

# **A Companion to Twentieth-Century German Literature**

Second edition

Raymond Furness  
and Malcolm Humble



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# A Companion to Twentieth-Century German Literature

Containing entries on over four hundred authors of fiction, poetry and drama from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, this invaluable work of reference presents material of a range and depth that no other book on the subject in English attains. For the second edition, the entries have been updated to include the most recent works of German literature. A number of new entries have been added, dealing in particular with the East German literary scene and the changing literary landscape after reunification.

In addition to basic biographical facts, the *Companion* offers summaries, information on involvement in literary groups and political developments, schools and movements, critical terms and aspects of the other arts, including film.

**Raymond Furness**, Professor of German, and **Malcolm Humble**, Lecturer in German, both at the University of St Andrews, have drawn on their extensive experience of teaching and research to produce a work which will be indispensable to all students of German and will provide fascinating reading for anyone interested in German literature.



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## Preface

Writing some twenty-five years ago in *Encounter*, Erich Heller spoke of the modern mind as being beholden to the hegemony of the German cultural spirit: Germany, he writes, having been defeated in two World Wars, has invaded vast areas of the world's consciousness. 'The modern mind speaks German', Heller claimed, citing Marx, Freud and Nietzsche as its most illustrious tutors. This present Companion enumerates those twentieth-century literary figures who have contributed a distinctive voice; as Germany becomes the focus of Europe once more so its writers become increasingly interesting as interpreters of and commentators on the modern world. We have sought to do justice to the undisputed masters (Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Franz Kafka, Rilke, Hauptmann, Döblin, Günter Grass and Heinrich Boll) as well as to include a whole host of other established writers and to list the more obscure names. We have no particular axe to grind, but attempt to assess the importance of women writers, writers in the territories formerly known as the German Democratic Republic and those who are perhaps peripheral but nevertheless have an original tone. And 'German' must mean 'German-speaking' here: the Austrian contribution is, of course, incalculable and the Swiss, although of lesser stature, is equally fascinating. As the twentieth century enters its last decade, and Germany enters upon a new and daunting adventure, it is surely appropriate to have at one's fingertips concise and up to date information on those authors who, writing in German, have produced a body of literature which engages (and sometimes captivates) the modern reader. Our tastes are catholic, and only limits on time and space prevented the volume from exceeding acceptable dimensions. We apologize for the omission of those names which the reader seeks in vain.

Raymond Furness  
Malcolm Humble  
St Andrews  
3 October 1990



## Preface to the Second Edition

Six years have elapsed since the first edition of *A Companion to Twentieth-Century German Literature* appeared; the momentous events of 1989/1990 in Germany are now part of history, and it is surely appropriate to assess the literary reactions to them. The new *Companion* seeks to be as topical as possible and has been enlarged to contain information on the post-Wende trauma (including references to allegations of Stasi involvement), as well as other items of contemporary interest. We have sought to provide a full panorama, however, with dates of birth ranging from 1846 to 1957. The *Companion* strives to give succinct, lucid information on well over four hundred writers; again, we apologize if our criteria of exclusion are not shared by the reader who seeks an author in vain.

RSF  
MEH  
St Andrews 1996



# A

## Achleitner, Friedrich (1930–)

Achleitner studied architecture in Vienna, becoming an architecture critic. (*Nieder mit Fischer von Erlach* (1986) is a collection of his criticisms for the press) and in 1983 Professor of the history and theory of architecture at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts (*Österreichische Architektur im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (1980–5)). Achleitner joined the *Wiener Gruppe* in 1955, writing in collaboration with other members and taking part in group performances in the ‘literarische cabarets’. Achleitner’s mild experimentalism finds expression in ‘Konstellationen’ in the style of **Gomringer**, dialect poems, montages and the *quadratroman* (1973), in which techniques of concrete poetry are applied in such a way that the square becomes the central motif of a *Bildungsroman*, undergoing numerous transformations into objects and sights the reader must identify and interpret according to his own whim.

## Achternbusch, Herbert (1938–)

Achternbusch, whose roots lie in the small peasant communities of the remote Bavarian forest, began his writing career, after studying painting, with *Hülle* (1969), which dispensed with pagination and conventional divisions and was ignored. His breakthrough came in 1973 with *Der Tag wird kommen*. Since then he has produced a series of prose works all marked by radical subjectivity and a mixture of standard German and Bavarian dialect, fact and fantasy, some of which (1969, *Die Atlantikschwimmer* (1975) and *Die Alexanderschlacht* (1978)) have been revised and republished in collected form. Since 1975 he has written the scenarios for and directed films closely related to his other work, including *Das Andechser Gefühl* (1974), *Die Atlantikschwimmer* (1975), *Bierkampf* (1976), *Servus Bayern* (1977), *Der junge Mönch* (1978), *Der Komantsche* (1979) and *Das Gespenst* (1983), while since 1978 he has also branched into drama with plays which in their portrayal of ‘geschundene Existenzen’ from the Bavarian backwoods resemble some of the works of Franz Xaver **Kroetz** (*Ella* (1978), *Susn* (1979), *Plattling* (1982), *Der Frosch* (1982), *Mein Herbert* (1983), *Sintflut* (1984), *Gust* (1984), *Linz* (1987), *Heißer Stier* (1987) and *Heilt Hitler/Wohin* (1988)). The film *Herz aus Glas* (1976), directed by Werner Herzog, is based on a story in *Die Stunde des Todes* (1975). Further

plays are *Auf verlorenem Posten* (1990), which treats post-Wende trauma as farce, and *Der Stiefel und sein Socken* (1993).

## Adler, Hans Günther (1919–88)

Adler grew up in the cultured Jewish middle class of Prague, was deported in 1942 to Theresienstadt, in 1944 to Auschwitz and later to parts of the Buchenwald complex. After a short period in Prague he emigrated in 1947 to London. His work can be divided into three parts: historical documentation, fiction and poetry. *Theresienstadt 1941–1945. Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft. Geschichte, Soziologie, Psychologie* (1955, 2nd improved and enlarged edn 1960), together with his editing of *Die verheimlichte Wahrheit. Theresienstädter Dokumente* (1958), forms a model of objective investigation into the Holocaust and a monumental memorial to its victims. The same qualities are evident in *Der verwaltete Mensch. Studien zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland* (1974) and *Die Juden in Deutschland. Von der Aufklärung bis zum Nationalsozialismus* (1960, 1987). Adler's fiction, written almost entirely before 1961, appeared late in his life or posthumously: *Panorama* (1968) traces ten stages in the development of Josef Kramer between 1918 and 1948, which cover Prague, its rural vicinity, boarding school, a youth group, a mystical sect, periods of employment as a private teacher and in further education, forced labour in occupied Bohemia and in Langenstein concentration camp, and finally a visit to Launceston Castle in Cornwall after liberation and emigration; the sections are written in disparate styles reflecting the age and experience of the protagonist, but are held together by the leitmotif of the panorama or peepshow. *Eine Reise* (1962) is a classic account of the deportation and concentration camp confinement of a fictional family, of whose five members only one survives. *Die Wand* (1989) records the problematic adjustment of a Holocaust survivor to life in London. Further fiction includes *Unser Georg. Und andere Geschichten* (1961) and the satire of bureaucracy *Hausordnung* (1988), *Die Ansiedlung*, *Die Prüfung* and *Raoul Feuerstein* (unpublished). Characteristic of Adler's numerous volumes of poetry are *Viele Jahreszeiten* (1975), *Blicke* (1979) and *Stimme und Zwurf* (1980), all cyclical and in strict forms.

## Aichinger, Use (1921–)

Aichinger was born and grew up in Vienna, studied medicine, worked for a time at the *Hochschule für Gestaltung* in Ulm, married Günter **Eich** in 1953 and has lived since his death in 1972 near Salzburg. Her novel *Die größere Hoffnung* (1948) was one of the first treatments of a Jewish fate during the Third Reich by one who had had direct experience of the system, yet it differs from contemporary 'Trümmerliteratur' in its concentration on the central character's existential situation, which is presented as detached from a

concrete historical context. Her later works are marked by a tone and technique ranging between the bleak absurd (cf. Ionesco and Beckett) to playful whimsy, and include short stories ('Der Gefesselte' (1953), which appeared the previous year in Austria under the title 'Rede unter dem Galgen', and 'Spiegelgeschichte' (1954) have attained classic status, the latter being awarded the prize of the *Gruppe 47* in 1952) and radio plays (*Knöpfe* (1953), *Auckland* (1969) and *Gare maritime* (1973)), as well as collections of short dialogues and scenes (*Zu keiner Stunde* (1957, extended 1980)) and poems (in *Verschenkter Rat* (1978)). Her essay 'Aufruf zum Mißtrauen' encapsulated the mood of the time when it appeared in July 1946. *Werke* appeared in seven volumes in 1991.

## **Altenberg, Peter** (pseudonym of Richard Englaender, 1859–1919)

The pseudonym derives from the nickname 'Peter', the girl to whom Englaender was briefly engaged and who came from the town of Altenberg. This 'Verlaine d'Autriche', son of a wealthy Jewish family, frequented the Viennese cafés, where he associated with Egon Friedell, Alfred Loos and Karl **Kraus**, on whose recommendation the collection of impressionistic sketches *Wie ich es sehe* was published in 1896. 'Ich möchte einen Menschen in einem Satze schildern, ein Erlebnis der Seele auf einer Seite, eine Landschaft in einem Wort': this was Altenberg's programme. He edited with Adolf Loos the short-lived periodical *Kunst* from 1903–4; his novel *Prodromos*, 'der erste Versuch einer physiologischen Romantik', appeared in 1906. *Was der Tag mir zuträgt*, a collection of sophisticated, often satirical sketches, had been published in 1901, followed by *Märchen des Lebens* (1908), *Bilderbogen des kleinen Lebens* (1909), *Vita Ipsa* (1918) and *Mein Lebensabend* (1919). Altenberg's *Nachlaß* was published by Alfred **Polgar** in 1925: a selection of his writings, *Ausgewählte Werke*, appeared in 1961. Although Altenberg excelled at pithy and trenchant comments on the demi-monde of Viennese night life his quizzical and frequently sardonic gaze encompassed Austrian (and German) society as a whole. *Das große Peter Altenberg Buch* was published in 1977, and the *Ausgewählte Werke* (two vols) in 1980. *Gesammelte Werke* began to appear in 1987.

## **Alverdes, Paul** (1897–1979)

Born in Strasbourg, Alverdes was a member of the German youth movement, joined the war in 1915 and suffered a severe wound to the larynx. His *Novelle, Die Pfeiferstube*, published in 1927 and reaching sales of 263,000 by 1948, is based on this experience and tells of the friendship between German soldiers and an English prisoner who all suffer the same wound. During the Third Reich Alverdes published, with Karl Benno von Mechow,

the journal *Das innere Reich*, which propagated a conservative rather than a radical standpoint. Alverdes's poetry at this time is characteristic of much 'Blut und Boden' writing ('O meine Erde, meine liebe Erde,/es treibt, von Vatergeist ins Blut geschauert,/ die Flamme namenlos mich fortzustürmen...') Other *Novellen* include *Der Kriegsfreiwillige Reinhold* and *Reinhold im Dienst* (1931). Alverdes also wrote radio plays (*Die Freiwilligen* (1934), dealing with the outbreak of war in 1914) and also *Märchen* (*Das Männlein Mittenzwei* (1937)). He was a frequent guest of Rudolf **Binding** at the latter's house near Starnberg. After 1945 Alverdes turned increasingly to fables and children's stories (*Grimmbarts Haus* (1949) and *Legende vom Christ-Esel* (1953)).

## Amery, Carl (pseudonym of Christian Mayer, 1922–)

Amery is the author of novels in which an idiosyncratic historical awareness and elements of science fiction achieve a remarkable fusion. In the most important of these (*Das Königsprojekt* (1974)) a secret Vatican council sends a colonel of the Swiss Guard in a Wellsian time-machine back into the past in order to secure the re-Catholicization of Britain and the installation of the Wittelsbachs as the heirs to the Stuart pretenders. Amery's Bavarian patriotism also finds expression in *An den Feuern von Leyermark* (1979) in which Leyermark (Bavaria) wins the war of 1866 against Prussia with American help. In *Die Wallfahrer* (1986) the time-travelling device is reintroduced in order to bring together pilgrims from different periods of Bavarian history and allow them further progress into the future. The author offers alternative endings, the first preceding and the second following the apocalypse. His other novels are *Der Wettbewerb* (1954), *Die große deutsche Tour* (1958), against the *Wirtschaftswunder*, *Der Untergang der Stadt Passau* (1975), science fiction, *Das Geheimnis der Krypta* (1990), another dystopia. A critical Catholicism is present in all Amery's essays (*Deutscher Katholizismus heute* (1963), *Fragen an Welt und Kirche* (1967), *Das Ende der Vorsehung. Die gnadenlosen Folgen des Christentums* (1972)), but in his more recent work he shows a growing concern with ecological issues (*Natur als Politik* (1976)) and criticizes the contemporary obsession with high technology (*Die starke Position oder Ganz normale MAMUS* (1985)).

## Améry, Jean (pseudonym of Hans (Chaim) Mayer, 1912–78)

A Viennese Jew, Améry escaped to Belgium in 1938, only to suffer repeated internment and persecution on racial and political grounds in the following years, including

confinement in the concentration camps Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Belsen. These experiences and the influence of Sartre have left their mark on almost all his work, which can be divided into primarily autobiographical writings (*Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne* (1966), *Unmeisterliche Wanderjahre* (1971)), philosophical essays (*Über das Altern, Revolte und Resignation* (1968), *Hand an sich legen* (1976)), cultural, literary, critical and biographical essays (*Der integrate Humanismus* (1985)), and fiction (*Lefeu oder der Abbruch* (1974), the autobiographically based story of a painter whose will to live is broken by the Holocaust, and *Charles Bovary, Landarzt* (1978), a sympathetic portrait of the husband of Flaubert's Emma). He committed suicide, a theme of several works.

## **Anders, Günther** (pseudonym of Günther Stern, 1902–93)

Having studied philosophy under Cassirer, Husserl and Heidegger, Anders began the anti-Nazi novel *Die molussische Katakombe* in 1930, but failed to find a publisher when he was forced to flee to Paris in 1933. He turned to philosophy with *Pathologie de la liberté*, the principal thesis of which influenced Sartre, and moved on to the United States in 1936, where he associated with other *émigrés* in California. After returning to Europe in 1950 he settled in Vienna and was active in the various anti-nuclear movements of the following years, and his later philosophical works have been written against the background of the historical turning-points represented by Hiroshima (*Der Mann auf der Brücke* (1959), diary of a visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *Off limits für das Gewissen* (1961), an exchange of letters with Claude Eatherley, one of the Hiroshima bomber pilots, *Endzeit und Zeitenende* (1972), *Hiroshima ist überall* (1982)) and the Holocaust (*Besuch im Hades* (1978), *Nach 'Holocaust'* (1979), *Wir Eichmannsöhne* (1964), an exchange of letters with Adolf Eichmann's son Klaus), culminating in his *magnum opus*: *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen. Über die Seele im Zeitalter der 2. industriellen Revolution* (Part I (1956), Part II (1980)). He has also produced fables (*Der Blick vom Turm* (1968)), dialogues (*Ketzereien* (1982)), poems (published in *Tagebücher und Gedichte* (1985)), further diaries (*Die Schrift an der Wand* (1967)) and literary criticism (*Kafka—pro und contra* (1951) and the collection *Mensch ohne Welt* (1984)). *Die molussische Katakombe* (1992) is an anti-Fascist allegorical dystopia, part of which was published in 1933. *Mariechen* (1993, written 1946) is a mixture of erotic idyll and philosophical fable.

## Andersch, Alfred (1914–80)

Andersch belonged to the generation of **Böll**, **Schnurre** and **Bender**, marked by involvement in a war which challenged their humanitarian instincts, but he can also be linked to the slightly older **Koeppen**, **Eich**, **Huchel**, as, like they, he began writing well before Germany's defeat. Andersch's early life was further complicated by his upbringing in a conservative household (his father was a businessman, soldier and supporter of Ludendorff) and schooling (one of his teachers was the father of Heinrich Himmler and his Greek class forms the substance of *Der Vater eines Mörders* (1980)). Having obtained a responsible position in the communist youth organization, Andersch was briefly incarcerated in Dachau after the Nazi seizure of power, avoided further political involvement on his release, and did various odd jobs until his call-up in 1943. On 6 June 1944 he deserted on the Italian front, a decision which he later endowed with crucial political and existential significance and made the turning-point of his autobiographical work *Die Kirschen der Freiheit* (1952), the original version of which, devoid of existentialist overtones, appeared in 1950 under the title *Flucht in Etrurien* and was re-published in 1981. Returning from POW camp in the USA, he founded and edited with Hans Werner **Richter** *Der Ruf* (1946–7) until the threat of suppression by the American occupation authorities made its continuation under their editorship impossible, then worked for radio, developing new broadcasting forms such as the feature and the radio essay and opening the medium to younger writers. He performed a similar role as editor of the bimonthly *Texte und Zeichen* (1955–7). Settling in Ticino in 1958, he became a Swiss citizen in 1972.

Andersch's first novel *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund* (1957) assembles a small group affected in different ways by Nazi persecution: Judith is Jewish, Knudsen's wife is threatened by the euthanasia programme, Helander represents the church and its accommodation with the regime, Gregor stands for the communist underground and a statue by Barlach symbolizes spiritual freedom and 'degenerate art'. Knudsen and Judith succeed in fleeing to Sweden with the statue, while Helander falls victim to SS bullets. In confining narrative perspective to each of the characters in succession, the novel bears a technical resemblance to Gerd Gaiser's *Schlußball*. In *Die Rote* (1960, revised version 1972) the red-haired Franziska escapes the conflicting demands of her marriage and an affair by travelling to Venice, where after becoming involved in the revenge of an Irish victim of Nazism against his former Gestapo interrogator she finds the emotional fulfilment she seeks in a relationship with an excommunist musician. The revision removes the last part, which presents her happiness with her lover's family in Mestre in a working-class idyll. In *Efraim* (1967) Andersch focuses on Georg(e) Efraim, a modern Ahasverus, who at the time of the Cuban missile crisis returns to his Berlin roots as a British journalist with the task of tracing his employer's daughter and begins an affair with a Marxist actress from East Berlin. When both the mission and the relationship fail, he moves to Rome and abandons journalism for novel-writing. The title of *Winterspelt* (1974), Andersch's principal work, refers to its setting, a village in the Eifel close to the Belgian frontier, where a German major, confronted by the Americans towards the end of 1944 and convinced of the futility of further combat, plans to surrender his battalion with the assistance of a schoolteacher, a Czech communist and an art historian. The last of

these, having saved a picture by Paul Klee from Nazi sequestration, undertakes to act as an intermediary in negotiations with the American side, but he is arrested and shot by a homosexual corporal who hopes thus to protect himself. The surrender plan comes to nothing after the major receives a secret order to withdraw in preparation for the imminent Ardennes offensive. The situation, the constellation of characters and the symbolical role of the work of art recall *Sansibar*, but the larger scale of the later novel allows Andersch to analyse the interaction of personal motivation and political duress with much greater subtlety. Andersch also produced a number of short story collections (*Geister und Leute. Zehn Geschichten* (1958). *Ein Liebhaber des Halbschattens* (1963), *Mein Verschwinden in Providence* (1971)), travel writings (*Wanderungen im Norden* (1962), *Hohe Breitengrade* (1969)), radio plays and poems (*empört euch der himmel ist blau* (1977) containing ‘Artikel 3(3)’, which unleashed a storm of controversy by its implication that government measures such as the ‘Radikalenerlaß’ challenged constitutionally guaranteed democratic freedoms).

## Andreas-Salomé, Lou (1861–1937)

Of Russian and French descent, Lou Salomé was one of the first emancipated women to be associated with modern German literature. She studied at Zurich university, and later became associated with Nietzsche, who wished to marry her, with **Rilke**, **Gerhart Hauptmann**, Frank **Wedekind** and other notable literary figures. During her stay in Berlin she wrote articles on Ibsen and the modern stage for the *Freie Bühne*; her book on the Norwegian dramatist (1892) established her reputation. She travelled widely and accompanied Rilke to Russia twice, visiting Tolstoi at his country estate. A restless and intensely demanding woman, Lou Salomé portrayed in her stories (particularly in *Ma, Ruth*, the cycle *Im Zwischenland* and *Das Haus*, all written at the turn of the century) the problematic relationship between men and women. Her early story *Ein Todesfall* may have encouraged Gerhart Hauptmann to complete his *Michael Kramer*, performed in 1900, the rehearsals of which Lou Salomé attended with Rilke; her own *Ruth* may, in turn, have been inspired by *Hanneles Himmelfahrt*. Lou Salomé later became an associate of Sigmund Freud, and contributed to psycho-analytical discussion, writing articles on this and other related topics. Her *Lebensrückblick* (ed. Pfeiffer) was published in 1968; *Ausgewählte Texte* appeared in 1988.

## Andres, Stefan (1906–70)

Born in the Moselle area, with Italy the setting of many of his works, Andres, after a period as a Capuchin novice and as a student, settled in Positano, where he spent the years 1937–49; in his later years he lived in the Rhineland (until 1960) and in Rome.

Andres owed his popularity, which reached its height in the 1950s and has since much abated, to numerous unpretentious novels and stories with rural and Mediterranean settings, in which a Catholic morality, tolerant of the healing forces of time and nature, sees the characters through to a positive resolution of their problems (*Der Mann von Asteri* (1939), *Der gefrorene Dionysos* (1941)—also under the title *Die Liebesschaukel* (1951)—*Die Hochzeit der Feinde* (1947), *Ritter der Gerechtigkeit* (1948), *Die Reise nach Portiuncula* (1954)). More ambitious and substantial works include *Wir sind Utopia* (1943), dramatized as *Gottes Utopia* in 1950, and *El Greco malt den Großinquisitor* (1936), the former dealing with problems of conscience against the background of the Spanish Civil War, the latter the artist's duty to reveal to his subject his true nature as in a mirror; both are typical works of the Christian 'innere Emigration' (cf. **Bergengruen, Langgässer, Klepper, Reinhold Schneider**). A large-scale trilogy *Die Sintflut* (I, *Das Tier aus der Tiefe* (1949), II, *Die Arche* (1951), and III, *Der graue Regenbogen* (1959)), an attempt to treat the Third Reich in the form of a futuristic fantasy on the foundation of the legend of Noah, was less successful, but Andres came closer to the Old Testament in 1963, when in *Der Mann im Fisch* he offered his own version of the story of Jonah, who while inside the whale encounters a man whose guilt convinces him of his duty to answer God's call. One of several plays, *Sperrzonen* (1958), and the novel *Der Taubenturm* (1966) represent a more realistic approach to the Third Reich and its aftermath than *Die Sintflut*. Andres returned to the theme of commitment after a struggle with conscience in the posthumously published *Die Versuchung des Synesios* (1963), centred on a fifth-century bishop of Cyrene.

## Andrian-Werburg, Leopold Freiherr von (1875–1951)

A Viennese aristocrat of partly Jewish descent (he was related to the composer Meyerbeer), Andrian was associated with **Hofmannsthal** and Stefan **George**, to whose *Blätter für die Kunst* he contributed (1894–1901). Andrian wrote polished, exquisite verse of wincing sensitivity; George dedicated the poem 'Den Brüdern' to him in the collection *Lieder von Traum und Tod*. A frequent theme in Andrian's poetry is a lament for the passing of Old Austria, whose beauty and refinement can only, apparently, be captured in poetic incantation: the sonnet 'Besinnst du dich, wie einst im Abendwind' exemplifies this. In 1893 Andrian published his *Novelle, Der Garten der Erkenntnis*, subtitled 'Das Fest der Jugend', a lyrical and haunting piece of writing; a second edition appeared in 1919. Andrian entered the diplomatic service, travelled widely and became (briefly) governor-general of Poland. Hofmannsthal was instrumental in his appointment as director of the *Hoftheater*, but the November revolution of 1918 abruptly terminated this. Andrian turned increasingly towards religion and a conservative stance, viz. *Die Ständeordnung des Alls. Rationales Weltbild eines katholischen Dichters* (1930) and *Österreich im Prisma der Idee* (1937). During the Second World War Andrian lived in exile, meeting Georges Bernanos in Brazil; he returned to Europe in 1945. Andrian

stands very much under the shadow of Hofmannsthal, whose death in 1929 seemed to him to signify the death-knell of Austrian culture. The correspondence with Hofmannsthal was published in 1968.

## Arendt, Erich (1903–84)

Arendt became a communist and a member of the communist-led *Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller* in 1926 when his earliest poems were appearing in later issues of the expressionist periodical *Der Sturm*. However, although his exile experiences in Spain, where he took part as a non-combatant in the Spanish Civil War (1936–9), and in Colombia, where he spent the years 1939–50, inspired poetry of a political dimension, he rarely conformed to socialist realist norms then or later. The poems inspired by Spain were eventually published in *Bergwindballade* (1952), including portraits of Lorca, Goya and Don Quixote, while the thirty Colombian poems of *Tolú* (1956) first appeared as a section of *Trug doch die Nacht den Albatros* (1951), in which the exile experience is embodied in the figures of Odysseus, Rimbaud and the bird of the title. Arendt's most important verse, from both a formal and thematic point of view, is to be found in *Flug-Oden* (1959), on the scientific view of the world and its positive and negative consequences, and *Ägäis* (1967), on the landscape and ancient monuments of Greece, which he visited in the early 1960s in order to prepare commentaries for photographic volumes. *Über Asche und Zeit* (1956), which traces the course of his relationship to his wife Katja, reappeared in *Gesang der sieben Inseln* (1957), set on the Baltic island of Hiddensee and in Italy. The free-verse forms developed in *Flug-Oden* and *Ägäis* become more laconic and concentrated, the tone increasingly dark and pessimistic, with the recurrence of a few basic images (stone, sand, lava and dust) in Arendt's last years, as is shown in *Feuerhalm* (1973—Greece again), *Memento und Bild* (1977), *Zeitsaum* (1978) and *Starrend von Zeit und Helle* (1980), but in his last collection, *entgrenzen* (1981, extended 1983), he adds to his themes the eroticism of old age in poems of remarkable intensity.

## Arp, Hans (or Jean) (1886–1966)

Born in Strasbourg, Arp enjoyed a mixed cultural environment, and wrote in both French and German; he was talented enough to feel at ease as both graphic artist and lyric poet. His first poems were published by René **Schickele** in the *Neues Magazin* in 1905. In 1911 Arp exhibited his paintings and became associated with the *Blaue Reiter* group. He contributed also to the *Sturm* periodical (ed. Herwarth **Walden**) and attempted to emulate the effects of abstract art in literature. In the First World War he lived in Switzerland: he was invited by Hugo **Ball** to join the newly-formed Dadaist group in the Café Voltaire in

Zurich. Arp also worked on the Tyrol Dada pamphlet *Dada Intirol Augrandair*. The first volume of his collected poetry, *Die wolkenpumpe*, appeared in 1920 and was characterized by grotesque and startling imagery, automatic writing and the deliberate cultivation of absurdity. (His most famous poem, 'Kaspar ist tot', appeared as a prose poem in the periodical *Dada* in 1919: it underwent many revisions.) Arp's 'absurd' and 'surrealist' poetry (he also exhibited his painting in the first general surrealist exhibition) exemplified the view that reason and progress had irretrievably alienated man from his basic integrity: poetry and painting should attempt to restore innocence and pre-rational expressiveness. After the death of his wife Sophie Taeuber, the designer, in 1943, Arp's poetry achieved an intensity and earnestness hitherto unknown, particularly in the *Sophie* cycle (1943–5), as well as in *Der vierblättrige Stern* (1945–50). Arp explained: 'Den zu Tode Getroffenen beschäftigten die Formprobleme nicht mehr. Er will sich dem unkörperlichen Raum nähern.' Arp is generally grouped with Hugo Ball and Richard **Huelsenbeck** as one of the founders of Dadaism; his painting is generally described as surrealist. The collection *Wortträume und schwarze Sterne* contains a collection of early work; *Gesammelte Gedichte* I (ed. Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach) appeared in 1963, volume II in 1974 and volume III in 1982. An interesting collection, *Unsern täglichen Traum* (1955), contains much autobiographical material.

## Artmann, Hans Carl (1921–)

Born in a suburb of Vienna, Artmann spent five years as a soldier on the eastern front before capture by the Americans and has lived in Malmö, Berlin, Vienna and Salzburg. A brilliant linguist—he claims to understand twenty-six languages in addition to the eight from which he has translated—and master of stylistic masks, he is also a connoisseur of black romanticism, surrealism, baroque formalism and dialect. His best-known book remains that by which he became known: *med ana schwoazzn dintn* (1958), and his work done in collaboration with other members of the *Wiener Gruppe*, to which he ceased to claim allegiance before its eventual dissolution, includes besides *Montagen* (1964) further dialect poems, *hosn rosn baa* (1959). Because Artmann prefers the short form and the fragment, he is best approached through collections and anthologies such as *The Best of H.C. Artmann* (1970), in which all genres are represented, and *ein lilien-weißer brief aus lincolnshire, gedichte aus 21 jahren* (1969). Thirty-two mini-plays are assembled in *die fahrt zur insel nantucket* (1969) and all the prose until 1979 in *Grammatik der Rosen* (three vols). Readers in search of exuberant fantasy, verbal prestidigitation and the ludic transmutation and promiscuous juxtaposition of every conceivable form, tone, register, genre and trivial topos, need look no further; those after spiritual or psychological depth, reflection on serious contemporary issues, realistic depiction of milieu and genuine historical awareness must look elsewhere. *Das poetische Werk*, in ten volumes, appeared in 1994.

## Arx, Cäsar von (1895–1949)

A Swiss theatrical producer and prolific playwright, Cäsar von Arx is associated particularly with festival drama and historical plays. *Die Geschichte vom General Suter* (1929) and *Der Verrat von Novara* (1934) were immensely popular, the latter play enjoying over two thousand performances. Cäsar von Arx learned his skill as *Dramaturg* at Leipzig (1920–3), being renowned as a ‘Feinmechaniker and Kalkulator’. From this period stems his antipathy to **Brecht** and his methods; his statement ‘Wer das Theater will, muß das Drama wollen’ should be seen as a deliberate criticism of Brecht. Von Arx, in his *Moritat* (typed as a manuscript in 1928, but probably written two years before) satirizes Brecht’s *Baal* and also **Wedekind**; his *Der kleine Sündenfall* (1938) demonstrates a similar concern. He befriended Georg **Kaiser** during the latter’s exile in Switzerland during the Second World War, when Kaiser advised him to turn his attention to film scripts and novels. Feeling estranged from modern developments in the theatre, and failing to understand Kaiser’s admiration for Brecht, he committed suicide.

## Ausländer, Rose (1907–88)

Rose Ausländer spent her early life in the German-speaking, largely Jewish enclave centred on Czernowitz, Bukovina. She worked from 1921 in New York but returned to her homeland in 1931, only to be caught up in the political upheavals in the course of which Bukovina first became part of Romania, then in 1940 was absorbed by the Soviet Union, then after occupation by German troops rejoined Romania when that country entered the war on the German side in 1941. She narrowly escaped deportation, and was forced to spend the years 1941–4 in hiding in the ghetto. After returning to the USA in 1946, where she worked as a secretary and translator, she settled in Düsseldorf in 1963. She was associated in Czernowitz with a circle of writers in German and Yiddish, which included her mentor Alfred Margul-Sperber and Paul Celan. Thanks to Margul-Sperber her first collection of poems, *Der Regenbogen* (1939), was published; written in the manner of the early **Rilke** and **Hofmannsthal**, it was later rejected by her as an epigonal work. Her second and most important collection, *Blinder Sommer*, did not appear until 1965 and was scarcely noticed; the title poem, containing reflections on the post-Holocaust situation, is followed by poems evoking New York, poems on language and the art of poetry, autobiographical poems and poems of identification with the Jewish spiritual heritage. The theme of exile with its multiple meanings is here already present and is repeated in further variations in the subsequent collections which appeared almost yearly throughout the 1970s and 1980s. *Gesammelte Gedichte*, drawn from five volumes (1976, extended 1977) and the *Gesammelte Werke in sieben Bänden* (1984–6) present sum and substance of her work, to be followed finally by *Ich spiele noch. Neue Gedichte* (1987) and *Und preise die kühlende Liebe der Luft* (1988). The *Gedichte aus dem Nachlaß. Jeder Tropfen ein Stein* appeared in 1990.

# B

## Bachmann, Ingeborg (1926–73)

Born in Klagenfurt, Ingeborg Bachmann studied philosophy from 1945 to 1950, concentrating on Wittgenstein and Heidegger and gaining a doctorate for a dissertation on the latter. She spent long periods in Rome, where she died of the effects of a domestic fire accident. She first became known in the 1950s for poems read at early meetings of the *Gruppe 47* (which awarded her its prize in 1953) and collected in *Die gestundete Zeit* (1953) and *Anrufung des großen Bären* (1956), which whether in free-verse forms or in regular rhymed stanzas combined a high level of abstraction with rich imagery in a distinctive musical tone. Although her use of imagery from nature can be related to the romantic tradition of the *Stimmungsbild*, behind the majority of her poems lies the concrete experience of a damaged childhood in the Austrian provinces during the Third Reich. A melancholy sense of loss and fear that personal relationships are not only doomed to transience but threatened by socio-political forces pervades her work, even when a note of fulfilment is present as in the love poems of the second collection, at the end of which she also expresses faith in the transcending power of art. This faith, however, eventually yields to an awareness of the impotence and doubtful justification of 'fine' lyrical expression, which finds expression in the few remaining poems she wrote. At the end of the 1950s, in which Bachmann also produced radio plays (*Zikaden* (1955, music by Hans Werner Henze) and *Der gute Gott von Manhattan* (1958), in which the growing intensity of the love between Jan and Jennifer is symbolized by the gradual move to the top of a skyscraper hotel in New York and only Jennifer is granted by 'der gute Gott' the privileged *Liebestod*) and libretti for a ballet and an opera by Henze, her work underwent a critical transformation on the nature and necessity of which she reflected in the Frankfurt poetry lectures of 1959–60 by reappraising what she had written so far.

The following works, two collections of short stories (*Das dreißigste Jahr* (1961) and *Simultan* (1972)) and what was realized of a planned trilogy of novels (*Todesarten*), represent a breakthrough to a feminism of disturbing psychological depth. (Only the first part, *Malina* (1971) was completed before Bachmann's death; fragments and finished chapters of the other two, which were to have received the titles 'Der Fall Franza' and 'Requiem für Fanny Goldmann', were assembled in the complete edition.) In *Malina*, what appears at first to be an account of the course of a triangle involving the female narrator, the mysterious Malina and her lover Ivan turns out to be a form for the analysis of a deep psychic wound with the help of Jungian categories. It emerges that Malina does

not represent a real person, but the narrator's 'animus' or male element, who, detached from her as sober listener and counsellor, assists her to gain clarity. Yet this same detachment exposes and increases her vulnerability, leaves her unable to resist the terrifying fantasies of the chapter 'Der dritte Mann' and hold on to the utopia adumbrated in the *Märchen* 'Die Geheimnisse der Prinzessin von Kagran'. Ivan's betrayal leads to the identification of him with the father-figure of 'Der dritte Mann' and the loss of the narrator's creative identity, while Malina survives.

The burden of this novel and of the remaining fragments of the rest of the trilogy, as well as of the stories in *Das dreißigste Jahr* and *Simultan*—that men blindly ignore or brutally exploit the feelings of women, who are thereby doomed to betrayal, despair and the extinction of their personality—however dubious as a generalization from the facts of individual relationships, however extreme or obscure the form (realism, myth, psychic allegory) in which it is conveyed, is suffused with such a sense of agonized commitment that the reader is forced to recognize in Bachmann the presence of a writer able to carry over beyond the period of its inception the existentialist revolt of the first post-war generation and apply it to new themes. A complete edition, *Werke*, in four volumes, appeared in 1978.

## Bahr, Hermann (1863–1934)

Primarily an Austrian critic and essayist, Bahr also wrote novels and plays; an *habitué* of Viennese cafés, he was at the centre of the newest literary developments or, indeed, one step ahead. Maximilian Harden called him the 'Philosoph der Moderne', also 'der Mann von Übermorgen, welcher immer in der Zukunft lebt, in der Temperatur des übernächsten Tages'. In *Zur Kritik der Moderne* (1890) Bahr sensed that naturalism was on the wane, and in *Die Überwindung des Naturalismus* (1891) he called for a new 'nervöse Romantik', 'eine Mystik der Nerven'. Bahr was regarded as the spokesman for the 'Jungwien' cult of sensitivity and neo-romanticism; he was, however, cruelly lampooned by Karl Kraus in *Die demolirte Literatur*, where he appears as 'ein Herr aus Linz', characterized by 'eine Linzer Gewohnheit, Genialität durch eine in die Stirne baumelnde Haarlocke anzudeuten'. Bahr later championed expressionism in his 1916 essay of the same name. The dramatist Bahr worked briefly under Max Reinhardt in Berlin, and was *Dramaturg* at the *Burgtheater*: his plays were meant as entertainment, and *Das Konzert* (1909) is probably the most successful, with its amusing portrayal of the idolatry enjoyed by the pianist Gustav Heink. Bahr's novels tend towards the impressionistic and the cultivation of moods and subtle personal interrelationships: he attempted a cycle of twelve to portray the cultural scene in Vienna, and these include *O Mensch* (1910), *Himmelfahrt* (1916) and *Die Rote Korahs* (1918) with its fulsome insistence on Austria's significance for post-war Europe. As a young man Bahr had spoken at the notorious funeral oration for Richard Wagner (5 March 1883) and had been expelled from the university for being excessively 'deutschnational'. In 1909 he married the Wagner-singer Anna Mildenburg. Bahr's essays are indispensable reading for an understanding of Viennese cultural life at the turn of the century, despite the strictures of Karl Kraus. Bahr

also discovered d'Annunzio, Maeterlinck, Unamuno, Ortega and Whitman; he encouraged the reading of late Stifter and, above all, drew attention to the young prodigy **Hofmannsthal**. Bahr was also one of the initiators of the Salzburg Festival. The *Ausgewählte Werke* were published in 1968, and the correspondence with his father in 1971; the *Tagebücher 1888–1904* appeared in 1987.

## Ball, Hugo (1886–1927)

Ball, one of the co-founders of Dadaism, originally studied acting at the Max Reinhardt school in Berlin and, shortly before the First World War, became director of the Munich *Kammerspiele*. He met Richard **Huelsenbeck** in the Berlin Café des Westens (or 'Café Größenwahn'), turned to poetry and published in the expressionist journals *Die Aktion* and *Die Revolution*; the latter only survived two months but contained such violent poems as Ball's 'Die Revolution' and 'Der Henker'. Ball greeted the outbreak of war as a welcome cataclysm and sought to enlist. He was rejected, but managed to witness trench warfare in Belgium: he reacted in disgust and horror. In Zurich he performed in the Café Voltaire, reciting the first 'sound poem' dressed in cardboard tubes and cape ('Verse ohne Worte in kubistischem Kostüm'). The Dadaist antics of Ball and others mirrored the chaos raging in Europe, yet also sought to recover spontaneity and an 'absurd' playfulness (for example in such poems as 'jolifanto bambla ô falli bambla'). After a nervous breakdown Ball turned his back on Dada, took up journalism and also contributed to René **Schickele's** *Die weißen Blätter*. After the war he attacked the arrogance of the German intellectual tradition in *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz*, (1919), turned increasingly to religion (*Die Folgen der Reformation* (1924) and *Byzantinisches Christentum* (1923)) and befriended Hermann **Hesse**. The publication of Ball's diaries *Flucht aus der Zeit* (new edition 1946) gave much information on the Dada years. *Gesammelte Gedichte* appeared in 1963 and the 'fantastical novel' *Tenderenda der Phantast* (written 1914–20) in 1967. The less personal, more flippant novel *Flametti oder vom Dandysmus der Armen* had appeared in 1918. Ball's wife, Emmy Ball-Hennings (1885–1948), was a famous soubrette and cabaret artiste: she took part in the Dada evenings at Zurich. She wrote on this period in her life, also on her later life with Ball, in *Hugo Balls Weg zu Gott* (1931), *Der Kranz* (1939) and *Ruf und Echo* (1953). *Damals in Zürich. Briefe aus den Jahren 1915–1917* was published in 1978.

## Barlach, Ernst (1870–1938)

Sculptor, graphic artist, dramatist and novelist, Ernst Barlach was without doubt the most gifted of those expressionists (Arnold Schoenberg and Oskar **Kokoschka** were others) who enjoyed a rich diversity of talent. Hailed as one of the greatest German sculptors of

the twentieth century, Barlach also achieved considerable acclaim for his plays, and he was awarded the Kleist prize in 1924 for his outstanding literary gifts. His sculptures are characterized by a tension between an earth-bound solidity and a yearning for some transcendental reality: Barlach's journey to Russia in 1906 was an experience akin to the mystical, and the hunched figures of peasants which he modelled, who seem to partake of both realms, furthered his reputation. The plays contain a similar dichotomy between 'Diesseits' and 'Jenseits', a common theme being the need for redemption or 'excarnation'. *Der tote Tag*, begun after the Russian journey and published in 1912, contains an autobiographical element, namely, Barlach's own struggle to gain possession of his illegitimate son. The play is mystical and sombre, exploring the conflict between the principle of transcendence (the Father) and that of immanence (the Mother), with the son as the battlefield. A brooding atmosphere prevails throughout as the son attempts to escape the clinging maternal influence; although he perishes in the struggle the knowledge of an immaculate spiritual conception is gained. *Der arme Vetter* (1918) continues the theme of mystical illumination, but against a realistic background: Barlach demanded 'Milieuechtheit', for physical reality, although ultimately inauthentic, is 'organisch auf dem Wesentlichen gewachsen'. The scene on the heath by the River Elbe, and the arrival of a party of Easter trippers at the country inn, are plausibly portrayed; humour is also provided by 'Frau Venus' and 'Kapitän Pickenpack'. The 'poor cousin' of the title, Siebenmark, struggles in vain to appreciate spiritual values, yet he develops enough to admit: 'Mir fehlt der Abglanz vom Jenseits.' The original title of the play, *Osterleute*, emphasizes the concept of resurrection which is central to it; the father-son relationship is also significant. *Die echten Sedemunds* (1920) describes a fight for genuine values and religious awareness within a family; *Der Findling* (1922) is a mystery play which shows the power of love to redeem and transform. *Die Sündflut* (1924) is a reworking of the biblical account of the Flood; *Der blaue Boll* (1926), perhaps Barlach's most successful play dramatically, is of interest in that it describes the dramatic tension between the two halves of 'Gutsbesitzer Boll' in a manner which anticipates **Brecht**. *Die gute Zeit* (1929) is another 'Erlösungsdrama', imbued with a knowledge of guilt and evil but which also describes man's longing for ultimate goodness. *Der Graf von Ratzeburg* was unfinished and published posthumously in 1951: the statements 'Es geht nicht ums Gelten, es geht ums Sein!' and 'Ich habe keinen Gott, aber Gott hat mich' belong quintessentially to Barlach. Most of the plays are 'Stationendramen', portraying in an expressionist manner the soul's struggle for self-transcendence. The North German atmosphere prevails throughout most, and a wry, often clumsy, humour is often prevalent. Barlach frequently published lithographs and woodcuts, illustrating his plays (those for *Der Findling* are especially successful): these complement the work he did in wood, stone and bronze. Two unfinished novels, *Der gestohlene Mond* and *Seespeck* (both published in 1948), contain passages of striking descriptive power: *Seespeck* has a literary portrayal of Theodor **Däubler**, whom Barlach had befriended in Florence in 1909. (Barlach also did a wood-carving of Däubler's massive form, entitled *Ruhender Däubler*, in 1922.) In 1933 Barlach's work was declared 'entartet' ('degenerate'): the sculptures were impounded and the plays vilified. He died in complete isolation in Güstrow in 1938. His eminence in both sculpture and drama is now assured: *Das dichterische Werk* (three vols) appeared between 1956 and 1959, was reprinted between 1968 and 1976, and two volumes of letters were published in 1968 and 1969. (See also

the novel by Alfred **Andersch**, *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund* (1957), for a description of Barlach's wood-carving *Der lesende Klosterschüler*.)

## Bartsch, Rudolf Hans (1872–1952)

An Austrian writer of popular novels, Bartsch achieved great success with his *Zwölf aus der Steiermark* in 1908: critics wrote that 'Die Erfindungen in der Fabel sind von Gottfried Keller, der Gedankengehalt von Jean Paulscher Üppigkeit ...'. Bartsch described the life of the peasants in south-west Styria and the threat of Slav encroachment; other novels (he published over twenty) were characterized by excessive sentimentality and pretentiousness. *Schwammerl* (1912) is a facile portrayal of the life of Schubert; *Lukas Rabesam* (1917), dedicated to Peter Rosegger, and with its motto 'Mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt', is a pallid imitation of Gerhart **Hauptmann's** *Emmanuel Quint*, with Graz ('wo alles Wunderliche möglich ist') the venue for Christ's appearance. Bartsch wrote with a facility which impaired his earlier reputation. His plays include *Ohne Gott* (1915) and *Fernes Schiff* (1934). *Vom sterbenden Rokoko* is a collection of *Novellen*. Bartsch's sentimental portrayal of Austrian life has made him the favourite of indiscriminating readers; social problems are hinted at in some of the early works, but the bulk of Bartsch's writing is escapist and insipid.

## Bauer, Wolfgang (1941–)

Bauer was born in Graz, where he studied and has continued to live. Impressed by Ionesco, he began with over thirty one-act plays ('Mikrodramen') influenced by the theatre of the absurd, then turned to an increasingly idiosyncratic portrayal of sordid bohemianism, achieving scandalous fame with *Magic Afternoon* (1968) and *Change* (1969). However, he cannot be bracketed with a dated pop culture, as he uses its trappings for his own purposes, sharing with the early **Handke** and other Austrians a concern with appearance and reality and a stage method which demonstrates delusion and deception in ever more sophisticated variations through the way in which characters adopt roles and force them on one another through manipulation. Bauer's more recent work has been much criticized for its supposed impenetrability and triviality; in fact from *Magnetküsse* (1976) onwards he adopts a new approach to the same themes by presenting events through the eyes of central characters who are insane (Ziak in *Magnetküsse*, Toni in *Memory Hotel* (1980)). While the plays of 1967–75 (including also *Party for Six* (1967), *Film und Frau* (1971), *Silvester oder Das Massaker im Hotel Sacher* (1971) and *Gespenster* (1975)) can be understood as naturalistic evocations of milieu and attitudes in the tradition of the *Volksstück* and **Horváth** or simply as provocations of a conventional audience, the later plays (including also *Pfnacht* (1980), *Batyscaphe oder Die Hölle ist*

*oben* (1982), *Woher kommen wir? Was sind wir? Wohin gehen wir?* (1982), *Ein fröhlicher Morgen beim Friseur* (1983), *Das kurze Leben der Schneewolken* (1983) and *Herr Faust spielt Roulett* (1987)) present a Monty Python world in a manner which marks to some degree a return to the style Bauer had developed in the 'Mikrodramen' of 1962–4. *Werke* (seven vols) began to appear in 1986. Further plays are *Das Lächeln des Brian de Palma* (1991), *Der Zikadenzüchter* (1992), *Die Kantine—Capriccio à la Habsburg* (1993).

## Baum, Oskar (1883–1941)

A Prague novelist and lifelong friend of Franz **Kafka**, Oskar Baum was blinded as a boy during a fight between German and Czech nationalists. His *Uferdasein* (1908) is a collection of short stories concerned with blindness: those who cannot see are able to explore, writes Baum, an inner world of sensations and mystic awareness with a greater facility. His first novel, *Das Leben im Dunkeln*, appeared in 1909; a later work, *Die Tür ins Unmögliche* (1920), portrays a supernatural experience. Baum also attempted to write drama (*Das Wunder* (1920), *Der Feind* (1926) and *Der pünktliche Eros* (1927)), but was more at home in prose fiction. He later became a contributor to Herwarth **Walden's** *Der Sturm*, veering towards expressionism in the wake of **Werfel** and **Brod**. Kafka's comment on Baum is most telling: 'Der Jude Oskar Baum verlor sein Sehvermögen als Deutscher. Als etwas, was er eigentlich nie war und was ihm nie zuerkannt wurde. Vielleicht ist Oskar nur ein trauriges Symbol der sogenannten deutschen Juden in Prag.'

## Baum, Peter (1869–1916)

Baum was one of the associates of Elsa **Lasker-Schüler** and Peter **Hille**; he was later introduced to the *Sturm* circle. His prose style is reminiscent of that of E.T.A.Hoffmann, and his predilection for the macabre (he intended to write a *Grabenbuch*) looks back to Edgar Allan Poe. He was called up in 1914 and published his *Schützengrabenverse* in 1916 (reprinted as *Und alles war anders* in 1955). This collection contains varied verse forms: 'Am Beginn des Krieges stand ein Regenbogen' is a pseudo-sonnet. The war is seen in many poems as a fight to the death between wild animals ('Leuchtkugeln aus gestäubtem Tigerhaar'). Baum was killed by a stray piece of shrapnel in 1916.

## Baum, Vicki or Vicky (1888–1960)

Normally, but unjustly, regarded as a writer of light, sentimental novels, Vicki Baum worked in the editorial office of Ullstein in Berlin and soon reached a wide readership with the publication of *Die Tänze der Ina Raffay* in 1921. *Welt ohne Sünde* (the ‘Roman einer Minute’ (1922)) demonstrated that the authoress was able to handle the technique of interior monologue; *Hell in Frauensee* (1927), subtitled ‘Ein Sommerbuch von Liebe, Sport und Hunger’ is a by no means trivial analysis of interpersonal relationships. The erotic is handled with sensitivity and skill in Vicki Baum’s more successful novels, and the social scene, together with contemporary problems, is also invoked, as in *Stud. chem. Helene Willfüher* (1929). That same year saw the publication of *Menschen im Hotel*, one of the most characteristic novels of the Weimar Republic. A thinly veiled description of the Hotel Adlon, it cleverly enmeshes the destinies, pathetic and frequently sordid, of the guests staying beneath its roof. Filmed in America as *Grand Hotel* it consolidated Vicki Baum’s success; she settled in America and died in Hollywood in 1960. She wrote her later novels in English: *Berlin Hotel* (1943) attempted unsuccessfully to regain the popularity of the earlier novel, although the descriptions of air-raids over Berlin have a certain graphic quality. Her autobiography *Es war alles ganz anders* appeared in 1962.

## Bayer, Konrad (1932–64)

A member of the *Wiener Gruppe*, Bayer remained until his death the most wilfully experimental of the five in his work and his life style. **Artmann** was his mentor, with whom he shared a taste for surrealism and black romanticism. The works performed at the ‘literarische cabarets’, some of which were done in collaboration with other members of the group, consist of language divorced from its conventional meaning and social context and reorganized according to abstract, sometimes mathematical principles (e.g. the montages of extracts from a nineteenth-century language primer (1964), with Artmann; *der vogel singt. eine dichtungsmaschine in 571 bestandteilen* (1957–8), based on series and intervals), or the exposure of everyday linguistic stereotypes in such a way that the audience/reader becomes aware of language as a mode of social conditioning and integration (e.g. the plays *kasperl im elektrischen stuhl* (1968) and *der boxer* (1971), which can be related to the early plays of **Handke**). Bayer’s career was marked by a growing scepticism concerning language as an instrument of communication, combined with an anarchistic individualism which showed the influence of Max Stirner. His last works, two novels (see below), indicate the desire to expand consciousness beyond the limits imposed by the need for social interaction and the rational ordering of experience and to reinstate sensual awareness—an aim achieved at the cost of a solipsism and loss of identity which undoubtedly contributed to Bayer’s suicide, *der kopf des vitus bering* (1965, radio play 1964, film 1970) portrays the eighteenth-century Russian polar explorer in eighty-seven sections which consist of a montage of extracts from various sources

touching in various ways on Bering's role as discoverer of new territory, both in objective reality, through his voyages of exploration, and in consciousness, through his euphoric experiences as an epileptic, *der sechste sinn* (1966, 1969), centred on the autobiographical figure of Franz Goldenberg and left incomplete at Bayer's death, is a mosaic of fragments ending significantly in the disappearance of its protagonist. *Das Gesamtwerk*, edited by fellow *Wiener Gruppe* member Gerhard **Rühm**, appeared in 1977.

## Becher, Johannes R. (1891–1958)

Son of a wealthy Bavarian judge, Becher revolted against his family, became a pacifist, joined the *Spartakus-Bund* in 1918 and, later, the Communist Party. His early poetry is ejaculatory and fervent: 'Der Dichter meidet strahlende Akkorde' and 'Verfluchtes Jahrhundert! Gesanglos! Chaotisch!' are two representative poems. Grotesque hyperbole and abysmal bathos reduce much of Becher's poetry to the preposterous. Kasimir **Edschmid** described him thus: 'Bei Johannes R. Becher verströmt die große Explosion. Im Herauswurf gerät ihm das Gedicht in Fetzen. So ungeheuer ist das Gefühl aufgestanden in ihm.' The collections *Der Ringende* (1911), *An Europa* and *Verbrüderung* (1916) show the influence of **Werfel**; the increasingly revolutionary stance of his poetry and its hymnic fervour well exemplify the committed, left-wing aspect of expressionism. A confessional drama, *Arbeiter, Bauern, Soldaten*, appeared in 1921. Becher became a Communist deputy in the Reichstag in the Weimar Republic, fled Germany in February 1933 and eventually settled in Moscow. The autobiographical novel *Abschied*, published in Moscow in 1941 (Germany in 1945) is an account of Becher's rejection of the bourgeoisie and his subsequent faith in the ultimate triumph of communism. The *Ausgewählte Dichtung aus der Zeit der Verbannung. 1933–1945* (1945) is predictable in sentiment, yet also demonstrates a return to formal discipline; form now becomes 'Sinnbild einer Ordnungsmacht'. The *Neue deutsche Volkslieder* (1950) and *Deutsche Sonette* (1952) are undistinguished. Becher was Minister of Culture in East Germany, and given a state funeral in November 1958. Editions of his work include *Auswahl* (four vols, 1949); *Auswahl* (six vols, 1952); *Gesammelte Werke* (eighteen vols, 1966–81). A three-volume *Werke* appeared in 1971.

## Becher, Ulrich (1910–90)

Becher's first publication, the collection of stories *Männer machen Fehler* (1932, reissued in extended form in 1958), was burned by the Nazis, and he was forced into emigration, first to Austria, then to Switzerland (1938), Brazil (1941), New York (1944), returning to Vienna in 1948 and later moving to Basel. His exile works include *Niemand*

(1934), a modern mystery play inspired by the drawing 'Christus in der Gasmasken' by George Grosz, a further story collection *Die Eroberer* (1936) and the anti-Fascist satire *Das Märchen vom Räuber, der Schutzmann wurde* (1943). (Grosz was an early mentor and is portrayed in the novel *Das Profit* (1973)). Becher achieved success in 1948 with the première of the 'tragic farce' *Der Bockerer*, written in collaboration with the actor Peter Preses; in it the title-figure, a Viennese butcher, develops his own Schweikian form of resistance to the Third Reich, despite the presence of committed Nazis in his own family. Of Becher's other plays, *Samba* (1950) and *Feuerwasser. Deutsch-amerikanische Chronik* (1951) portray the struggle of exiles to survive in the Brazilian jungle and in New York. Becher's reputation is based on his novels, which are influenced by American writers of the 1920s and 1930s and apply the techniques of film in a rich, exotic and sometimes artificial style. Of these *Kurz nach 4* (1957) and *Murmeljagd* (1977) deal with the tribulations of exiles on the run, either viewed retrospectively or experienced directly, while *William's Ex-Casino* (1973) is set in a divided France during the Algerian war of independence, combining elements of the political thriller with reflections by the narrator on the life and death of Ernest Hemingway.

## Becker, Jurek (1937–)

Becker spent his childhood in the ghetto of Lodz, Poland, and in two concentration camps before settling in Berlin in 1945. In the upheavals within the GDR writing community following the expatriation of Wolf **Biermann** Becker was expelled from the SED and resigned from the Writers' Union, and he has lived in the West since the end of 1977. Becker achieved prominence in 1969 with the appearance of *Jakob der Lügner*, which commemorates the unheroic heroism of the title-figure forced to lie in order to maintain morale in a Polish ghetto in the closing phase of the Second World War after accidentally hearing on police radio of the Red Army's approach. Seen from a pragmatic point of view, Jakob's lies have a positive effect; seen from an absolute point of view, they emerge as the line of least resistance. The title of Becker's next novel, *Irreführung der Behörden* (1973), points to the continuity of the theme of deception, of oneself and others, in Becker's work. Apparent too is its connection to the subject of story-telling, which is an abiding preoccupation of the central characters, who usually narrate their own story. In his account of his successful career as a writer Georg Bieneck reveals himself as a careerist, opportunist and above all as a fraudulent manipulator of all those with whom he comes into contact. When his estranged wife confronts him with the truth about himself, he accepts that he has flouted socialist principles. Other novels focus on Jewish victims of the Holocaust whose inability to come to terms with the traumas left by their experiences renders them unwilling outsiders in either German state (*Der Boxer* (1976), *Bronsteins Kinder* (1986)), or similar figures whose failure to accommodate themselves to the expectations of their professional and social milieu leads not to active protest but to withdrawal, illness and attempted suicide (*Schlaflöse Tage* (1978), *Aller Welt Freund* (1982)). Neither these novels, nor the twenty-five stories of the collection *Nach der ersten Zukunft* (1980), were published in the GDR. *Amanda herzlos* (1992), ostensibly a

private story about a woman and her relationships to three men, a conforming sports writer, a dissident author and a journalist from the West, viewed from their respective points of view, throws light on the mediocrity of life in the closing years of the GDR. *Warnung vor dem Schriftsteller* (1990) contains thoughts on the differences between East and West German literature. *Wir sind auch nur ein Volk* (1994) is a television series on post-Wende Germany.

## Becker, Jürgen (1932–)

Becker has spent most of his life in Cologne, where he has been employed in radio play supervision. His early prose writings (*Felder* (1964), *Ränder* (1968) and *Umgebungen* (1970)) draw on Joyce and Helmut **Heißenbüttel** to challenge the traditional novel with its emphasis on plot and character. In them reality in the form of particles of everyday life is filtered through the subjectivity of the author, who then carefully arranges these often fragmentary and disparate perceptions, occasionally conveyed in deliberately ungrammatical and punctuation-free form, in measured proportions to form a symmetrical whole. Faithful to the view that the old generic divisions are no longer valid, Becker combines lyrical, anecdotal and dramatic elements, exposes the stereotyped nature of the language associated with particular activities, in order to indicate how jargon hinders access to reality, (cf. concrete poets and *Wiener Gruppe*.) Unity is provided by the topography of Cologne and its surroundings, which remains the author's standpoint. The lyrical impulse present in these early prose works becomes dominant in the poetry collections *Schnee* (1971), *Das Ende der Landschaftsmalerei* (1974), *Erzähl mir nichts vom Krieg* (1977), *In der verbleibenden Zeit* (1979) and, combining the poems in these volumes with unpublished pieces written between 1974 and 1980, *Gedichte 1965–1980* (1981), all of which, like the prose, register perceptions by means of free association like diary jottings. In concentrating on the effects of industrial activity in the urban landscape these poems become the vehicle of regret for the loss of the idyll represented by pre-industrial nature and fear of environmental catastrophe. *Erzählen bis Ostende* (1981) presents the biography of a radio editor in the now familiar atomistic style, placed within the framework of a railway journey to Ostende, and the same impressionism is the principal feature of his most recent prose (*Die Türe zum Meere* (1983)) and verse (*Odenthals Küste* (1986) and *Das Gedicht von der wiedervereinigten Landschaft* (1988)). Further poetry volumes are *Das englische Fenster* (1990) and *Foxrott im Erfurter Stadion* (1993), the latter describing Becker's return to the town in the former GDR where he spent part of his childhood. Becker is also the author of numerous radio plays.

## Beer-Hofmann, Richard (1866–1945)

A Viennese writer of Jewish descent, Richard Beer-Hofmann was one of the most influential of that group of authors associated with the Café Griensteidl and exemplifying 'Jung Wien' neo-romanticism. A fastidious craftsman (Karl **Kraus** lampooned him as a writer who 'seit Jahren an der dritten Zeile einer Novelle arbeitet, weil er jedes Wort in mehreren Toiletten überlegt'), he published little: two short stories (*Camelias* and *Das Kind* (1893)); a slim novel, *Der Tod Georgs* (1900), whose hero is a typical representative of *fin de siècle* Viennese decadence with his impeccable taste, refinement and morbid aestheticism; a five-act play *Der Graf von Charolais* (1904), based on Philip Massinger's *The Fatal Dowry* (the critic Alfred Kerr attacked its unequal quality, claiming that half had been written by Beer and the other half by Hofmann); a cycle of biblical dramas, including *Jaákobs Traum* (1918), *Der junge David* (1933) and *Das Vorspiel auf dem Theater zu König David* (1936); a handful of lyric poems, the most famous being 'Schlaflied für Miriam'; a commemorative piece (*Gedenkrede für Wolfgang Amadé Mozart* (1906)) and a book of memoirs for his wife, *Paula, ein Fragment*, published posthumously in 1949. Beer-Hofmann fled Austria after the *Anschluß* and settled in New York, where he died in 1945. *Der Tod Georgs* is his best achievement, generally regarded as the finest *Jugendstil* novel in the German language; it also contains, in the hero's final awareness of his Jewish blood, anticipations of Beer-Hofmann's later preoccupations. The *Gesammelte Werke* appeared in 1963, the correspondence with Hofmannsthal in 1972.

## Bender, Hans (1919–)

Bender belongs to the generation of men who witnessed the Second World War and the collapse of the Third Reich as reluctant soldiers and disillusioned POWs (cf. **Andersch, Böll, Schnurre, Weyrauch**) and who transposed their experiences into fiction, usually in the form of short stories on the American model, which proved to be a suitable vehicle for the literary renewal represented by 'Trümmerliteratur'. Although such experiences form the background to some of Bender's best-known short stories ('Die Wölfe kommen zurück', 'Die Schlucht', 'Iljas Tauben' and 'Der Brotholer'), other themes (childhood and youth, travel, the West Germany of the early *Wirtschaftswunder* years) are present from the beginning. Bender's first novel *Eine Sache wie die Liebe* (1954, revised version with a more convincing ending 1965) concerns the growing pains of an eighteen-year-old student during the transition to a more independent existence and the first serious encounter with the opposite sex. More important is the more substantial novel *Wunschkost* (1959), which tells of the POW Ulmer, whose comrades ensure that he escapes death from pneumonia by collecting enough money to buy penicillin. His survival proves to be brief, as he eventually becomes the innocent victim of his Soviet

captors' determination to implicate him in a war atrocity committed by men of the infantry division to which he had belonged.

From its foundation in 1954 until 1980 Bender was editor of *Akzente* (until 1968 with Walter **Höllerer**), a literary magazine with a remarkable openness to new talents from Germany and abroad which did much to bring about a climate in which West Germany was able to rejoin and draw from the mainstream of literary modernism. He has also been active as a poet (*Fremde soll vorüber sein* (1951), *Lyrische Biographie* (1957)), anthologist (*Mein Gedicht ist mein Messer* (1955), *Widerspiel. Deutsche Lyrik seit 45* (1961), *In diesem Lande leben wir. Deutsche Gedichte der Gegenwart* (1979)), and has recently returned to the short story (*Bruderherz* (1987)). *Worte Bilder Menschen* (1969) represents a crosssection of his early work. *Werke* (six vols) began to appear in 1993.

## Benn, Gottfried (1886–1956)

Generally acknowledged to be one of the most outstanding German lyric poets of the twentieth century, Gottfried Benn came from a family of Protestant parsons, studied medicine in Marburg and Berlin and published, shortly after graduating as a medical officer in 1912, a cycle of poems entitled *Morgue und andere Gedichte*. These brutal and frequently grotesque poems, which spoke of corpses and putrefaction, were welcomed by Ernst **Stadler** and established Benn's reputation as a poet of uncompromising modernity. He published in the major expressionist journals (*Die Aktion*, *Der Sturm*, *Neues Pathos* and *Die weißen Blätter*); the second volume of poems, *Söhne* (1913), was dedicated to Else **Lasker-Schüler**. In *Die weißen Blätter* there appeared in 1914 a short dramatic sketch entitled *Ithaka*, which tells of a violent and lethal confrontation between young idealists and professional authority; typically expressionist is the plea for atavistic vitalism: 'Wir wollen den Traum. Wir wollen den Rausch. Wir rufen Dionysos und Ithaka!' Benn's primitivism is derived largely from Nietzsche; it is also the realization of the man of science that life is suffused with powerful instincts that cannot be suppressed. During the First World War Benn was in charge of an army brothel in Belgium; he also witnessed the shooting of Nurse Edith Cavell. Benn came into contact with Carl **Sternheim**, Otto **Flake** and Carl **Einstein**. Einstein particularly was an admirer of Benn's poetry, and this is seen above all in his review of the latter's *Gesammelte Gedichte* of 1927 (he singled out Benn's 'durch keine Wirklichkeit vorbestimmte(s) Sprachspiel' and his 'halluzinativ autistisches Wortgeschehen' for high praise). The collection *Fleisch* appeared in 1917, *Schutt* and *Spaltung* in 1924 and 1925 respectively. Benn's poetry of the 1920s (he settled as a medical practitioner in Berlin after the war) is characterized by a juxtaposition of deliberately modern, urban phrasing, of medical and scientific terms, deliberately 'unpoetic' and aggressive, with irrational longings for the exotic and the sensual. In an incomprehensible universe meaning is only achieved through the poetic act, the mysterious fusion of disparate parts: Broadway, interstellar space, the Parthenon, the cervical cortex. The montage effects of many poems, the concentration on substantives, the almost Alexandrian breadth of allusion and the sophisticated cynicism alienated those who regarded poetry as lyrical effusion; **Brecht**, however, esteemed

Benn's modernity and presented him with a signed copy of *Die Hauspostille*. Benn moved in the same circle as **Klabund**, Oskar **Loerke** and **J.R.Becher**; he also appeared in court as a medical witness in the trial concerning the ostensible obscenity of the Dadaist journal *Jedermann sein eigener Fußball*.

Benn's primitivism, his disillusionment with democracy and his inability to sympathize with platitudinous humanism led him to throw in his lot with National Socialism; by no means an aberration, his welcoming the Nazi seizure of power was a natural development of certain tendencies which characterized his poetry throughout. His standpoint is clearly expressed in *Der neue Staat und die Intellektuellen* of 1933. Benn also replied to **Klaus Mann**, who demanded a statement concerning Benn's refusal to emigrate: the *Antwort an die literarischen Emigranten* extols the emergence of a new biological type of man in Nazi Germany. Benn found himself, however, out of favour with the authorities for his earlier poems, his formalism and modernism, and was attacked in 1936 as a purveyor of lewd pornography. He withdrew into 'inner emigration' and rejoined the army. In isolation he concentrated upon a definition of poetry as being an act of defiance in the face of absurdity and nihilism. The concept of the 'absolute poem', created *ex nihilo*, became of increasing importance for Benn during the Second World War: the poem 'Ein Wort', written in 1943 and published in the *Statische Gedichte* of 1948, emphasizes above all the impact, yet also the transience, of articulate utterance. Benn remained in Berlin after 1945; the brilliance, intensity, and also the tone of quiet resignation in his poetry attracted a growing readership who were prepared to condone his earlier political views. The *Novelle Die Ptolemäer* (1947), is an account of the suffering and the dislocation experienced in Germany in the post-war period. In 1951 Benn delivered a famous lecture at Marburg University on problems of writing lyric poetry, a lecture quoted and discussed in Cambridge by T.S.Eliot. Benn's death brought forth tributes from all over Europe and America. Eight volumes of *Gesammelte Werke* (ed. **Wellershoff**) appeared between 1958 and 1961 (reprinted 1968); *Sämtliche Erzählungen* in 1970 and *Das Hauptwerk* (four vols) in 1980. A complete edition (Stuttgarter Ausgabe) began publication in 1986.

## Bergengruen, Werner (1892–1962)

Born in Riga, Bergengruen fought in the First World War and in the subsequent campaign in the Baltic. In 1923 there appeared his first novel, *Das Gesetz des Atum*, a derivative (E.Th. A.Hoffmann) and pseudo-expressionistic account of student life in which Atum, an ancient Egyptian sun-god, acts as judge and paradigm. Collections of *Novellen (Rosen aus Galgenholz)* were also published in the 1920s, followed by the next novel *Das große Alkahest* (1926, republished as *Der Starost* in 1938): like Atum, the alcahest or *acidum universale* of Paracelsus represents a supernatural power which invalidates human greed and aspiration. The undemanding nature of Bergengruen's style and the quasireligious atmosphere invoked by many of his stories made him a very popular writer: extremely prolific, he published a succession of novels, *Novellen* and also poetry. His finest achievement is generally considered to be the novel *Der Großtyrann*

*und das Gericht* (1935), an account of the corruption of power and the demoralization which infects a whole society. The story is set during the Italian Renaissance, but the book may be seen as a thinly veiled portrayal of conditions prevailing within Germany in the 1930s, the 'Großtyrann' being the arch-criminal. Surprisingly, the book was not banned by the Nazis. Bergengruen remained within Germany, although life became increasingly difficult for him: in 1937 he was removed from the *Reichsschrifttumskammer*, although he was allowed to publish *Am Himmel wie auf Erden* in 1940. A historical novel which is set in sixteenth-century Brandenburg, the book also hints at punishment and a higher destiny; Bergengruen, by now a devout Catholic, was not blinded by the initial successes of the German army. *Der Tod von Reval* (1939) is a grotesquely humorous *Totentanz*; *Der spanische Rosenstock* (1942) a delightful piece of escapism. After the war Bergengruen published his *Rittmeister* trilogy, and also collected his poetry and published it in two volumes, *Die heile Welt* (1950) and *Figur und Schatten* (1958). His religious belief insisted that the world, despite suffering and destruction, was 'heil' ('Was aus Schmerzen kam/war Vorübergang./ Und mein Ohr vernahm/nichts als Lobgesang...'): a somewhat facile optimism, however, cannot be denied. Bergengruen's popularity has been eclipsed in recent years by more aggressively modern writers, but his uncomplicated style and religious belief still appeal to many.

## Bernhard, Thomas (1931–89)

A dominant but eccentric figure in contemporary German letters, with **Handke** the best-known Austrian writer of recent decades, Bernhard has monomaniacally devoted himself to an ever more elaborate transposition of his bleak vision of the senselessness of human existence into a vast output of work in prose fiction, autobiography and drama, in which mental disturbance, physical decay and death are the permanent themes. The five volumes of his autobiography, *Die Ursache* (1975), *Der Keller* (1976), *Der Atem* (1978), *Die Kälte* (1981) and *Ein Kind* (1982), reveal a disturbed childhood, marked by illegitimate birth, the experience of two boarding-schools, one Nazi and one Catholic, both so oppressive that the boy was almost driven to suicide, illness which developed into tuberculosis and confined him for four years to hospitals, a period as a grocer's apprentice made barely tolerable by the discovery of music, the death of his loved grandfather the writer Johannes Freumbichler, years of poverty as a student of music and acting. After travels in Sicily, Britain and Poland Bernhard withdrew to a farm in the centre of Upper Austria which he turned into a hermitage for the production of the works (eighteen full-length plays, seven full-length novels, numerous stories and shorter prose in addition to the autobiographical series) which poured without interruption from his pen in the following twenty-four years.

Bernhard's *Weltanschauung* is encapsulated in the statement: 'Es ist nichts zu loben, nichts zu verdammen, nichts anzuklagen, aber es ist vieles lächerlich; es ist alles lächerlich, wenn man an den Tod denkt.' It prompts him to treat physical affliction and mental disturbance not as departures from a norm, but as testimonies to the general scheme of things, artistic and scientific achievements as meaningless attempts at