

Titel:

Franz Werfels modernity. Fragility and totality in Werfels novel *Verdi. Roman der Oper*

The PhD project combines the fields of literature studies with sociology of music. Werfel's attempts to critically address society's technification, rationalisation, deindividualisations and its consequences on arts, are generally interpreted as 'conservative' by contemporary scholars. Frequently these critiques do not contextualise Werfel's contribution within his historical context. Werfel, however, combines both 'modern' and 'anti-modern' aspects – also from poetological point of view. This perspective has gained little attention so far within studies of literature.

Especially in the 1920s Franz Werfel reflects the poetics and the artistic existence in his musical discourse. Both are intrinsically tied to the question whether and to what extent art influences society.

Werfel's passion for Italian opera music and particularly his debut novel *Verdi. Roman der Oper* are central elements to understand his aesthetic points of view. The PhD project could show for the first time how important Paul Bekker was for Werfel and his conception of aesthetic. Bekker as a non-academic „Musikschritsteller“ inspired Werfel with his approach of music sociology. Furthermore, the project verifies the connection between Ferruccio Busoni's reform concept of opera and Werfel's theory of drama. Remarkably, Werfel's theoretical perception was included by Kurt Weill's reform after 1925.