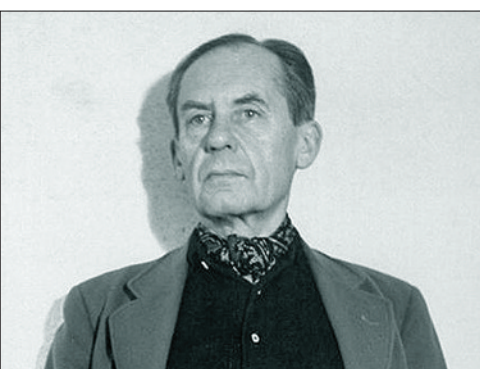


THIS WEEK

Between the late nineteenth century and the Second World War, Berlin grew apace – Mark Twain called it “Chicago on the Spree”. And unlike London, Paris and Vienna, cities that had grown over centuries, with a rich cultural tradition, Berlin, “the quintessential modern city”, “raw, vigorous, ugly and haphazard”, simply mushroomed, “with the minimum of planning”. Ritchie Robertson reviews an anthology of writings by architects, planners, journalists, philosophers, sociologists, essayists and novelists, from the famous – Walter Gropius (below), Walter Benjamin, Joseph Roth – to the unknown, and finds it “astonishing in its range”. The Soviet Union in the same years would seem the last place where you’d come upon a haunted castle – but the Gothic was alive and well in Soviet culture, with its abandoned factories, unfinished construction sites and communal apartments where the dead “stubbornly refuse to stay in the ground”. Muireann Maguire’s study of Soviet Gothic and her translations of tales in this unlikely genre are reviewed by Eliot Borenstein. Growing out of a contiguous sub-soil, the “unusually well-crafted tales” in Stephen Romer’s “beautifully translated” anthology of French Decadents feature “snobbish perverts plotting the satisfaction of their peculiar lusts”, Baudelairean ennui and necrophilia. Graham Robb welcomes some minor, forgotten masterpieces – misogynistic as they unfortunately are.



We devote several pages this week to Literary Criticism, which has undergone several transformations in the lifetime of this editor, let alone of this paper. Joseph Phelan spots the elephant in the room, writing “what we actually hear in [*The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume Six*] is academics talking to each other, and hoping or pretending that someone elsewhere is listening”. One thriving area is the “recovery” of buried women writers; Susan Civale reviews new studies of Jane Austen’s less well known contemporaries. Alicia Rix and Claudia L. Johnson both focus on the ways in which we continue to seek the great Jane “herself”.

A J

SOCIAL STUDIES	3	Ritchie Robertson Emily Wilson	Iain Boyd White and David Frisby, editors <i>Metropolis Berlin: 1880–1940</i> Terry Eagleton <i>Across the Pond – An Englishman’s view of America</i>
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ARTS	15	Nicholas Wadley Alan Brownjohn	Collecting Gauguin – Samuel Courtauld in the ’20s (Courtauld Gallery, Somerset House) Cherchez Hortense (Various cinemas)
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