

Modes of Modernism. Vienna 1900 and Beyond

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Abstracts



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Florian Lippert: Of Truth and Off-Truth. Kafka's 'Alternative Facts' from an Off-Modern Perspective

When asked for his understanding of 'truth', Franz Kafka responded: 'Truth is what every human being needs in order to live and yet no one can get or obtain it from anyone. Every person must produce it again and again from within themselves, otherwise they will perish. Life without truth is impossible. Truth is perhaps life itself.'

On the one hand, this stance reflects a general tension that runs through Kafka's thoughts and works and is often contextualized with the classical modern 'crises' of truth and subjectivity: the tension between the human need to permanently refer to truth, and the apparent inaccessibility, or only *ex negativo*-accessibility, of an ontological, monolithic Truth (with a capital T). On the other hand, as I want to argue, Kafka's diagnosis of people 'producing' truth and the 'gliding paradoxes' (Neumann) in many of Kafka's narratives and aphorisms can also provide us with a fruitful *off-modern* (Boym) perspective on the mechanisms and the psychological appeal of one of the most controversial and important sociocultural phenomena of our current time: *post-truth*. Vice versa, discourses on post-truth and its roots in Modernity might be helpful for re-evaluating a particular recurrent figure in Kafka's texts, which I suggest to call 'off-truths'.

In my contribution, I therefore want to follow two lines of inquiry: how Kafka's texts lure the reader into suspending the very principle of objective truth as an external reference for knowledge and corrective of beliefs; and how this experience can be paradigmatically related to the contemporary post-truth mindset.

Florian Lippert is Associate Professor (UHD) and Vice Chair of European Culture and Literature, and Director of the Research Centre for the Study of Democratic Cultures and Politics (DemCP) at the University of Groningen. Before joining the UG, he had lecturer positions at King's College London, Sungshin University Seoul and the University of Fine Arts, Karlsruhe. He has been guest lecturer at Harvard University and Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and, most recently, Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS), Amsterdam. Florian has served as an Expert Evaluator for the European Commission and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF), as Selection Board Member for the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and as a reviewer for the *Journal of European Studies*, *Politique européenne/ European Politics*, *Austrian Studies* and for Brill/Rodopi.

Florian is the author of *Selbstreferenz in Literatur und Wissenschaft* (Wilhelm Fink, 2013) and editor of *Self-Reflection in Literature* (Brill/Rodopi 2020, with Marcel Schmid) and has published widely on culture and politics, modern and contemporary literature and film, the European migrant crisis, Discourse Theory and Social Systems Theory. His current research focuses on notions of 'European Culture' in societal, political and cultural discourses, and on cultural and political concepts of truth and normality.

Tom DeRose: Elementary my dear Freud! Psychoanalysis and Detective Fiction

In his later years, Sigmund Freud often indulged in that peculiarly modernist pastime, the reading of detective novels. But his passion for Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers was more than just a personal pleasure: psychoanalysis and the detective novel spring from common roots, so much so that Freud once remarked that his case histories read more like detective novels than medical reports.

Discussing such themes as plotting, catharsis, 'revelation' and deferred action, this talk will explore some of the affinities between the psychoanalysts' search for the origin of the symptom, and the detective's quest to piece together the clues left by the culprit.

Tom DeRose is Research Manager at the Freud Museum London. His research focuses on the cultural and philosophical aspects of Freudian theory. His most recent publications are 'The Battle for the Voice: Psychoanalysis and Music', in ed. Tambling, *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Literature and Psychoanalysis* (Bloomsbury, 2023) and 'Freud's Changing Views on Sodomasochism' in, ed. Akhtar and Crilley, *The Joy of Torment* (Karnac, 2024).

Helmut Grugger: Hermann Broch's Concept of the Modernist Novel

Hermann Broch's concept of the modernist novel is best seen as a lifelong project that he pursued both in practice and in theory, the latter from his early essay *Zolas Vorurteil* (1917) to his essay on James Joyce (1936) and his late study of Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1947/48). Although he understands the modernist novel as a turning point, he analyses its development based on the 19th-century novel. One task he sees is to combine radical-experimental ('esoteric') with more accessible ('social') modes of writing. The latter proved to be more difficult for him, as the lack of success and also refinement of his novel *The Unknown Quantity* (1933) shows.

For Broch, the double threat of either writing too 'esoteric' or too 'social' is linked to the aporias of grasping the complex reality of the modernist world through works of art. For him, this is first and foremost an ethical question. In his search for the new novel and the new style of writing he coined terms such as the 'intensive novel' (in the wake of Flaubert), the 'polyhistorical novel' or the concept of 'extended naturalism'. Broch's creative techniques, which he developed in his constant quest for innovation, can be seen an example of the historical reach of the modernist novel. They not only influenced writers such as Barbara Frischmuth, Jean Ámery, or Milan Kundera in the 1970s and 1980s, but also important contemporary authors such as Thomas Lehr.

His ideas and the development of his novel are to be presented based on three major projects: *The Sleepwalkers* (1931–32), the Demeter-Manuscript (1935–1951; known as the *The Spell*) and *The Death of Virgil* (1945). The analysis will show how he shifted from a more analytical-objective to a more synthetic-subjective style of writing. In *The Death of Virgil* he takes literature and art, i.e. the system of aesthetics, as one of his main subjects.

Helmut Grugger studied literature, philosophy and psychology in Innsbruck and teaches at the University of Limerick since 2012. He has published widely, e.g. *Dramaturgie des Subjekts bei Heinrich von Kleist* (his dissertation), and *Trauma – Literatur – Moderne. Poetische Diskurse zum Komplex des Psychotraumas* (his habilitation), and recently a biography of Werner Schwab.

Ritwik Gajendragadkar: Über die Moderne hinaus: Hermann Brochs *Die Schlafwandler* zwischen Klassischer Moderne und Postmoderne

Die Schlafwandler (*The Sleepwalkers*), the debut-novel of the Viennese author Hermann Broch, explores the period from 1888 to 1918 in Germany and tries to analyse the historic epoch that led to the First World War. The novel can, to an extent, be seen as an exemplar of 'Classicism', as Broch chooses the literary medium to elaborate his theory of 'Disintegration of Values' ('Zerfall der Werte'), which he was working on since the early 1920s. Ideas, which belong to a pure philosophical discourse, flow seamlessly in the novel and become a part of the narrative. However, this very amalgam of philosophy and literature, of theory and fiction, attributes to *The Sleepwalkers* the quality of literary avant-garde. Broch experiments with the narrative form – especially in the third part of the trilogy – by integrating a series of essays 'Disintegration of Values' that serve as a philosophical commentary on the narrative of the novel. Additionally, he also implants the 'Story of a Salvation Army Girl in Berlin'. The narrator of this story is also the author of the essays, which eventually lose their independent identity and become part of the main narrative. The paper hence tries to unfold these form innovations and their significance in the context not only of the history of German-speaking literature, but also in the context of literary theory. The question, to what extent can the novel be looked at as a predecessor of the postmodernist novel, will be at the core of the paper.

Ritwik Gajendragadkar is Assistant Professor for German Studies at the School for International Studies & Diaspora (SISD) of the Gujarat University (Ahmedabad) since August 2024. He completed his Bachelors (German Studies) from the Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) and Masters (German Literature) from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. During his Masters, he received the Baden-Württemberg scholarship for a research stay of one semester at the Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg as well as a DAAD scholarship to participate in a summer school organised by the Faculty of Literary Studies, Bielefeld University. He then received the research scholarship of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) to pursue his doctoral studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University (LMU)

Munich. He completed his PhD on Hermann Broch's lesser-known essays and other theoretical writings from the 1930s under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Friedrich Vollhardt and defended the same last year in February. His thesis is soon being published as a monograph titled *Zwischen Theorie und Fiktion: Hermann Brochs essayistisches Werk zwischen Literatur(theorie) und Philosophie* by the Brill | Fink publication house. He is a member of the International Hermann Broch Society (IAB) since 2021 and a member of the Goethe Society of India (GSI) since September 2024.

Daichi Shigemoto: Influences of Otto Wagner and the Vienna Secession on Modern Japanese Architecture: From 1903 to 1928

Austria and Japan have had a strong relationship throughout the history of modern architecture. Austria-Hungary and Japan first established diplomatic relations in 1869, and the 1873 World Exposition in Vienna triggered the boom of Japanese arts and crafts, called Japonisme, in Austria and other European countries. But, of course, the influence was reciprocal rather than one-way. In architecture, the Austrian influence was especially significant in Japan.

In Japan, studying architecture had long been almost equal to studying European architecture since the end of the country's isolation in the mid-nineteenth century. Austria was one of the countries from which Japanese architects ardently learned architecture. In 1912, the magazine *Kenchiku to sōshoku* (Architecture and decoration) featured the Vienna Secession, which was one of the earliest Japanese publications on this topic. Since before that, the Secession had been a boom in Japan, although many architects recognized it merely as a style without a deep understanding of the movement's spirit. In 1920, six graduates of the Tokyo Imperial University formed a group called Bunriha Kenchikukai and continued their activities until their dissolution in 1928 (Bunriha is the Japanese translation of the Secession). In 1927, the architect Hideto Kishida (1899–1966) wrote a book on Otto Wagner (1841–1918), which led to an event celebrating the tenth anniversary of Wagner's death in 1928.

The 1920s was the most diverse period in the history of modern Japanese architecture in terms of the variety of styles and movements. Eventually, Austrian modernism did not become mainstream in Japanese architecture, as the influences of Le Corbusier (1887–1965) and the Bauhaus took over. In this presentation, I will introduce Japanese architects, groups, movements, and their designs influenced by the Vienna Secession and reconsider the role and position of Austrian modernism in the history of modern Japanese architecture.

Daichi Shigemoto received his PhD in architectural history from the University of Texas at Austin in 2024 for his dissertation on the Japanese architect Hideto Kishida, who wrote the first Japanese monograph on the Austrian architect Otto Wagner in 1927. Shigemoto specializes in the history of Japanese architecture and urbanism, with particular emphasis on the interactions between Western (European and American) and Japanese architects in the modern age. As a Master's student at Waseda University, he was involved in editing the Japanese versions of the Austrian architect Adolf Loos's books as a project member.

Alyssa Bryl: Modernism for the Proletariat: The Interwar Wiener Gemeindebau

One of Vienna's leading urban architects of the fin de siècle, Otto Wagner's century-old designs continue to mark Vienna's cityscape. Although he is primarily known for his ornate Jugendstil aesthetic, Wagner's transition from Jugendstil to functional modernism exemplifies the city's broader shift toward a synthetic modernism that would shape Viennese urban identity as well. Wagner's most prominent students at the Academy of Fine Arts would follow in this modernist path and go on to design many of Vienna's municipal apartment complexes (Wiener Gemeindebauten) in the 1920s and 1930s. These social housing projects embodied a unique blend of modernist design principles and social functionality, synthesizing innovation with a focus on narrative, community, and utility. This presentation examines the development of synthetic modernism in regard to the Wiener Gemeindebauten. I argue that the Gemeindebauten illustrate a Viennese model of modernity, integrating forward-thinking aesthetics with a human-centered approach. By channeling avantgarde design principles (and representational architecture) into worker housing, these municipal complexes democratized what had traditionally been the privilege of high society – modernist architecture and

high-quality construction. This approach not only blurred boundaries between high and low culture, but also marked a profound societal shift as the municipal socialist government sought to make aesthetic and structural innovations accessible to its working class. Thus, the Gemeindebauten redefined high culture to include the proletariat, making the principles of modernism a public good rather than an elite privilege. This confluence of modernist aesthetics and societal renewal led to buildings that were visually modern and reinforced Vienna's unique brand of socially-minded modernity that was unable to be duplicated elsewhere in interwar Europe.

Alyssa Bryl is a PhD candidate in the German Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She received a Bachelor's degree from UW-Madison in German and International Studies and her Master's degree in German as a Second and Foreign Language from the University of Vienna. Her primary interests are related to Viennese history, culture, and language. Alyssa was awarded a Fulbright-Mach doctoral research award and is in Vienna for the 2024–25 academic year. In her doctoral research, Alyssa focuses on interwar Vienna, the legacy of Red Vienna, and the Wiener Gemeindebauten. She is also motivated to explore how aspects of memory and history are transmitted or obscured via public spaces in Vienna.

Lila Fabro: Oygnblik: The Intimacy of Estrangement in Argentine Yiddish Miniatures

This paper explores Polish-Argentine writer Samuel Rollansky's Yiddish miniatures collected in the book *In Buenos Ayres*, published in Buenos Aires in 1941. A major figure in Yiddish culture, Rollansky directed the Argentinean branch of the YIVO (Yiddisher Visnshaftlekher Institut/ Institute for Jewish Research), wrote periodically for the daily journal *Di Yiddishe Tsaytung* in Buenos Aires, and is most recognized as the editor of *Musterverk fun der yidisher literatur*, a 100-volume series of the classics of Yiddish literary classics, a monumental venture that constituted one of the greatest post-Holocaust endeavours to spread Yiddish literature and culture in Yiddish. Often associated with the monumentality of the *Musterverk* collection, Rollansky was also the author of a collection of literary miniatures that depict the experience of Jewish immigrants in Buenos Aires. Far from the turn of the 20th-century's miniatures, these mid-century writings located in South America, therefore, deploy particular nuances within the metropolis miniatures corpus. In this regard, Rollansky's miniatures are part of the modernist miniature genre with regard to the crisis of perception that initiated a new relation to space and time, as A. Huyssen states, bearing the mark of an intimate gaze, otherness, trauma, nostalgia, transnationalism, language contact with regards to the imaginary of Buenos Aires's urban space overlapped with former Eastern European urban and life experiences. It is my aim, therefore, to explore the literary tensions in this unexplored corpus of Argentine Yiddish modernist writings while outlining its specificity within the genre.

Lila Fabro earned a BA in Art History from the University of Buenos Aires and is a current PhD candidate in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Johns Hopkins University. Her research centres on Argentine Yiddish literature and the intersections between Yiddish and Spanish in Argentine literature.

Cristina Fernández Lacueva: Three Paths to Vienna: Ingeborg Bachmann and the Viennese fin de siècle

Flight was a constant theme in Ingeborg Bachmann's life and work: like Elisabeth Matrei (*Drei Wege zum See*), Bachmann fled from Carinthia to Vienna and later, like the protagonist of *Das dreißigste Jahr*, sought refuge in Rome; like Franza (*Das Buch Franza*), she also sought healing in the deserts of Egypt and Sudan after prolonged stays in psychiatric hospitals; and like Nadja (*Simultan*), she often distanced herself from her mother tongue, German, which was inevitably marked by the imprint of Nazism. In an interview, however, Bachmann spoke of her Austrian origins in these terms: „Denn eine außerordentliche Intimität mit dieser langen und großen Geschichte, mit ihrer Literatur, die für mich immer eine größere Rolle gespielt hat als beispielsweise die deutsche, ist eben vorhanden. Vor allem zur Literatur, Musik und Wissenschaft dieses Jahrhunderts. Denn selbst zu deutschen Autoren, vor denen ich Respekt habe, finde ich keine Beziehung. Natürlich aber zu Musil und Kafka, zu Weininger,

Freud, Wittgenstein und so viele anderen.’ Despite her attempts to distance herself from it, Vienna – especially *fin-de-siècle* Vienna – remained the centre of gravity from which Bachmann could never escape. The aim of my contribution to the symposium is to examine the influences of Viennese modernism on Bachmann’s work through a selection of poetic and critical texts from the 1960s, the late stage of her literary career. In this sense, the analysis will be organised around three basic thematic axes, in which the alliances with currents of thought and authors of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna become particularly evident. These axes are (1) linguistic scepticism, influenced in particular by Hofmannsthal and Wittgenstein; (2) the ‘Habsburg myth’ (Claudio Magris), following the path of Joseph Roth; and (3) psychoanalysis and the work of Freud, whose influence on Bachmann’s late texts is undeniable.

Cristina Fernández Lacueva is a PhD candidate in the Humanities Department of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Humanities (Universitat Pompeu Fabra) and a Master’s degree in Literary Studies (Universidad Complutense de Madrid). Her research interests include literary theory and criticism, comparative literature, and psycho-analysis. Her doctoral dissertation, titled ‘*Verlustsarten. Evocaciones de la pérdida en la poesía tardía de Ingeborg Bachmann*’, focuses on the evocations of loss – and its related topics, such as grief, mourning, melancholy, and lack – in the late poetry of the Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann (1926-1971). She is on research leave at King’s College London, under the supervision of Áine McMurtry, from April to July. Her current work is also related to the ‘Neue Sachlichkeit’ literary movement and, more specifically, to the work of Gertrud Kolmar. Her publications include articles on the works of Jean Racine, Virginia Woolf, Julio Cortázar, Raymond Carver, Gertrud Kolmar, and Ingeborg Bachmann.

Piet Defraeye: Hofmannsthal’s *Prolog zu ‘Lysistrata’ von Aristophanes*

Hugo von Hofmannsthal is well known for his so-called Prologe and Vorspiele – a genre that became quite fashionable and popular with the emergence of modernism. It mostly allowed authors to insert or footnote an authorial voice to their dramaturgical texts. Hofmannsthal’s *Prolog zu ‘Lysistrata’ von Aristophanes* was written in 1908, and stands out from other prologues he wrote because of its irony and sarcasm as to the emerging role of the Dramaturg in modernist German/Austrian theatre practice. In it, he attacks mostly an academic approach to theatre performance. It is a very funny text and fully performable as a monologue.

Piet Defraeye is a Professor of Performance Studies (University of Alberta). A scholar, theatre director, and dramaturg; he researches strategies of stage provocation and focuses on interdisciplinary approaches to performance. He has toured internationally with several productions, including an award-winning production of Evelyn de la Chenelière’s *Bashir Lazhar* (Edmonton, Antwerp, Munich, Dresden, Innsbruck, Kiev, London, Edinburgh, Kitchener Waterloo). His most recent publications include *Brussels 1900 Vienna*, a co-edited volume on the cultural transfers between Austria and Belgium around the turn of the century (Brill, 2021), and a special (co-edited) issue of *Theater* (Yale, 2021) on the Swiss-Belgian director Milo Rau. He has published on the Rwandan genocide and is at the apex of an interdisciplinary and collaborative research project on the figure of Patrice Lumumba, the assassinated first Prime Minister of the Congo, as he appears in a variety of cultural discourse and practice. He was a Guest Professor for extensive periods of time at Innsbruck Universität, Ludwig Maximilian Universität (Munich), Kath. Universiteit Leuven, Universiteit Antwerpen, Universiteit Gent, and Université libre de Bruxelles.

Tom Hedley: Untaught Topologists: Mathematical Modernism and Wiener Moderne in Vicki Baum’s *Menschen im Hotel* and Mela Hartwig’s *Bin ich ein überflüssiger Mensch?*

In the 1920s, the trailblazing mathematician Emmy Noether, who was responsible for many of the innovations that ushered in a mathematical ‘modernism’, stridently maintained that mathematicians are in fact artists, not scientists. Can modern mathematics, therefore, be included in our discussions of modernism? By prioritising direct literary thematization of mathematical ideas, existing scholarship in this area has concretised a narrow canon of mathematically-trained writers like Robert Musil and Hermann Broch, neglecting in turn possible parallels between these domains on a deeper structural or

formal level. A more effective way forward, I suggest, would be to isolate central concerns in modern mathematics, like spatial transformation, in order to ‘re-read’ corresponding manifestations (e.g. of metamorphosis) that arise indirectly and perhaps unknowingly in literary works by untrained cultural actors. By foregrounding the dense entanglement of artistic, philosophical and scientific networks in early 20th-century Vienna, this paper asks: How might a re-examination of non-canonical modernist literature in Vienna, e.g. by Vicki Baum and Mela Hartwig, more effectively embed modern mathematics within a diverse modernist collective? If there is an area of mathematics that best exemplifies its modernisation, it is the highly abstract field of topology, which emerged as a new spatial language in the wake of non-Euclidean geometries. Its guiding principle is the rearticulation of spatial transformation in terms of its own opposite, namely invariances within these processes of change, and with the works of Kurt Reidemeister on knot theory, 1920s’ Vienna was a hub of topological development. In this paper, I examine the inherently topological spatialisations in Vicki Baum’s bestseller *Menschen im Hotel* (1928), which was later derided as ‘Unterhaltungsliteratur’, and Hartwig’s posthumously published *Bin ich ein überflüssiger Mensch?* (2001). On a first reading, both novels seem to echo the all-embracing sense of transformation associated with the modernist epoch, with respect to social constellations in metropolitan spaces and gendered bodyscapes. A more topologically cognisant perspective, however, helps to uncover underlying continuities throughout the metamorphoses in these novels, by which supposed paradigm shifts like ‘die neue Frau’ come to reveal that which is not so ‘neu’ after all – continuities of class-based and gendered hierarchies merely in a new guise. By drawing belated attention to these ‘forgotten’ works and exploring this cross-disciplinary overlap, this paper calls for a more inclusive understanding of modernism as a whole, both in terms of its cultural proponents and forms of expression.

Tom Hedley is currently a lecturer in German literature and film at the Université libre de Bruxelles (2024–), and he completed his PhD research at Trinity College Dublin (2019-23). His dissertation project, entitled ‘Spatial Reckonings: Mapping the Problem of Space in Modern Mathematics and German Modernism, 1890–1933’, was fully funded by the Irish Research Council. He holds a BA in German literature and Mathematics from Trinity College Dublin (2017) and an MA in Comparative Literature from the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena (2019). In 2021, he was a Junior Fellow at the Descartes Centre for the History and Philosophy of Science at Utrecht University (jointly with the Mathematical Institute). Between 2022 and 2024, he was a lecturer in comparative literature at Utrecht University. He has presented his research at 18 conferences internationally to date. Publications include peer-reviewed articles for *Germanistik in Ireland*, 16 (2021), *Imaginaires*, 23 (2021), *Open Library of Humanities* (2025) and *Germanistische Mitteilungen* (forthcoming, 2025).

Niccola Shearman: Another Angle on Authenticity: The Woodcut Practice of Margarete Berger-Hamerschlag

Who needs labels? Not Margarete Berger-Hamerschlag (1902–58), who began her career in the vibrant landscape of Vienna’s applied arts and later applied all she learned there in educating working-class youth from the mean streets of London’s Notting Hill. As a working artist with a highly versatile range, from political graphics to scenic watercolours, the pages of books to public spaces, her authenticity lay in her craft and its productive engagement. If in many respects she was too busy to pay much heed to modernist myths of originality, nonetheless when it came to her intensive production in woodcut printing, her skills and commitment coincided with a phenomenon that can legitimately be termed ‘classical modernism’.

This paper will examine works in woodcut preserved in Viennese and London collections, in varied subjects and applications, from a highly contemporary concern with the brutality of city life, to illustrations for fantastical novels and back again to the urgent political situation of the mid-1930s. Analysis will focus on the artist’s agile manipulation of her material, to create motifs that are at once grim and playful; brittle and lyrically fluid. Two influences to be explored in this respect are, firstly, the agility inspired by teachers Franz Cižek, Berthold Löffler and others at the Kunstgewerbeschule; and, secondly, the significance of woodcut in the German-speaking sphere, where in the aftermath of WWI, it became the medium most suited to a black-and-white world caught between despair and redemption. Associated with this is the subject of city life: a salient theme for artists such as Max

Beckmann, George Grosz, and Rudolf Otto Schatz. In this context, does Berger-Hamerschlag operate 'synthetically', between the abstract ideal and the 'Sachlich'? Is it significant to find a woman active in this medium? These and other questions will receive critical attention in this brief window onto a remarkable career.

Niccola Shearman is an independent historian of twentieth-century art, with a focus on Germany and Austria to 1945. She has held academic positions at the University of Manchester and at the Courtauld Institute, London, where in 2025 she will curate an exhibition of Expressionist graphic art. In addition to a focus on print histories and on the careers of women artists in exile, her research interests include art and emotion, and the psychology of vision, especially the work of Gestalt scientists in 1920s' Berlin. Having published articles on German Expressionist printmaking and its reception, she is co-editing a volume of essays on German Art in an Expanded Field (Festschrift for Dr Shulamith Behr, Peter Lang, 2025)

Vera EBl: Karl Kraus' 'omnivorous' Drama Form. Epoch-theoretical and genre-aesthetic reflections on *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*

Karl Kraus' (1874–1936) drama *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (1915–22) is characterized by its combination of factual and fictional modes of (re)presentation, its inter- and extra-textual reference system, its diversity across genres and its intermediality. The tragedy, which in the 1922 book edition has long been considered a canonical text of classical Austrian modernism, exhibits a 'strict compositional organizational principle' (Ribeiro, 2022, p.166), based on the Aristotelian five acts; there are also various citations of the traditional humanist canon, such as the Bible, Shakespeare's dramas and Goethe's classicist texts. On the other hand, an open scene structure and an abundance of creatively and productively incorporated documentary material can be identified, as well as references to different arts such as photography, dance and music. The drama therefore results in an intertextual, intermedial and interdisciplinary synthesis, a *mixtum compositum* of new and traditional literary and artistic methods. The question arises as to whether Gustav Frank and Stefan Scherer's concept of a 'synthetic modernism' (Frank/Scherer, 2016) can be made productive not only for prose, but also for the drama of classical modernism. What function and significance does the 'basically omnivorous aesthetic form' (Ribeiro, 2022, p. 166) of Kraus's tragedy have beyond the previously intensively researched combination of documentation and poetry? In this talk, the existing desideratum is to be supplemented with special consideration of the epilogue 'Die letzte Nacht' (in which the cross-genre, cross-genre and cross-disciplinary characteristics also appear particularly clearly), because even a first close reading shows that the interpretation of a moral-divine ending must be reconsidered (cf. Timms 2004, p. 517), as the 'voice from above' speaks in doggerel verse, the verse meter of classical tragedy, when it destroys the world, while the 'voice of God' merely quotes powerlessly. The thesis to be examined is that Kraus could be perceived as radically new not only through his collage technique, but paradoxically also through his adaptive use of traditional motifs and forms.

Vera EBl studied German Philology, Latin Studies, Rhetoric and Philosophy at the Universities of Salzburg and Vienna and is currently working as a university assistant at the University of Vienna. Her doctoral project has the working title 'Ingeborg Bachmanns Musil-Rezeption. Intertextuelle und intermediale Bezugnahmen' and her research interests include semiotics of form, intertextuality theory and media theory, especially with regard to drama, theatre and novels of the twentieth century. An article on Peter Handke and one on Ingeborg Bachmann will be published by Böhlau and De Gruyter in 2025.

Hanno Biber: When Karl Kraus noticed the rotten Emphasis of modernity: 'und "modern" nur eine falsche Betonung war'

It was in the year 1935, when Karl Kraus noticed the rotten emphasis of modernity. Even before this time the dubiousness of modernity was certain for the satirist, and, if one follows its many occurrences in his writings from 1899 until 1936, one has to state that hardly any word can be called as particularly antique as this one derived from French a long time ago. The expression modern is widely used in his

early work, where the homonymic pun already emerges in 1902, and the adjective also appears later, in its comparative form, often in thematic connection with the broken promises of the advancement of science and technology besides those of culture, fashion or of politics. Significantly, the word also occurs in a text quoted by Karl Kraus, which is an anti-war feuilleton by Ferdinand Kürnberger from 1870, that was confiscated in 1917 for obvious reasons and could then be printed in his journal *Die Fackel* only in 1919. After the war Karl Kraus noted the word with a particular emphasis, when he critically observed that it had become even more worn out in the contexts of the expressionist art movements and in related literary circles. In the year 1935, however, its old-fashioned character was concealing its even more explosive up-to-date currentness so much that it had to be exposed by him directly and thereby directed against the dangerous and hopeless developments he feared and despised so much. This was done by Karl Kraus in order to escape the imminent future by returning to an imaginary world of the past, that for him could save the present world, through performing the art of Jacques Offenbach. Karl Kraus defended a neglected cultural critique against his contemporaries, the advocates of modernity, by turning it against them, and demanded a proper emphasis of modern.

Hanno Biber studied German Philology at the University of Vienna and wrote his dissertation about ‘The Composition of *Die Fackel*’. As a senior scientist of the Austrian Academy of Sciences he has worked on several publications about the work of Karl Kraus, has been working on the digitized literary remains of Thomas Bernhard and is currently completing corpus research projects in the research unit ‘Literary & Textual Studies’ in the Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage of the Academy, where he has researched in textual studies, corpus linguistics, text lexicography, and digital editions.

Burkhardt Wolf: Herzmanovsky-Orlandos groteske Bürokratie

Fritz von Herzmanovsky-Orlando zeitigt bis heute ein Klassifikationsproblem: Formal beschrieben hat man seine Texte als Manierismus mit phantastischen Elementen, inhaltlich als eigentümliche Pseudo-Metaphysik und Esoterik, die an Okkultismus grenzt. Was sich in ihnen zum Ausdruck bringt, sind offenbar – mit Robert Musils *Mann ohne Eigenschaften* gesprochen – die unzureichend gewordenen Existenzgründe einer merklich zersetzten kakanischen Welt. Oder anders gesagt: In ihnen artikuliert sich auf unverkennbare Weise der ‘habsburgische Mythos’, diesmal allerdings im Zustand der Verkäufung und Verwilderung, des Formlosen und Arkanen. Als Ausgangs- und Fluchtpunkt dieses Schreibens soll der Vortrag Habsburgs überkommene Bürokratie verstehen, ihre Krise als Institution, ihren Mangel an Ordnungskraft und ihren – bereits vor dem Großen Krieg längst unübersehbaren – Geltungsschwund. Herzmanovsky-Orlandos Erzähltexte bilden vor diesem Hintergrund vielleicht, wie es einmal Karl Wolfskehl formuliert hat, eine ‘Synthese von allem, was einst Österreich war’. Zur Synthese kommt hier das alte Reich aber gerade nicht mehr im Modus ‘restaurativer Nostalgie’ (Svetlana Boym), sondern vielmehr auf dem Weg einer halb anachronistischen, halb modernistischen Groteske. Und dies gilt auch, wie zu zeigen ist, für Herzmanovsky-Orlandos Graphiken, die zu seinen Texten nicht im Verhältnis strenger Fügung stehen, sondern sie im Stile einer pseudobarocken Hypertrophie vielleicht ergänzen, sicher aber weiter verwirren und überwuchern.

Burkhardt Wolf is Professor of Modern German Literature, Media and Literary Theory at the University of Vienna. His recent research interests include the media history of administration and the poetics of affect. He has worked on questions of sovereignty and governmentality, political representation and social technologies, danger and risk, violence and religion between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. His publications include *Die Sorge des Souveräns: Eine Diskursgeschichte des Opfers* (2004), *Fortuna di mare: Literatur und Seefahrt* (2013), *Sea Fortune. Literature and Navigation*, transl. Joel Golb, 2020, *Teilweise Musil. Kapitelkommentare zum ›Mann ohne Eigenschaften‹ Zweiter Band: Aktenzeichen MoE – Bürokratie*, 2020.

Laura Castillo Bel: The Interplay Between Music and Literature in Arthur Schnitzler's Work

The relationship between music and literature has been well-established since the very origins of literary expression, where elements such as rhythm and harmony hold significant importance in poetic creation. However, few periods illustrate such a rich interdisciplinary connection between these two art forms as the Viennese fin de siècle. The history of Vienna, a cultural capital, is replete with collaborations between poets and composers, such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss. Yet, inter-artistic relationships are not always explicit; at times, the influence of music is subtly woven into the very fabric of literary expression. This is evident in the work of Arthur Schnitzler, who, in his personal diaries, frequently referenced composers and musical pieces that shaped his thoughts and life. Moreover, his fictional works reveal a rhythm and cadence unmistakably inspired by music. Scholars such as Cathy Raymond (1993), Jon Green (1972) and Marc A. Weiner (1986) have underscored this musical inspiration. The influence of music on Schnitzler's works is further evidenced by the success of many of his texts being adapted into operettas, highlighting their inherent musicality. This presentation aims to explore how music has served as a formal inspiration for Schnitzler's oeuvre, focusing specifically on two of his major works: *La Ronde (Reigen)* and *Fräulein Else*. To analyze this interplay, the study draws upon the methodological principles of inter-semiotics proposed by Lawrence Kramer (1986) and Jean-Jacques Nattiez. These frameworks provide a lens through which to examine the structural, thematic, and rhythmic elements of Schnitzler's narratives as influenced by musical forms, offering a deeper understanding of the symbiosis between these two art forms in his work.

Laura Castillo Bel holds a degree in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature from Universidad Complutense de Madrid, where she completed a Master's degree in Literary Studies and was awarded a collaboration grant in the Department of Literary Theory. She is currently on a research visit to the Congreso Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) and is preparing her PhD on the cognitive theory of emotions in literary reception. She has participated in many international conferences and published several articles in collective volumes. Her main lines of research revolve around Neuroaesthetics, Cognitive Poetics, Queer and Cultural Studies and AI narratology. She has recently completed a research visit at the German Department at the University of Cambridge and in March she is preparing to work at the Jean Nicod Institute at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris.

Paris Reid: Desperate Measures: Representing Reality in *Fräulein Else*

Arthur Schnitzler plays a pivotal role in the history of modern literature as a pioneer of the stream-of-consciousness form. About a quarter-century after the 1900 publication of *None but the Brave*, arguably the first instantiation of the device, Schnitzler's 1924 novella *Fräulein Else* would find itself amidst the works of Joyce, Proust, and Woolf, not to mention the burgeoning field of psychoanalysis, all of which were concerned with a distinctly modern means of representing reality, or rather, reality as it materializes through the particular subjectivity of the individual. English scholarship on *Fräulein Else* has drawn primarily upon Freudian thought and feminist theory to explain the protagonist's gradual demise, and while these analyses acknowledge Else's stream-of-consciousness voice, little attention has been given to the finer characteristics of her narration. The study at hand assesses Else's epistemology insofar as it utilizes terms of *measurement* to conceive of both reality and possibility. Here, the measurement of money, of age, of temporalities of waiting and deferral, allow Else to approximate a sense of being-in-relation, providing vital schematic support to an unreliable existence. This reading, consequently, locates Else's ultimate dissolution in the problem of *unrepresentability* – in other words, the *failure* of measurement – which reaches its height when Schnitzler breaks the written text with 'measures' of musical notation as Else publicly exposes herself in the nude. The function of measurement in *Fräulein Else* (and Schnitzler's innovative mode of narrativizing it) interweaves pertinent issues in the twentieth century regarding gender norms, class mobility and bourgeois society, while simultaneously showing these organizing features to be insufficient and tenuous, readily disturbed by Else's deviation from the standard. Accordingly, this analysis concludes that Else's estimates act not only as metrics for her reality, but also constitute an ethical orientation.

Paris Reid is a researcher and writer from Calgary, Alberta. She received her BA in Individualized Study from New York University's Gallatin School, and her MA in Religion, with a concentration in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, from Yale Divinity School. Currently, she lives and works in Austin, Texas.

Leena Eilittä: Stefan Zweig's 'Unmodern Modernity'

In contrast to mainstream scholarship on fin-de-siècle Viennese literature, which emphasizes its modernity, this paper shows that the elaboration of ancient themes, topics and traditions was an important part of Viennese modernism. Stefan Zweig's work contains many elements of Jewish and some other traditions, which, as Mark H. Gelber has pointed out, is an important part of his cosmopolitanism. Many eminent scholars have drawn attention to the contradictory situation of Jews in the capital of the Habsburg monarchy, where they were allowed to follow the path of assimilation, but were expected to largely suppress their Jewish origins. Their situation on the threshold of modernity may be related to their particular 'way of being in society', to use Emile Durkheim's term. As Durkheim points out, subgroups of diverse individuals are an important factor in modern society; they are able to transcend the mainstream through common norms generated by the interdependence and complementary differences of their members. Stephan Rasch has shown that as Zweig wrote, he was constantly adding information about the social and political contexts of his time. In Rasch's words, Zweig consciously set out to write 'a vision of history for the future', a vision that seemed doomed to failure during his lifetime. Zweig's works, motivated by the situation of assimilated Jews and the anti-Semitic pressure on Jews, led him to search for the tradition of his own Jewish background. In his collection of novellas *Legenden* (published in 1940), Zweig uses the form of legend and archaic language to describe the world of the past. In his unusual modernist style with an omniscient narrator, Zweig was inspired by the literary ideas of Martin Buber and Emil Bernhard Cohn, to whom he wrote that he was planning a collection 'in which the biblical Christian and Buddhist worlds meet'. In *Jeremias. Eine dramatische Dichtung in Neun Bildern* (1917), Zweig projects contemporary concerns about war onto the events of the biblical story. The drama, which consists of nine scenes ('Bilder'), loosely focuses on the biblical character of the prophet Jeremiah and his relationship with the Jewish people. Zweig also wrote several other works in which the tension between the modern and the unmodern plays an important role, including *Legende eines Lebens* (1919), *Die Flucht zu Gott* (1927), *Das Lamm des Armen* (1929), *Buchmendel* (1929) and *Die Heilung durch den Geist* (1931).

Leena Eilittä teaches Comparative Literature at the University of Helsinki. She received her PhD from the University of Oxford in 1998 with a dissertation on the question of identity in Franz Kafka's short stories. Eilittä is currently editing an anthology on Viennese modernism for an academic publisher in Helsinki and is working on a book on Viennese writers and world literature for Brill. She has organised several international conferences and been a speaker at many conferences around the world. Publications include: 'Local and Global in Richard Beer-Hofmann's *Der Tod Georgs*' in *From the Enlightenment to Modernity: Three Centuries of German Literature: Essays for Ritchie Robertson*, ed. Kevin Hillard and Carolin Duttlinger (Legenda, 2022); (Ed.) *The Adaptation and Convergence of Artistic Media: 'High' Culture versus Popular Culture Intermediality* (Aalto University Arts Books, 2018); *Approaches to Personal Identity in Kafka's Short Fiction: Freud, Darwin, Kierkegaard* (The Finnish Academy of Arts and Letters, 1999).

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