Underwritten by the Austrian Cultural Forum London, the Modern Humanities Research Association and the Oxford Regius Professor of History, „Cultures at War: Austria-Hungary 1914-1918“ spread new research on the production, dissemination, and reception of culture in the Habsburg monarchy during and immediately after the Great War. The conference brought together over thirty-five scholars from Central Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States presenting to fellow scholars, students, and the general public. Like the diverse lands and peoples of late-Imperial Austria-Hungary, conference participants hailed from a variety of disciplines including history, art history, literature and theater and film studies, and harnessed a wide range of textual, visual, and musical sources. Key themes probed included cultural mobilization and the Augusterlebnis; tensions between supranational and national loyalties as well as elite and popular culture; censorship in literature, art, and theater; center and periphery relations; gender, pacifism and the feminist Burgfrieden. Proceedings were conducted bilingually in German and English, with participants switching freely between languages in the stimulating question and answer sessions. The conference also marked the launch of distinguished Kraus biographer Edward Timms’ memoirs, Taking Up the Torch: English Institutions, German Dialectics and Multi-Cultural Commitments, at a reception hosted by Austrian Ambassador Dr. Emil Brix.

Interdisciplinary fluidity and multi/transnational perspectives on Austria-Hungary’s war of culture and ideology constituted one of the conference’s major strengths. The strongest, most engaging papers, including the majority of those presented in the opening and closing plenary sessions, spoke across the disciplines rather than to field-specific internal dialogues. While the majority of papers tended to focus on Cisleithania, a significant minority of presenters centered their talks on wartime culture in the Hungarian, Czech, Croatian, and Romanian lands. Further bolstering the conference’s multinational, interdisciplinary character, „Cultures at War“ paired analytical papers on Austria-Hungary’s cultural front with sessions spotlighting the actual artifacts of wartime cultural mobilization, such as film, music and poetry. On Wednesday evening Dr. THOMAS BALLHAUSEN (Filmarchiv Austria) introduced a series of rare film clips, ranging from footage of the repatriation of the assassinated Archduke’s and Archduchess’s bodies back to Vienna, to shots of civilian internment camps and the Austrian General Staff, to selections from the wartime farce „Wien im Krieg“ (1916) mentioned in Robert von Dassanowsky’s paper on Austrian wartime film. The textual and visual congruence between the film-newsreels and papers, for instance used in Matthew Stibbe’s talk on civilian internment camps and Lutz Mutzner’s paper on Alice Schalek’s coverage of the Isozno Front, offered participants unique cinematic frames of reference. Likewise, on Thursday evening, a musical program featured patriotic songs from prominent operetta and Wiener Lieder composers, as well as settings of poems by Richard von Kralik and Franz Eichert. The evening concert complemented a panel session on wartime music earlier that afternoon: THOMAS STEIERT’s (Bayreuth) paper on Soldatenlied and Kunstmusik and ANITA MAYER-HIRZBERGER’s (Vienna) arguments on the August Madness and the Wandervogel movement’s collection of folk songs: songs which were originally collected to be sung when hiking but were misused during the war effort in mass concerts against the movement’s founding principles. Yet in both cases such initial patriotic euphoria expressed through music grew thin. EDWARD TIMM’s (Sussex) well-attended presentation, „Musical Subversions of Militarism in Karl
Kraus’s Die letzten Tage der Menschheit,” represented a musical performance in and of itself: a performance which, as Timms reminded the audience, Kraus might have approved of given the way that a piano typically accompanied Kraus’s lectures. Timms effectively wove his arguments on musical and textual subversion, particularly the invisible line between popular and military music, with live piano and recorded excerpts of a few of the one-hundred pieces quoted in Kraus’s cataclysmic drama.

Cultural mobilization and the limits of the so-called ‘Augusterlebnis,’ or August Madness, represented a major theme problematized across many panels. How did the diplomatic missiles fired in Summer 1914 shape the production of literature, theater, music, and art? Crucially, how did the war exacerbate already strained relations between the Empire’s centrifugal and centripetal forces? Finally, what dialogue existed between elite and popular cultures and to what extent were artists and intellectuals co-opted into state patriotism? As quoted in ANDREW BARKER’s (Edinburgh) paper „Peter Altenberg: Apocalyptic Aesthete,” Altenberg’s text entitled „1915” perfectly captures the quandary facing artists and intellectuals in the wake of the war. „Ich sehe, die Dichter, die Schriftsteller ergreift ein panischer Schreck: sie fürchten jetzt vergessen zu werden! Rasch eine Kriegshymne oder ein politischer Essay: ‘Wesen des Deutschen!’” The presenters in the opening plenary sessions concurred that, at least initially, the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914 offered the possibility of transformative cultural regeneration and the overcoming of class, national, and political divisions in the civilian Burgfrieden. Yet, taking cues from Jeffrey Verhey’s influential thesis on the ‘Spirit of 1914,’ participants probed the myth of war enthusiasm. In „Loyalty and Legitimacy in the Habsburg Lands, 1914-18,” MARK CORNWALL (Southampton) tested the limits of the August Madness and supranational loyalty in certain peripheral regions, including Galicia, Bukovina, and the South Slavic lands, focusing on shifting loyalties and state identities as war euphoria melted away. Ultimately, despite steady dialogues between center and periphery, Cornwall pointed to front and homefront propaganda, for instance nationalistic periodicals and broadsides, in labeling ethnic groups like the South Slavs as ‘traitors in the midst.’ Likewise, in a later panel session, MARTIN MOLL (Graz) presented accusations of ‘Verrat’ springing up between Styrian Germans and Slovenians immediately following the declaration of war. Moreover, as Moll’s co-panelist JAN VERMEIREN (London) argued, even the Dual Alliance was not immune to its share of treachery or perceptions thereof: i.e. the idea that some Austrian perceived the Germans as ‘our secret enemies.’

Following Cornwall in the plenary session, WOLFGANG MADEKTHANER (Vienna) and ALFRED PFOSER (Vienna) set the tone with their collaborative presentation „Krieg und kulturelle Transformation.” Maderthaner and Pfoser framed the Ringstraße as particularly important to an explosion of war hysteria and Germanic sentiment bridging societal divisions. Though Sigmund Freud and the Arbeiterzeitung editor Friedrich Austerlitz were not immune to this war psychosis at first, soon Austerlitz and Freud joined Karl Kraus in vehement opposition to the war. A rather different perspective on Austerlitz’s Arbeiterzeitung was provided the next morning by DEBORAH HOLMES’ (Kent) interesting study of the co-opting of the particularly Viennese journalistic form, the feuilleton, for the war effort. While such 2-3 page feuilletons had typically played prominent yet subordinate roles to front-page headline news, Holmes argued that a certain harmony both above and ‘unter dem Strich’ ensued during wartime by pointing to coverage of important moments during the war, including the June 1914 assassinations.

Two additional papers from the opening plenary sessions—PAUL STIRTON’s (New York) „Commerce, Modernity, and Cosmology: Hungarian Visual Culture During the First World War“ and ROBERT VON DASANOWSKY’s (Colorado Springs) “‘Seine Majestät wünschen überhaupt nicht, dass ein solcher Film zustande kommt!’ The Tacit Transformation of Austrian Film in the First World War”—approached the Augusterlebnis from different angles. A common leitmotiv in both papers was the complex re-
relationship between popular and elite forms of culture, as well as how the outbreak of war presented new opportunities for cultural production: in Dassanowsky’s paper, the prospect of schwarz-gelb filmic reportage, in Stirton’s case, a fundamental shift of gravity among the Hungarian avant-garde away from foreign (i.e. Austrian or French) models. Dovetailing with the film screening later that evening, Dassanowsky presented a fascinating paper tracing the history of Austrian cinema and reportage during the war, focusing on the competing Sascha-Filmmfabrik and Wiener Kunstfilm silent film companies. The formal, courtly language of his paper title refers to the fact that, at least while Emperor Franz Josef was alive, the Monarchy shunned appearance in any possible patriotic film projects. Yet, with the 1913 de-facto lifting of the ban of Burgtheater actors from appearing in films, both the military command and the new Emperor Karl eventually awakened to the transformative power of newsreels and propaganda film. Paul Stirton’s paper also addressed the slippery slope between elite and popular culture maintained by Dassanowsky regarding the postwar integrality of film and literature. Stirton’s presentation, based on visual and material evidence, shifted the methodological emphasis from the mostly text-based papers. Tracing connections between commerce (including advertisements for heroic beers, soaps and war bonds) and government propaganda, Stirton used visual evidence to suggest the war’s profound effect on Hungarian avant-garde art and design as Hungarian artists turned their backs on Germanic Central European visual culture for more dynamic modern styles such as Cubo-Futurism, Dada, or Constructivism. The war, Stirton maintained, was the final stage in divorcing Hungarian artists and designers from the inferiority complex that haunted the late 19th century. On a later panel, similar themes on mass propaganda and the commodification of the visual arts were found in JOACHIM BURGSCHEWINTER’s (Innsbruck) paper on the role of state-produced picture postcards in what he termed the ‘mental war.’ Burgschwenter’s analysis revealed how the 600 war-postcards produced by the Kriegshilfsbüro—sent out to the general public with payment slips for donations to support war welfare—triggered discussions as to whether such fundraising risked trivializing the war and if money were not better spent on direct donations.

Finally, in the context of the Czech avant-garde, THOMAS ORT (North Carolina) traced the war’s transformative effects on avant-garde art and philosophy, for instance how the totalizing effects of the war led Karel Capek, a founding member of the Cubist SVU (Visual Artists Group) and leading cultural critic in the Czech pre-war modernist movement, to reconsider key tenets of pre-war modernism. (On a side note, it was somewhat surprising that no paper explored Jaroslav Hasek’s classic satire of bumbling batman The Good Soldier Švejk, as duly noted by Ort). Regarding the discipline of art history itself, GEORG VASOLD’s (VIENNA) paper on Max Dvorak, one of the most prominent practitioners of the Wiener Schule of art history, resisted the temptation to interpret Dvorak’s concept of Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte as a direct outgrowth of his wartime experience, instead arguing that the war exacerbated already-present fissures in the way art history was conceived of and taught. Yet, similar to the other papers’ conclusion on the war’s transformative effects on the visual arts, Vasold contended that the war endangered the transnational, cosmopolitan categories of analysis that the Viennese school had formerly privileged.

The war’s transformative impact on the Austro-Hungarian women’s movement was another important theme shared across several panels. Like other sectors of civilian society, the state hoped to tap the strength and unity of Austro-Hungarian women in support of the war effort. Ideological, class, and nationalistic squabbles were to be laid aside in this feminist Burgfrieden. However, recent research has shown across Europe (for instance, The Women’s Movement in Wartime, edited by Alison Fell and Ingrid Sharp) that the August Madness could not mask the women’s movement’s deep divisions, despite certain groups’ enthusiastic war service. Based on meticulous research in the Mayreder Nachlass and diaries, ULRIKE TANZER’s (Salzburg) presentation on
Rosa Mayreder’s pacifist writings revealed that Mayreder’s attitude towards the war was anything but enthusiastic. Rather, Mayreder considered the war the final stage of destructive male hegemony. This became a familiar argument used by Austrian feminists, in combination with charitable relief performed during the war, to justify women’s suffrage and access to higher education, as problematized by TAMARA EHS’s (Vienna) paper on women’s postwar admission to legal studies and MEGAN BRANDOW-FALLER’s (Georgetown) presentation on the women’s movement in the arts and the postwar female Secession. Again showing the contested nature of the feminist Burgfrieden, JILL LEWIS (Swansea)argued that the war played a profound role in attracting Käthe Leichter to socialism and anti-war agitation.

Overall, the present conference was a very stimulating one, expanding new directions in the historiography: for instance, the comparative, interdisciplinary approach of Aviel Rosshwald’s and the late Richard Stites’ edited volume *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment and Propaganda*, and the emphasis on contested loyalties in Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky’s *The Limits of Loyalty*. Nonetheless, as the majority of papers handled high culture or the relationship between elite and popular culture, fascinating topics relating to the history of everyday life and the material realities of the home/battlefront remained underrepresented in the present gathering. Food and the total war of starvation, children’s experiences, and the growing encroachment of the state on the daily lives of individuals—topics explored in groundbreaking studies such as Maureen Healy’s *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* or Belinda Davis’s *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin*—received short shrift here. A stronger emphasis on material factors would have been welcome. Nonetheless, a number of papers considered the everyday experience of war, in particular censorship and how the declaration of war mandated strict monitoring of all forms of communication, including the press, theater, film, and personal letters. In drawing attention to the little-know genre of war plays referencing current events, MARION LINHARDT’s (Bayreuth) paper on Vienense wartime theater (“‘Anno 14’: War and Popular Culture in Vienna”) aptly demonstrated how a controversial play referring to events to the eastern front had to be transposed into the Napoleonic era. The conversation on Austria-Hungary’s cultural mobilization will continue in the projected publication of the conference papers (to appear in Austrian Studies) and, no doubt, at future gatherings as the 100th anniversary of the outbreak approaches.

**Conference Overview:**

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Plenary Session**
Chair: Robert Evans

Mark Cornwall (Southampton): Loyalty and Legitimacy in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-1918

Wolfgang Maderthaner (VGA, Vienna) and Alfred Pfoser (Vienna): Krieg und kulturelle Transformation

**Plenary Session**
Chair: Judith Beniston

Andrew Barker (Edinburgh): Peter Altenberg - Apocalyptic Aesthete?

Paul Stirton (Bard College, NY): Commerce, Modernity and Cosmology: Hungarian Visual Culture during the First World War

Robert von Dassanowsky (Colorado): ‘Seine Majestät wünschen überhaupt nicht, dass ein solcher Film zustande kommt’: The Tacit Transformation of Austrian Film in the First World War.

*First World War Film introduced by Thomas Ballhausen (Filmarchiv Austria)*

**Session A**
Chair: Jon Hughes

Deborah Holmes (Kent): The Kriegsfeuilleton in Vienna: Arbeiterzeitung versus Neue Freie Presse

Lutz Musner (IFK, Vienna): Dem Krieg eine gefällige Form geben – Alice Schalek an der Isonzo-Front

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Session B
Chair: Peter Pulzer
Lisa Silverman (Milwaukee, WI): Yiddish Literature and First-World-War Vienna: Abraham Mosche Fuchs
Eszter Gantner (Budapest): ‘Gibt es in Ungarn eine Judenfrage?’ Die Krise des Assimilationsmodells in Ungarn während des Ersten Weltkriegs

Session A
Chair: Deborah Holmes
Matthew Sibbe (Sheffield Hallam University): The Internment of Italians in Austria during the First World War: The Katzenau Camp, 1915-1918
Brian Moloney (Hull): ‘Was will der dumme Kerl hier?’ Italo Svevo and Ettore Schmitz in wartime Trieste

Session B
Chair: Robert Vilain
Geoffrey Chew (Royal Holloway London): Musica in tempore belli: Janáček’s Wartime Symphonic Poems
Austrian War Poetry: round table discussion led by Robert Vilain (Bristol)

Session A
Chair: Lisa Silverman
Megan Brandow-Faller (Georgetown): Tenacious Mitschwestern: Mobilizing Vienna’s Women Artists and the Splintering of Austrian Frauenkunst, 1914-20
Ulrike Tanzer (Salzburg): Schreiben gegen den Krieg. Die Pazifistin Rosa Mayreder

Session B
Chair: Wolfgang Maderthaner
Jill Lewis (Swansea): Käthe Leichter and the First World War
Tamara Ehs (Vienna): (Studium der) Rechte für Frauen? Eine Frage der Kultur!

Session A
Chair: John Warren
Thomas Steiert (Bayreuth): Soldatenlied and Kunstmusik. Interrelations from quotation to atmospheric adaptation
Anita Mayer-Hirzberger (Vienna): Volkslied und Lagerfeuerromantik im Weltkrieg

Session B
Chair: Paul Weindling
Landry Charrier (Clermond-Ferrand): Die Internationale Rundschau (1915-1918), ein österreichisches Instrument kultureller Demobilisierung
Werner Suppanz (Graz): Zeichen einer ‘Großen Zeit’. Politische und ästhetische Diskurse um die Errichtung von Kriegerdenkmälern in Österreich-Ungarn 1914-1918

Pre-dinner drinks in the presence of the Austrian Ambassador, Dr Emil Brix, to celebrate the publication of Edward Timms’ autobiography - Taking up the Torch. English Institutions, German Dialectics and Multi-Cultural Commitments
Introduced by Christian Glanz (Vienna): Der Weltkrieg und die Wiener Musikproduktion

Witwen und Waisen

Session A
Chair: Gilbert Carr
W. E. Yates (Exeter): The Burgtheaterdirektion in the War Years
Marion Linhardt (Bayreuth): ‘Anno 14’ – War and Popular Culture in Vienna
Judith Beniston (UCL): Hans Müller’s War

Session B
Chair: Robert Knight
Georg Vasold (Vienna): Krieg und ‘Krisis’. Max Dvorak und die Erfindung der Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte
Irina Marin (SSEES/UCL): The Perils of Archaeology: National Culture and Espionage in the Cena Case

Session A
Chair: Martin Liebscher

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Jan Vermeiren (UCL): ‘It’s not only for Austria’s Banner’: The Dual Alliance at War and the Politics of Austro-German Identity

Martin Moll (Graz): Augusterlebnis in der österreichischen Provinz: Inklusion und Exklusion am Beispiel der Verfolgung angeblich ‘serbophiler’ Slowenen

Ekkehard Haring (Nitra): ‘Unglaubliche Verwandlungen – aber wahr!’ Mobilisierungsprozesse der Prager deutschen Literatur im 1. Weltkrieg

Session B
Chair: Ritchie Robertson

John Warren (Oxford Brookes): Stefan Zweig’s Jeremias in the Context of Expressionist Anti-War Drama

Edward Timms (Sussex): Musical subversions of militarism in Karl Kraus’s Die letzten Tage der Menschheit

Plenary Session
Chair: Florian Krobb

Werner Michler (Vienna): Im (literarischen) Feld: Weltkrieg und Avantgarde bei Robert Müller und anderen

John Paul Newman (University College Dublin): Miroslav Krleža, The Croatian God Mars, and the Habsburg War

Thomas Ort (North Carolina State University): Karel Capek, the First World War, and the Czech Prewar Modernist Movement

Closing Session

Round-table discussion in the Jacqueline du Pré Hall. Panelists will include Robert Evans, Mark Cornwall, Andrew Barker, Judith Beniston and Deborah Holmes


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