarchism. In this and other cases Despiniadis engages with scholarly debates and makes transparent his reasons for relying on specific references and sources.

The study's theoretical parameters are set in the preface, followed by critical readings of Kafka's major prose works in light of early twentieth century society and politics. With his multidisciplinary approach Despiniadis uncovers ways in which Kafka positioned himself toward the constraints of power structures as a writer, a son, a citizen, and a lawyer. Despiniadis argues that Kafka envisioned coping mechanisms to resist and escape from the oppression and cooptation that threaten to crush the individual. Kafka, he maintains, illustrates the ultimate inescapability of the existing regimes of power and authority, but his featured protagonists attempt to safeguard their integrity by following their own reasoning and insights. By doing so, they come into conflict with systemic power, which, according to Despiniadis, Kafka configures in a dual manner as "not only structured pyramid-fashion, in a vertical hierarchy, but also linearly, in a segmentary way" (17). Chapter 1 explores seen and unseen dimensions of power within the totalitarian regimes of *The Castle* and *The Trial*. The former enacts power through administrative, the latter through judicial structures. Chapter 2 highlights the anticapitalist subtext of *Amerika*. The novel fragment culminates in an ambivalent utopia, the *Naturtheater*, that combines Kafka's dream of a peaceful collectivist life in Palestine and his pessimism derived from his realistic assessment of power politics. In his reading of *The Metamorphosis* in Chapter 3, Despiniadis explores Kafka's critique of patriarchy and the father as the ultimate authority within oppressive family structures. By including Friedrich Engels's seminal treatise *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884) Despiniadis might have strengthened this analysis since the authors he references were influenced by Engels's findings.

The perceptive analyses of *In the Penal Colony* in Chapter 4 and *The Burrow* interpreted as a deepening of the subversive *Castle* narrative in Chapter 5 include historical and biographical information and lead seamlessly into Chapter 6 and the discussion of Kafka's anarchist connections. Chapter 7 reviews earlier findings in the context of a wider historical panorama,

including fascism and National Socialism. The death of Milena Jesenská in the Nazi concentration camp Ravensbrück and Dora Diamant's escape to the Soviet Union and eventually England exemplify the far-reaching repercussions totalitarian politics had for Kafka's friends and the fate of his manuscripts.

Despiniadis's lucid and articulate study is sure to captivate readers in search of answers to the questions that traditional Kafka scholarship has left unaddressed. Contradicting the vast majority of Kafka interpretations, *The Anatomist of Power* argues that Kafka's nonconformist protagonists—Samsa, K., and Josef K.—are justified in their uncompromising opposition to the power structures and authority figures they encounter. Rejecting the herd mentality displayed and endorsed by the minor characters, Kafka's protagonists defy majority opinion. This opposition, Despiniadis argues, is justified, which makes the struggle for autonomy a heroic fight. Despiniadis dismisses notions of personal failure or guilt, which many scholars attribute to the Kafkaen hero, but instead validates the hero's perception that he is entrapped in a corrupt system which deprives him of free choice.

Without suggesting that this critical approach is the only right one, Despiniadis provides a key to many of the problems Kafka research has left unresolved. Clearly, *The Anatomist of Power: Franz Kafka and the Critique of Authority* leads into uncharted territory and sets a high bar for future Kafka scholarship.

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Kata Gellen, *Kafka and Noise: The Discovery of Cinematic Sound in Literary Modernism*. Northwestern UP, 2019. 250 pp.

Kafka's writings resound with odd sounds, from the inhuman squeaks in Gregor Samsa's voice to the mysterious noise in "The Burrow." Only, as literature, these texts cannot actually *resound* at all. This is Kata Gellen's point of departure for her compelling book *Kafka and Noise*, which investigates the "sounds" of Kafka's texts alongside the "sounds" of silent film in order to show that "nonsounding media can reveal aspects of sonic modernity that are unavailable to sounding media" (33).

Gellen knows she is not the first scholar to listen for Kafka's strange noi-

ses (34). As becomes clear in the first chapter, her methodological innovation involves her focus on film. After considering the early sketch “Great Noise” to exemplify her premise that “noise, a phenomenon with no apparent function, meaning, or value, presents a productive obstacle to modernist literary narration” (4–5), Gellen spends much of the chapter reading the opening of “The Metamorphosis” alongside the “silent” film *The Artist* (Michael Hazanavicius, 2011), focusing on both pieces’ use of the “acoustic closeup” (19). By considering *The Metamorphosis* with a tool derived from Balázs film theory, Gellen is able to highlight the way sounds expand time around the moment of awakening and develop new insights into Gregor’s transformation. She does not suggest that Kafka himself conceived of this as an acoustic closeup, though. What sets Gellen’s work apart from other writings on Kafka and film, such as Peter-André Alt’s *Kafka und der Film* and Anna Brabandt’s *Franz Kafka und der Stummfilm*, is that Gellen understands silent film not merely as an influence on Kafka’s writing but also sees both film and Kafka’s works as indices of changing modernist perceptions around sound (83–84). In other words, Gellen is aware that Kafka’s “literary engagement with sound was certainly influenced by his experience of its technological mediation,” but she is primarily interested in a longer evolution of discourses around sound and noise, including earlier technologies that shaped both Kafka’s and film’s imagination of sound (29).

The second chapter takes up the inability of literature or silent film to be heard, considering not only “Josefine the Singer” and the impossibility of representing Josefine’s singing, but also “The Knock at the Courtyard Gate,” in which it cannot be said whether a character actually knocked or simply feigned knocking, and “The Silence of the Sirens,” in which the reader finally cannot know whether the sirens actually sang for Odysseus. These latter texts draw attention to “the basic instability of representing sound in silent media,” for the reader is invited to imagine sounds which may or may not have ever been audible (83). In the third chapter, the focus shifts to sounds that *are* heard, as Gellen considers the anxieties around the advent of sound film together with the role of recitation in Kafka’s works, looking at the imagined recitation in “Report for an Academy” and at its near opposite, the “Speech on the Yiddish Language,” a text “primarily spoken and only secondarily written” (137).

The sounds of the second and third chapter—knocking, singing, reciting—are notably not sounds generally considered “noise,” and a certain

ambivalence around this term is one of the few weaknesses of this otherwise strong book. The word *noise* seems sometimes to be used only in the sense of “a noise,” that is, any sound, while at other times it appears as “unwanted sounds, acoustic refuse” (187). Missing in Gellen’s wide-ranging bibliography are many of the important texts on noise—we do not find Douglas Kahn or David Nowak or even a sidelong glance at Jacques Attali. This is unsurprising insofar as Gellen has explicitly deselected sound studies for developing her theoretical approach, opting instead to draw on the critical vocabulary of film theory (7, 28). While this choice may provide fresh insights—and Gellen is certainly correct that sound studies has paid too little attention to the “sounds” of literature—it also creates an artificial distance, labeling theorists who are already part of the sound studies discourse, like Michel Chion, as film scholars only.

Her elected outsider status denies Gellen use of a number of helpful texts which might contextualize and enrich the definition of noise she finally does provide in her outstanding fourth chapter. Considering “The Burrow” and “Investigations of a Dog,” two stories narrated by animals, she suggests: “Noise is the name humans give to sounds that can be heard but have no meaning or value in our Umwelt” (194). Both stories feature sounds appearing to originate outside the diegesis of the story, bringing Gellen to the striking idea that noise is not just about missing value in one *Umwelt*, but rather the “name for sounds that can cross over from one Umwelt to another” (195), for the “dissonance between Umwelten” (197). She finally arrives at the suggestion that “noise is associated with thresholds” (197); by this she means not only the narrative thresholds in the fourth chapter but indeed all sorts of thresholds in every chapter. This comes close to a sweeping redefinition of noise, since the threshold-transgressing “noises” in most of the chapters are not what we would normally think of as noises at all, and Gellen’s suggestion that noises “do not dissolve meaning; rather, they reveal new horizons for its discovery,” would apply to far more types of sound than only noise (197).

With its many insightful readings, Gellen’s book will be of interest to film scholars and indispensable to Kafka scholars. Despite the awkwardness of its self-imposed relationship to the field, the core arguments make this above all a fine example of sound studies scholarship, and it will be of great value to anyone working in the field.

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Marcel Krings, *Franz Kafka: Beschreibung eines Kampfes und Betrachtung: Frühwerk—Freiheit—Literatur*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2018. 220 pp.

The earliest works of Franz Kafka remain elusive; they are sometimes identified as incomplete and amateurish. However, Marcel Krings's recent work of scholarship, *Franz Kafka: Beschreibung eines Kampfes und Betrachtung: Frühwerk—Freiheit—Literatur* offers the reader a solid interpretation of the young Kafka's writings.

Krings claims at the beginning of his work that he aims to interpret the poetics of Kafka's *Beschreibung eines Kampfes* and first short story collection, *Betrachtung* (Contemplation) hermeneutically and with that all at once to simultaneously chart an unknown part of Kafka and rehabilitate the unloved early work. Krings correctly implies that Kafka's early works more typically have been swept under the rug in their reception, sometimes being dismissed as inexperienced (most notably by John Updike in his introduction to Kafka's *Complete Stories*). By giving his readers a fully fleshed out reading of these stories within their context and as precursors to Kafka's more well-known and celebrated works, Krings offers an original take to Kafka studies in general. In order to establish a connection between the posthumously published *Beschreibung eines Kampfes* and the collection of short stories, Krings maintains that

[d]er Kampf, von welchem die *Beschreibung* handelt, ist also derjenige zwischen Freiheit und Natur oder Geist und Physis. Er berichtet vom ungelösten Problem, dass Menschen die Stimme der Freiheit zwar vernehmen, aber lieber in den Niedrungen des Empirischen blieben, als sich selbst radikal zu rechtfertigen. (43)

The complex narrative structure, major transitions, and overall layering of narrative that occur within *Beschreibung eines Kampfes* afford a broad-reaching interpretation of this text as the struggle between nature and freedom that is actually quite reasonable because the story itself contains both realistic and fantastic elements that do not completely agree with one another. The text's distancing from that which is empirical also seems apropos, given the stories' place historically at the end of the height of literary realism in the early twentieth century. Krings links *Beschreibung eines Kampfes* to *Betrachtung* by asserting that the polemical tension between the spiritual and the physical

identified in the former as the act of movement as the act of movement in the latter. Following this claim, Krings devotes a chapter to each of the short stories featured in *Betrachtung*, reading the ways in which the tension between the spiritual and the physical play out in each text. Krings's reading of each short story thoroughly connects the collection published by Rotwahl Verlag to the short story written in two different drafts, which remained mostly unpublished (with the exceptions of some fragments published in the literary magazine *Hyperion* and in *Betrachtung*) in Kafka's lifetime.

Perhaps of most interest to scholars in Austrian studies in particular are his readings of the geographical specificity of *Beschreibung eines Kampfes* in tandem with the tension developed between the spiritual and physical, especially where the physical is linked to empiricism, since the text enjoys both empirical and fantastic settings. Krings observes, "Das setting ist keineswegs zufällig. Es reflektiert die Prager Topographie des Spaziergangs aus der Rahmenhandlung [...] und macht darauf aufmerksam, dass Literatur zunächst ein empirisches Substrat enthält" (50). Setting "Beschreibung eines Kampfes" within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and perhaps most particularly in Prague, grounds Kafka's story in the physical/ empirical world, with which presumptive readers of the story would be familiar (bearing in mind that *Beschreibung eines Kampfes* had a substantially limited readership before Kafka's death in 1924). Krings places emphasis on the "walk" (*Spaziergang*) into and out of Laurenziberg within *Beschreibung eines Kampfes* because topographical spaces of walking recur as a theme within several of the stories in *Betrachtung*, such as "Kinder auf der Landstraße," "Der plötzliche Spaziergang," "Der Ausflug ins Gebirge," "Der Nachhauseweg," "Die Vorüberlaufenden," and "Zum Nachdenken für Herrenreiter." Kafka wrote these stories at a time when, as mentioned before, literary realism was falling out of fashion and experimentations in form were taking over the reins of literary style. The one fault I identify with this book is the author's failure to recognize Kafka's works within their literary contexts. Further scholarship could bring Krings's analysis of the tension between the empirical and fantastical as philosophical categories in line with the literary context of *Beschreibung eines Kampfes* and *Betrachtung*, especially as these two begin to distance themselves from literary realism.

Krings's study of Franz Kafka's *Beschreibung eines Kampfes* and *Betrachtung* offers readers an interpretation of Kafka's early works that identifies a key tension between the spiritual and physical. By bringing this tension to the

attention of its readers, this book welcomes further scholarship on Kafka and Austrian studies by expounding on the degree to which the themes developed in his early works feature as such in his later works, as well as the way “Austro-Hungarian” settings are designed to function as empirical spaces.

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Jason Crouthamel, Michael Geheran, Tim Grady, Julia Barbara Köhne, eds., *Beyond Inclusion and Exclusion: Jewish Experiences of the First World War in Central Europe*. New York: Berghahn, 2019. 407 pp.

In November 2014, at the start of a long line of scholarly events commemorating the centennial of the First World War, the Center for Jewish History in New York City hosted a conference; the resulting volume, *World War I and the Jews: Conflict and Transformation in Europe, the Middle East, and America* (Oxford UP, 2017) was, as its editors, Jonathan Karp and Marsha L. Rozenblit stated, “one of the first academic works devoted expressly to the subject of World War I and the Jews.” (17) *Beyond Inclusion and Exclusion; Jewish Experiences of the First World War in Central Europe* continues this exploration with a tighter scope but deeper reach.

Three of the volume’s four editors have contributed important monographs to the history of World War I in Germany, on topics ranging from the military, gender, and sexuality to memory and trauma, and the volume offers an even more wide-ranging survey of German Jewish war experiences. The four sections of the collection focus on Jews in the military, contested identities in the settings of front and home front, and two papers each on the representation of the war experience in film and literature and on postwar narratives, both in psychological discourse and nationalist war literature. Together, the articles offer an admirable range of disciplinary and methodological approaches with the aim of highlighting Jewish experiences and responses to anti-Semitism and introducing new sources that add nuance to Jewish and German narratives in an effort to inform but also reflect the subtle shifts in Jewish-German relationships.

Any claim of a lack of studies centered on Jews and World War I should be understood in relative terms, in comparison to the still-growing scholarship on what came after—and what made most scholars see the First World

War as merely a prequel to—the Shoah. The significance of the war was never questioned by scholars or in popular memory; it was a paramount historical event that fundamentally affected the lives of European Jews and Jewish communities. Among the most significant of the often contradictory changes the war ushered in, it destroyed the empires the majority of Jews lived in but gave them, in the Balfour Declaration, the right to self-determination, at least in principle. Through military service and, for women, service on the home front, the war offered Jewish citizens the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to the state and earn full acceptance; at the same time, by displacement on a massive scale and rising anti-Semitism, it brought their identity and belonging into question.

Scholarship from the 1960s until quite recently tended to approach German Jewish experiences during the First World War and in the postwar period with this hindsight understanding, and it described Jewish-German relations in the binaries of assimilation/anti-Semitism, exclusion/inclusion. Scholars highlighted the role of the 1916 *Judenanzählung* initiated by the Prussian War Ministry as the decisive moment in the breakdown of these relations, leading to toxic anti-Semitism, and, eventually, the Holocaust. A stellar lineup of recent studies by, among others, Marsha Rozenblit, Derek Penslar, Tim Grady, and David Fine, presented a more nuanced, fluid, and complicated view of identity and Jewish experiences as well as Jewish and non-Jewish responses to and during the war, offering major corrections to this long-reigning narrative. The volume takes a firm position on the revisionist side of this debate, and most of the chapters argue that anti-Semitism was not the decisive factor in the everyday front and home front experience of German Jews. Anchoring the volume, Jason Crouthamel's chapter on Jewish and non-Jewish front soldiers supports this view by presenting their experience as a shared one and argues for an interpretation of the trends of wartime Jewish–non-Jewish relations within its own context—and with more emphasis on the testimonies of individual, ordinary Jews and non-Jews.

Recent histories of World War I have broadened their scope to include countries of Europe previously thought of as irrelevant peripheries, but the history of Jews and the First World War seems to be resistant to this trend. German and German-speaking Austrian Jewish experiences are still the mainstay of historical scholarship, and this volume is no exception, with its focus firmly on Imperial Germany. Christine Krüger's chapter on German and French Jews is the only explicitly comparative chapter of the volume,

and Tamara Sheer's study on Habsburg Jews in the Imperial Army, based on unpublished, German-language memoirs, stands out as the only one dedicated entirely to Austrian Jews. The references to Austrian or Habsburg Jews in this and other chapters fail to mention the fact that Habsburg Jews serving in the Imperial Army left behind memoirs and correspondence in languages other than German or that the Austrian Jewish war experience was not as monolithic as these references would suggest. Sheer's conclusion about the solidifying of anti-Jewish stereotypes in the Habsburg Army toward the end of the war also hints at the unexplored differences between the German and Austrian cases as it seems to go counter to the volume's overall argument—and, incidentally, echo the Hungarian case.

All in all, the collection succeeds in its primary aim, to present fresh and innovative perspectives on (mainly) German Jewish wartime experiences and introduce newly discovered sources and analytical tools that highlight their diversity, in the editors' words, "along gender, political, geographic, social, and subjective lines" (2). Perhaps even more importantly, as Derek Penslar puts it in his thoughtful afterword, it represents an important contribution towards a "unified field of modern German and Jewish history" (397).

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Amanda Baghdassarians, *Franz Werfels andere Moderne: Musikästhetische und kunstsoziologische Konzepte in Franz Werfels Roman "Verdi. Roman der Oper."* Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2019. 278 pp.

Despite its sixteen-word earful of a title, this study, based on the author's doctoral dissertation in German Studies at the University of Zurich, is most helpful. Concentrating on Werfel's contemporary theoretical sources of music criticism that, in part, inspired him to write his first novel, *Verdi: Roman der Oper* (1924), Baghdassarians divides her book into four telling chapter-sections ranging from thirty-five to seventy pages. These deal respectively with the theories of the post-World War I musical sociologist Paul Bekker, the anti-Wagnerian writings and works of such composer-critics as Ferruccio Busoni and Kurt Weill, and a close discussion of the dominant role of Verdi as the eponymous protagonist of the novel itself, before concluding with a

discussion of the thematic relationship between this first novel and Werfel's later prose fiction.

The first chapter, properly titled "Paul Bekkers Musiksoziologie," is informed by a discussion of the importance of Paul Bekker's anti-Wagnerian criticism in the early 1920s. Baghdassarians pinpoints Werfel's own interest in Bekker's musical-sociological theories as an inspiration for the novelist's characterization of Verdi and the Italian composer's inability to understand either Wagner's music or his coterie of followers, who view him as a quasi-religious, trans-national prophet figure. Her arguments throughout this forty-five-page portion are most convincing, and they provide Baghdassarians' greatest contribution to recent Werfel secondary criticism. According to the author, it was Bekker's sociological view of music of the past and of the present that fascinated Werfel in the early 1920s. Formulated as they were during the sociopolitical fragmentation after World War I, Bekker's writings, which championed the grounding of past and present great composers in their own political societies, inspired Werfel in shaping his contrast between Verdi and Fischböck throughout the novel. Werfel's depiction of the "music for music's sake" compositions of Fischböck, devoid of any societal context, stand in marked contradistinction to Verdi's grounded politically social stance as reflected in his operas.

The second chapter, properly an extension of the discussion of Bekker's writings, emphasizes such anti-Wagnerian composer-writers as Busoni and Weill as contemporary allies of Bekker and underscores Werfel's creative admiration of these composers. As opponents of Wagnerian illusionistic staged opera, both Busoni and Weill sought to anchor their contemporary audiences' experience in the actual action of what is taking place on the operatic stage. Baghdassarians fittingly brings into her discussion Werfel's 1920 essay "Dramaturgie und Deutung des Zauberspiels Spiegelmensch," in which the essayist roundly attacks Wagner's illusionistic view of the stage. According to Werfel, it is the lack of humor and the starched exclusion of irony that informs Wagner's pseudo-religious view of the stage. Baghdassarians wisely concludes the chapter with a discussion of Werfel's mid-1920s German translations of three of Verdi's mid-period operas, *La Forza del Destino*, *Simon Boccanegra*, and *Don Carlos* and explains how their staging boosted the major Verdi revival during the Weimar Republic.

Baghdassarians's third chapter, a close textual interpretation of the novel itself, is literally at the heart of her study. That it is close to double the length of

each of the other three chapters is a key to the critic's penetrating interpretation of Werfel's *Verdi*. Regarding the novel as a series of duets between Verdi and the novel's other key characters works convincingly. In particular, her treatment of Verdi's extended conversations with the centenarian Senator, Fischböck, the singer Mario, and Dario, the old porter at the opera house, portray Verdi as a committed composer eager to engage others during his incognito two-month stay in Venice during the winter of 1882/83. Baghdassarians's interpretation is so telling that the reader wants even more in her discussion of Verdi's non-engagement with Richard Wagner—the German composer in Werfel's fictive account whom Verdi sporadically sees but does not engage. In sum, however, the critic's discussion of Verdi's ten-year dry spell and his ensuing ability after his Venetian stay to return to composing and finally create his ironized masterpiece *Falstaff* is most convincingly interpreted. Also, it must be added that the critic's interpretation of the role that Monteverdi's music plays in the novel to invoke the actual creator of Italian opera, in the early Baroque musical period, is well integrated into her discussion as a whole.

If this study goes into a second printing, this densely created study deserves an index at the end of the book whereby scholars may cross-reference the many comparative points that Baghdassarians makes throughout her study. The critic should be encouraged to incorporate fewer of those lengthy direct citations, many of them remnants from her thesis, that permeate the book. The decrease in these direct citations would let the writer inject her own interpretative viewpoints. And finally, and most importantly, more attention should be directed by the critic in elaborating on her important interpretation of Wagner as antagonist in the novel. At no point does Baghdassarians cite Peter Conrad's the important 2011 study *Verdi and/or Wagner* in which the Britain-based scholar talks in detail about the significance of Verdi in the creative output of Werfel. The omission of the Conrad book should be corrected.

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Arturo Larcati and Klemens Renolder, eds., "*Am liebsten wäre mir Rom!*": *Stefan Zweig und Italien*. Schriftenreihe des Stefan Zweig Zentrum Salzburg 9. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2019. 216 pp.

As well known as Stefan Zweig is in the German-speaking world, little is

known about his love and admiration for Italian culture. Italy was a place in which he saw European culture rooted, as a place that cultivated and expressed beauty in both prose and poetry. Indeed, it is interesting to note that Italy became Zweig's "Wahlheimat" of sorts, in that during the course of his relatively short life, he came into contact with many Italian artists and intellectuals who further spurred his love for and interest in the country. It comes as little surprise as well that Zweig chose Rome to be his city of exile in 1934, the year he departed Salzburg.

The collection of essays in this volume is the result of a Stefan Zweig symposium that took place in Meran, South Tyrol, in 2011. It documents the Italian side of Zweig culturally, linguistically, politically, and personally. The purpose of the collection is to "discover" Zweig's admiration for Italy, as stated in the foreword of the work, "Zweigs Verhältnis zu Italien ist noch zu entdecken" (7). This "Entdeckung des Südens" developed during the course of several phases. As Arturo Larcari emphasizes in his essay *Stefan Zweigs heimliche Liebe zur italienischen Literatur*, "Mit keiner anderen Literatur, wenn man von der französischen absieht, hat sich Stefan Zweig so intensiv und kontinuierlich beschäftigt wie mit der italienischen" (31). Larcari explains Zweig's interests in the classicists, his contemporaries, and the writers of the younger generation, respectively, Dante Alighieri, Gabriele D'Annunzio, and Ignazio Silone. Larcari's contribution to this volume provides a good discussion of Zweig's intellectual activities in Italy during Mussolini's dictatorship and Zweig's own fascination with Silone, who operated as a strict anti-Mussolini activist, as evidenced in his novels. The theme flows further in the essay "Briefe über den italienischen Faschismus: Rainer Maria Rilke und Stefan Zweig" by Walter Busch und Isolde Schiffermüller. It is noted how little Zweig and Rilke actually wrote about Italian fascism and how both remained politically unmotivated by the political actions surrounding them, mostly out of fear for their own safety.

Indeed, Zweig's own dramas and comedies enjoyed much more popularity during his lifetime than they do today. His dramas are seldom seen on the stage; his comedies remain virtually unknown since his death. In fact, he also translated Luigi Pirandello's play *Non si sa come* as *Man weiß nicht wie*, which was requested of Zweig by Pirandello. This translation is discussed thoroughly by Fausto de Michele in his article "Etappen einer Rezeptionsgeschichte: Stefan Zweig übersetzt Luigi Pirandello." In this article, de Michele discusses the original source work for this play and how

the play came to be. The process of the translation of the play is discussed in detail. In addition, de Michele provides attentive analysis of the translation, which differs wildly from the original Italian-language play. Because of the precarious political situation, Zweig kept his relationship with Pirandello completely professional. However thrilled he was by the opportunity to translate Pirandello's work, the political situation hindered Zweig's desire to participate in a theater congress organized by Pirandello, for fear of angering fascist authorities. De Michele provides an excellent description of this entire translation dilemma, something that remains virtually unknown about Zweig's professional life.

In the contribution "Strategieen der Komik in *Volpone* und *Die Schweigsame Frau*: Stefan Zweig und die *Commedia dell'arte*," Monika Meister provides a discussion of Zweig's talent as a writer of comedy. Although his play *Volpone* is rarely seen on the stage, Zweig remains revered as a writer who reestablished the Italian tradition of *Commedia dell'arte* and opera buffa. Meister discusses Zweig's use of both English and Italian theatrical models and the mixture he used to produce highly unusual representations on the stage, especially in his work *Die schweigsame Frau*. Elmar Lochar continues with a more modern approach in analyzing Zweig's Italian connection by concentrating on *Die Welt von Gestern* and Zweig's essay "Der europäische Gedanke in seiner historischen Entwicklung." He analyzes Italian history and culture, discussing their relevance in premodern and modern European performances. Lochar posits that Zweig played a dangerous game when writing these works in that he was not totally aware of the danger expanding in fascist Europe.

Zweig's translations from Italian and his comedic plays are relatively little known and this particular volume brings forth a new facet of Zweig's extensive body of work. Some of Zweig's prose has even been rewritten for celluloid and has enjoyed great success. In his contribution to this collection, Eugenio Spedicato analyzes Roberto Rossellini's film *La paura* (1954), which was based on Zweig's novella *Angst*. Spedicato analyzes Rossellini's use of Zweig's work by differentiating five subtexts in the novella and comparing them with their respective sequences in the film. Indeed, the reader of Spedicato's contribution can gain a much better understanding of how an Italian director of Rossellini's caliber used the historical context of Zweig's work and interpreted it for an Italian film audience.

In conclusion, this collection reveals a new facet of one of the German

language's most prolific writers. It would serve well to be read by fans of the writer as well as scholars who are not familiar with Zweig's fascination for one of the most culturally powerful European nations.

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Frank-Peter Hansen, *Die Wittgenstein-Dekomposition 2*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2019. 158 S.

Das vorliegende Buch setzt Hansens *Wittgenstein-Dekomposition* (2018) fort. Hierbei handelte es sich um den zuweilen treffsicheren, oft aber auch plakativ polemischen Versuch, Wittgenstein zu entzaubern, da die Spezialisten allesamt befangene Verehrer wären, die übersähen, dass dieser Denker oft blanke Unlogik verbreitet hätte.

Schon jenes Buch begann mit erheblicher Bereitschaft zum Missverständnis, wo man immerhin auch Subtilitäten heraushören könnte, um dieses gegenläufige Vorurteil zu stützen. Neben Wittgensteins Philosophie wurden dabei auch ganze Problemkomplexe versimpelt, etwa das Bild als eine "der Differenzierung entbehrende einfache Repräsentationsform", als wäre das nicht der unbegründete, bloß quasi-ontologisch vorgetragene Vorbehalt Hansens gegen das Bild als gleichwohl semiotisch komplexe Struktur.

In jenem ersten Band versah Hansen den Text vielleicht aufgrund dieser Fragwürdigkeiten mit der Autorfiktion, er sei nur der Herausgeber—das ändert sich im zweiten Band, der ansonsten aber das Pointierte wie auch das dadurch, dass der Wille zur Pointe zuweilen alles überlagert, Plump-Unzutreffende fortsetzt. Geändert hat sich, dass es nun um die *Philosophischen Untersuchungen* geht, während im ersten Band Wittgensteins *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* diskutiert wurde, sonst aber wenig: Wieder ist da der Vorwurf, die Wittgenstein-Sekundärliteratur böte fast nur "Idolatrie", die "per se denkfeindlich" (10) sei, weshalb Wittgensteins "geistige Höhenflüge" (10) nun geradezu erstmals überprüft würden. Und da seien die Resultate Wittgensteins bescheiden, zu "mehr als 'philosophische(n) Bemerkungen' [...] hat es nicht gereicht" (10).

Moniert wird Wittgensteins Neigung zum Skizzenhaften wie zur Metapher. "In einer sich [...] für wissenschaftlich ausgehenden Schrift haben derlei begriffslose Umschreibungen nichts verloren" (12), urteilt Hansen,

wobei er unterschlägt, inwiefern sich diese Schriften für wissenschaftlich ausgeben, immerhin ist die Gleichsetzung von Philosophie und einem bestimmten Wissenschaftsbegriff durch ihn geschehen und wohl nicht nur mir nicht bekannt, inwiefern Schriften sich als etwas ausgeben, wenn nicht metaphorisch bzw., da es um den Verfasser geht, metonymisch. Auch ist unklar, wie eine *unmetaphorische* Sprache aussähe, kurzum, Hansen setzt seine Vorurteile fort, die in sich unstimmig sind und zu Wittgenstein in höchstens loser Verbindung stehen.

Aber er setzt auch die klugen Einwände fort, es ist erstaunlich, wie eitler Unsinn neben klugen Invektiven hier steht. Beispielsweise fragt Hansen zu den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen*, inwiefern jedes “Wort [. . .] eine Bedeutung” haben könne, die aber “dem jeweiligen ‘Wort zugeordnet’” (19) sei. Bringt nicht das Wort im ersten Fall die Bedeutung dessen, was es nicht nur bezeichnet, während im zweiten das Signifikat bloß der Zuordnung eines Signifikanten harrt?

Ein anderes Beispiel ist Wittgensteins Behauptung, es sei *common sense*, von Allem oder dem Ganzen sprechen zu wollen, was indes, so Hansen, allenfalls für “religiöse Sinnsucher” gelte: “Wittgenstein kreiert hier einen Nonsens und unterstellt, dass dieser von ihm aus der Taufe gehobene Nonsens der allgemein im Gebrauch befindliche Nonsens sei” (23). Das ist so nicht richtig, wenn man sich die Sprachspiele näher ansieht, denen man sich anzugleichen hat, um effektiv wie effizient zu sprechen, die aber kein Ganzes bemühen—es sei denn *ex negativo*. Dagegen sei “Wittgenstein auf der geistigen Stufe eines vorschulischen Steppkes” (24), der aber jedenfalls für den Pimpf, der Hansen in seiner eigenen Diktion dann wäre, zu schwierig argumentiert.

Daneben steht dann wieder die genaue Bemerkung, dass Metasprachen das zum Teil leisten, was ihnen Wittgenstein gänzlich abspricht, wenn er schreibt: “Sprich das Wort ‘das’ aus, so wirst du doch dieses zweite Wort ‘das’ auch noch zum Satz rechnen” (27). Das stimmt einerseits, denn die Metasprache hebt offenbar da an, wo sie es noch nicht ist. Andererseits spricht man hier über das, wovon man schweigen muss—doch so subtil hier Hansen ist, die Differenz zwischen *worüber* und *wovon*, dass also der Ebenenwechsel gelingt, aber nicht die Sprache zwingend ändert, entgeht ihm bereits wieder. Der Sekundärliteratur, die er schmätzt, übersah es nicht; neben einer Arbeit über Hegel und einer zu Platon, einmal Kant und einmal Kafka zitiert Hansen von Wittgenstein abgesehen übrigens nur sich selbst. Geistreich ist dann immerhin wiederum, wie Hansen darauf hinweist, dass demütiges Zitieren oft Selbsterhöhung ist.

Und es geht weiter. Wittgenstein imaginiere “unendlich viele Sprachen”, weil schon “eine Sprache ins absolut Unbestimmte hinaus ausbau- und erweiterbar” ist, in “Unendlich-Variantenreiche diversifizierbare Einzelsprachen” (31). Dazu bedarf es nicht Wittgensteins. Interessant ist allenfalls, dass einer, der Metaphern beklagt, meint, es gehe ins Unbestimmte just hinaus und nicht hinein. Dann aber setzt Hansen von dieser Diversifikation hinzu: “Natürlich sind das gar keine Sprachen in *dem* Sinne” (31). Was ist eine Sprache in dem Sinne? Er bezieht sich auf Wittgensteins Idee einer Sprache wie einer Stadt. “Kinderglauben” (31) sei das. Bloß vergisst Hansen, dass eine solche Stadt nicht nur ihre Ausdehnung ist, sondern Interferenz, Migration usw. beinhaltet. Das ist gar nicht bloße Erweiterung. Leider ist Hansen das Bild in so falscher Weise zugleich so klar, dass er es natürlich findet, dass dem so nicht wäre.

Auch zu “Extremwertaufgaben” (140), die bei Wittgenstein dafür sorgen, dass “Kessel [. . .] nicht so oft explodieren” (140), behandelt Hansen—ginge es bloß um *Wahrscheinlichkeit*, würden sich solche Rechnungen “als absolut überflüssig herausstellen”, schreibt er. Bei Hansen steht Fukushima also vermutlich noch.

Wittgenstein wird jedenfalls so bilanziert: “Seine Intention ist [. . .], indem er irgendwie auf alles zu sprechen kommt, ein vollständiges Weltverstehen auf bummelig 250 Seiten realisiert zu haben. Und da schreibt man halt alles hin, was einem gerade einfällt” (116). Ungefähr so könnte man Hansen zusammenfassen, seine Intention ist, indem er irgendwie auf alles zu sprechen kommt, ein vollständiges Wittgensteinverstehen auf bummelig 158 Seiten realisiert zu haben. Und da schreibt man halt alles hin, was einem gerade einfällt. Bloß ist Wittgenstein dann doch ungleich anregender.

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Jacqueline Vansant, *Austria Made in Hollywood*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2019. 196 pp.

For a country of its size, Austria receives a lot of attention from American filmmakers. Not only has Hollywood made many movies set in both Imperial Austria and the Republic of Austria, but filmmakers’ interest in the country has remained somewhat steady throughout the history of the industry. Whether

writers and directors were interested in documenting Nazism, Austria's role in the Cold War, or simply the myths of grandeur and elegance surrounding the former imperial capital, Vienna, they have been using the country as a setting for American films since the early days of moviemaking and continue to find inspiration there. This is the focus of Jacqueline Vansant's book *Austria Made in Hollywood*. She shows how Hollywood's Austrian films began in 1923 with Erich Stroheim's film *Merry-Go-Round* and remain an important part of American filmmaking through the 1960s with movies such as *The Cardinal* and *The Sound of Music*. Vansant makes the argument that these films were often vehicles for working through American social issues, particularly around social class and ethnicity, as well as global political movements that transcended both the United States and Austria.

Vansant's book is organized into five chapters, which are essentially chronological but also focus on discrete topics in the history of this filmmaking. Chapter 1 looks closely at Erich Stroheim and his films that were set in Austria. She notes that other scholars' focus on Stroheim's rocky relationships with studio heads gives short shrift to the significance of his nostalgia for pre-World War I Austria and the way he simultaneously challenged contemporary mores. The topic of Chapter 2 spans a broader period, looking at films that depict romantic relationships between Americans and Austrians between 1932 and 1960. In particular, Vansant writes about four Paramount-produced comedies, *Evenings for Sale*, *Champagne Waltz*, *The Emperor Waltz*, and *A Breath of Scandal*. All four of these films use their Austrian settings to discuss social issues such as poverty, racism and eugenics, women's sexual empowerment, and the positive contributions to be made by immigrants. They were also deeply impacted by world events, such as the Great Depression, World War II and the Holocaust, and the Cold War. Chapter 3 looks at films set in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and made just before or during the Second World War, many of which contrasted Austria with Nazi Germany and posited the benefits of multicultural societies. Unfortunately, Vansant also notes that the subtleties of these films may have been lost on American audiences. She writes that the reviewers for the *New York Times* dismissed these films without connecting them to contemporary issues, and we can presume that most audiences did the same. Sticking with the theme of a general public that was less than enthusiastic about filmic delves into contemporary issues, Chapter 4 looks specifically at three films, *So Ends Our*

Night, They Dare Not Love, and *Once Upon a Honeymoon*, all of which depict the Anschluss. These films came in the context of American isolationism and were presented to a public that had little interest in international affairs. They also presented the true story of the annexation of the independent state of Austria to its larger neighbor through the particular lenses of their respective filmmakers' biases. In her final chapter, Vansant examines the depiction of Austria in *The Cardinal* and *The Sound of Music*, both of which came approximately twenty years after the majority of the other films discussed in this text. Because of this chronological difference, these two films view the country in significantly different ways. As she says, "unlike the films discussed in the previous chapter, *The Cardinal* and *The Sound of Music* were neither a call to arms nor justification for US involvement in the war" (113). Both films used Austria's recent history as material to primarily entertain audiences. An argument could be made for *The Cardinal* as a cautionary tale about silence in the face of evil, but ultimately it was made to get viewers excited about coming to the theater, especially as television was becoming serious competition for viewership.

What all of these films have in common is that they were not documentaries about Austria. They were, in different ways and contexts, made by Americans to appeal to domestic audiences and only used their Austrian settings as tools to help illustrate whatever greater point the filmmakers hoped to make. This is consistent with how Americans have long viewed Austria. Vansant remarks that Americans have long had difficulty classifying Austrians, as the country was neither a close ally nor an enemy and the majority of Austrian immigrants to the United States did not self-consciously celebrate their Austrianness. Few Americans have a tangible connection to Austria, so the country becomes a cipher and takes on the meaning assigned to it by whichever filmmaker chooses to use it in the moment.

This concise text is enjoyable to read and may inspire readers to search out films that they are not yet familiar with. It should definitely be of interest to film scholars and could potentially be useful with undergraduates or graduate students. And perhaps it will inspire a contemporary American filmmaker to reexamine Austria.

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Klaus Christian Vögl, *Angeschlossen und gleichgeschaltet: Kino in Österreich 1938–1945*. Vienna: Böhlau, 2018. 447 pp.

In *Angeschlossen und gleichgeschaltet: Kino in Österreich 1938–1945*, Klaus Christian Vögl examines movie theaters in Austria during the Nazi period from 1938 to 1945. The author uses the term *Kino* to define in a literal sense the structure, organization, and history of Austrian movie theaters and not cinema or film, so this book is not a history of film in Austria in this time period. However, given the significance of film in the Nazi period, questions of how movie theaters operated in this era should be of considerable interest to film scholars. Vögl worked as the “Geschäftsführer der Fachgruppe der Lichtspieltheater und Audivisionsveranstalter in der Sparte Tourismus und Freizeitwirtschaft der Wirtschaftskammer Wien” from 1981 to 2010. In this capacity, he discovered a steel safe in 1981 containing about twenty thousand pages of records from the Reichsfilmkammer in Austria that were about to be discarded, since it no longer seemed of any use to Vienna’s Wirtschaftskammer. Vögl saved these documents, and most of his research for this book is based on these files, which provide new and interesting information.

Vögl provides a detailed chapter with a historical overview of movie theaters in Austria during the monarchy from 1896 to 1906 and after the creation of the Reichsverband der Kinomatographenbesitzer in Österreich from 1907 to 1918; he also covers movie theaters in the First Republic and the Austrofascist period, which Vögl identifies as the *Ständestaat*. Then, the author examines the legal changes that affected movie theaters in Austria after the Anschluss. As a trained historian and lawyer, Vögl places an interesting emphasis on the legal context in which movie theaters operated. Like many German-language monographs, the book is divided into subchapters allowing for a comprehensive overview of the topics covered. The most fascinating parts of the book are on the “Arisierung” of Jewish-owned movie theaters in Austria, and in this thirty-page chapter the book crosses briefly into an important aspect of Holocaust Studies, the dispossession of Austrian Jews perpetrated by the Nazis, a process that left behind a legalistic paper trail that is an important part of Holocaust history in Austria. The other important parts of the book look at how the Nazi government and its various organizations exerted control over movie theaters, including the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF), which oversaw movie theater personnel, and the Reichsfilmkammer, which controlled the issuance of movie theater operating licenses. The book

provides ample evidence of how tightly the Nazi regime sought to control movie theaters, which further illustrates the importance of film as media in this period.

A weakness of this book is that it is almost exclusively based on the trove of documents that the author discovered in 1981, which furnish an incomplete picture of the movie theater business, in large part due to the lack of other secondary sources on the topic. To some extent this is understandable, but the book would have benefited from being edited in a way that it did not try to cover all of information available in these documents and instead focused more succinctly on the *Arisierungen* and the influence the state exerted on movie theater operations and then tied this in with the significance of film at the time, which might have made the book more appealing to film scholars. While the book is a heavy and somewhat disjointed read that is not suited to be used with students or scholars new to the topic, the book offers a wealth of new information for film scholars trying to contextualize the role of movie theaters for the films that people were seeing in Austria in the Nazi period. This book will undoubtedly also be of significant interest to historians studying everyday life during the Nazi period as well as the home front in Austria during World War II.

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Marc Landry and Patrick Kupper, eds., *Austrian Environmental History*. Contemporary Austrian Studies 27. New Orleans: U of New Orleans P, 2018. 354 pp.

The environment has always played an integral part of Austria's identity as a country. The historical connection that Austria has to its nature and beauty continues to occupy space in the minds of Austrians, long after the breakup of the Habsburg Monarchy and two world wars. Indeed, in the last quarter century, environmental history has begun to grow exponentially as a serious area of study, and the majority of dissertations on the theme have been written since 1994. This area of study is thus relatively new and has begun to connect itself with environmental science, folklore, and geography, among other disciplines of academic study. Moreover, business and industry have also played

a major role in the development of environmental history as a field of inquiry. It is one of the fastest-growing disciplines in academia today.

This work appears at an apropos time in human history. It is divided into five sections: topical essays, one off-topical essay, a forum on “Austrians as Victims,” a review essay, and finally, numerous book reviews. The topical essays are of particular note in that they provide a background to Austrian environmental history. Verena Winiwarter’s essay on contemporary Austria is a discussion of the approach to modern environmental studies using historical approaches. Some of the areas discussed, such as hydroelectric power, nuclear energy, forestry, agriculture, and tourism, all tie in historically with the environment, though the authors admit that environmental history is still in its infancy due to its lack of institutional history. The role of industry in the Alps is especially intriguing, as is the discussion on changing landscapes brought on by tourism, especially the important role of Alpine tourism.

Irene Pallua and Gerhard Siegl focus their essay on twentieth-century historical literature and the development of modern environmental history, using the Tyrol as their main area of discussion. The authors tie together previous historical literature and ways to expand the field of environmental history by focusing on societal interrelationships and changing perceptions. This article provides good background on distinctive Austrian landscapes, such as the Alpine region, politics (the case of the Brenner Pass and the division of the Tyrol after 1918), the role of National Socialism and the Anschluss in 1938, as well as energy history.

Ortun Veichtlbauer’s article relates the background on the role of the Danube River in the development of Austrian commerce. This discussion focuses on the history of port construction between 1850 and 1950 and eventually leads into the effects of war on the transnational infrastructure. Veichtlbauer compares harbor construction from the Habsburgs through the National Socialists and into the Cold War era.

Robert Gross and Martin Kroll articulate the environmental history of two touristic areas in the western Austrian state of Vorarlberg. Their discussion of postwar environmental changes, also known as “The Great Acceleration,” and how global change is especially evident in ski areas indicates the deep concerns environmentalists and environmental historians have for Austria’s natural environs. It is especially interesting to note that the more technology has interacted with the environment, especially with the construction of

roads to “accelerate mobility” (109) to ski resorts, the more “rushed” ski tourists have become, which has eventually led to the demand for more and more ski lifts to aid in the crush of sports enthusiasts.

Sofie Mittas aims her research in the area of the Marshall Plan and the European Recovery Program, areas that have been little researched. She hones in on the forestry and paper industry. Postwar Austria had additional problems that related to worker shortages, lack of proper nutrition for forestry workers, and occupied zones. This all led to paper shortages and the need to use forests, many privately held, to further the paper industry, which in turn has fueled environmental encroachment.

Christian Rohr relates the use of postage stamps as reflections of Austria’s natural Alpine beauty and explains how Austria eclipsed Switzerland in this “advertisement” of the power of landscape and nature. He mentions as well the high number of hydropower dams reflected on Austrian postage stamps as well as the use of stamps as “charity stamps” (169) to support the victims of avalanches. Commemorative stamps that portray *Naturfreunde*, the leisure organization of the working class (171), are also mentioned.

Christina Pichlar-Koban centers her research on the hydroelectric power generation in Austria and its reliance on the modern convenience of electricity. The need to further industry and comfortable living began in the nineteenth century, and the conflicts that resulted between hydroelectric industries and nature conservationists have become more acute. The use of hydroelectric power propelled Austria into its economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s, but not without negative consequences, which resulted in the creation of new political parties and institutions to combat industrial encroachment on the environment.

To conclude, this particular volume of work should be of great interest to historians and environmental studies scholars who seek to know more about Austria’s past and its connection to its landscape and nature. Further historical readings within this volume give the less initiated reader a solid background in Austrian politics and the role of “victimhood” in Austria, which also play into current political and environmental contention.

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Friederike Mayröcker, *Scardanelli*. Translation by Jonathan Larson. New York: The Song Cave, 2018. 48 pp.

Since her debut in the 1950s, the Viennese writer Friederike Mayröcker, born in 1924, has churned out volume after volume of poetry, prose, radio plays, and montages and hybrid forms of her own creation. Her works, which have won many prestigious prizes, have been labeled avant-garde, concrete, stream of consciousness, and experimental as well as idiosyncratic and impossible to interpret. Ultimately, critics tend to conclude that her highly original texts defy simple labels. Her poetry presents webs and montages of images and free associations, manipulations of language and conventional poetic forms, and fragments of perception, memory and dreams, thoughts and feelings. She has often asserted that she does not write stories, and indeed her writings are too ambiguous, open-ended, nonchronological, and fanciful to fit into the story form or to serve a straightforward mimetic function.

A welcome addition to our current body of English translations of Mayröcker's writings is Jonathan Larson's sensitive 2018 translation of her short 2009 book of poems, *Scardanelli*, published by the ten-year-old small press called The Song Cave. Larson, himself a successful New York poet, published an interview with Mayröcker in *Bomb* (142, Winter, 2018). This recent collection of poems, mainly written in 2008, is named after Scardanelli, the mysterious Italian-sounding pseudonym or "alter-ego" of the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) during his "late phase," after he had been diagnosed with acute schizophrenic psychosis. *Scardanelli* opens with the poem, "Hölderlin tower, on the Neckar River, in May." In 1989, Mayröcker presented a reading at the tower where the "mad" poet was confined for the last thirty-six years of his life. The poem describes furnishings of a "Hölderlin-room," the pronouns "I" and "you," views of a garden from a window, music wafting in, and a past called "then."

After presenting this introductory poem as a tribute to the poet, Mayröcker keeps him in the reader's mind with "concrete" or visual means, inserting the names *Scardanelli*, *Hölderlin*, or the abbreviated form *Höld* in more than half of the poems. The names appear in the poems' mosaics of titles, body lines, phrases in parentheses, and concluding dedications or apparent signatures. Except for the pseudonym and the fact that some of his late poems are "dated" with years well into the future, the poems of Hölderlin during his tower years are relatively conventional, unlike those of Mayröcker's

Scardanelli collection. They display her customary montage techniques, incorporating names of numerous friends, her longtime lover the poet Ernst Jandl, and contemporary as well as deceased artists in many fields, even an acquaintance of mine, the late Beth Bjorklund, who interviewed Mayröcker, translated, and published studies of her work. These unconventional poems are set in or refer to various cities and places, many of them Austrian, including “D.” for Deinzendorf, where she spent time as a child. A plethora of species of flowers and plants, urban and rural scenes, and other evocations of nature abound. Flights of fancy are anchored by references to herself, her body, the furnishings of rooms, and often to windows, calling to mind the one window of her modest apartment. Just as a window connects the often solitary writer to the outside world, these poems connect her to a wide world of nature, books and ideas, social and artistic connections, present, past, and future.

Larson’s English text is generally quite faithful to the words, content, meter, and form of the original poems. He deviates from the texts in appropriate ways. For example, he deftly adjusts German verb tenses to conform to English usage. The translator rightly retains most of the eccentric features of Mayröcker’s poems, including nonstandard, often whimsical patterns of capitalization, punctuation, italics, syntax, abbreviation, indentation, insertion of numbers, and arrangement of elements, such as titles, lines, stanzas, and dedications.

For the most part, English equivalent words in this translation are well chosen and effective. One exception, in my opinion, is the distracting overuse of the English diminutive suffix *-let* for the German *-chen*. “Streamlet” is appropriate enough, but “little” before a noun would have been better than “dresslet,” “deathlet,” “bouquetlet,” or “gardenlet,” and “leaflet” suggests a flyer or brochure rather than a small leaf. A few other questionable English words include the babyish term “tea-baggy,” the nonstandard pronoun “themselves,” and “deeps” instead of “depths.” The frequent term “damals,” almost always rendered as “that time” (implying a certain event or point in time) in some cases would have called for the more general “back then.” To indulge in a bit more quibbling, I would add that I would have selected a different English word in some cases, none of which would have a significant effect on the overall rendering of the poems. Examples include “transitory” rather than “unlasting” for *vergänglichlich*, “insignificant” rather than “unseeming” for *unscheinbar*, and “vale of tears” rather than “valley of groans” for *Jammertal*.

Accepting the common view that Mayröcker resists pedantic analysis or

facile interpretation of her poetry, I believe that she would prefer that this volume would inspire readers to read Hölderlin's late poems in tandem with her own, rather than spending time on minute comparisons of his poetry and hers to assess "influence." Moreover, readers may soon turn to a new reading experience, for Jonathan Larson's next Mayröcker translation, *Embracing the Sparrow-wall or 1 Schumann-madness*, is forthcoming from OOMPH! Press.

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