

Fellows

Austin P. Harrington

IFK_Research Fellow

Duration of fellowship

01. October 2001 bis 30. June 2002

Austin P. Harrington

PROJECT TITLE

Robert Musil and The Literary Sociology of Modernity

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project intends to produce a book on the Austrian novelist and essayist, Robert Musil. The book will argue that in his "Essays", "Diaries", "Letters" and above all his monumental novel of 1930-42, "The Man Without Qualities", Musil can be read as an exemplary social theorist, a philosopher and critic of European culture who exploits the literary devices of irony, ambivalence and aesthetic distance to communicate thoughts about the social, political and spiritual anxieties of the modern age that could not otherwise be made in the discursive language of scientific sociology.

The premise of the project is that at that time no clear epistemological division separates the established scientific discourse of sociology from more general forms of cultural criticism and social commentary. Close analysis of texts by figures such as Max Weber or Georg Simmel reveals a profound dependence on narrative structures, metaphors and other aesthetic devices, just as close analysis of the historical centres of early 20th century social thought indicates intensive dialogue with figures known more simply as writers or essayists.

CV

Lecturer in Sociology, University of Leeds

Publications

U. a. Hermeneutic Dialogue and Social Science: A Critique of Gadamer and Habermas (London, Routledge 2001); The Protestant Ethic Debate: Max Weber's Replies to his Critics, co-ed. with David Chalcraft (Liverpool University Press 2001)