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Table of Contents

Articles

ANDREW W. BARKER

"Ein Lichtbringender und Leuchtender, ein Dichter und Prophet."
Responses to Peter Altenberg in Turn-of-the-Century Vienna 1-14

The critical response to Peter Altenberg's early work by such Viennese contemporaries as Kraus, Hofmannsthal, and Bahr is examined in the first part of the essay. Satirical responses are also noted, and the paper concludes with an examination of Altenberg's importance for the composers of the "Second Viennese School."

BARBARA Z. SCHOENBERG

The Influence of the French Prose Poem on Peter Altenberg 15-32

This article traces the influence of French prose-poets Bertrand, Baudelaire, and Huysmans on the prose sketches of Peter Altenberg. The essay argues that a study of these French predecessors in the genre of prose poetry will result in a better understanding of the work and innovations of Peter Altenberg.

MARC C. WEINER

Die Zauberflöte and the Rejection of Historicism
in Schnitzler's *Traumnovelle* 33-50

Both Arthur Schnitzler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal employ Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* as a surreptitious model for a literary work (*Traumnovelle* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* respectively), but their uses of the opera reveal antithetical ideological positions. While Hofmannsthal's libretto celebrates the Enlightenment tradition as a vibrant, life-giving force applicable to turn-of-the-century society, Schnitzler's text underscores the loss of any connection to the Enlightenment past: their different uses of the opera correspond to their participation in and/or rejection of an historicist ideology at the turn of the century.

MARK W. ROCHE

Schnitzler's *Anatol* as a Philosophical Comedy 51-64

Schnitzler's *Anatol* is more than just a clever portrayal of comic situations; it is a philosophical comedy that reflects on abstract issues such as truth and illusion, unity and multiplicity, and stability and impermanence. The play integrates essential dimensions of high comedy, above all the critique of asymmetrical relations and the comic dimensions of philosophical contradiction.

LORE MURDEL DORMER

Wie die Blumen in einem Garten. Hofmannsthal's Vaterstadt Wien und die Quellen seiner Dramen 65-80

Die Dramen des Frühwerks (besonders *Der Kaiser und die Hexe*, *Der Abenteurer* und *die Sängerin*, *Der weiße Fächer*, *Das kleine Welttheater*) and die Libretti (besonders *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Arabella*, *Die Ägyptische Helena*) weisen in der Wahl ihrer Quellen und in ihrem Bezug zur Zeitgeschichte auf Hofmannsthal's oft übersehene Bedeutung für die moderne Dichtung.

ADRIAN DEL CARO

Hofmannsthal as a Paradigm of Nietzschean Influence on the Austrian fin de siècle 81-96

Nietzsche's writings played a significant role in the development of Hofmannsthal's early work. The Nietzschean influence is best seen when Hofmannsthal's writings are scrutinized from the perspective of *Lebensphilosophie*. Hofmannsthal's conception of the artist and his practice of the poet's vocation represent the first truly original reception of Nietzsche in Austrian literature at the turn of the century.

STEPHANIE BARBÉ HAMMER

Hofmannsthal's Essays on Schiller: The Myth of Greatness 97-108

Hofmannsthal's two essays on Schiller explore a complex ambivalence towards the classical writer and towards the concept of artistic greatness which he both incarnates and problematizes. As such the Schiller essays unfold as critical tours de force which defamiliarize our conceptions of artistic magnitude, immortality, and influence.

REINGARD NETHERSOLE

Enchanted Gardens: Landscape Imagery in the Works of Hofmannsthal and Klimt 109-126

A close reading of Hofmannsthal's poem "Besitz" and a comparative analysis of Klimt's "Garden Landscape" (1906) show the garden to be the site of an allegory. The garden-image in their work refers as an indexical sign to potential creativity facilitated by a gaze as advocated by Mach's and Freud's proposals concerning ways of perceiving and structuring the world.

MARTIN STERN

"Poésie pure" und Atonalität in Österreich: Stefan Georges Wirkung auf das Junge Wien und Arnold Schönberg 127-141

Dieser Beitrag analysiert die erstaunliche Symbiose von Wort und Musik in Schönbergs Op. 15, wo der Komponist fünfzehn Gedichte von Stefan George verwendete, um seine "neue Musik" von allen früheren Bindungen an die Tonalität zu befreien. War diese Wahl ein Missverständnis, oder die Verbindung zweier benachbarter Avantgarde-Bewegungen?

JAY BODINE

Karl Kraus, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Paradigms of Textual Understanding 143-186

The mice folk's reception of Josefina's art in Kafka's story "Josefine, die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse" reflects the reception on the part of Kraus's audience of his literary art with its "meta-ideological" cultural analysis. This analysis was recognized by the primary members of the Frankfurt School for Social Research and is easily demonstrable in Kraus's analytical treatment of the Social Democrats in the short essay "Hüben und Drüben." The question of the efficacy of Kraus's analysis is better posed as a question of the reception on the part of the mice folk of the meta-ideological analysis undertaken.

LEROY R. SHAW

Polyphemus among the Phaeacians: Kraus, Wedekind, and Vienna 187-202

This article attempts to reevaluate the Wedekind-Kraus relationship in its personal as well as literary aspects. Their contri-

butions to each other's careers are placed in perspective and traced back ultimately to enlightened self-interest. Opportunism, fostered by fundamental differences in temperament and intellect, eventually prevented an unreserved and life-long friendship.

HANS EICHNER

Rainer Maria Rilke's Bildgedichte. Versuch einer Klassifizierung . . . 203-210

Rilke's poems about paintings, statues, and similar artefacts can be classified in four groups ranging from poems that merely evoke the mood of an individual artefact to poems that refer to an iconic tradition rather than an individual work of art. As a particularly impressive example of the last group, the sonnet "Die Ägyptische Maria" is discussed.

LAURENCE A. RICKELS

Kafka and Freud on the Telephone 211-226

According to both Freud and Kafka, the telephone call was erected or institutionalized to interfere with telepathic relations with the unmourned dead. Like the superego, the phone cannot, however, in turn promote proper mourning; from its provenance to its reception it can produce only narcissistic objects and objections, but no affirmation (of life): There is no 'no' on the telephone.

GEOFFREY C. HOWES

Emerson's Image in Turn-of-the-Century Austria:

The Cases of Kassner, Friedell, and Musil 227-240

Kassner, Friedell, and Musil participated in the general European turn-of-the-century interest in Emerson. Unlike many others, they responded more to method than to content. The article explores how each author's own leanings slanted his image of Emerson: Kassner's Emerson was a symbolist, Friedell's an impressionist, and Musil's an essayist.

GUDRUN BROKOPH MAUCH

Salome and Ophelia: Die Frau in der österreichischen

Literatur der Jahrhundertwende 241-255

The article demonstrates that the portrayal of women in Austrian literature at the turn of the century falls essentially into two categories: the *femme fatale* and the *femme fragile*, both projections of the male libido and products of the repressive sexual morality of the time.

Schnitzler's *Anatol* as a Philosophical Comedy

Mark W. Roche

Schnitzler's *Anatol* is a splendid and entertaining situation comedy: one thinks of Anatol's hypnosis of Cora and his unwillingness to ask the crucial question; the dramatic irony of his episode with Bianca; the comic one-upmanship in "Abschiedssouper"; or Anatol's trying to get his latest girlfriend out of bed so that he can get dressed for his wedding with another woman. But *Anatol* is more than just a clever portrayal of comic situations; it is a philosophical comedy that reflects on abstract issues such as truth and illusion, unity and multiplicity, and stability and impermanence; the play integrates essential dimensions of high comedy: the critique of asymmetrical relations; the hero's obsession with his own subjectivity; the parody of tragedy; the protagonist's identity crisis; the comic dimensions of philosophical contradiction; and the hero's intuitive desire for intersubjectivity.¹

Asymmetrical relationships appear frequently in comic texts. The subordinate part of such a relationship tends to be taken by a woman or servant (though in Lessing's *Die Juden* it is the Jew). This accounts in part for the frequency of the Don Juan motif and its variations and of servants in comic texts. (They are there not only for their wit.) What is fascinating about Anatol's asymmetrical behavior is that it is countered by an intuitive desire for symmetry. A symmetrical relationship is necessarily a one-to-one correspondence, and Anatol insists with an almost tyrannical bent on being the exclusive object of his beloved's affections. The crucial question he wants to ask Cora relates to her faithfulness.² The crisis of "Denksteine" revolves around Anatol's demand that the two partners love only one another. In "Abschiedssouper" Annie and Anatol jab each other by claiming that their relationship was never as symmetrical as the other thought. The asymmetry of loving a married woman bothers Anatol in "Agonie": he asks Elsa to imagine that the two of them are alone in the world (67).³ Finally, Anatol's marriage, which is

in part a gesture to (and subversion of) comic tradition, also reveals the hero's intuitive desire for oneness. The incongruity of Anatol's longing for unity while succumbing to a multiplicity of moods and relationships constitutes the material for much of the text's comedy.

Symmetry presupposes not only a one-to-one correspondence but also an equality between individuals. The subject treats the other as a free subject, not an object. Here too Anatol's usurping of the symmetrical ideal furnishes us with comic passages. Hypnosis is in part a metaphor for possession. Anatol states: "Ich habe sie in meiner Macht" (10). Max fears that if he were under hypnosis Anatol might tell him he's a chimney sweep, and before long he'd be covered with soot (7). In "Episode" Anatol recalls not names but objects, metaphors, and moods. The one name mentioned is selected for the purpose of a rhyme: "Wilde . . . Mathilde" (31). Anatol mentions that he dropped one girl much the way one absent-mindedly abandons an umbrella (33). Instrumentalization, however, is not restricted to the male side. Gabrielle struggles to assert power over Anatol's abode as soon as Anatol triggers her sexual vanity by sketching an idyll with another woman.⁴ In "Abschiedssouper" the instrumentalization of the other is expressed in economic terms. Annie stuffs herself with champagne and oysters as she bids Anatol farewell. Elsa uses Anatol as well—for diversion from her boring marriage. Max nicely illustrates the contemporary subordination of love to possession when he asserts in "Episode" that, although Anatol's former girlfriends may all have stopped loving him, they might still experience jealousy (30). Anatol's multiple relations and those of his partners turn out to be everything but liberating; they are unveiled as extreme forms of consumerism and instrumentalization. The fact that this instrumentalization functions on both sides suggests, paradoxically, not an overcoming, but a doubling, of asymmetry.

Anatol's instrumentalization of others derives in part from his extreme subjectivity, a dominant feature in modern European comedy.⁵ Subjectivity is above all an unwillingness to enter into relations with others or an inability to treat others as equals. An effect of subjectivity of which we see bits and pieces in *Anatol* is the hero's focus on consciousness and self-reflection at the expense of genuine communication, and within the act of self-reflection a focus not on universals but on the particularity of the self. More significant for *Anatol* is the arrogance that accompanies subjectivity. Anatol is blinded by a sense of his own greatness. He sees himself as the lover every woman wants to be with and the man no woman can forget. Every woman he embraces is transformed into a virgin (99). Max functions in part to undermine Anatol's subjectivity. He is a Mephistophelean companion who deflates Anatol's claims to greatness, above all by mirroring Anatol's words and concepts.

He is the realist, the pragmatist, the cynic. Max is more insightful than Anatol, and many of his best lines pass right by the story's hero.⁶

Though Anatol wants to bury his past, discard the specter of continuity, and live only for the moment, he also needs the memory of his previous exploits to convince himself of his own greatness. He alone can experience unique and intense moods: "Das Geheimnis der ganzen Sache ist, daß ich's erlebt habe" (34). However, when Anatol asserts the uniqueness of his experiences and his superior knowledge of Bianca, Max argues: "Nicht ich habe etwas übersehen, was an ihr war; sondern *du* sahst, was nicht an ihr war. Aus dem reichen und schönen Leben deiner Seele hast du deine phantastische Jugend und Blut in ihr nichtiges Herz hineinempfunden, und was dir entgegenglänzte, war Licht von *deinem* Licht" (37). We see in this passage a clever inversion of the traditional rhetoric of truth as enlightenment: Anatol's light is the light of subjectivity, the light of illusion, not truth; in reality Anatol prefers dusk, the dimming of lights, "das Halbdunkel" (36). We also recognize in this passage a pattern *Anatol* shares with Hofmannsthal's *Der Schwierige*: problems with communication arise less from semantic difficulties than from the application of false categories of subjectivity, i.e., the characters' unwillingness or inability to consider the positions of others.⁷ Anatol sees not the other but an image of the other derived from his own self: "Du betest das an, was du in sie hineinträgst" (98). Anatol's partners are means to his evocation of moods; they are not ends. They become therefore interchangeable.

Identity crises are comic staples in texts as diverse as Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Kleist's *Amphitryon*, and Woody Allen's *Zelig*. In not recognizing the other as other Anatol fails to develop a stable relationship and a true self-identity. He becomes as interchangeable as his counterparts. Bianca, for example, confuses Anatol with someone in St. Petersburg. Anatol's sense of time furthers this dissolution of selfhood: because he is immersed only in the moment, Anatol loses all continuity. For the man who lives only in the moment the moment is always already past: "Während ich den warmen Hauch ihres Mundes auf meiner Hand fühlte, erlebte ich das Ganze schon in der Erinnerung. Es war eigentlich schon vorüber" (35). The hero's loss of identity, his multiple selfhood, is especially brought to the fore on the morning of his wedding when he claims to be the best man at the wedding in which he is also the groom.

Anatol's identity crisis, his conflict of selves, is for the audience comic, but Anatol, supported by an inflated view of his own subjectivity, must read the conflict as tragic. Parody of tragedy is another frequent comic motif, beginning already with Aristophanes. The parody can take either of two forms: it can be directed against the tragic dimension, as in Lenz's *Der Hofmeister*,

where pathos and self-sacrifice are mocked, or as in *Anatol* it can leave tragedy intact but parody the hero who claims—in his obsessive subjectivity—that his fate is tragic.⁸ The audience of course recognizes that the hero cannot be taken seriously. Weak heroes, pitying themselves and obsessed with their own particular suffering, can hardly be viewed as tragic. The tragic hero is committed to a goal; Anatol, in part because of his sense of time, has no goals. One of his favorite words is “Spazieren”: “Es liegt so was herrlich Planloses in dem Wort!” (20). The tragic hero adheres to principles; he is consistent. Anatol is the epitome of inconsistency. In its final scene the play mocks this inconsistency together with Anatol’s assumption of tragic grandeur. Despite leaving one woman after another Anatol still takes his tea with rum and two sugars. Ilona asserts: “Rum und zwei Stück Zucker, (zu Max) der hat Prinzipien!” (79). Anatol reaches intersubjectivity only at the level of eroticism; he gains tragic status meanwhile only at the level of nourishment. Anatol’s suffering does not derive from a tragic collision, from adherence to an absolute value, or from an assertion of formal greatness; instead Anatol has fallen in love—for one scene at least—with a married woman. Like the Stoic hero, however, Anatol accepts his fate: “man muß sich fügen” (67). Annie too would assume tragic stature. She appeals to tragic inevitability when she falls out of love with Anatol: “Es ist meine Bestimmung—und gegen meine Bestimmung . . . kann ich nichts tun . . . und . . . gegen . . . meine Bestimmung . . . kann . . . ich . . . nichts . . . tun . . .” (59).

Anatol contains one tragic *peripeteia* after another; however, in Anatol’s case these do not lead to any kind of *anagnorisis*, since he fails to recognize the various reversals.⁹ It is symbolic of his lack of self-understanding that Anatol can hypnotize others but not himself. He sees himself as beyond the moment of union with Bianca, but it is she who has forgotten, and he who has remembered.¹⁰ When at the end of “Denksteine” Anatol calls Emilie a whore, he fails to see the consequences for his own relationship to her. Doesn’t Anatol’s accusation recoil back on himself and imply that he treats her as an object, a possession?¹¹ “Abschiedssouper” contains another reversal. Anatol’s desire to free himself of Annie is thwarted when he finds that she is already free of him. At the end of “Agonie” Anatol’s kiss would make Elsa just one more; in truth it makes Anatol just one more. In this episode Anatol is the other man.

Much of the comedy of *Anatol* derives from an incongruity between the hero’s pose as a tragic hero and the ludicrous level at which he asserts this pose. The laughter of incongruity shares much with a philosophy that focuses on contradictions. Anatol contradicts himself frequently, giving rise to laughter, as the contradictions demonstrate the untenability of his position.

Reminiscing about his earlier relationships, Anatol imagines a magic formula that would bring back *all* his lovers: “Ich rufe also: Einzig Geliebte . . . ! Und nun kommen sie” (30). When Anatol swears eternal love, he reflects on the conditions of a possible break-up: “Ich habe es Annie aufrichtig gesagt, gleich—gleich, ganz zu Anfang . . . wie wir uns ewige Liebe schwuren: Weißt du, liebe Annie—wer von uns eines schönen Tages spürt, daß es zu Ende geht—sagt es dem andern rund heraus . . .” (51). Though Anatol himself collects remembrances, he forbids Emilie in “Denksteine” from keeping anything from her past, even a memory that, as Anatol once put it, served her development toward a relationship with Anatol (145).¹² As Anatol tries to send Ilona out of his apartment so that he can go to his wedding, he still has the audacity to promise her “jetzt gibt es keine Abreise mehr . . . keine Trennung” (77). In “Anatols Größenwahn” he asks Max: “Hast du übrigens etwas dagegen wenn ich das Gegenteil von dem behaupte, was ich vor einer Minute sagte?” Max responds: “Oh, ich erwartete es!” (92). Anatol’s criterion for the acceptance of a position is not the law of noncontradiction but the degree of pleasure and pain: “Nun, beweisen läßt sich das nicht—aber ich nehme es an; weil mir das Gegenteil unangenehm wäre” (69). The text underlines these philosophical contradictions by introducing rhetorical ones, for example Anatol’s assertion: “mein Leichtsinns ist so schwermütig geworden” (108).¹³ We see here not a classical and harmonic oxymoron but an unresolved contradiction.

The text contains additional contradictions, but the most significant one is general. Anatol’s whole life is a contradiction, and each relationship is based on an illusion. He asserts his desire to know the truth about Cora’s fidelity, but he fails to ask the question, which would be to risk losing possession over Cora. The relationship continues only on the basis of illusion. However, the illusion that makes the relationship possible is the same one that will inevitably lead to its dissolution.¹⁴ The relationship cannot last; it remains asymmetrical and superficial. Not by chance does the second scene open with Anatol talking to a *former* girlfriend about his *current* beloved. Anatol’s stress on the moment supports this sequential structure. Acknowledging the ephemerality of relations Anatol asks: “Weiß man denn überhaupt im Herbst, wem man zu Weihnachten etwas schenken wird?” (21).

Throughout the text Anatol asserts his desire for truth. From Cora he would hear “ein wahres Wort” (10). In “Denksteine” Anatol asserts: “die Wahrheit will ich wissen” (44). To Annie the phrase is: “Lüge nicht!” (57). In “Anatols Größenwahn” Anatol reaffirms his stance to Berta: “Ich habe dich immer beschworen, nur die Wahrheit zu sagen!” (106). What Anatol really wants, however, is not truth but a livable illusion that appears as truth,

an illusion not recognized as illusion.¹⁵ Anatol, despite his own illusions, still upholds, theoretically at least, the priority of reality over appearance (108). Anatol fails to ask the crucial question less out of his concern with language than out of his subconscious fear of truth.¹⁶ Emilie states of Anatol and his likenesses: "ihr vertragt sie nicht, die Wahrheit" (46). The situation is complex: Anatol wants truth but cannot bear it. Thus he must live by illusion, but illusion doesn't satisfy him. So he moves on to new relationships, always looking for the ideal, which he cannot reach, and the truth, which he cannot accept. The text has a distinctly Faustian dimension to it.¹⁷ In this rewriting of the Faust story, however, one sees yet another parody of tragedy. Faust wants truth but can't reach it; his weakness becomes his strength insofar as it drives him ever forward. Anatol is simply mediocre: he says he wants truth, but he does not search for it. Fearing its consequences, he actively avoids it. Faust and Anatol are spurred to new adventures in totally different ways.

Besides the finite contradictions and the contradiction between truth and illusion is the contradiction between the one and the many. Anatol states: "Es gibt so viele Krankheiten und nur eine Gesundheit" (65). His assertion echoes an important passage in Plato's *Republic* and shows the proximity of the truth-versus-illusion dichotomy to that of the one-versus-the-many. Socrates states: "There is one form of excellence, while the forms of evil are infinite" (448c).¹⁸ One could organize one's reading of *Anatol* by proposing two columns with unity and multiplicity at the top:

One	Many
truth	illusion
health	sickness
constancy	moods
stability	change
marriage	affairs, adultery
eternity	moments
boredom	new impressions, amusements, and interests
philosophy	taste
autonomy	heteronomy
classless society	class divisions
self	split self
organic drama	multiple episodes

Though there may be only one true answer to a given question, the number

of false responses is infinite.¹⁹ Anatol is not geared toward singular truth; he is a man of the senses, an aesthetic man, a man with taste; he is therefore a master of deception and illusion, even concerning his own self. It is this life of illusion that deprives Anatol of health. With the valorization of the aesthetic comes, however, an appreciation of moments of decay, sickness, and decadence. Because Anatol affirms subjectivity, he is willing to embrace that illness which makes him unique (or from an external perspective seems to make him unique—the reader knows how predictable and common Anatol has become). Anatol revels in his life of impressions. His assertion of multiplicity keeps him moving from one relationship to the next. As his many moods change, so do his partners. The Faustian longing for the eternal moment is met with an equally strong longing for ever new moments and moods. Although love has been defined from Plato to Hegel and beyond as the unity of unity and multiplicity, Anatol's love becomes the nonsynthesis of the one and the many. It is an ultimate incongruity to see the man of many moods confront the institution of oneness and stability. The text points this out; on the morning of his wedding Anatol is "nicht in der Stimmung zum Heiraten" (72). The decision of one's life is reduced to a momentary lapse in mood. Marriage becomes, if you will, an episode.²⁰ Were it permanent, it would lead to boredom. Brief adventures, on the other hand, allow Anatol to renew his impressions and cover any internal vacuum.²¹ For Anatol moods supersede questions of morality. In a further inversion of the tragic mode Anatol responds to Max's comment that his behavior on his wedding day is "unmoralisch" with the clear affirmation of mood over principle: for Anatol it is above all "träurig" (77). Anatol's lack of morality has more than private consequences: the embrace of multiplicity over unity obviously leads to class divisions (society is not one but two, rich and poor), and Anatol lives his life of leisure on the basis of this multiplicity. Finally, Anatol's embrace of multiplicity leads to his split self rather than to any integrated identity, and the text *Anatol* mirrors the hero's embrace of multiplicity in a formal manner: the philosophical subordination of hypotaxis gives way to Anatol's use of parataxis, the text frequently introduces aposiopesis,²² and on a more global level the development of an organic plot gives way to the episodic, to multiple and at least partially interchangeable scenes.²³

One might suspect that Max is the voice of the one. After all, Max raises a voice of protest when he finds Anatol with another woman on the morning of his wedding. But making Max the voice of ethics, the voice of the one, would be a mistaken enterprise. If marriage were sacred to Max, he would have been upset over Anatol's relationship with Elsa, a married woman. But he is not. The problem seems to be an aesthetic one. While it is all

right for someone to have an affair after years of boredom, it just does not *look good* to fool around on the morning of one's wedding. The appeal is to convention, not to truth: "So was tut man nicht!" (73). Even for Max aesthetics is superior to ethics, appearance to essence. This reading is reinforced, first, by Max's encouraging Ilona to seduce Anatol as Max tries to keep her from disturbing the wedding ceremony. Here again such a disruption would be tasteless. Second, during the entire scene Max is concerned with an aesthetic matter: the matching of his flowers to the maid of honor's dress. Third, Max's other moment of protest, "Das Leben ist nicht so" (50), is undermined at the end of this scene when he responds to Ilona's "O dieser Hohn! . . . Dieser Betrug!" with "es ist eben das Leben" (87). Finally, Max's function in the text as a whole is inherently aesthetic: he states: "Ich bin immer nur für die Stichwörter dagewesen" (92).

Anatol wants truth, he wants a single relationship, he also wants permanence. In a perverse way, one which nonetheless shows us that the truth of inconstancy is constancy, the truth of impermanence permanence, Anatol does reach this state. Changing constantly, Anatol is locked into the sameness of change. Though in a state of *flux*, Anatol *remains* in a state of flux. Hofmannsthal speaks quite justly of "das Medusenhafte" in *Anatol*.²⁴ The relationships become formal and mechanical. The play illustrates the empty stillness of arbitrary change. The many is in truth one. This oneness in multiplicity, like Anatol's permanent impermanence, is a synthetic truth at the lowest level.

Anatol reveals a further dialectic or reversal of freedom and necessity. Like the tragic hero, Anatol would free himself of his limiting surroundings: "Ich beginne ein neues Leben auf unbestimmte Zeit. Dazu muß ich frei und allein sein, und darum löse ich mich von der Vergangenheit los" (29). But, as it turns out, Anatol is hardly free of his past or beyond any attachments. Anatol is very much interested in the Bianca he once abandoned, and Max responds: "Was geht es dich an? Du willst ja—'frei und allein' sein!" (38). In "Abschiedssouper" Anatol confidently tells Max that he and Annie are not bound to one another: "Wir haben nicht die geringsten Verpflichtungen gegeneinander, wir sind frei" (51). Not only is this notion of freedom still governed by a law, but Anatol explicitly asserts in the course of the scene that Annie has failed to fulfill her obligations to Anatol and to the relationship. In each case Anatol is constrained, and it is the other who is free of him. Though Anatol thinks he is free, he is determined in an abstract sense by his longing for another and in a particular sense by his dependence on instincts, moods, and environment. Here again the play demonstrates a philosophical reversal at the lowest level, in this case that the truth of freedom is necessity. Anatol fails to recognize this truth, whether in its highest form as action

according to *a priori* principles or as the freedom to bind oneself to others. For Anatol the night before his marriage is his last night of freedom: "Die letzte Nacht der Freiheit" (75).

One can call Schnitzler's play a comedy of underdeveloped intersubjectivity: Anatol has valid goals, at least momentarily, but fails because he is in a position of such little insight that he cannot attain his goals. Intention stands in disproportion to means. Contradictions remain, but the audience recognizes the hero's intuitive desire to resolve these contradictions. In this form of comedy intersubjectivity is attained only at the lowest level: for example, as a limited move towards recognition of the rights of the other (as in Lessing's *Die Juden*) or as forced friendship (as in Brecht's *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti*). In *Anatol* we see love at the level of eroticism, truth at the level of intention and convenience,²⁵ permanence by way of Anatol's permanent impermanence, a stagnant oneness in multiplicity, and a determinism that limits, rather than expands, the hero's affirmation of freedom. Anatol knows what he must do to reach his goals, but he is unwilling to draw the consequences for his own behavior. The audience laughs at the disproportion between Anatol's longings and his actions. There is truth in the goal and truth, by way of a negation of the negation, in the hero's failings.

Anatol's extreme subjectivity prevents the realization of his goals. But the abstract truth of the play is not to be identified with Anatol's illusions and failure. The hero is ironized and his positions undermined not only in a scene like "Episode" but throughout the text and especially when he asserts: "zum Glück hab ich keine Illusionen . . ." (60). The text is aware of Anatol's inconsistencies in a way that the hero, with his vision restricted to the immediate and present, is not. In a Baroque text, where we likewise see the dichotomy of truth and illusion, reality and appearance, a transcendent and stable other is unequivocally invoked. In the 1890s one might think that there are *only* illusions; there is no true world. But our ability to laugh at Anatol and the text's capacity to undermine his antics are possible only on the basis of an other against which we can measure Anatol's foibles. Schnitzler's negation of illusion (his negation of negativity) is constructed in such a way that an alternative is posited even where it is not explicitly portrayed. Otherwise, the critique of a life of illusions would be impossible. Positive standards are invoked against which we measure Anatol's contradictions and which allow us to laugh at him. The text is an ironization of Anatol's untenable position, hardly an affirmation of the life of illusion, even if Anatol's stance is not unique, even if Anatol is representative of his society and his age.

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NOTES

¹I use the term "intersubjectivity" to refer to subject-subject relations, that is, symmetrically structured interpersonal relations such as friendship or love. In its highest form intersubjectivity represents—to use a Hegelian expression—the identity of identity and difference.

²Comparisons can be drawn here with Schnitzler's story "Die drei Elixiere": here, too, is the desire for fidelity; the fear of letting one's happy illusions dissolve coupled with a competing desire for truth; the intermingling of oneness (symmetry) and possession (asymmetry); and the seeming impossibility of finding fidelity in the contemporary world.

³In order to make my interpretation useful for students as well as critics I cite the convenient, yet reliable, Reclam edition of *Anatol* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977).

⁴See Martin Swales, *Arthur Schnitzler: A Critical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), p. 221.

⁵Anatol's subjectivity is related not only to the genre of comedy but to the age in which Schnitzler lived. As the objective world order appears to fall, as objective values seem no longer to hold, the focus shifts to the subject and the subject's view of the world. The section "Agonie," with Anatol's affirmation of an *Endzeit*, most clearly parallels Anatol and contemporary Vienna. The hero, like his society, turns away from the crumbling objective order to enjoy a fleeting and subjective moment of bliss. Precisely at the moment of demise, illusion becomes most attractive (63).

⁶See, for example, 18, 32, 52, and 62.

⁷I'm thinking not of Hans Karl but of characters such as Cresence, Vinzenz, Neuhoff, and above all Stani. Characters obsessed with their own subjectivity create misunderstandings even when words are not spoken, as in Act II, scenes 12 and 14 or Act III, scene 7.

⁸Sandro Sticca ("The Drama of Being and Seeming in Schnitzler's 'Anatol' and Pirandello's 'Così è se vi pare,'" *Journal of the International Arthur Schnitzler Research Association* 5 (1966), pp. 4–28) views the play as a serious and genuine tragedy, rather than a parody of tragedy, and so misses an

important dimension of the text. Admittedly, it is not easy to place *Anatol* or to determine exactly how one should perform the text: a performance that is too serious and brooding will miss the parody of tragedy; performances meanwhile that are either too gay or too ironic will miss Anatol's genuine longing for intersubjectivity.

⁹The reversals in action discussed below parallel Max's mirroring back to Anatol his own words. The use of reversals or mirroring is extensive in comedy. It functions at times independently of the parody of tragedy. Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm* develops the theme of mirroring more fully than any comedy I know. Mirroring normally displays incongruities, specifically asymmetries, in the hero's behavior; it thus leads the hero to self-awareness or, in some cases, serves to ironize his or her lack of self-awareness.

¹⁰The complexity of "Episode" invites the question, why does Max avenge Anatol. Two reasons come to mind. First, Max shares a double standard of the times: men, not women, are free to treat the other as an object. Second, Schnitzler, through Max, wants to suggest that Anatol is intuitively higher than Bianca: Anatol at least desires the eternal.

¹¹Anatol's freedom here from concrete economic concerns, his unhesitating toss of the black diamond into the fire, does not obscure his penchant for possession in a sphere beyond the literally economic.

¹²This particular critique of Anatol presupposes of course that we view the individual scenes as one collective unit.

¹³See also 24.

¹⁴See also Swales, *Arthur Schnitzler*, p. 220.

¹⁵See also Ernst L. Offermanns, ed., *Anatol. Texte und Materialien zur Interpretation*, by Arthur Schnitzler, Komedia 6 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1964), p. 176.

¹⁶Though Anatol refuses to ask the question primarily out of an unwillingness to face a truth that might upset his illusion of symmetry and secondarily out of the difficulties of finding just the right words, there is perhaps the implicit hint that Anatol wants not to treat the other as an object. This parallels Anatol's intuitive desire for symmetry throughout the text.

¹⁷ Other obvious reminiscences of Goethe's *Faust*: *Anatol*, like *Faust*, thematizes the eternal moment; Anatol's "ich muß die Frage anders fassen" (13) echoes Faust's "ich muß es anders übersetzen" (1227); the *Gretchenfrage* is reduced to the hero's subjective "Frage an das Schicksal"; Anatol's women pass from saints to whores, but not, as with Gretchen, in the eyes of society, rather in Anatol's eyes; Anatol speaks of "die kleine Welt" and "die große Welt" (21), not, however, as idyll and universe, but as suburb and city; finally, I cite Max's comment to Anatol from "Das Abenteuer seines Lebens": "Männer wie du erwarten das Abenteuer ihres Lebens hundertmal, weil sie es hundertmal erleben; dann nicht befriedigt sind und wieder warten" (Offermanns, *Anatol. Texte und Materialien zur Interpretation*, p. 122).

¹⁸ See also *Phaedrus* 238a and *Laws* 963c-d and 965d-e. Heinrich Heine makes a similar assertion in *Ideen, Das Buch le Grand*: "Denn es gibt nur eine einzige Klugheit und diese hat ihre bestimmten Grenzen; aber es gibt tausend unermessliche Narrheiten." See *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Klaus Briegleb et al, 6 vols. (München: Hanser, 1968-76), II, 291.

¹⁹ It may appear that truth is not always singular; where two truths conflict, tragedy arises—at least according to the influential reading of Hegel. However, on a higher plane one can argue that the two truths are valid only as moments in a higher (and indeed singular) truth.

²⁰ The final exchange between Max and Ilona recalls Anatol's earlier promise to Ilona as he prepares for his marriage: "Auf ein paar Stunden mußt du mir Urlaub geben" (78).

²¹ See 49 and 69.

²² See Offermanns, *Anatol. Texte und Materialien zur Interpretation*, pp. 172-173.

²³ Where Aristotle argues against episodic plots, as for example, in Euripides, one might make the case that the episodic element in *Anatol* is "inversely organic." It is necessary that the hero *not* progress. For an admirable attempt to demonstrate at least a limited order in Schnitzler's sequence of scenes see Jens Rieckmann, *Aufbruch in die Moderne: Die Anfänge des Jungen Wien: Österreichische Literatur und Kritik im Fin de Siècle* (Königstein/Ts.: Athenäum, 1985), pp. 158-159.

²⁴ Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Über Schnitzlers 'Anatol,'" *Neue Rundschau* 82 (1971), p. 797.

²⁵ It is interesting that in one of the few passages where Anatol tells the truth he does so *not* out of his love for truth but out of a desire to assert his independence and superiority over another. I'm thinking of Anatol's revelation to Ilona that he is the groom (85).