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*Verdrängte Moderne—vergessene Avantgarde:
Diskurskonstellationen zwischen Literatur, Theater, Kunst
und Musik in Österreich 1918–1938* ed. by Primus-Heinz
Kucher (review)

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In going down such a narrow path, Mirecka excises the characters from the narrative complexities that surround them and thus does not fulfill the promise of her broad introductory chapters. Though one could certainly examine, for example, a novel like *Die Frau, nach der man sich sehnt* (1927) from a feminist perspective, such an analysis falls short if it does not take Brod's multidimensional humanism into consideration. For Brod, the notion of "die Frau, nach der man sich sehnt" opens up the possibility of something unchanging or transcendent in the seeming chaos of the modern world. In the end, Mirecka's analysis of Brod's fiction relies solely on the one-to-one correlation she establishes between his biography and his fiction. She rejects a sustained and close reading of the texts in order to reduce all of Brod's work to a two-fold question: Just how sexist are Brod's works and just how sexist is Max Brod himself? A more interesting approach would have acknowledged Brod's attempts to depict gender differences as the gateway for some kind of *human* longing for transcendence.

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Primus-Heinz Kucher, ed., *Verdrängte Moderne—vergessene Avantgarde: Diskurskonstellationen zwischen Literatur, Theater, Kunst und Musik in Österreich 1918–1938*. Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2016. 296 pp.

Primus-Heinz Kucher's collection of articles explores the Austrian interwar avant-garde, including its origins and legacy in the Second Republic. The scholarly debates on the German avant-garde in Berlin have traditionally overshadowed the influence of fin-de-siècle Vienna modernism and the role of the avant-garde in the cultural production of the First Republic. In his introduction Kucher takes note of this situation, which persisted until recently, as is evident from Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler's assessments of the literary spectrum of that time. The contributors to the volume *Verdrängte Moderne—vergessene Avantgarde* represent a variety of disciplines, including literary and cultural studies, literary history, theater and art history, and women's literature. Contemporary international methodologies inform the articles, whose authors are affiliated with Austrian and German, French, Polish, and Italian institutes. The majority of articles are historically and socially contextualized, addressing economic issues and the political power balance. This is the case in

Zoltan Peter's exploration of a moderate avant-garde as a third path between the extremes of anti-modernism and formalist experimentalism. Such a third path was envisioned by Vienna intellectuals such as architect Josef Frank, who, as Zoltan reveals, ascribed to the Austrian mentality a sense of realism that resisted the experimentalism practiced in the Weimar Republic. Barbara Lesák examines the rather short-lived Austrian avant-gardist stage projects with a focus on Visionaries and Utopists. Included in her discussion are Jakob Moreno Levy's project of the Theater ohne Zuschauer as well as Adolf Loos and Lajos Kassák. Anke Bosse explores technological innovations in stage theory and architecture since 1900 and the increasingly "unliterary" character of theater. She problematizes Karel Čapek's stage humanoids-robots and Kiesler's electro-mechanical stage, raising the question if kinetic art is still theater, or if the abstract and de-personalized presentations under discussion constitute different genres altogether. Jürgen Doll discusses Vienna's Social Democratic theater as a mass spectacle typified by choral declamatory works representing power relations and the class struggle that also serves as a counter initiative the more intimate political cabaret that preempted Jura Soyfer's proletarian art. Arturo Larcati discusses the reception of Italian Futurism in interwar Vienna and its key event, the inclusion of Futurists in the Vienna theater exhibit of 1924 that drew the engagement of intellectuals such as Friedrich Kiesler, whose impact on film Larcati notes as well. On the 1930s, political dimensions increasingly enter the discussion, and Larcati addresses possible concessions to Fascism by representatives of the Futurist movement.

The second part of the anthology deals with the interplay of progressive and moderate initiatives. The opening article by Evelyne Polt-Heinzl examines Oskar Strnad as a pioneer of modernism, his significance for generations of Viennese architects and artists, his influence on the architecture of "Red Vienna," his stage innovations and connections to modernists like Schnitzler, Krenek, and Reinhardt, and, finally, the difficulties he faced during the rise of fascism. Rebecca Unterberger discusses Ernst Krenek's position between progress and reaction in light of Adorno's theories on the avant-garde and Brecht's theatrical practice. Julia Bertschik's article contributes to the discussion by showing the difficulty of positioning specific journals vis-à-vis intellectual trends since market conditions, distribution, and the desideratum of mass appeal are not to be underestimated. Bertschik highlights *Querschnitt*, a venue used by authors such as Franz Blei, Ernst Schaukal, Alexander Lernet-Holenia, and Sigmund Freud, and reviews publications of Karl Kraus, Roda

Roda, Emil Kuh, even Billy Wilder. Bertschik's survey of *Querschnitt* reveals skillful marketing strategies and makes explicit the coexistence of disparate trends. Primus-Heinz Kucher investigates the debates in the journal *Musikblätter im Anbruch* with attention to conceptual links involving music theory, architecture, and sculpture. He emphasizes the ambivalence of the avant-garde, which is obvious from the debates and the cultural production. He concludes that such ambivalence is characteristic of international musical modernism and avant-gardism. Suggesting that atonalism could be a fad in some cases and a genuine innovation in others, he points to Schönberg to argue that traditionalism was often an integral part of avant-gardist forms.

Part 3 examines movements that run parallel to the avant-garde without displaying its formalist experimentation. Walter Fähnders reviews vagabond literati such as Hugo Sonnenschein, whom Erich Mühsam assigned an avant-garde position. The anti-literature and anti-establishment mode of living taken up by the vagabond poets can be understood as a new cultural initiative. In addition, Fähnders detects interests and ideas that the vagabond intellectuals shared with the political left. Vivien Boxberger's interpretation of Mela Hartwig's *Das Verbrechen* is the only article in the volume that thematizes the female avant-garde and its gender-specific configurations. In light of the particular marginalization of women, these avant-garde expressions are often overlooked or not recognized. Hartwig's deconstruction of the psychoanalytical model and her construct of the "new daughter" have ensured her place in the Austrian avant-garde. It is regrettable that no other female authors such as Else Feldmann or Paula Ludwig were included in the discussions. Jürgen Egyptien discusses journalist and writer Ernst Fischer's views on drama and stage practice and Fischer's leftist politics in conjunction with his dramatic projects centering on political figures like Lenin or Lasalle. Egyptien establishes a close correlation between Fischer's approach and his dramas, in which he tried to shape aesthetic forms appropriate to the era. The concluding article by Aneta Jachimowicz on journalist and painter Rudolf Brunngraber, a close associate of political economist and philosopher Otto Neurath, presents a detailed analysis of Brunngraber's novel *Karl und das 20. Jahrhundert*. Jachimowicz acknowledges the innovations the novel makes but remains unconvinced of the effectiveness of the blend of statistics, sociology, and fiction. She criticizes the language of science in the novel, which, she concludes, merely illustrates the problems of the time without capturing the human dimension.

The anthology is compellingly structured, moving from avant-garde ae-

stheticism and artistic experimentation to a broader understanding of the avant-garde. These excellent articles expand the range of the ongoing scholarly discussions and make an important contribution to the field of interdisciplinary Austrian Studies.

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Hannah Markus, *Ilse Aichingers Lyrik: Das gedruckte Werk und die Handschriften*. Edited by Beate Kellner and Claudia Stockinger. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015. 336 pp.

Until the publication of Hannah Markus's study, Ilse Aichinger's poetic work had not been critically assessed and explored in its entirety. Compared to the author's postwar novel *Die größere Hoffnung* and her prose and dramatic texts, the extraordinary quality of her poems had been acknowledged, but not a single study had focused on this aspect of her oeuvre. In light of the political debates of the 1960s and 1970s and the priority given to prose and political theater at that time, lyric poetry as a genre had lost its appeal for readers, students, and critics as well as for authors. Aichinger had written and published a significant body of poetry during the postwar era, but like other poets of her generation, including Ingeborg Bachmann, she gave priority to different genres.

According to Hannah Markus the majority of Aichinger's poems, which had been published in different venues individually or in smaller groupings in the 1950s to 1970s, are collected in the volume *Verschenkter Rat* (1978), and in the latter's expanded version (1991), which appeared under the umbrella of the edition of Aichinger's collected works. Markus writes that the Aichinger files in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach contain a large number of lyric texts and drafts that reveal that the author never stopped writing poetry. Markus mentions eight folders of poems and poetic sketches, many of which still await cataloguing (166). These materials include different versions of poems, thus providing insight into Aichinger's creative processes and development.

Markus is the first scholar to provide a scholarly book-length study dedicated exclusively to Aichinger's poetry. She takes into consideration essential elements of text production, assessment, and interpretation. In her extensive