

know about the contentious roles language, race, and religion played in nationalist associations around the turn of the century. And, despite introducing us to a range of relatively unknown actors in the Kaiserreich, it does little to help us better understand the character of Imperial Germany which, this reviewer suspects, was articulated more through the inconsistencies in these movements, their lack of an overarching ideology and organization, and their many failures, than through their consistencies and their links to similar movements decades later. Scholars seeking information about *völkische* associations or the people who created them will find much in this volume of interest. Those seeking insights into either the links between National Socialism and the Wilhelminian era or the character of Imperial Germany, however, will find little that is new.

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Eros and Inwardness in Vienna: Weininger, Musil, Doderer. By David Luft. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2003. Pp. xiv + 257. \$35.00. ISBN 0-226-49647-3.

Reviewing David Luft's fine *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture* when it appeared in 1980, I remarked that it was a pity that Luft had not explored the connections between Musil's thought and Otto Weininger's bizarre, but highly influential, views about female sexuality and the demand for sexual continence on the part of men. With this new book, David Luft endeavors to fill that gap adding Heimito von Doderer in the framework of a discussion of the conflict between two ideologies, scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism, to form a picture of how eroticism emerged as a central theme in Viennese thought from the fin de siècle to the early days of the Second Republic. Luft thus continues one important strain in the work of Carl Schorske, whose analysis of the previous generation is presupposed. His provocative thesis about Viennese eroticism is: "Weininger recoiled from the dominance of the natural sciences in the intellectual world of liberal Vienna, Musil embraced it, and Doderer tried to find a way beyond it" (p. 28). Not unsurprisingly, then, Musil turns out to be the central figure in the study, which in fact revolves around the question of what becomes of ethics after Nietzsche. Luft takes this question to be one that was forced upon the alienated generation that grew to maturity after 1900, whose experiences were formed by the Russian Revolution, the disastrous introduction of universal suffrage in the western half of the monarchy, and the virtually total polarization between Christian Socials and Social Democrats that had developed by then. Weininger's, Musil's, and Doderer's views about the meaning of the profound tension between sexuality and the

demands of rationality are thus depicted against the backdrop of these intellectual and political dynamics with a view to appreciating the intellectual struggles and strategies that we find in *Geschlecht und Charakter*, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, and *Die Dämonen* respectively.

This is not light fare and, despite the encomia of a number of prominent historians on the dust jacket, Luft only partially succeeds in satisfying the interdisciplinary demands that his subject imposes upon him. Musil, understandably in a work by a leading authority, receives the best treatment. His *chef d'oeuvre*, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Luft reminds us, is an inquiry into the nature of love and no mere satire on "Kakania." Already in essays in the 1920s like "The German Personality as Symptom," the fascination with the irreducible polarity between "precision" and "soul" that is so central to *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* is clearly present. Luft rightly argues that Musil's greatness attaches to his refusal to play off reason against emotion or vice versa, but instead to describe their monumental struggle to coexist in his characters in all its intensity. Like Jean-Pierre Cometti in *Robert Musil ou l'alternative romanesque*, Luft believes that Musil ended up very close to Wittgenstein's view that the most important things in life cannot be put into scientific theories but must be written as fiction.

There is much food for thought with respect to what is typically Austrian since the Second World War in Luft's presentation of Doderer. In his oeuvre, which is clearly developed in reaction to both Weininger and Musil, Doderer represents the irrational as a neurotic fixation upon one's own sexuality that resembles totalitarian ideology inasmuch as it entails a flight into unreality. Reality, on the other hand, is contrasted with apperception, which is reflective self-observation, in effect, a kind of transcendental voyeurism. In this situation sexuality comes to assume a spiritual significance as an object of self-reflection. At the same time such a conception of reflection becomes the basis for a conservative critique of ideology. In effect, it is the old Nazi-become-Catholic's strategy for coping with a world in which he has become a victim of his own solipsistic psychic urges. Unconditional apperception with the minimum of preconceptions, in effect accepting a kind of "feminine" sexuality à la Weininger in oneself, is the way to come to grips with the irrational in the world. If such stoicism is really typical of the Second Republic, as Luft suggests, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna* should open up a wider discussion of issues about culture and society in the Second Republic.

The treatment of Weininger's moral critique of a sex-ridden society is less successful in part because Luft does not seem to be aware of important literature such as Waltraud Hirsch's *Eine unbescheidene Charakterologie* with its critical overview of Weininger's texts and extensive documentation, or Habib Malik's definitive *Receiving Søren Kierkegaard*. In many cases Luft treats tensions in Weininger's thought as though they were full-blown contradictions, often from

an inability to follow Weininger's abstruse argumentation. However, Luft continually resists succumbing to the myriad clichés surrounding Weininger and urges his reader to do likewise while providing a largely reliable guide to Weininger's "genderizing" of everything relating to "modernity." What Luft does not do is to ask what it was about Viennese society and above all *die Wiener Moderne*, that prompted Weininger to do that. This is unfortunate; for Weininger's answer to that question is closer to Carl Schorske's than many people might believe.

Further, overestimating some of Weininger's remarks about the inadequacy of science to represent the problem of the relationship between the sexes adequately, Luft fails to investigate the role of science in Weininger's enterprise as a whole — for a book that purports to concern the conflict between scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism there is virtually no history of science in the book at all. What is scientific in Musil's acceptance of Mach? There is much to be said for the case that scientific materialism is much more an ideology of science, like monism, than truly representative of it. Moreover, developments in the history and philosophy of science since Michael Polanyi, who emphasized the role of feeling in scientific understanding, and Thomas Kuhn and Co., who have thoroughly revamped our notion of scientific rationality, are at least deserving of mention in a study of this nature. Be that as it may, Weininger's main contention is not that science is wrong about the nature of eroticism but that it cannot answer the deepest questions about it adequately. Thus science has to be complemented by literature and philosophy à la Goethe.

Luft is sometimes vague with respect to the clarification of important terminology. For example, Doderer's crucial notion of "apperception" is elusive as is the author's account of the role of the Thomistic *analogia entis* in his thinking. The alleged connections between these figures are not particularly well documented. In addition the footnotes do not always seem to support what they should. Finally, the tension between scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism from which Luft proceeds has a way of disappearing without trace by the time he gets to Doderer.

In the end the reader has the sense of a lively encounter with interesting and important ideas in need of further documentation and wider articulation, especially with respect to their social context. Doubtless the style and substance of Luft's *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna* insures that it will be read, but it should be read with a critical eye. It is a welcome contribution to understanding Viennese culture and what became of it.

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