

Field Report for
Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation Fellowship
Alexander Lin (UC Berkeley) (May-August 2021)

I was hosted by Prof. Norbert Christian Wolf at the Institut für Germanistik at the Universität Wien from May to August 2021. This fellowship stay gave me the opportunity to develop my PhD project on Robert Musil and secularization through discussions with Prof. Wolf and other professors and colleagues at the university, as well as attend and participate in seminars and workshops on topics in German and Austrian literature and philosophy relevant to my research.

It was my first time visiting Vienna, and I was very impressed by the city's academic and cultural institutions. I took advantage of the vibrant intellectual life at the university and made many fruitful contacts, including Prof. Wolf, Prof. Burkhardt Wolf, and others, including fellow graduate students. The highlights of my academic activities include:

- The workshop “Architektur erzählen: Internationale literaturwissenschaftliche Tagung des Musil-Netzwerkes in Kooperation mit dem Institut für Germanistik der Universität Wien und dem Verein Neugermanistik Wien,” where I was exposed to the cutting-edge of Musil research and had the opportunity to meet many Musil scholars
- Prof. Burkhardt Wolf's masters seminar on the philosophy of Günther Anders, which introduced me to a 20th century philosopher whose work is little studied in the United States.
- The workshop “Moby-Dick: Ein historisch-spekulativer Kommentar Letzte Ausfahrt,” organized by Prof. Burkhardt Wolf, which showed me the kind of exciting comparative

and theoretical work the Institut für Germanistik does outside of conventional Germanistik topics.

I would definitely recommend any future fellowship recipients to participate in this vibrant intellectual life at the Universität Wien. I found their work in Germanistik to be of the highest caliber, with particular strengths in Austrian literature and culture. I also found interesting the interconnectedness of academic circles in Vienna with those in Berlin, which my Austrian colleagues told me is usually considered more of the intellectual center in German-speaking lands. Many scholars, such as Prof. Burkhardt Wolf, were in fact from Germany and trained in Berlin.

As my native Viennese friends were quick to tell me, and as I came to heartily agree, Vienna is an incomparably livable city, with not only a world-class cultural life but good quality of life and reasonable living expenses. I am deeply thankful to the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation for their generous support for what was a very fruitful research stay and hope that I can visit and do research in Vienna again soon.