

MODERN = AUSTRIAN LITERATURE

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CONTENTS

From the Editor	i
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Contributors	iv

=Articles

ERIC KLAUS

A Modern Gnostic: Gustav Meyrink's *Der Engel vom westlichen Fenster*

1

During the *fin de siècle* there was no unifying epistemological paradigm, which led to a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety. While many advocated science as a means to find truth, Gustav Meyrink (1868–1932) developed his own formula: occultist gnosis. Meyrink believed that one could gain insight into the secrets of existence by pursuing knowledge through supernatural means. He often promoted yoga as a means of acquiring hidden knowledge, but in his final novel, *Der Engel vom westlichen Fenster* (1927), the path to truth and to the self is revealed through alchemy and remembering past lives.

EVA KUTTENBERG

Soma, Psyche, Corpse, and Gaze: Perception and Vision in Arthur Schnitzler's Early Prose Fiction

21

After setting Arthur Schnitzler's visual aesthetics in dialogue with key issues in visual culture and mapping links between cinematic and literary practices, this article explores vision as a preeminent poetic strategy in his early prose works *Sterben* (1894), "Der Ehrentag" (1897), and "Das neue Lied" (1905). It argues that these texts mark a "pictorial turn" (Mitchell) in Vienna modernism. Through a dynamic interplay of visual, narrative, and social practices, they present an eloquent cultural critique of aestheticizing death, along with mental and physical illness. Close textual analysis focuses on Schnitzler's techniques of rendering the human body and psyche visually by graphically depicting the progress of terminal illness, depression, and disability.

JAKOB NORBERG

The Black Book: Karl Kraus's *Etiquette*.....

45

The conduct book stakes out the boundaries of correct behavior, making in-

structions for self-management available to anyone who strives for easy social integration. Given its close relation to the mores of the educated classes, it is a rather unlikely genre to employ for the misanthrope looking to repudiate society. Yet in a series of articles in 1905/06 in his journal *Die Fackel*, the Viennese satirist Karl Kraus alluded to this genre, sharpening its rules to the point of absurdity as a means to completely close down rather than facilitate societal exchange. In Kraus's etiquette, bad manners come to include all manners. The study of this little-known project enables us to understand Kraus's obsessive preoccupation with clichéd speech as a critical response to the pathologies of communal life around 1900.

FLEMMING FINN HANSEN

Autobiographie als Diskurs. Zur Autobiographie von Elias Canetti 67

How is autobiography as a classical form of "humanism," of individualist self-representation, still possible in our age of postmodernity? The article examines the unique ways in which elements of classical autobiography are transformed in Elias Canetti's autobiography, and seeks to qualify widespread beliefs that it is built primarily on Goethe-like forms of autobiographical representation. On the contrary, a discursive layer can be detected in the text; Canetti adapts and "saves" autobiography by partly transforming classical humanist and individualist ideas of personality into discourses, making it possible to re-establish a relation between individual life and history, and making both personality and its development manifest through linguistic games of power.

PETER SCHALLMAYER

Der Sturz in die Tiefe: Paradoxes in Thomas Bernhards Kurztex

"Ernst" 95

"Ernst," part of the collection *Der Stimmenimitator*, exemplifies difficulties typically encountered in interpreting a text by Thomas Bernhard. A structural approach suggests that the main difficulty is a logical paradox that prevents the determinability of each statement. A re-reading with Gregory Bateson reveals a pattern resulting from the disease schizophrenia and offers access to Bernhard's oeuvre as a whole: Despite all efforts, the "Schizosemie" interrupts both meaning and interpretation and literally drives the protagonist mad, finally leading to his death.

≡Reviews

Szilvia Ritz, *Der Österreich-Begriff in Schnitzlers Schaffen: Analyse seiner Erzählungen*.

FELIX W. TWERASER 107

MODERN AUSTRIAN LITERATURE

Simon Ganahl, <i>Ich gegen Babylon: Karl Kraus und die Presse im Fin de Siècle</i> . PAUL REITTER	108
Hyuck Zoon Kwon, <i>Der Sündenfallmythos bei Franz Kafka. Der biblische Sündenfallmythos in Kafkas Denken und dessen Gestaltung in seinem Werk</i> . RENATE S. POSTHOFEN	110
Gerald Sommer, <i>Heimito von Doderer: "Technische Mittel". Fragmente einer Poetik des Schreibhandwerks</i> . VINCENT KLING	113
Klaus Kastberger und Nicole Streitler, Hrsg., <i>Vampir und Engel. Zur Genese und Funktion der Fräulein-Figur im Werk Ödön von Horváths</i> . KARL MÜLLER	116
Georg Markus, <i>Die Hörbigers. Biographie einer Familie</i> . ROBERT VON DASSANOWSKY	121
Inge Cevela, Hrsg., <i>Zumutungen. Lene Mayer-Skumanz und die religiöse Kinderliteratur</i> . ANGELA GULIELMETTI	124
Ingrid Pfeiffer, <i>Scheidewege der Worte. Literatur in österreichischen Zeitschriften 1945–1948</i> . JOSEPH MCVEIGH	127
Bernhard Fetz and Hannes Schweiger, Hrsg., <i>Spiegel und Maske: Konstruktionen biographischer Wahrheit</i> . LORELY FRENCH	129
Michael Hansel und Martin Wedl, Hrsg., <i>Österreichisches Literaturarchiv—Die ersten 10 Jahre</i> . JÖRG THUNECKE	132
Charlotte Kohn, <i>Luftfrauen: Der Mythos einer jüdischen Frauenidentität</i> . HILLARY HERZOG	133
Jill Knight Weinberger, <i>Vienna Voices. A Traveler Listens to the City of Dreams</i> . DONALD G. DAVIAU	136