

## **PREFACE**

Austrians tend to be preoccupied with the idiosyncrasies of their own mentality. The Austrian soul (*die österreichische Seele*) and its various crises of identity have been the objects of all kinds of analyses, ranging from Erwin Ringel's psychological inquiries to Helmut Qualtinger's satirical caricatures, whose black humour is typical of the entertainment seen in the Austrian cabaret. The reasons for this self-questioning obsession are manifold and partially rooted in the multiculturalism of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Vienna of the *fin de siècle* was not only the capital but also the cultural meeting place for intellectuals from all corners of the Empire. This creative atmosphere was characterized by the exchange of ideas among various schools, circles, groups, and individuals, and nourished by Vienna's thriving coffeehouse culture. The decline and eventual dissolution, in 1918, of the Habsburg Monarchy, reactivated once again the problematic issue of Austrian identity, an identity defined mainly in contrast to Germany, its neighbour to the north.

Numerous scholars have tried both to define and to account for the existence of Austrian traditions in various cultural fields. The extensive work of philosophers such as Rudolf Haller and Barry Smith has substantiated the claim, expressed earlier by Otto Neurath in the manifesto of the Vienna Circle, that there are distinct Austrian traditions in philosophy. Literary critics such as Claudio Magris, Ulrich Greiner, and Robert Menasse investigated similar claims about typically Austrian features in literature.

We invited leading experts on these topics to participate in an international conference, *Writing the Austrian Traditions* (May 12-14, 2000 at Woodsworth College, University of Toronto), in order to discuss some of the significant connections between Austrian literary and philosophical traditions. The articles collected in the present volume emerged from this conference.

In the opening article "The Austrian Plato," Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler gives an overview of Austrian responses to Plato and Platonism by drawing on overlapping philosophical, literary, and philological discourses. He includes examples from such writers as Franz Grillparzer, Heinrich Gomperz, Hermann Broch, and Karl Popper, all of whom are representative of Austrian literary and intellectual history. The mainly anti-idealistic responses pertained to artistic and philosophical questions rather than to systematic philosophical issues. Against the background of the enduring seductiveness of Plato's thought, Schmidt-Dengler argues, the Austrian responses apparently strive to avoid a thorough discussion of Plato's metaphysics.

Fred Wilson argues for a more careful assessment of Freud's work, given recent criticism of the unscientific aspects of Freud's psychoanalytic method, in his article "The Vienna Circle and Freud." He discusses the examination of psychoanalysis in the works of Gustav Bergmann, who was one of the younger members of the Vienna Circle, and of Egon Brunswik, who was closely associated with this group. On the whole, both accepted the scientific claims of Freud despite some negative tendencies in psychoanalysis such as the teleological thinking so characteristic of German Romantic philosophy. After commenting on Adolf Grünbaum's work on the

methodological status of psychoanalysis, Wilson suggests that Freud provided reasonable grounds to consider his theory scientific even according to the criteria proposed by the Vienna Circle. The relationships between the Freudians in Vienna and the Vienna Circle were not merely personal; similar cultural and ethical aims on both sides situated them in broader philosophical contexts. Wilson concludes by looking at their shared background, which includes Nietzsche, neo-Kantian philosophy, and the traditions of Enlightenment and humanism.

In his article “Wittgenstein – Poetry and Literature,” Rudolf Haller explores the philosopher’s attitudes toward literature and art. According to Haller, Wittgenstein remained critical of cultural modernity; neither his writings nor his reading list renders examples of modern(ist) literature. Economic and social modernization as well as cultural and intellectual modernity from the turn of the century to the 1930s provide the background for his anti-modernistic responses. Haller emphasizes that Wittgenstein’s conservative taste in poetry and music should not be mistaken for political neo-conservatism. Wittgenstein’s exposure to the journals *Die Fackel* and *Der Brenner*, and his interest in Trakl, Anzengruber, Dostoevskii, and Tolstoi prove that to split Wittgenstein into the analytic philosopher, on the one hand, and the artist striving for perfection of form, on the other, is misleading. Haller states that unification of such a split character is a precondition for interpreting Wittgenstein’s views of culture. His concerns for language and, specifically, for form and style, are consistent with his views on life and life-form which, in turn, are bound up with questions of morality, faith, religious experience, and mysticism.

John Gibson shows in his article “Reality & The Language of Fiction,” how we can use Wittgenstein’s theory of language in the context of the theory of literature. The prevalent trend in many contemporary theories of literature, Gibson argues, is to conceive of literary language as a self-referential use of language, one which does not and cannot reach beyond the “world of the text” to touch the nature and reality of the world of the reader of literary texts. The late Wittgenstein demonstrates that since language provides our point of contact with reality, it is by examining the structure of language, of linguistic convention and practice, that we investigate our linguistic connection to reality. Literature, Gibson argues, is capable of providing this sort of Wittgensteinian investigation. Accordingly, the popular idea that we can segregate a literary text from reality is theoretically flawed, since literature’s use of a common social language reveals a way of understanding how it can weave our world into the very words it uses to construct its fictional worlds.

Newton Garver argues in his article “The ‘Silence’ of Wittgenstein and Kraus” that Wittgenstein’s famous slogan to keep silent whereof one cannot speak is more than the climactic expression of his philosophical program in his early book, the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein’s silence is instead a life-long practice, an activity rather than a mere absence of speaking, related to Goethe’s phrase “In the beginning was the deed.” Garver points out that this understanding of silence as an activity rather than an absence could also account for Wittgenstein’s admiration of the Quakers, a religious group whose practices have various parallels to Wittgenstein’s philosophical program. His views on silence as well as his life-long silence about political matters, Garver argues, were strongly influenced by Karl Kraus, an

extremely productive writer who, nevertheless, found silence the most effective reaction to some of the political developments in his lifetime, notably in his comment “I cannot think of anything to say about Hitler.”

Barry Smith discusses three interrelated topics at the heart of the thinking of Karl Kraus in his contribution “Kraus on Weininger, Kraus on Women, Kraus on Serbia.” In the first part of his paper Smith gives a concise outline of Otto Weininger’s position on sex, value, and morality. Smith shows that Weininger’s ethics is strongly influenced by Kant, and that Weininger formulates an extreme version of Kantian ethics, which he then applies to the distinction between male and female. In the second part of his paper, Smith argues that Kraus turns Weininger’s work on its head: Kraus, like Weininger, accepts the basic distinction between male and female aspects, but whereas Weininger detests female aspects and believes every person has a moral obligation to try to become more man and less woman, Kraus loves women precisely for their female aspects and criticises the attempts of some women to become man, as in the case of Alice Schalek, an Austrian war correspondent he disparages as a “male-female perversion.”

Concentrating on the theory of fiction, Dale Jacquette, in his article on “David Lewis on Meinongian Logic of Fiction,” defends Meinong’s position against objections raised by David Lewis. Meinongian semantic domains admit existent and nonexistent objects, including objects ostensibly referred to in works of fiction, and permit reference and true predication of constitutive properties to existent and nonexistent objects alike. Lewis proposes an alternative to Meinong’s object theory that considers the truth of a sentence in a work of fiction only within an explicit story-context. Jacquette argues that Lewis-style modal story-contexting is not incompatible with a Meinongian logic of fiction and suggests that it needs to be combined with a Meinongian semantics of fiction in order to avoid both Lewis’s objections to Meinongian object theory and Meinongian objections to Lewis’s story-context-prefixing.

A particular form of the relation between philosophy and literature, namely the actual meeting of a writer and a philosopher, is the topic of Wolfgang Huemer’s contribution to this volume. Huemer discusses a letter Edmund Husserl wrote Hugo von Hofmannsthal shortly after Hofmannsthal had visited him. In this letter, Husserl compares the phenomenological reduction to Hofmannsthal’s theory of aesthetic experience. The letter was written at a time when Husserl was just beginning to develop the phenomenological reduction and was still struggling with a way to introduce this new method. Huemer analyses why Husserl does not continue to use this comparison to introduce his new ideas. He shows that while the comparison had clear limitations for Husserl’s early version of the phenomenological reduction, a comparison with Hofmannsthal’s later aesthetic theory, especially his *Lord Chandos Letter*, could have provided Husserl with a strong tool to introduce his later version of the phenomenological method.

In his article “The ‘Soft Law’ of Austrian Historical Logic since the Enlightenment in the Arts and Sciences,” Mark E. Blum approaches the distinctive features of Austrian historical reasoning as in contrast to German traditions. National historical logics respond to political-social experience and are interpretive

norms that structure the understanding of how events of public and private life are ordered causally over time. Blum characterizes Austrian historical logic, which arose with the Habsburg authority in Europe, as a morphological logic that functions like a family dynasty. With its sense of an evolving form bridging times and places, this type of logic privileges the non-dramatic, non-dialectical, or the Gestalt. Examples from writers, philosophers, and political scientists support his claim that Austrian historical logic favors models of the “one in the many,” of interdependence and empathy.

In his article on “Mathematics in Musil,” Randall R. Dipert focuses on mathematics as an important leitmotif in Robert Musil’s work. He points out that Musil’s view of mathematical metaphysics lies close to his “secular mysticism,” but is notably different from the views of his contemporaries, such as Thomas Mann or Hermann Broch. Musil’s views are even further removed from the outright hostility toward scientific and excessively rational thinking, a hostility that flourished in the shadow of Heidegger and that came to be regarded as informing Nazism. Dipert argues that the traditional interpretation of Musil, according to which Musil is seen as a kind of literary exponent of logical positivism, is profoundly mistaken.

Jill Scott argues in her contribution “Oedipus Endangered: Atrian Incest and Ethical Relations in Musil’s *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*” that Musil’s masterpiece threatens the psychoanalytical master narrative of Freud’s Oedipus. Without staging a direct polemic, *Mann ohne Eigenschaften* has the Atrian myth of Electra usurp the singular, masculine-gendered subject position of the Oedipal model. In addition, the Electra myth serves as a platform for a critically engaged dialog with Ernst Mach’s theories of the provisional ego and sensation body. Tacitly referring, among others, to Johann Jacob Bachofen and Friedrich Nietzsche, the novel gives rise to a new ideal of femininity and an alternative relational ethics.

The state of morality in an epochal “Zerfall der Werte” is a core topic of Hermann Broch’s cultural-philosophical *Schlafwandler Trilogie*, which is a fine example of the late modernist novel in German-language literature. In his article “A Symposium as Ornament? Hermann Broch’s *Schlafwandler Trilogie* and the Discourse of Art and Philosophy in the Modern Novel,” Mark Grzeskowiak considers how Broch’s conception of a new type of novel based on unity is achieved in *Die Schlafwandler* and how it relates to modernist architectural debates around the *fin de siècle*. The passage “Symposion oder Gespräch über die Erlösung” from the trilogy’s third part “Huguenuau oder die Sachlichkeit” is singled out for the distinction between the ornament (which has contextual function) and decoration (which is purely aesthetic). If the whole trilogy, like this passage, is decorative, then the question about the novel’s status as (late) modernist might have to be reviewed in light of postmodernism.

We are extremely pleased that we can conclude this collection of studies with recent examples from the poetic work of Franz Josef Czernin. The contemporary Austrian writer is known for his diverse literary interests and techniques ranging from the traditional to the experimental. With publication beginning in 1978, his extensive work includes theoretical-critical texts and is informed by a highly self-reflective position. Austrian language criticism and Wittgensteinian philosophy are

just two of the contexts that Czernin competently and creatively engages with philosophical questions about language, poetics, and realism. Czernin both thematizes and applies such questions to his literary work without reducing poetic speech to a mere vehicle of theoretical claims.

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