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*Poetologie und Epistemologie: Schreibstragien und  
Autorschaftskonzepte in Arthur Schnitzlers medizinischen  
Texten* by Klara Gross-Elixmann (review)

Monica Strauss

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After 1869, Göderle follows larger debates about statistics and national censuses within Europe's scientific community. Topics include the pursuit of objectivity, the grounding of objectivity in statistics, and the increasing belief that statistics could represent reality objectively. This belief and these pursuits came at the same time as questions regarding language, *Volksstämme*, and ethnicity emerged within the general academic community. It was from this larger academic community, and not necessary from the Habsburg state itself, that questions regarding language in the Austrian census were finally introduced in 1880. From there Göderle is able to use all the theoretical knowledge he covered in the preceding pages, including concepts of action-network theory, to bring together the different strands of argumentation in the book. The result is that Göderle shows the different roots of ethnicization in Austrian Central Europe. Ethnicization sprung from this network of people, from the tools of knowledge used by the state in its state-building process, and from the scientific pursuit of objectivity itself as a way of understanding the diversity of peoples and spaces and history.

We have, for a long time, understood the grounding of nations in the concept of an imagined community. Göderle tells us, in this excellent volume, how that imagination works.

John Deak  
*University of Notre Dame*

Klara Gross-Elixmann, *Poetologie und Epistemologie: Schreibstrategien und Autorschaftskonzepte in Arthur Schnitzlers medizinischen Texten*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2016. 350 pp.

A considerable tome, this PhD dissertation completed by Klara Gross-Elixmann at the Ruhr University, Bochum, in 2016 is intended to give Schnitzler's medical texts the same attention as those written by his fellow author-physicians Gottfried Benn and Alfred Döblin. Schnitzler's contributions to the field appeared in the *Wiener Medizinische Presse* in 1886 and the *Internationale klinische Rundschau* from 1887 to 1894. Both publications were edited by his father, Dr. Johann Schnitzler. The young doctor wrote reviews (both detailed and perfunctory) covering some of the key medical controversies of the time, essays that took a stand on professional ethics and the state of hospitals and summaries of the proceedings of medical congresses.

In addition, his first and only research paper appeared in the *Internationale klinische Rundschau* in 1889. Though Gross-Elixmann acknowledges the pioneering efforts of Horst Thomé, Michael Worbs, Hillary Hope Herzog, and Laura Otis, among others, in publishing and bringing attention to Schnitzler's medical journalism, she insists that their analyses lack the close scrutiny offered by literary theory. This perspective, she proposes, not only allows for subtle distinctions between Schnitzler as author (figure of authority), reviewer (knowledgeable reader), or simply messenger (performer of editorial tasks) but also highlights the narrative strategies that scientific and literary discourse share.

The five chapters cover Schnitzler's critical take in his reviews, his outlook on the relationship between doctor and patient, his use of the protocol of the case history, his language critique, and his approach to experiment in both his research and literary efforts. Three of the chapters present linear parallels between medical and literary texts, rather than the promised comparison of structural strategies. In the first, concerning Schnitzler's reviews of books on syphilis, hypnosis, addiction, and heredity, the connection to literary material relies on theme rather than structure. Gross-Elixmann cites *Andreas Thameyer's letzter Brief* (the power of suggestion), *Mein Freund Ypsilon* (genius and madness), and *Reigen* (which Gross-Elixmann reads, like Otis, as a metaphor for syphilitic contagion). The same can be said of her analysis of Schnitzler's skeptical views of the medical profession in his *Sylvesterbetrachtungen* and the reports from medical congresses. They are directly reflected in the ambiguous roles played by the physicians in *Das Vermächtnis*, *Der Weg ins Freie*, and *Dr. Bernhardt*, among others. And in the chapter that analyzes Schnitzler's "Sprachkritik," the link between a review rejecting euphemisms for syphilis and the criticism of communication in *Das Wort* is forced. The former represented an attempt to veil the truth, the latter made an irresponsible game of it.

It is in her focus on the structural influence of two medical paradigms—the case history and the experiment—that the author does present new insights into Schnitzler's techniques. For the narrative form of case histories, Gross-Elixmann relies on the four-part sequence elucidated by Nicholas Pethes: "Die Biographik, die Dramaturgie der Wendepunkte, das Interesse an Normabweichung und der Anspruch des Exemplarischen" (51). Using this framework, she presents a detailed study of the case histories in Schnitzler's research paper "Über funktionelle Aphonie und deren Behandlung durch

Hypnose und Suggestion” and discusses the manner in which the genre is adapted in the novellas *Sterben*, *Leutnant Gustl*, and *Fräulein Else*.

In *Sterben*, written in 1892, the case history format leaves little room for the characters to develop in depth—as Schnitzler, himself, recognized. Gross-Elixmann cites his 1904 letter to Hugo von Hoffmanstahl years after it was published: “Es stammt aus der Zeit wo mich der Fall mehr interessiert hat als die Menschen, und ich denke das meiste aus dieser Epoche muss wie luftlos wirken.” Though both *Leutnant Gustl* and *Fräulein Else* can also be tied to the same narrative structure, by the time they were written Schnitzler had figured out how to bring “air” into the medical prototype. He presented the “case” not only in the first person but from within.

During Schnitzler’s time at the Vienna Medical School, the basic text on the experimental method was Dr. Claude Bernard’s 1865 publication *Einführung in das Studium der experimentellen Medizin*. Bernard specified the three stages of an experiment—an observer provokes a situation with an aim in mind, follows up with comparisons, comes to a grounded judgment. Schnitzler adapted the form in fiction by moving a character from a familiar situation to a new one, comparing the results of the change, but then allowing the reader to be the judge of the outcome. This pattern is clearly seen in *Die Frage an das Schicksal*, *Paracelsus*, and *Hirtenflöte*.

Karen Gross-Elixmann’s book is an encyclopedic venture offering a wide range of observations on the strategies—medical and aesthetic—by which knowledge (material, ethical, psychological) is conveyed in the two disciplines Schnitzler commanded. And yet is it possible to do entirely without biography in such an enterprise, as the author does? Surely, some personal statements such as the one the twenty-five-year-old Schnitzler made in his diary on March 10, 1887, should be taken into account: “Größenteils besorgt noch der Papa meine Agenden. Ich bin überhaupt kein Journalist—gewiss kein Medizinischer!” Soon after his father’s death, Schnitzler left journalism, never to take it up again. His feelings about the genre must have had something to do with his “Schreibstrategien und Autorschaftskonzepte.” The ironic tone of many of his medical texts, for instance, which goes unexamined by Gross-Elixmann, may find its source there.

Monica Strauss  
*Independent scholar*