

EDWARD TIMMS

Edward Francis Timms

3 July 1937 – 21 November 2018

elected Fellow of the British Academy 2006

by

RITCHIE ROBERTSON

Fellow of the Academy

Edward Timms, the pre-eminent authority on the Austrian satirist Karl Kraus, did much to shape the sub-disciplines of Austrian studies and German-Jewish studies. His many publications include a magisterial two-volume study of Kraus's work, life and milieu (1986, 2005). As a University Lecturer at Cambridge and Fellow of Gonville & Caius College, he co-founded the yearbook *Austrian Studies*. Having moved to the University of Sussex as Professor of German, he founded the Centre for German-Jewish Studies. His marriage to Saima Göksu gave him an intense interest in Turkey; together they wrote a biography of the poet Nazım Hikmet. Among much else, he had a talent for engaging with people and for promoting collaborative enterprises. He received many honours from Austria and Britain.



EDWARD TIMMS

Edward Francis Timms, who died at the age of 81 on 21 November 2018, was an academic who shaped two disciplines within Modern Languages: Austrian studies and German-Jewish studies. His academic work was inseparable from the personal journey which he recorded, near the end of his life, in his autobiography, an honest and detailed account of how, in Nietzsche's phrase, he became who he was.¹

Edward was born on 3 July 1937, the third of eight children of the Rev. John Timms, Vicar of Buckfastleigh in Devon, and Joan Timms, née Axford; an older brother, born out of wedlock and given away for adoption, later came to light and was welcomed into the family. Like most of his siblings, Edward attended Christ's Hospital, which admitted children from lower-income families without a fee. In 1956 he started reading Modern Languages at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he soon decided to concentrate on German, taught first by E. K. Bennett and then by F. J. Stopp. With Stopp he took a comparative paper on satire, which included early modern texts such as Brant's *Narrenschiff* but also works by Swift, Pope and Pascal; its lasting effect is visible not only in the attention Edward would later pay to ironic techniques and satirical archetypes in Kraus's writing, but also in a remarkable, much later essay on the possibility of Christian satire.² After a year teaching in Nuremberg, he began a PhD thesis on Karl Kraus, supervised by the charismatic Peter Stern.

Edward would later become the world's pre-eminent Kraus scholar. How he came to Kraus is recounted in his autobiography. As an undergraduate at Cambridge he had scarcely connected literature with politics. His favourite topic, on which he was fortunately able to write in his final exams, was the depiction of nature by the outwardly placid, inwardly complex Austrian author Adalbert Stifter. After graduating, however, his experience of modern Germany made him raise questions about the relation between present and past. A student teacher he knew in Nuremberg, Hans Keith, responded to his enquiry about critical authors by advising him to read Karl Kraus, along with the Weimar satirist Kurt Tucholsky. Kraus's opaque and intricate writings provided a challenge which Edward addressed, guided by Peter Stern, who owned a complete set of Kraus's satirical journal *Die Fackel*. It is probable that *Die Fackel*, nowadays available online, was not present at that time in any British library.

Undertaking a study of Kraus was adventurous. He still has an uneasy place on the margins of the German canon. Aside from some poetry, he did not write in familiar literary genres. Even his huge anti-war drama, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*

¹E. Timms, *Taking up the Torch: English Institutions, German Dialectics and Multicultural Commitments* (Brighton, 2011).

²E. Timms, 'The Christian satirist: a contradiction in terms?', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 31 (1995), 101–16. See also 'Der Satiriker und der Christ - ein unvereinbarer Gegensatz?', in A. Schöne (ed.), *Akten des VII. Internationalen Germanisten-Kongresses Göttingen 1985* (Tübingen: 1986), vol. 2, pp. 201–8.

(The Last Days of Mankind) is *sui generis*, though its use of documentary materials has a partial precedent in Büchner's *Dantons Tod* (Danton's Death, 1834) and successors in postwar documentary dramas by Peter Weiss and Heinar Kipphardt. Most of Kraus's work consists of pamphlets and journalism, by its nature diffuse and difficult to master. *Die Fackel* alone contains some 22,600 pages, the vast majority written by Kraus. The twenty-volume scholarly edition published by Suhrkamp under the direction of Christian Wagenknecht started to appear only in 1986, while the carefully annotated three-volume edition of Kraus's pre-*Fackel* writings by Johannes J. Braakenburg dates only from 1979. There is as yet no complete edition of Kraus's letters, though individual correspondence has been published. In other words, the prior *Grundlagenforschung* or fundamental research, that one could rely on with a classic author such as Goethe or Lessing, had not even been attempted. Having begun this arduous task in 1960, he completed the thesis and was awarded the PhD in 1967.

Much more was happening in Edward's life meanwhile. In 1963 he was appointed an Assistant Lecturer at the newly founded University of Sussex, which offered great scope for innovatory and cross-disciplinary teaching. In his autobiography he also describes this period as formative for his personality. Unconventional and exciting new acquaintances such as the libertarian socialist and historian of science Brian Easlea helped to shake him out of his shyness and reserve. Sussex also provided an international and multicultural atmosphere such as he had not experienced in Cambridge or elsewhere. Through Brian Easlea he met Saime Göksu from Ankara, the only female research student in Theoretical Physics. Saime had already confronted many difficulties. As one of seven children (five girls and two boys) in a low-income family, she had had to work throughout her studies, and in her final year she was diagnosed with tuberculosis, which was only overcome by an expensive operation carried out in Germany. Not only her strong personality, but her family's secular political values, had their effect. Saime recalls:

In those two years [1963–5] we ended living in the same square as Ted moved there from a room with a family far out of town. My room in Marine Square became a meeting-place where we discussed politics, the Vietnam War, the anti-nuclear campaign, British politics, the Arts and Science division, Marxism. Visitors to my room included Joe Townsend [a journalist], Gavin Wraith [a mathematician from the Physics Department], and Indian, Pakistani, African students. ...³

Returning to Cambridge as a University Assistant Lecturer and Fellow of Caius in 1965, Edward found this environment more restrictive but did his best to broaden the curriculum by lecturing on such subjects as Hegel, Marx and the Frankfurt School, and later by collaborating with colleagues on a highly successful course, 'Avant-Garde

³From an email to Ritchie Robertson, 15 April 2019. Cf. Timms, *Taking up the Torch*, pp. 114–15.

Movements in Europe 1900–1939’. His autobiography also mentions the course ‘Culture and Society in Germany since 1965’, inspired by the upheavals in German universities, where students were protesting, with some reason, against conservative academic structures and teaching materials. Even when most inclined to radicalism, however, Edward favoured a humane and reflective variety of Marxism, personified by Rosa Luxemburg and Jürgen Habermas and also, in his opinion, by the student leader Rudi Dutschke. When Dutschke was studying at Cambridge, Edward invited him to address students on his course, and was impressed by Dutschke’s conception of ‘the long march through the institutions’ as an alternative to revolution. Dutschke and his family were soon afterwards expelled from Britain on the implausible grounds that they threatened national security.

In April 1966, under romantic and dramatic circumstances recounted in his autobiography, Edward married Saime, thus beginning a lifelong bond with Turkey. They adopted two Turkish orphan babies, Yusuf in 1974 and Daphne in 1976. In 1983 they enlarged their family by becoming guardians of the orphaned twelve-year-old Sebastian Tennant. Saime moved from physics to psychoanalysis, doing psychodynamic counselling in Cambridge and later in Sussex. This move matched a shift in Edward’s focus of interest from political to psychoanalytic theory, from Marx to Freud. They had many discussions of psychoanalysis in which Saime evaluated the theories of Melanie Klein in opposition to what she (and not only she) considered Freud’s too male-dominated outlook.

At one time Edward and Saime considered spending their lives in Turkey. In 1969–70 Saime taught at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. Edward used six months’ study leave from Cambridge to join her there; he taught courses on European intellectual history. It was by no means certain that once his period as University Assistant Lecturer expired in 1970 he would be appointed to a permanent post, so Ankara was a feasible alternative. However, Cambridge did reappoint him, albeit somewhat grudgingly. Reservations probably arose not only from his reputation for radicalism but also from his failure to publish anything apart from book reviews and reflections on left-wing thought, the latter in Cambridge organs such as *Granta* (though they may well have interested more people than many scholarly publications). Strange as it seems now, Edward was long a notorious non-publisher; his first academic paper appeared only in 1981.⁴

Edward’s doctoral thesis was the seed of his first book, *Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist: Culture and Crisis in Habsburg Vienna*, published in 1986 by Yale (after Cambridge University Press had ill-advisedly refused to publish it except in truncated

⁴E. Timms, ‘Hofmannsthal, Kraus and the “Theatrum mundi”’, in W. E. Yuill and P. Howe (eds.), *Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Commemorative Essays* (London, 1981), pp. 123–32.

form). Tactfully described by a reviewer as ‘long-awaited’, it was worth the wait. Setting Kraus’s satirical writings against the whole background of late Imperial Vienna, it offers perceptive analyses of difficult texts that often resist conventional critical methods, while bringing out Kraus’s importance as a campaigner for social and sexual emancipation. Private aspects—Kraus’s relationship with Sidonie von Nádherný, and his dealings, as a converted Jew, with the Roman Catholic Church—are treated with wonderful delicacy. The whole book has the attractive, unpretentious, understated lucidity which distinguished everything Edward wrote.

At the same time, the book brings out the political bite of Kraus’s satire. It emphasises Kraus’s lone campaign, through the journal *Die Fackel* which he founded in 1899, against a range of targets so wide—corruption in public life, philistinism in the media, hypocrisy in the legal regulation of prostitution, the excessive power of newspaper owners—that Kraus himself cannot be identified with any particular ideological standpoint. His problematic correspondence with the racist Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and his turn, after his conversion to Catholicism in 1911, to a conservatism recalling that of G. K. Chesterton and Paul Claudel, are treated in a cautious and nuanced way. Later in the book, the outbreak of the First World War provides an opportunity to reflect on the public responsibility of the intellectual. German and Austrian intellectuals who unquestioningly supported the war and the accompanying propaganda are contrasted with Kraus’s sceptical analysis of patriotic speeches as a cover not only for militarism but also for economic imperialism. This leads up to an analysis of *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*. Kraus worked on it from 1915 on, and successive versions reflect major shifts in his political views. When he began, he was still attached to his pre-war conservatism, which is still marked in the edition of 1919. His gradual disillusionment with the Austrian political class led him to support the Social Democrats, so that the revised and enlarged text published in book form in 1922 has a strongly socialist and republican thrust.

Though *Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist* extends only to 1918, after which Kraus would live and write copiously for another eighteen years, it was immediately recognised as towering over all other studies of Kraus. It was translated into German, and even made required reading in its English version in at least one Austrian university. A second volume was always envisaged, but took almost twenty years to write.

The method underlying both volumes on Kraus was interdisciplinary, though in the 1980s this term was not bandied about quite so much as it is now. To map the interactions among different cultural groupings in early twentieth-century Vienna, Edward devised a diagram which he labelled ‘The Vienna Circles’. He describes in *Taking up the Torch* how he first presented it at a lecture given at the University of East Anglia in February 1978, in the presence of the Austrian specialists Cedric Williams and Max Sebald:

The great strength of the Viennese modernism, I suggested, lay in its internal organization. By analogy with the Vienna Circle of logical positivists, the whole structure of avant-garde culture could be pictured as a condensed system of microcircuits. This idea was illustrated by a diagram of ‘Creative Interactions in Vienna around 1910’, incorporating fifteen intersecting circles, each of them centred on a dominant personality: from Victor Adler and Rosa Mayreder through Freud, Kraus and Adolf Loos to Schoenberg, Mahler and Klimt.⁵

Thus the circle with Kraus at its centre overlaps on one side with Freud’s, the overlap containing the name of the intermediary Fritz Wittels, whose memoirs Edward would later discover and publish. At the other end, Kraus’s circle overlaps with the one centring on the modernist architect Adolf Loos, the overlap being occupied by their mutual friend the sketch-writer Peter Altenberg. A very much more elaborate version, illustrating the intricate cultural interconnections of the post-1918 period, appears in the second Kraus volume.⁶ By this stage the diagram has approached the limits of what a representation in only two dimensions can achieve. It still provides a more helpful overview of complex cultural interactions than any merely verbal description could provide.

Edward’s focus on Austria led to his starting an Austrian Study Group at Cambridge and eventually to the foundation of the yearbook *Austrian Studies*. His account of both can be found in the twenty-fifth anniversary issue of *Austrian Studies*.⁷ Although Edward speaks generously of my share in this enterprise, I was in every way the junior partner, and learnt an immense amount both professionally and humanly. Initially I was too much in awe of other people’s articles to make drastic editorial changes (how long ago it seems), but I learnt from Edward how to reshape an article so as to make it coherent, and to bring out an argument that was only latent in the original text. Humanly, I learnt much from Edward’s tact, forbearance and diplomatic skills, honed no doubt in the exacting atmosphere of the Caius Senior Common Room, and invaluable in negotiating with the sometimes strongly held views of contributors.

Initially Edward wanted to call the journal *Meridian*, perhaps because he was so much impressed by Paul Celan’s speech published under that title, but he was finally persuaded that such a title misleadingly suggested Southern Europe and that, as our

⁵Timms, *Taking up the Torch*, p. 183; the diagram appears on p. 182. A slightly simpler version is presented in E. Timms, *Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist: Culture and Catastrophe in Habsburg Vienna* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1986), p. 8.

⁶E. Timms, *Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist: the Post-War Crisis and the Rise of the Swastika* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2005).

⁷E. Timms, ‘The founding of *Austrian Studies*: a collaborative enterprise’, *Austrian Studies*, 25 (2017), 6–11.

eventual publisher Martin Spencer put it, ‘penny plain’ is better than ‘tuppence coloured’. As Edward recounts, the journal was originally offered to Oxford University Press, but rejected after a number of negative remarks, mainly from historians. One, whom I afterwards identified by chance, expressed the suspicion that such a journal might become ‘a cosy *Kaffeeklatsch*’; later, however, this very person became an enthusiastic and much valued contributor to *Austrian Studies*. In Martin Spencer, who, after transforming Manchester University Press had transferred his energies to Edinburgh, we were fortunate enough to find a gifted publisher who combined imagination with sound judgement. His sudden death at a tragically early age was a painful shock. Fortunately, his successor, Vivian Bone, continued to support *Austrian Studies*.

Becoming increasingly restless in Cambridge, Edward accepted the invitation to return to Sussex in 1992 as Professor of German. It took him and Saime some time to find a suitable house in Brighton. It was important for them both to live near the sea—not only because they were passionately fond of swimming, but because of the sea’s wider, symbolic significance. When I suggested that they should find a house near some swimming-baths, Edward politely intimated that that was not the point at all. Eventually they moved into 4, The Cliff, a handsome house separated from the sea only by a long, sloping patch of grass inhabited by badgers. There they gave hospitality to many visitors, who had to sing for their supper by writing something memorable in the visitors’ book. It was Edward’s home for the rest of his life.

At the University of Sussex, with the support of Vice-Chancellors, Gordon Conway and later Alasdair Smith, Edward founded the Centre for German-Jewish Studies. Helped by a network of supporters from the Jewish community in London, Brighton and further afield, the Centre aimed to illuminate the history of Jewish emancipation, assimilation and persecution in German-speaking countries. Initially stimulated by a meeting at the London home of Diana Franklin, the Centre benefited from the support of a number of German-Jewish refugees who wanted to ensure that their parents’ and grandparents’ achievements in that brief period of German-Jewish ‘symbiosis’ were not overlooked or forgotten. At that time the Shoah was achieving its rightful place in the history of the 20th century with increasing numbers of academics and museums concentrating on the Holocaust. In parallel with this trend, individuals and organisations such as the Leo Baeck Institute and the Belsize Square Synagogue welcomed the chance to collaborate with the Centre in order to provide an academic and analytical perspective on the immense Jewish contribution to non-Jewish culture in pre-war Germany and Austria. Edward’s ability to bring his English academic skills into this environment provided the Centre’s supporters with a welcome academic home at Sussex and their relationship was secure enough for Edward to feel able to play the Horst Wessel song at a meeting of the Leo Baeck Lodge in Hampstead.⁸

⁸ I thank Diana Franklin for the information in this paragraph.

The Centre held a number of major conferences, papers from which were published in book form, notably *The German-Jewish Dilemma; from the Enlightenment to the Shoah* in 1995 (Lewiston, NY). Besides forming its own archive of refugees' papers, it secured a large Arts and Humanities Research Council grant to compile a database of refugee archives in Britain. A particularly fascinating collection was the Arnold Daghani archive, which the University had had since 1987 without knowing its value: some 6,000 works of art and notebooks by a survivor of the Nazi slave labour camp at Mikhailovka. This gave rise to several publications, including *Memories of Mikhailovka: Labour Camp Testimonies in the Arnold Daghani Archive*, edited by Edward with the art historian Deborah Schultz (Brighton, 2007).

Fully aware of the need to encourage young scholars, the Centre set up the bi-annual Max and Hilde Kochmann summer school for doctoral students in European cultural history. With the support of the Association for Jewish Refugees the Centre initiated an annual Holocaust Memorial Day event at the University of Sussex. Both events continue. So does the Centre, though from March 2019 it forms part of a larger entity, the Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies, established with help from the German government.

Although Edward had effectively transferred his energies to the sub-discipline now known as Exile Studies, Karl Kraus was not forgotten. The second volume of *Karl Kraus: Apocalyptic Satirist*, subtitled *The Post-War Crisis and the Rise of the Swastika*, appeared in 2005. Massive, encyclopaedic, with 550 pages of text and 57 pages of notes, it increasingly focuses on Kraus's exposure of the horrors of Nazism, especially in his great polemic *Dritte Walpurgisnacht* (Third Walpurgis Night) which was published only in 1951. There was, however, so much to be found out about Kraus's writings and activities in the 1920s and 1930s that the book necessarily deals with a vast range of topics. The cultural context is now no longer the Habsburg Empire but 'Red Vienna', where a socialist administration instituted many beneficial reforms in such areas as education, child-care and workers' housing. Some of its members, notably David Josef Bach, a little-known figure who is here rescued from virtual oblivion, were also committed to bringing high culture, particularly modernism, to the people at large (one might recall, as an analogy, the original mission of the BBC's Third Programme). Links are explored with Kraus's public readings, in which he declaimed passages from Goethe, Nestroy and Shakespeare (in the Schlegel-Tieck translation) to audiences of devotees.

A major theme is law: the complexities of legal citizenship for inhabitants of the rump state left behind by the fragmentation of the Habsburg Empire in 1918; Kraus's growing interest in international law as a means of keeping the peace in painfully divided postwar Europe; and his appeal to the law in his many campaigns against powerful people such as the press magnate Emmerich Bekessy (a prototype of Rupert

Murdoch) whom Kraus managed to get expelled from Vienna. Once again, therefore, the responsibilities of the citizen come under scrutiny.

The book has to address a particularly controversial topic, Kraus's support for the authoritarian Dollfuss government of Austria. Two days after the Nazi seizure of power in Germany, the Chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, suspended the constitution and governed by decree. His main target was the terrorist activities of Austrian Nazis. The National Socialist party was banned in Austria; many of its adherents were confined in a concentration camp. In February 1934, however, the left wing of the Social Democrats, fearing that Dollfuss would also suppress them, began an armed insurrection, which predictably was quelled within two days. Kraus bitterly criticised the Social Democrats for not supporting Dollfuss. His stance has often been seen as a grievous betrayal.⁹ Patient examination of the issues leads here to a more balanced verdict. Kraus was right to insist that Dollfuss's government was very different from Hitler's, and that the Left was wrong to lump them together as 'fascism' (the term 'Austro-Fascism' is often used even today). But he failed to speak out when his voice could have strengthened Dollfuss's anti-Nazi stance, and he was unjust in denouncing the Social Democrats, since (although Kraus could not know this) Dollfuss had a secret agreement with Mussolini, in which Mussolini undertook to support him against Germany provided he eliminated all traces of Marxism from Austria. Without concealing Kraus's errors of judgement, this investigation defends him convincingly against the criticisms, amounting sometimes to defamation, which his reputation has suffered. The price of Kraus's individual stance was to fall (in the German phrase) between all the stools.

There is far more in this book than can be indicated here. I read many chapters in draft and heard some given as conference papers. It was exciting to follow its progress, but often very hard to see how such heterogeneous materials could be combined into a single overarching narrative. Unlike the first volume, it is a book to be consulted and read in chapters, rather than to be read through. It is a resource which Kraus scholars will find indispensable for many years to come.

Earlier, Edward had published *Freud and the Child Woman: the Memoirs of Fritz Wittels* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1995), using the manuscript autobiography of the unorthodox Freudian Fritz Wittels to explore how eroticism helped to power creativity in the Vienna of Freud and Kraus. And he and Saime jointly composed a biography of the Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet, *Romantic Communist: the Life and Work of Nazim Hikmet* (London, 1999), based on oral history: Saime interviewed some thirty-five people in Turkey who had known Hikmet, she and Edward checked their information against archival sources, and Edward digested these materials into a smoothly flowing narrative.

⁹See, for example, chapter 4, 'Charting February 1934: Karl Kraus, Anna Seghers, Friedrich Wolf, Alois Vogel', in A. Barker, *Fictions from an Orphan State: Literary Reflections of Austria between Habsburg and Hitler* (Rochester, NY, 2012).

These achievements are the more remarkable when one recalls that from about 2000 Edward was increasingly disabled by multiple sclerosis. He bore his affliction with extraordinary fortitude, as I saw when in February 2009 I accompanied him to Vienna. The president of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Werner Welzig, hoped for an English translation of Kraus's *Dritte Walpurgisnacht*. Edward and I translated sample passages and presented them for discussion. At that time Edward was mostly in a wheelchair but could walk short distances very slowly; this was sometimes necessary, as Vienna was deep in snow. Nonetheless, thanks to some logistical planning, we managed to go to the theatre and to an exhibition of sculptures by Ernst Barlach and paintings by Käthe Kollwitz, and to meet up with several friends. Edward's intellectual and social energies were unabated.

Although the Academy's project never materialised, Edward, together with Fred Bridgham, accomplished another seemingly impossible translation, that of Kraus's monster drama *The Last Days of Mankind*, published by Yale in 2015. Kraus's daunting range of speech registers, plus parodies of literary and journalistic styles, and comic and serious verse, are rendered skilfully and imaginatively.¹⁰ This accomplishment was awarded the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Translation by the Modern Language Association of America. Edward and Fred subsequently collaborated on another, even more daunting translation, that of Kraus's great anti-Nazi polemic *Dritte Walpurgisnacht*, which, as I write, has yet to be published.

Having retired from directing the Centre in 2003, and become Research Professor in History, Edward continued to write, including reviews for the *Times Literary Supplement*, down to late 2017. He published in 2013 a study of Viennese modernism entitled *Dynamik der Kreise, Resonanz der Räume: Die schöpferischen Impulse der Wiener Moderne* (Weitra), and in 2016 he edited further archival material as *Anna Haag and her Secret Diary of the Second World War: a Democratic German Feminist's Response to the Catastrophe of National Socialism* (Oxford). Some outstanding articles are to be reprinted by Legenda. Other papers remain unpublished, as well as a long-cherished but probably incomplete draft for a book, *Freud and the Aesthetics of the Dream*.

Many honours arrived from both Austria and Britain. Edward received the Austrian State Prize for the History of the Social Sciences in 2002, the Austrian Cross of Honour for Arts and Sciences in 2008, and the Decoration of Honour in Gold for Services to the Province of Vienna in 2013. He was awarded the OBE for services to scholarship in 2005 and elected a Fellow of the British Academy the following year.

Everyone who knew Edward will remember his unfailing humanity, self-control, patience, kindness and forbearance. The closest approach to irritation I saw in him was when he told me, I forget why, that I had strong defence mechanisms. It was true, and salutary; I realise now that Edward must have recognised a resemblance to his

¹⁰ See my review in *Translation and Literature*, 25 (2016), 256–62.

own younger self. He and Saime encouraged me at least to say ‘I feel’ rather than ‘I think’. Some very English emotional reserve, instilled by his upbringing, lingered, but was counterbalanced by his sociability and talent for friendship.

Edward loved collaborative enterprises and was a natural networker. In the 1980s he helped to bring large numbers of Cambridge colleagues together to plan and compose books of essays on themes arising from the ‘Avant-Garde’ paper.¹¹ Involvement in a collective enterprise was a refreshing break from the usual isolation of academic study, though the editors faced some unexpected difficulties. The introduction that Raymond Williams supplied for one volume had a page missing, and as Williams, who died in 1988, was by then too ill to be consulted, the editors had to write a page themselves in an imitation of Williams’s style. Edward made a point of reaching out to people. Travelling with him in a Vienna taxi, I remember him chatting to the taxi-driver in the latter’s native Turkish. This friendliness could bring unforeseen rewards. In his autobiography Edward tells how, during a conference at the Austrian Cultural Forum, he addressed a complete stranger, who turned out to be the exile writer Jakov Lind; as a result of their acquaintance, Edward arranged a symposium followed by a publication on Lind’s work.¹² Part of the motivation for his turn to Exile Studies was, I am sure, the scope it offered for getting to know exiles and their families, all of whom had memories and in some cases written archives that needed to be preserved.

A sign of the wide affection Edward inspired was an event held at the Stadt- und Landesbibliothek in Vienna on 27 March 2019. At the formal opening of an exhibition on Karl Kraus, organised by Katharina Prager, words were spoken in Edward’s memory by Hubert Christian Ehalt and Friedrich Stadler, honouring his achievements and recalling his unique personality.

From the family vicarage, after the fading of Christian belief, Edward retained a strong moral seriousness which shows in all his writing. He also had a distinctively modernist sensibility, finding in the clean lines and clear thinking of the European (especially Viennese) avant-garde a rejection both of fussy ornamentation and of outdated social prejudices. (The downside was an impatience with remote literary conventions; he once told me he could not take Schiller’s *Wilhelm Tell* seriously.) He had a very strong visual sense and a deep knowledge and appreciation of painting: I remember a fine, still unpublished lecture he gave at Yarnton Manor, at that time the base for the Oxford Centre for Jewish and Hebrew Studies, contrasting the frank

¹¹ E. Timms and D. Kelley (eds.), *Unreal City: Urban Experience in Modern European Literature and Art* (Manchester, 1985); E. Timms and P. Collier (eds.), *Visions and Blueprints: Avant-Garde Culture and Radical Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Europe*, with a foreword by Raymond Williams (Manchester, 1988); E. Timms and J. Davies (eds.), *Modernism and the European Unconscious* (Cambridge, 1990).

¹² Timms, *Taking Up the Torch*, p. 249; E. Timms, A. Hammel and S. Hassler (eds.), *Writing after Hitler: the Work of Jakov Lind* (Cardiff, 2001).

eroticism of Viennese modernist painting with the comparatively buttoned-up sexuality of its Bloomsbury counterparts. A paper he did publish, on Kokoschka, deserves to be widely known.¹³ His aesthetic sense was conspicuous in the illustrations to his books and lectures and even in the design of brochures and other details accompanying the conferences he organised.

Edward's moral commitment helps also to account for the liberating, un-academic quality of his scholarship. The preface to *Taking up the Torch* consists of a two-page list of questions that arose at different stages in his life, including 'How are children affected by the approach of war?' and 'How should settled citizens respond to the plight of refugees, and why are those lost at sea so easily forgotten?' These, and the others in the list, are not the kind of 'research questions' that you would expect to meet nowadays in a funding application. Nor is it immediately obvious how one would frame a research programme to answer them. Yet they have an obvious and compelling human importance. It is in fact possible to approach these questions through historical, biographical, archival and literary research, and, staying with these two examples, Edward did so by looking at the development of child psychology in the 'Red Vienna' of the 1920s and its transplantation by exiles to London, and at maritime disasters in which ships sank that were crowded with refugees—one case is the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, whose history Günter Grass examined in *Im Krebsgang* (2004).¹⁴ His example shows that the best research is powered, sometimes indirectly, by deep personal concern and refined by well-trying research techniques and by the academic virtues of industry, judiciousness, distance and clarity. It can be said—as of how few academic publications—that everything Edward produced needed to be written.¹⁵

Note on the author: Ritchie Robertson is Taylor Professor of German at the University of Oxford. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2004.

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¹³ E. Timms, 'Kokoschka's pictographs—a contextual reading', *Word and Image*, 6 (1990), 4–17.

¹⁴ See E. Timms, 'New approaches to child psychology: from Red Vienna to the Hampstead Nursery', in E. Timms and J. Hughes (eds.), *Intellectual Migration and Cultural Transformation: Refugees from National Socialism in the English-Speaking World* (Vienna and New York, 2003), pp. 219–39; E. Timms, 'Remembering refugees lost at sea: the *Struma*, the *Wilhelm Gustloff* and the *Cap Anamur*', in A. Stephens and R. Walden (eds.), *For the Sake of Humanity: Essays in Honour of Clemens N. Nathan* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 325–49.

¹⁵ A full listing to 2007 can be found in R. Robertson, 'Edward Timms: a bibliography', in J. Beniston, R. Robertson and R. Vilain (eds.), *Austrian Satire and Other Essays. Austrian Studies*, 15 (2007), 6–14.

