

Hödl, Klaus. *Entangled Entertainers: Jews and Popular Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*

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Caroline A. Kita

Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri, USA
Email: CKITA@wustl.edu

Klaus Hödl's *Entangled Entertainers: Jews and Popular Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* is a richly documented case study of Viennese *Volkssänger* at the turn of the twentieth century. Expanding on his previous work on performance as a lens for reading Jewish and non-Jewish encounters in Austria and the former Habsburg imperial lands, this monograph offers two critical contributions. First, Hödl focuses our attention on the questions of cultural identity and belonging in the lower-class milieus of Vienna around 1900, rather than the bourgeoisie, which have until now received the majority of scholarly attention. Second, Hödl presents a new theoretical framework for analyzing and interpreting Jewish self-understanding: *inclusive difference*. This concept rejects "dichotomous approaches to describing human interactions or cultural comparisons" (9), drawing attention instead to similarities, congruences, and other points of intersection between Jews and non-Jews in this cultural moment.

Entangled Entertainers begins with an introduction to the study of Viennese popular culture around 1900. Hödl reveals the challenges of reconstructing an accurate picture of this period, as incomplete documentation of events in both Jewish and non-Jewish newspapers and the use of stage names among popular entertainers have obscured the role that Jews played as creators and consumers of popular culture. Chapter 2 introduces the prominent *Volkssänger* troupes in Vienna at the turn of the century as culturally mixed "interstitial spaces" where interactions between Jews and non-Jews were commonplace (65). This heterogeneous milieu was mirrored in *Volkssänger* performances, where it was not always possible to distinguish Jewishness. Two of Hödl's most compelling examples are the use of "Jewish Jargon" in *Volkssänger* plays, "a German-language idiom colored with elements of Yiddish and corresponding intonation" (53), and the blending of stereotypically Jewish characters and cultural references with Czech or other Eastern European cultural identities (49).

In the third chapter, Hödl addresses his primary case study: the so-called *Volkssänger* war that took place between leaders of key performing groups in Vienna in 1901–2. His documentation of this event, traced through a series of open letters published in newspapers and debates that took place in public fora, reveals surprising and contradictory expressions of Jewish self-understanding and anti-Jewish sentiment. The conflict was sparked by the question of whether Hungarian *Volkssänger* troupes should be allowed to perform in Vienna. A central protagonist of this story is Jewish theater actor and director Alfred Hirsch, whose support of Hungarian troupes such as the *Folies Caprice* was viewed as a betrayal by many of his fellow artisans. In this "war," antisemitic rhetoric was mobilized to demonize Hirsch and his allies. Yet, Hödl's reconstruction of the conflict ultimately reveals that it was personal and professional interests rather than racial or religious prejudices that determined the composition of the opposing camps, suggesting that "both antisemitism and close, private relationships with Jews existed in Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century and were not necessarily mutually exclusive" (109). Hirsch's response to antisemitic attacks during the *Volkssänger* war also reveal ambiguous attitudes toward Jewishness. For Hirsch, Hödl writes, Jewishness was defined neither by religion nor by a primordial ethnic community but rather by "a performative community, which presupposes the active engagement of members in solidarity building actions" (103). Thus, Hirsch's Jewish self-understanding was not fixed but "fragmented" and performative, manifesting in different ways in different contexts (113).

In the fourth chapter, Hödl addresses the ways that Viennese Jews more broadly inscribed themselves into the Austrian cultural community through alternative perceptions of space and time.

A prime example is the topos of Old Vienna (*Alt-Wien*), an idealized image of the Viennese outskirts that captured a nostalgia for a simpler time that seemed increasingly imperiled by urbanization and industrialization. Old Vienna features in the works of many Jewish artists at the turn of the century as a space that signifies the peaceful and productive coexistence between Jews and non-Jews. Such images were mobilized by Jewish artists such as Hirsch to convey the idea of a “continuous Jewish presence” in Vienna, thereby establishing a “counternarrative to the history of anti-Jewish animosity” (124, 142).

In his final chapter, Hödl articulates a new paradigm for understanding the lived experiences of Jews in Austria around 1900 that takes into account these moments of congruence with non-Jews: *inclusive difference*. Hödl’s work on performativity in Jewish culture has played an important role in shaping the recent wave of scholarship pushing back against narratives of assimilation or acculturation. Joining scholars such as Steven Aschheim (*Times of Crisis*, [Madison, 2001]) and Scott Spector (*Modernism without Jews*, [Bloomington, 2018]), he has challenged the assimilationist implication that Jews integrated into German and Austrian culture in a unidirectional movement, transforming from “outsiders” to “insiders.” Like Lisa Silverman (*Becoming Austrians*, [Oxford, 2012]), Hödl shares a broader understanding of Jewishness as a cultural construct of otherness that was constantly being redefined by Jews and non-Jews alike (a framework that Silverman has termed *Jewish difference*). Yet, with *inclusive difference*, Hödl shifts the focus from the construction of Jews as “others” to the points of intersection between Jews and non-Jews. To do so, he draws on Anil Batti’s definition of similarity: a divergence from dichotomous categories that acknowledges “neither total distinction nor complete alignment” (158) between two entities. The lens of *inclusive difference*, Hödl argues, does not ignore cultural distinctions but rather acknowledges the meaningful points of contact between Jews and non-Jews and shared experiences found in particular historical contexts. Hödl makes a convincing case that *inclusive difference*—and the recognition of similarity more generally—might help to undermine the “dependence on normative cultures” that underpins assimilationist narratives (159).

Hödl’s monograph, presented in an expert translation by Corey Twitchell, offers a persuasive methodological approach and an in-depth look at an understudied area of Austrian history that will pique the interest of historians of Austrian Jewish culture and of popular culture at the turn of the twentieth century. Its presentation of *inclusive difference* offers a fresh approach to thinking about Jewishness as a cultural construct, illuminating the ways in which the lived experiences of Austrian Jews have defied (and continue to defy) the dualistic paradigms that history seeks to impose upon them.

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Kolkenbrock, Marie. *Stereotype and Destiny in Arthur Schnitzler’s Prose: Five Psycho-Sociological Readings*

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Doreen Densky

New York University, New York, New York, USA

Email: doreen.densky@nyu.edu

Within the established discourse of crisis and identity in Arthur Schnitzler’s prose, Marie Kolkenbrock’s study offers a compelling addition with an original focus. She discerns how the Viennese author represents the psychosociological mechanisms behind a form of Habsburg nostalgia that romanticizes a seemingly stable social order. Under the monarchy’s crumbling social structures around 1900, many of Schnitzler’s privileged male protagonists paradoxically strive to be recognized as part of the norm and, at the same time, to be assured of a place outside of the norm. Connected