

types within a work, parlays nicely with Lucia Ruprecht's recent noteworthy monograph *Gestural Imaginaries* (Oxford 2019).

Drawing on a rich variety of archival materials, literary and artistic works, and socio-historical examples, this transdisciplinary book demonstrates the relevance of rigorous humanistic inquiry that brings fields of medicine, art, literature, and dance into conversation. In short, the aptly titled book *The Naked Truth* convincingly argues for the importance of the body, medicine, and movement as central to our understanding of Viennese Modernism and constitutes a significant contribution to the fields of Modernist, German, and Austrian Studies.

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—Meagan K. Tripp

### **Karl Kraus and the Discourse of Modernity.**

By Ari Linden. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2020. 216 pages + 2 b/w images. \$99.95 hardcover, \$39.95 paperback or e-book.

Many books are published about modernist thought and aesthetic philosophies of the early twentieth century, and Ari Linden's study, based on his dissertation and expertly revised for a broader audience, adds to the copious literature on intellectual concepts that emerged from the traumatic experiences during Europe's twentieth century. Yet Linden's approach of bringing the satirical literary writings by Karl Kraus (1874–1936) into dialogue with the three philosopher-critics Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and Søren Kierkegaard is novel. Kraus, who founded the journalistic publication *Die Fackel* (The Torch) in 1899 and, after 1911, was the sole author of most issues, achieved fame as a scathing critic of contemporary society. In particular, he directed his critical satire at the language of the press, especially of the feuilleton that, in Kraus's opinion, callously conflated the promised objectivity in journalism and the imaginative quality of literature, and the press's dubious relationship to party politics, the fascist mindset, and waging war. He was known as the 'Great Hater,' who detested the press's careless attitude toward the influence of journalistic writings. He loathed the powers of the press. Linden notes that, even though Kraus's criticism was not always fair and just, his method "consistently draws our attention to the notion that the representation of the world is filtered through the whim of a writer or the private interests that their newspaper serves but often conceals—and more significantly, that this world is, subsequently, altered according to its representation" (6).

Most scholars have treated Kraus as a local (Austrian/Viennese) phenomenon in the tradition of language-oriented satirical criticism (such as Edward Timms, Marjorie Perloff, Stanley Corngold, Paul Reitter, Leo Lensing, Sander Gilman, and others). Linden, on the other hand, claims that Kraus's texts are "inextricable from larger discourses concerning the predicaments of modernity—the subject's role within the public sphere; the relationship between language and power; and the dialectic of progress and destruction" (6). Therefore, he pursues systematically "the question of how illiberal forces, regimes, and ways of thinking develop within, and in virtue of, a liberal framework" (6) throughout this well-structured study that consists of four sections: Introduction; Part I with three chapters, each dedicated to the literary analysis of one major work by Kraus; Part II with two chapters dealing with the impact of

Kraus's work on the discourses of modernity; and Coda with reflections on the relevance of Kraus's work after his death until today.

In the "Introduction" subtitled "Toward a Krausian Theory of Modernity," Linden first develops his thesis meticulously and makes a concerted effort to explain Kraus's unique form of satire. Not only does he explore Kraus's own reflections on the function of satire, humor, and laughter, he also consults Georg Lukács's 1932 theoretical essay on the aesthetics of satire, in which the literary critic identifies the satirist as one who is filled with "heiliger Haß," the "revolutionary and self-authorized vitriol" (8) which, so Kraus, triggers an "earthly laughter" that awakens the "audience from its slumber and makes it more alert or sensitive to a reality otherwise obscured" (11). Therefore, Kraus's satire is a necessary response to war and, according to Linden, has to be read as a "counterdiscourse" that "creeps" (Benjamin) into the object of critique and becomes "an immanent feature of both his modernism and his critique of modernity" (12).

The three chapters of Part I are dedicated to *The Last Days of Mankind* (1915–1922), *Cloudcuckooland* (1923), and *Third Walpurgis Night* (1933/1952). The chapters' subtitles cleverly foreshadow the gist of the ensuing investigations and deliberations on the lost causes of World War I, the flawed experiments of social democracy, and the perils of fascism and National Socialism: Chapter One "Reciting War," Chapter Two "On Birds, Wars, and Fragile Republics," and Chapter Three "Where Illegality becomes the Law." Throughout his scholarly examinations of these three works, Linden generously quotes Kraus and provides the English translation side-by-side, which makes Kraus's biting satirical texts, some of them real and others invented journalistic sound-bites, more accessible and intelligible.

The detailed explanations of his interpretive methods and succinct account of his scholarly objectives that Linden lays out in the introductory chapter indubitably help the reader maneuver successfully through the complex theoretical questions that he confronts in Part II's Chapter Four on Kierkegaard, Kraus, and Benjamin, and Chapter Five on Adorno and Kraus. He redirects his attention to focus on the broader implications of Kraus's critiques and sets out to show that the writings of the author and journalist in relation to the critical philosophies of Adorno, Benjamin, and Kierkegaard "can be understood as something of a cipher" (13). The subtitle "Dialogues" stems from his understanding (referencing Benjamin's theory of translation) that there exists a "process of reciprocal illumination" (13) between Kraus's work and Adorno's views on authenticity and critique of origin(s), Benjamin's ideas about the relationship between public opinion and authority, and Kierkegaard's concept of "leveling" by quantifying the individual experience. Linden's discussion on Kraus's strong affinity for Kierkegaard's views is fascinating because it displays clearly the "fundamental concerns with regard to the shortcomings of the modern, bourgeois public sphere" that both shared and both viewed "as self-destructive" (102). Indeed, Theodor Haecker, who wrote several studies on Kierkegaard in the pre-WWI years, called Kraus "the closest living descendent of the Danish philosopher" (93). Linden's treatise on Benjamin and Kraus is equally enlightening as he provides ample evidence of the philosopher-critic's understanding of Kraus "as a figure [. . .] who 'wrenches' from his age its excesses" (112) and *Die Fackel* as an emancipated ("redeemed") newspaper that shouts out the latest news "of war and pestilence, of cries of murder and pain" (112–13). Thus, Linden proclaims, Benjamin teases out "the political im-

plications of a press critique in the language of dialectics” (113). The intellectual relationship between Adorno and Kraus is the subject of Chapter Five titled “Origin Is the Goal.” Divided into several subchapters (including one on “Kraus contra Heidegger,” 131–35), Linden articulately leads through his reading of Adorno’s critique of origin-philosophies (“jargon of authenticity”) and offers persuasive arguments for relating it to Kraus’s rebuke of the homogenizing “tone” (Kierkegaard’s “leveling”) in journalism that not only infiltrates the political realm but also intrudes into the private sphere (138). His advice that “it is worth considering the way Adorno related to Kraus through his own process of mimesis: integrating Kraus’s polemical methodology into his own [particularly his late] writing” (141) concludes this chapter.

Finally, in “Coda,” the fourth and last section subtitled “‘Shadows Cast Bodies.’ Kraus and Posterity,” Linden addresses Kraus’s legacy from 1945 to the present. Therefore, it is not surprising that he attempts to relate Kraus’s insights to today’s social-media platforms that not only enable the emancipation of social movements but also give rise to the propagation of hate speech and the dissemination of false information (“fake news”). He concludes his brief yet astute discussion by affirming the importance of Kraus’s contributions as a central theorist of modernity and by prompting us to read more closely and to listen more attentively to Karl Kraus.

Ari Linden’s book on Kraus is a well-researched and well-presented study that despite its challenging topics is a pleasant read. It should be added to the reading lists of graduate seminars in literature, philosophy, and intellectual history.

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—Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger

### **It Could Lead to Dancing: Mixed-Sex Dancing and Jewish Modernity.**

By Sonia Gollance. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021. 296 pages. \$65.00 hardcover or e-book.

Toward the end of Kadya Molodovsky’s Yiddish novel *Fun Lublin biz Nyu-york* (serialized 1941; book 1942), the protagonist Rivke Zilberg dances distractedly with her fiancé Red at her cousin’s wedding. “You have to learn how to dance the modern dances,” the American-born Red tells the Polish-born Rivke—a refugee who had arrived in New York a year earlier, whose mother had been killed in the bombing of Lublin, and who had just ended a period of mourning in which Jewish custom prohibits dancing. Yet for Red, Rivke’s history and Jewish observance are inconsequential. What is most important is that she learns the right moves and, in doing so, becomes his American wife.

Dozens of complementary scenes in which dance functions as “an important metaphor of acculturation” (17), and where the dance floor acts as the “liminal space” (12) of “Jewish integration into broader society, whether in Europe or the United States” (21), punctuate Sonia Gollance’s deft study of mixed-sex dancing in primarily German-Jewish and Yiddish literature from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. Gollance’s work demonstrates that the dance between a Jewish man and Jewish woman, no less with a Christian woman or Christian man, functions in these literary traditions not as a model of romantic harmony but as a marker of potential discord. The mixed-sex partner dances serve as occasions for Geertzian “deep play” (16); for