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# **‘Los von Paris!’: *Wiener Werkstätte* Fashion and the Paradox of Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism, 1911–1932<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract:** ‘Ist die Wiener Mode eine Konkurrenz für die Berliner Mode auf dem Weltmodenmarkt? Die Frage muss natürlich bejaht werden’, is what the German journal *Der Manufacturist* concluded on 27 March 1915. And indeed, although Berlin was slowly becoming the new cosmopolitan avant-garde of Central Europe, Viennese high culture continued to flourish and innovate even during the First World War. A prime example of this was the art collective *Wiener Werkstätte*. In particular, its fashion department (1911–1932), though sometimes overlooked by scholars, was one of its most financially and artistically successful branches. In an era rising nationalism, it is not surprising that haute couture of the *Wiener Werkstätte* competed with other fashion capitals such as Paris, London, and Berlin. At the same time, the patrons, designers and buyers of these garments were often members of a very cosmopolitan elite. Moreover, the fashion of the *Wiener Werkstätte* shows influences from both folk art throughout the (former) Habsburg Empire and Parisian design. The main question that arises is how cultural nationalism and cosmopolitanism were related. Few authors have dared to explore the balance between the two, and hardly ever in the field of material culture. *Wiener Werkstätte* fashion, however, may prove to be a fruitful case study for exploring this seeming paradox through newspaper articles, *Wiener Werkstätte* documentation, and catalogs covering the turbulent period from 1911 to 1932.

**Keywords:** Nationalism, cosmopolitanism, fashion, *Wiener Werkstätte*

## **Introduction**

‘Ist die Wiener Mode eine Konkurrenz für die Berliner Mode auf dem Weltmodenmarkt? Die Frage muss natürlich bejaht werden’, concluded the German journal *Der Manufakturist* in 1915.<sup>2</sup> And indeed, although some felt threatened by Berlin’s new cosmopolitan avant-garde, Viennese high culture was still thriving and innovative at the time.<sup>3</sup> A prime example of this was the art collective *Wiener Werkstätte*. It was founded in 1903 by Josef Franz Maria Hoffmann (1870–1956), Koloman Josef Moser

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<sup>2</sup> *Wiener Werkstätte Annalen* (from now on: WWAN) 83-29, *Der Manufakturist*, Hannover 27 March 1915 [Is the Viennese fashion a concurrent for the Berlin fashion on the world fashion market? The question has to be answered with ‘yes’].

<sup>3</sup> Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars*, Oxford 2012, 14; Ingrid Loschek, *Mode im 20. Jahrhundert: Eine Kulturgeschichte unserer Zeit*, München 1988, 73.

(1868–1918), and Friedrich Waerndorfer (1868–1939) to revive craftsmanship and handmade products and to create an Austrian style.<sup>4</sup> In particular, its fashion department (1911–1932) was one of its most successful branches. In an era of rising nationalism, it is not surprising that the haute couture of the *Wiener Werkstätte* competed with other fashion capitals such as Paris and Berlin. Yet its patrons, designers, buyers, and critics were often members of a very cosmopolitan elite. How, then, could such nationalism and cosmopolitanism compete? Few authors have dared to explore the balance between the two. *Wiener Werkstätte* fashion, however, proves to be a fruitful case study for exploring this seeming paradox.

*Wiener Werkstätte*'s women's clothing division was officially established on 9 March 1911.<sup>5</sup> It had shops in Vienna, but also aimed at the international market.<sup>6</sup> Over the years, the *Werkstätte*'s fashion stores expanded to several cities in Germany, Switzerland, and New York.<sup>7</sup> In the early years, French influences were quite evident. With the outbreak of World War I, however, more commercial and cultural contact with Germany was sought. The fashion of the *Wiener Werkstätte* changed from artistic dress to more practical fashion. Influences from 'heimische Kunst' and 'Volkskunst', mostly from other parts of the Habsburg Empire, also began to appear during this period.<sup>8</sup> Both the practical style and folk elements remained after World War I, while French influences and the elite character returned.

From 1910 to 1922, the department was headed by Eduard Josef Wimmer-Wisgrill (1882–1961). In 1922, Max Snischek (1891–1968) and Maria Likarz-Strauss (1893–1971) took over.<sup>9</sup> Despite its many investors, the *Werkstätte*'s poor financial management and the effects of the Great Depression led to its liquidation in 1932.<sup>10</sup> Several authors have emphasized the apolitical nature of the *Wiener Werkstätte*.<sup>11</sup> However, the lack of clearly expressed political views does not mean that the artists did not identify in any (political) way. This study therefore aims to answer the question of how ideas of Viennese, Austrian, imperial, and cosmopolitan identity interacted in and around the *Wiener Werkstätte*'s fashion department. Vienna serves as an appropriate case study in many ways: it went from being the capital of an empire to the capital of a small new state, briefly attempted to join Germany, and still tried to compete culturally with cities like Paris and Berlin. Not only the city, but also its inhabitants experienced an identity transition in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>4</sup> Christian Witt-Döring, Introduction, in: Christian Witt-Döring – Janis Staggs (Eds.), *Wiener Werkstätte 1903–1932: The Luxury of Beauty*, New York 2017, 12–19, here 14f.

<sup>5</sup> Angela Völker, *Wiener Mode + Modefotografie*, München 1984, 7f.

<sup>6</sup> Traude Hansen, *Wiener Werkstätte Mode: Stoffe, Schmuck, Accessoires*, Wien/München 1984, 183.

<sup>7</sup> Claudia Klein-Primavesi, *Die Familie Primavesi: Kunst und Mode der Wiener Werkstätte*, Wien 2006, 42.

<sup>8</sup> Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 19, 22f., 66, 206.

<sup>9</sup> Hansen, *Wiener Werkstätte*, 36.

<sup>10</sup> Jane Kallir, *Viennese Design and the Wiener Werkstätte*, New York 1986, 39; Herta Neiss, *Wiener Werkstätte: Zwischen Mythos und wirtschaftlicher Realität*, Wien 2004, 11f.

<sup>11</sup> Anne-Katrin Rossberg, *The Women Artists' Workshop*, in: Christoph Thun-Hohenstein – Anne-Katrin Rossberg – Elisabeth Schmutzmeier (Eds.), *Die Frauen der Wiener Werkstätte*, Basel 2020, 142–153, here 149; Kallir, *Viennese Design*, 21.

To understand national identity in Vienna between 1911 and 1932, one must move away from a modern, nation-state perspective. What exactly the Austrian nation was is ambiguous. Many authors have tried to grasp the meaning of national identity within the Habsburg Empire. For example, ‘Austria’ could refer to the *Erblände*, the hereditary lands, or to the larger non-Hungarian part of the empire.<sup>12</sup> What has often gone unexamined, however, is the cultural connotation of these terms.

More recently, a number of new histories of the Habsburg Empire have appeared that also pay close attention to the relationship with Germany, such as publications by Maureen Healy (\*1968)<sup>13</sup> and Matthew Rampley.<sup>14</sup> The latter, for example, mentioned approaches such as that of social theorist Werner Sombart (1863–1941), which considered Austria ‘predominantly or entirely German but also as distinct from Germany’.<sup>15</sup> German culture was seen as superior in this period, leading to a colonial view of the non-German part of the empire.<sup>16</sup> Pieter M. Judson (\*1956) highlighted another aspect of Austrian identity, namely its imperial stratum. He also argued that many of the successor states could be considered ‘little empires’ in both an administrative and a cultural sense.<sup>17</sup> Andrea Komlosy (\*1957) suggested that ‘Österreichertum’ was indeed ‘a supra-national category, relying on the common sovereign, and common Central European culture and history beyond ethnic and linguistic differences’.<sup>18</sup>

The debate about what has been called Austria so far seems to suggest that this definition varied from place to place and time to time. Moreover, such territorial identities could be layered. Laurence Cole (\*1968) has argued that despite the rise of nationalist politics, ‘local and cosmopolitan facets’ of identity increased.<sup>19</sup> Cole built on the ideas of Tara Zahra (\*1976), who criticized the ‘nationalisation’ of history and focused instead on ‘national indifference’.<sup>20</sup> The possibility of layered territorial identities also leaves room for cosmopolitan elements, as Cole suggested. Cosmopolitanism, however, seems to be a topic that has been studied in the political and social sciences, but rarely in modern (art) history.

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<sup>12</sup> Robert A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire. Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848–1918. Volume I. Empire and Nationalities*, New York 1950, 4; Erich Zöllner, *Der Österreichbegriff: Formen und Wandlungen in der Geschichte*, Wien 1988.

<sup>13</sup> Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War*, Cambridge 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew Rampley, *The Vienna School of Art History: Empire and the Politics of Scholarship, 1847–1918*, University Park 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Rampley, *The Vienna School of Art History*, 78.

<sup>16</sup> Rampley, *The Vienna School of Art History*, 76, 78, 83–95, 179–181, 451.

<sup>17</sup> Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, Cambridge 2018, 4f., 388.

<sup>18</sup> Andrea Komlosy, *Imperial Cohesion, Nation-Building, and Regional Integration in the Habsburg Monarchy*, in: Stefan Berger – Alexei Miller (Eds.), *Nationalizing Empires*, Budapest 2015, 369–428, here 380–382.

<sup>19</sup> Laurence Cole, *Differentiation or Indifference? Changing Perspectives on National Identification in the Austrian Half of the Habsburg Monarchy*, in: Maarten van Ginderachter – Marnix Beyen, (Eds.), *Nationhood from Below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Basingstoke 2015, 96–119, 99, 108, 110.

<sup>20</sup> Tara Zahra, *Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis*, in: *Slavic Review* 69/1, 2010, 93–119.

Moreover, such debates tend to revolve around finding a definition of what cosmopolitanism is.<sup>21</sup> Rather, the question in this article is how ideas and mentions of cosmopolitanism existed within and interacted with the complex identities of the Habsburg Empire and interwar Austria.

To answer the question posed in this article, a number of sources will be used. First of all, the ‘Wiener Werkstätte Annalen’: a large collection of international newspaper clippings about the Werkstätte and related topics. Internal documentation is also used. Unfortunately, the actual archives of the Wiener Werkstätte itself are scattered, disorganized, and/or lost.<sup>22</sup> Documents such as catalogs and bequests of people associated with the Wiener Werkstätte have been used, which shed more light on the motivations behind their work than the newspaper articles.

This article will therefore briefly examine the connections between Vienna and the rest of Europe from the perspectives of cosmopolitanism and nationalism. These will be explored first through the relationship of the Werkstätte’s fashion to Germany, second through the connection to Paris, and finally by looking at the so-called ‘culture offensive’ of the Austrian self-image.

### **Wiener Werkstätte fashion and Germany**

Although German Austrians were not part of a German state, they were part of an ‘ethnocultural’ German ‘Kulturgemeinschaft’.<sup>23</sup> Germanness in the nineteenth century and at the start of the twentieth was about culture and language, not necessarily political allegiance.<sup>24</sup> Although dominant, German was one of the many cultures in the Habsburg Empire and in Vienna. Austrian identity was still largely political, since Austria was a state, not a nation.<sup>25</sup> It revolved more around loyalty to the emperor, ‘Kaisertreue’ than around a cultural identity.<sup>26</sup> In theory, ‘Österreichertum’ ‘offered a potential identity for all peoples,’ but in reality this nation was endowed with ‘German traits in the self-understanding of both German speaking and non-German speaking Austrians’.<sup>27</sup> Particularly young people and

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<sup>21</sup> Ulf Hannerz, Two Faces of Cosmopolitanism: Culture and Politics, in: *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift*, 107/3, 2005, 199–213, here 204; Ulrich Beck, The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies, in: *Theory, Culture & Society*, 19/1–2, 2002, 19, 28; Gerard Delanty, Introduction: The Emerging Field of Cosmopolitanism Studies, in: *idem* (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitanism Studies*, New York/London 2012, 1–8, here 6.

<sup>22</sup> Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 7, 10; Lara Steinhäuber, By Women for Women: On the Role of Female Fashion Artists at the Wiener Werkstätte, in: *Die Frauen der Wiener Werkstätte*, 116–139, here 121; Christoph Thun-Hohenstein and Angela Völker, *Die Unbekannte Wiener Werkstätte: Stickereien und Spitzen 1906 bis 1930*, Wien 2017, 10f.

<sup>23</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Cambridge 2009, 12f; Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I*, Oxford 2001, 23.

<sup>24</sup> Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews: 1867–1938: A Cultural History*, Cambridge 1989, 150, 171.

<sup>25</sup> Healy, *Vienna*, 16; Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Rampley, *The Vienna School*, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Lonnie Johnson, *Introducing Austria: A Short History*, Cambridge 2018, 37; Komlosy, *Imperial Cohesion*, 372, 382.

Protestants were Germany-focused.<sup>28</sup> With the outbreak of war, the connectedness with Germany grew.<sup>29</sup> Even in fashion, both countries turned against the common enemy capital: Paris.<sup>30</sup>

However, the rivalry between the two has not disappeared. Some claim that it had been there since the Prussians defeated the Habsburg army at Königgrätz in 1866.<sup>31</sup> Thus, there was a desire to distinguish oneself in the Habsburg Empire, especially in an atmosphere of rising nationalism. Heather Hess argues that Austria began to use luxury goods to ‘forge an identity distinct from Germany’.<sup>32</sup> Even after the collapse of the empire, many German Austrians had no connection to Germany other than their language. Many of them had emigrated to Vienna from non-German parts of the Habsburg Empire. German identity was therefore not something they could all identify with – an Austrian (political) was more appropriate.<sup>33</sup> Cedric Ellis Williams also suggests that, especially after the fall of the Empire, the myth of Austria’s ‘supranational consciousness, the mediation between east and west’ was used as ‘an attempt to distinguish between Austrian and German culture’ and as ‘a justification of her cultural independence from Germany’.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, according to Friedrich Heer (1916-1983), many groups did become more and more associated with Germany in the time of the Republic of (German-)Austria, opposing mostly Catholics and conservatives who claimed to represent Austria. Multiple identities appeared to exist next to each other; as Adolf Loos already wrote in 1908, Austrians lived in different temporalities at the same time – which also meant with different spatial and cultural representations of their country.<sup>35</sup>

At first glance, the Wiener Werkstätte seemed to have been part of a German culture that was broader than just Austria. They were among the founding members of the famous *Deutscher Werkbund* and they held many fashion shows in Germany.<sup>36</sup> Before the war, it mostly as if the Wiener Werkstätte wanted to impress Germany. The liberal, slightly pro-German Viennese daily *Neue Freie Presse* proudly wrote in 1912 that ‘Kronprinzessin Cäcilie’ (1886–1954), the wife of German Crown Prince Wilhelm, bought a Wiener Werkstätte dress and thereby had made ‘für das ganze elegante Berlin die Wiener Werkstätte

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<sup>28</sup> Friedrich Heer, *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität*, Vienna 1981, 289-298.

<sup>29</sup> C.E. Williams, *A Legacy of Empire: Aspects of Austrian Supranationalism*, in: *Journal of European Studies* 1, 1971, 103–114, here 113.

<sup>30</sup> Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 66.

<sup>31</sup> Johnson, *Introducing Austria*, 36; Stefan Zweig, transl. F.W. van Heerikhuizen, *De wereld van gisteren: Herinneringen van een Europeaan*, Amsterdam 1948, 44.

<sup>32</sup> Heather Hess, *The Wiener Werkstätte and the Reform Impulse*, in: Regina Lee Blaszczyk (Ed.), *Producing Fashion: Commerce, Culture, and Consumers*, Philadelphia 2008, 111–129, here 119.

<sup>33</sup> Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*, 32f.

<sup>34</sup> Williams, *A Legacy*, 113.

<sup>35</sup> Heer, *Der Kampf*, 322-323, 340-348.

<sup>36</sup> Schweiger, *Wiener Werkstätte*, 93, 124; Klein-Primavesi, *Die Familie*, 42.

zum Clou der Ausstellung'.<sup>37</sup> They were indeed successful: 'hier könnte Berlin noch manches lernen', concluded the Berliner *Lokal Anzeiger* about the same show.<sup>38</sup>

When war broke out, however, the art critic Berta Zuckerkandl-Szepts (1864–1945) suddenly wrote about Germans and Austrians (though not necessarily together) wanting to destroy the French fashion industry.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, Zuckerkandl-Szepts was a strong supporter of the multiculturalism of the Habsburg Empire, as was the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, for which she wrote at the time.<sup>40</sup> This makes it all the more unusual that she now embraced the German connection. More and more Austrian newspapers began to use the term 'deutsche Mode' to refer to both German and Austrian fashion. The art historian Max Eisler (1861–1937), for example, wrote '[n]iemand draussen wird uns das Vorrecht des Wegweisers bestreiten, wenn es um die deutsche Mode geht. Wien muss die Führung nehmen'.<sup>41</sup> The Graz-born *Handelskammeramtsdirektor*<sup>42</sup> in Vienna, Erich Pistor (1837–?), came to the conclusion that Vienna was the heart and mind of the German people, and that it was under the cover of 'Deutschtums'. Given Pistor's profession, this statement was probably commercially motivated, as the German and Austrian economies were heavily dependent on each other during the war.<sup>43</sup> A Cologne newspaper wrote in 1915 that the Wiener Werkstätten had made a real breakthrough in 'deutsche Mode'.<sup>44</sup> The Berlin magazin *Der Konfektionär* even offered a definition: 'Man versteht heute unter "deutsches Kunsthandwerk" ganz allgemein deutsche und österreichisch-ungarische Arbeit.'<sup>45</sup> For the author, the term 'deutsch' thus included the Austro-Hungarian empire. During the war, however, this changed. The sudden habit of German newspapers to refer to the creation of the Wiener Werkstätte as 'deutsche Mode' disappeared around 1917, probably due to the waning enthusiasm for the war.<sup>46</sup>

Although both produced 'deutsche Mode', Austria and Germany were not one nation. Fashion designers in Berlin were considered 'wertvolle Bundesgenossen [...] bei dem Wettkampf mit Paris'.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> WWAN82-199, Wiener Werkstätte Mode in Berlin, *Neue Freie Presse (NFP)*, Wien 9 October 1912 [for all of elegant Berlin the Wiener Werkstätte the key of the exhibition].

<sup>38</sup> WWAN88-11, Modenschau der Wiener Werkstätte, *Berliner Lokal Anzeiger*, Berlin 12 March 1913 [Here Berlin can still learn a lot].

<sup>39</sup> WWAN83-1, Berta Zuckerkandl, Los von Paris! *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ)*, Wien 18 August 1914 [fundamentally shaking France's artistic hegemony].

<sup>40</sup> Berta Zuckerkandl, *Ich erlebte fünfzig Jahre Weltgeschichte*, Stockholm 1939, 240, 307.

<sup>41</sup> WWAN83-5, Max Eisler, *Fremden-Blatt*, Wien 17 October 1914 [Nobody outside can fight our right of leading the way, when it comes to German fashion. Vienna must take the lead].

<sup>42</sup> [Senior official of the Chamber of Commerce].

<sup>43</sup> Archiv und Sammlung der Universität für Angewandte Kunst Wien (UfAK), 11.339/Aut (Q) Die Wiener Modebewegung, Erich Pistor, Wien – Die Frauen – Die Kunst und die Mode. Erinnerungen an die Modenvorfürungen der Wiener Werkstätte und des Isabella-Hausindustrievereines am 11. und 19. Februar 1916; WWAN83-124, Dritte Modenschau im Österreichischen Museum für Kunst und Industrie, *Deutsches Volksblatt*, Berlin 12 February 1916.

<sup>44</sup> WWAN83-66, Modenschau, *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, Köln 28 September 1915.

<sup>45</sup> WWAN83-19, *Der Konfektionär*, Berlin 14 March 1915 [One now with 'German applied art' generally refers to German and Austrian-Hungarian work].

<sup>46</sup> Zweig, *De wereld*, 312.

<sup>47</sup> WWAN83-7, Die neue Wiener Mode, *Frankfurter Zeitung am Abend*, Frankfurt 25 November 1914 [valuable allies (...) in the competition with Paris].

Fashion critics wrote of a 'Bundesbrüderschaft' with the 'Gäste von der Donau'.<sup>48</sup> The return of the Biedermeier style to Wiener Werkstätte fashion in 1916 was also greeted with enthusiasm in both countries<sup>49</sup> – Biedermeier was a style that represented not only an escapist longing for peace, but also a common cultural history of Austria and Germany.<sup>50</sup> Aspects of the Biedermeier style in dresses were a narrow waist with a subtle petticoat, embroidery and lace, and sleeves ending in lace cuffs. Such elements can be found in the 1916 Werkstätte designs.

War also gave rise to a new symbolism: culture as an extension of the battlefield. Several authors drew a connection between the war on the front and an artistic and economic war waged in fashion.<sup>51</sup> Zuckerkandl-Szeps wrote that eccentric Austrian art was essentially the 'Arbeit einer Kriegsbereitschaft'.<sup>52</sup> *Der Konfektionär* concluded in February 1915 that Parisian fashion 'unter dem Schrapnellfeuer der Deutschen zusammengebrochen [ist]'.<sup>53</sup> That same year, the Wiener Werkstätte even named a number of fashion designs after Russian-Polish cities that were captured by the Habsburg empire.<sup>54</sup> This changed in 1916. Instead, items were named after German or Habsburg cities.<sup>55</sup> The yearning for peace seems to have been expressed not only in the Biedermeier style, which had a connotation of peacefulness, but also in the focus on Germany instead of places of war – although the German aspect was probably mostly commercially motivated.

The sudden closeness between Germany and Austria was not only motivated by nationalist ideals. After all, the Habsburg Empire still existed, and Austria-Hungary was still a multinational state in which many, but certainly not all, identified with German culture. Promoting 'deutsche Mode' and mocking Paris was also a way of boosting the Austrian economy. More importantly, importing clothes or even fabrics from enemy countries was simply impossible.<sup>56</sup>

Although the propaganda of 'deutsche Mode' went out of fashion after the war, the Wiener Werkstätte remained close to Germany. Does this mean that they were trying to fit in with Germany, to

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<sup>48</sup> WWAN83-84, Das Moden-Gastspiel der Wiener Werkstätte, *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, Essen 6 January 1916; WWAN83-112, A.B., Neue Wiener Moden, *Die Post*, Berlin 8 January 1916; WWAN83-78, Wiener Mode in Berlin, *Kleines Journal*, Berlin 24 January 1917.

<sup>49</sup> E.g., WWAN83-88, *Berliner Tageblatt*, Berlin 4 January 1916; WWAN83-85, Die Frühjahrsmodelle der Wiener Werkstätten in Berlin, *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung*, München 6 January 1916; WWAN83-95, Eine Modeausstellung der Wiener Werkstätte in Berlin, *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* (from now on: NWT), Wien 7 January 1916.

<sup>50</sup> Völker, Wiener Mode, 93.

<sup>51</sup> WWAN83-37, Emma Stropp, Der Krieg und die deutsche Modenindustrie, *Frauenkapital* 15, Berlin 11 April 1915; WWAN83-34, Wiener Mode in Berlin, *Elegante Welt*, Berlin April 1915; WWAN83-54, Allgemeine Modenschau. Die Wiener Werkstätte, *Deutsches Tagesblatt*, Berlin 17 September 1915.

<sup>52</sup> WWAN83-1, Zuckerkandl, Los von Paris! [work of a war preparation].

<sup>53</sup> WWAN83-16, Die Wiener Modellschau – ein Erfolg!, *Der Konfektionär*, Berlin 28 February 1915 [has been shattered under the gunfire of the Germans].

<sup>54</sup> WWAN83-55, Modenschau der Wiener Werkstätten in Berlin, *Der Manufakturist*, Hannover 7 August 1915.

<sup>55</sup> WWAN83-93, E.M., Modell-Ausstellung der Wiener Werkstätte, *Berliner Morgenpost*, Berlin 4 January 1916; WWAN83-102, Wiener Werkstätten-Woche: Die Frühjahrsmoden-Ausstellung im 'Kaiserhof', *Der Manufakturist*, Hannover January 1916.

<sup>56</sup> Mary L. Wagener, Berta Zuckerkandl. Viennese Journalist and Publicist of Modern Art and Culture, in: *European Studies Review* 12, 1982, 425–444, here 438; Hess, *The Wiener Werkstätte*, 126.

impress them, to express a ‘deutsche Kultur’? Probably not. The lack of German roots was evident in the patrons and designers of the Wiener Werkstätte. The designers Hoffmann, Moser, and Wimmer-Wisgrill, and the patrons Waerndorfer and Otto Primavesi (1868–1926) were all born in the Habsburg Empire. With the exception of Hoffmann (Brtnice/Pirnitz) and Primavesi (Olomouc/Olmütz), they were even born in Vienna. Their designs also show no connection to Germany. Some have suggested that the Werkstätte copied the German ‘Reformkleid’.<sup>57</sup> However, Wimmer-Wisgrill, who was the head of the fashion department at the time, found this type of dress completely tasteless.<sup>58</sup> It was Paul Poiret (1879–1944) who had translated the ‘Reformkleid’ into a more fashionable look, and so it was a Parisian copy – not a German one.<sup>59</sup>

About the critics: The Hungarian-born Ludwig Hevesi (1843–1910) was one of the most important critics of the Werkstätte. He was a strong supporter of the Empire. He saw the emperor as ‘an agent of change and innovation – where others saw him as a symbol of stability and continuity with the old’.<sup>60</sup> In his 1923 biography, Arthur Roessler (1877–1955) explained how Hevesi made Austrian (in Hevesi’s case, Austro-Hungarian) art famous. Austrian (meaning Viennese) artists were not taken seriously abroad. Hevesi worked to improve their reputation. Promoting the Viennese Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte were means to this end.<sup>61</sup> And indeed, it was mainly Vienna that he promoted, despite his own origins. Central to his efforts was proving to Germany that Austrian (i.e., Viennese) artists could compete with them.<sup>62</sup>

Like Hevesi, the critic Hermann Anastas Bahr (1863–1934), who was also one of the founders of the Wiener Werkstätte, wanted to distinguish Austria from Germany like Hevesi. ‘Ich weiss nur, dass ich böse werde, wenn man mich fragt, ob ich ein Deutscher bin. Nein, antworte ich, ich bin kein Deutscher, ich bin ein Österreicher’, he said as early as 1899.<sup>63</sup> Viennese and Austrian seemed to Bahr to be quite similar: neither is Germany but they should be culturally German. In addition to promoting Austrian art, Bahr also wanted to reform it with the help of the state. The ultimate goal was ‘a new, strong, Austrian culture, that is, a nation in which the life of the people is rooted in the arts.’<sup>64</sup>

Zuckerkaendl-Szeps, the Werkstätte’s most prominent critic, was no fan of Germany either. She rejected any comparison between Germans and Austrians. In the early years of the war, she thought it

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<sup>57</sup> Hansen, *Wiener Werkstätte*, 183; Brigitte Felderer, *Selbstentwurf und Körperformular: Modegeschichte aus Österreich*, in: Tulga Beyerle – Karin Hirschberger (Eds.), *Designlandschaft Österreich 1900–2005*, Basel 2006, 54–59, here 55f.

<sup>58</sup> WWAN88-19-20, Zuckerkaendl, *Durch Kunst zu künstlerischer Mode*, *WAZ*, Wien 15 March 1913.

<sup>59</sup> Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 19.

<sup>60</sup> Rampley, *The Vienna School*, 79f.

<sup>61</sup> Arthur Roessler, *Speidel und Hevesi: Zwei Bildnisminiaturen in einem Rahmen*, Wien 1923, 49–51.

<sup>62</sup> Rampley, *The Vienna School*, 77–80.

<sup>63</sup> Hermann Bahr, *Secession*. (Vierte Ausstellung der Vereinigung bildender Künstler Österreichs), *Die Zeit* 18:234, Wien 25 March 1899, 184–185 [I only know, that I get angry, when one asks me if I am a German. No, I answer, I am no German, I am an Austrian].

<sup>64</sup> Donald G. Daviau, *Understanding Hermann Bahr*, *St. Ingbert* 2002, 135f., 145.

wasmjustified. As it progressed, around 1917, it no longer felt compatible with her cosmopolitanism. She turned to pacifism, which reinforced her anti-German stance. Central to its struggle was the preservation of the *Donaumonarchie* and Austrian culture. ‘Los von Paris!’ was supplemented by ‘Los von Deutschland!’<sup>65</sup> Thus it seems that when those in and around the Wiener Werkstätte wrote about the nation or the national, they were probably not referring to a *Großdeutschland* idea, the desire for the “*Anschluss*”, or a purely German understanding of German-Austria after 1918.<sup>66</sup>

As for the buyers, 80 percent of them was foreign.<sup>67</sup> For the most part, foreigners considered Wiener Werkstätte fashion to be both Austrian and Viennese. It was put in the same category as the *Wiener Walzer*, *Heuriger*, and the *Wiener Wald*.<sup>68</sup> Thus, they saw Wiener Werkstätte fashion as something foreign, which contributed to the cosmopolitan (self-)image of the buyers. The emphasis German authors placed on the Slavic, Bulgarian, Hungarian, and other embroideries and elements in Werkstätte fashion underscores this.<sup>69</sup> Many German authors also acknowledged that the Werkstätte was born out of the tradition of ‘das Wienertum’, which refers to the diversity and cosmopolitanism of the Habsburg Empire as a whole.<sup>70</sup> Anything ‘ganz und gar wienerisch’ (again, with the exception of 1914–1916) was perceived as eclectic and quite different from ‘echt deutsch’.<sup>71</sup> The term ‘Weltmode’ was also used by German newspapers to refer to Wiener Werkstätte fashion, further emphasizing its cosmopolitan image.<sup>72</sup> As William Whyte and Oliver Zimmer (\*1963) argued, ‘overlapping symbolism of city and nation’ was quite common.<sup>73</sup> This can also be applied to the city and the empire, which often seems to be the case in the reception of Wiener Werkstätte fashion.

In short, it seems that the first years of the war brought the German and Austrian fashion scenes closer together for nationalistic and economic reasons. ‘Austria’ usually referred to the German-speaking parts of the *Erblande*, but sometimes the focus was on connections to other cultures under the Habsburg

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<sup>65</sup> Renate Redl, Berta Zuckerandl und die Wiener Gesellschaft: Ein Beitrag zur Österreichischen Kunst- und Gesellschaftskritik, phil. Diss. Universität Wien 1978, 24, 30f., 136, 141, 152, 158.

<sup>66</sup> Komlosy, *Imperial Cohesion*, 413–415.

<sup>67</sup> Schweiger, *Wiener Werkstätte*, 123.

<sup>68</sup> WWAN88-3, *Aus der Welt der Frau: Modenschau der Wiener Werkstätten*, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* Berlin 14 May 1913; WWAN83-90, *Modellschau der Wiener Werkstätten*, *Berliner Tageblatt*, Berlin 23 January 1917; WWAN83-396, Carl Marilaun, *Wiener Nachmittag von Carl Marilaun*, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Berlin 2 June 1920.

<sup>69</sup> E.g., WWAN83-28, *Modellschau der Wiener Werkstätte in Berlin*, *Die Textilwoche*, Berlin 24 March 1914; WWAN83-54, *Allgemeine Modenschau. Die Wiener Werkstätte*, *Deutsches Tagesblatt*, Berlin 17 September 1915; WWAN83-547, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Frankfurt 5 April 1922.

<sup>70</sup> WWAN83-90, *Modellschau der Wiener Werkstätten*, *Berliner Tageblatt*, Berlin 23 January 1917.

<sup>71</sup> E.g., WWAN83-28, *Modellschau der Wiener Werkstätte in Berlin*, *Die Textilwoche*, Berlin 24 March 1914; WWAN83-29, *Der Manufakturist*, Hannover 27 March 1915; WWAN83-386, J.Th., *Herbstmodelle der Wiener Werkstätte*, *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, Berlin 11 August 1920; WWAN86-1919, H. Jaro Jaretski, *Wien zieht nach Berlin: Josef Hoffmann und die Wiener Werkstätten*, *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, Berlin 1 October 1929.

<sup>72</sup> E.g., WWAN83-46, *Die Modenschau der Wiener Werkstätten*, *Der Konfektionär*, Berlin 29 July 1915; WWAN83-343, *Die Kunst der Wiener Werkstätten*, *Nationalzeitung Berlin*, Berlin 20 February 1920.

<sup>73</sup> William Whyte and Oliver Zimmer, Introduction, in: *idem* (Eds.), *Nationalism and the Reshaping of Urban Communities in Europe, 1848–1914*, Basingstoke 2011, 1–13, here 8.

umbrella. At the Wiener Werkstätte, cosmopolitan and nationalist motives complemented each other in its relationship to Germany. On the one hand, the Werkstätte presented its products to the German public as cosmopolitan fashion. This was probably commercially motivated, since their products were never very popular in Austria itself. They needed this foreign market to survive.<sup>74</sup> Their original motives seem to have been more nationalist. This seems to be in line with what Roessler concluded: Austria needed to prove itself, in particular to Germany.<sup>75</sup> The Viennese journalist Claire Patek-Hochenadel (1880–1963) emphasized this in 1917, writing ‘dass Wien kein Vorort von Berlin ist, sondern eine grosse, elegante österreichische Stadt’, including in terms of fashion.<sup>76</sup> This underscores Hess’s point about luxury goods. Vienna’s elegant reputation was even a matter of concern for the authorities: a letter from *Kaiserlicher Rat*<sup>77</sup> Friedrich Tilgner (1868–1946) to Dr. Ottokar Trenka in 1914 about the upcoming *Wiener Modellschau* expressed the fear that Viennese fashion’s dependence on Paris might turn into dependence on Berlin. It was therefore necessary to support for Viennese fashion in order to prevent damage to the Austrian economy and ‘Volkskraft’.<sup>78</sup> This illustrates that although Wiener Werkstätte’s fashion aimed to be the ‘Austrian’, it was primarily seen as Viennese in the first place. Nevertheless, Viennese fashion could still be a source of national or imperial pride. Even commercial cosmopolitanism could help: after all, success abroad would still be an achievement for Austria, especially when it became a much smaller country after the war.<sup>79</sup>

### Competing with Paris

Stefan Zweig (1881–1942) wrote in his memoirs that before the war Vienna had more in common with Paris than with Berlin, citing fashion as the main example.<sup>80</sup> It is indeed an inescapable connection to examine. Paris was a ‘fashion world city,’ as Christopher Breward (\*1965) and David Gilbert have called it – especially with regard to women’s haute couture. The competition in high fashion has always been mostly between cities, Gilbert explains, and ‘fashion was used as a means of expressing the superiority of certain places in the world order’. The battle was between cities – but at the same time they represented their ‘national cultures’.<sup>81</sup> Contemporary newspapers and later literature thus emphasize the Parisian influence on the Werkstätte’s fashion.

<sup>74</sup> WWAN83-144, Claire Patek, Wien im neutralen Ausland, *Neues Wiener Journal (NWJ)*, Wien 27 May 1917; Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 38-42; Klein-Primavesi, *Die Familie*, 294.

<sup>75</sup> Roessler, Speidel und Hevesi, 49-51.

<sup>76</sup> WWAN83-144, Patek, Wien im neutralen Ausland, *NWJ*, Wien 27 May 1917 [that Vienna is not a suburb of Berlin, but a large, elegant Austrian city].

<sup>77</sup> Kaiserlicher Rat [Imperial Counselor] was an honorary title awarded by the Emperor of Austria until 1918.

<sup>78</sup> UfAK, 11.295/Aut. Sitzungsprotokolle für Wiener Modellschau 3. Dezember 1914, Brief von Kaiserlicher Rat Tilgner an Herrn Musiker, Dr. Ottokar Trenka, 9f.

<sup>79</sup> Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 38-42.

<sup>80</sup> Zweig, *De wereld*, 144.

<sup>81</sup> David Gilbert, From Paris to Shanghai: The Changing Geographies of Fashion’s World Cities, in: Christopher Breward – David Gilbert (Eds.), *Fashion’s World Cities*, Oxford 2006, 3–32, here 20f.; Simona Segre Reinach, National Identities and International Recognition, in: *Fashion Theory* 15/2, 2011, 267–272, here 268.

It seems that the years leading up to the outbreak of war were marked by mutual respect. In 1911, Zuckerkandl-Szepe introduced Poiret, one of France's most famous designers at the time, to Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), Hoffmann, and other artists from the Werkstätte in 1911.<sup>82</sup> Poiret became friends with Wimmer-Wisgrill, who openly praised Poiret's designs. Poiret, in turn, was inspired by the Werkstätte's designs and bought their fabrics.<sup>83</sup> Wimmer-Wisgrill even got nicknamed 'Poiret der Wiener'.<sup>84</sup> The fact that this is often repeated in secondary studies underscores the strong and friendly connection these two cities had in fashion.<sup>85</sup> Sources even indicate that the fashion shows held at the Werkstätte were modeled on those held in Paris.<sup>86</sup> Several other fashion designers at the Werkstätte also met with Poiret.<sup>87</sup> The Parisian influence is visible in quite some prewar dress designs, for instance those featuring the high Empire waist (figure 1).

[Figure 1. Otto Lendicke, Dress design (1912), colour lithograph on paper.<sup>88</sup>]

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<sup>82</sup> Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Kunstarchiv Werner J. Schweiger, 1.2.2.8 Die Mode der Wiener Werkstätte. Kopie des Artikels (n.d.) 1.

<sup>83</sup> Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 19, 208; Daniel James Cole and Nancy Deihl, *The History of Modern Fashion from 1850*, London 2015, 117; Suzanne Lussier, *Art Deco Fashion*, London 2003, 12. Newspapers also reported on the Werkstätte's influence on Poiret.

<sup>84</sup> WWAN88-3, A.M., *Aus der Welt der Frau: Modeschau der Wiener Werkstätten*, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Berlin 14 March 1913.

<sup>85</sup> *E.g.*, Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 47; Cole and Deihl, *The History*, 122.

<sup>86</sup> Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 47.

<sup>87</sup> Schweiger, *Wiener Werkstätte*, 100; Steinhäuser, *By Women*, 123; Nancy Troy, *The Image of Austria Refracted: Paris in the Mirror of Peche and the Decorative Arts in Paris 1912*, in: Peter Noever (Ed.), *Dagobert Peche and the Wiener Werkstätte*, New Haven/New York 2002, 53–65, here 53.

<sup>88</sup> MET Museum WW.857, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/650953>



Although Paris led the world in fashion, some had always disliked the extravagance of Parisian fashion and the way the Wiener Werkstätte copied it. It seems, however, that such comments about the Werkstätte's fashion were not primarily rooted in anti-French feelings, but in an aversion to haute couture or other overly artistic clothing.<sup>89</sup>

However, as already mentioned, the outbreak of the war had an impact on the fashion world. Soon the slogan 'Los von Paris!' was coined.<sup>90</sup> Parisian fashion was no longer available in Vienna. In addition, anti-French motifs, albeit out of devotion to Vienna, Austria or the Empire, diminished the demand for it.<sup>91</sup> Newspapers were filled with calls for independence from Parisian fashion hegemony.<sup>92</sup> *Der Konfektionär* even wrote: 'Frankreich hat so gut wie keine Volkskunst, die sich der Mode dienstbar machen könnte. (...) Österreich-Ungarn ist darin weiter. Welche erstaunlichen Resultate haben z.B. die Wiener Werkstätten bereits erzielt, gerade in der Textilkunst.'<sup>93</sup> Clearly, in times of war and its propaganda, localism, nationalism, or loyalty to the Empire proved stronger than cosmopolitanism. From another perspective, however, one could argue that there was still a cosmopolitan yet competitive attitude in Viennese fashion.

From the beginning, however, this competition seems to have been more between cities than between countries, although the cities represented the countries, as explained by Beward and Gilbert.<sup>94</sup> In the case of the Wiener Werkstätte, this is demonstrated by the support provided by the Austrian *Ministerium für öffentliche Arbeiten* for its fashion shows and exhibitions abroad.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, just as German audiences considered themselves cosmopolitan when wearing Wiener Werkstätte fashions, this cosmopolitanism was in turn a source of pride for Paris. Not only did many sources mention Poiret's approval of Wiener Werkstätte fabrics, but as early as 1908, the *Neue Freie Presse* described Viennese furs as 'true cosmopolitans' and boasted that 'die Pariserin und besonders die Amerikanerin, liebt diese wienerische Note einer internationalen Elegance'.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, a 1912 short story in the same paper

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<sup>89</sup> WWAN84-1213, Siegfried Geyer, Der Leidensweg der Wiener Werkstätte, *Die Bühne*, Wien 27 May 1926, 6–9, here 8.

<sup>90</sup> WWAN83-1, Zuckerkandl, Los von Paris!, *WAZ*, Wien 18 August 1914; Helene Tuschak, Los von Paris!, *Wiener Mode*, 28/1, Wien 1 October 1914, 1.

<sup>91</sup> WiR, ZPH 1605 1 Kunstarchiv Werner J. Schweiger, Schweiger, 1.2.2.8 Die Mode der Wiener Werkstätte. Kopie des Artikels (n.d.) 2; UfAK, 11.295/Aut. Sitzungsprotokolle für Wiener Modellschau 3. Dezember 1914, Ausschuss zur Vorbereitung einer Wiener Modellschau. Versammlung der zur Teilnahme eingeladenen Firmen am 22. Dezember 1914 in der Wiener Handelskammer, 3f.

<sup>92</sup> E.g., WWAN83-7, Die neue Wiener Mode, *Frankfurter Zeitung am Abend*, Frankfurt 25 November 1914; WWAN83-63, WWAN87-107, *WAZ*, Wien 8 November 1915.

<sup>93</sup> WWAN83-19, *Der Konfektionär*, Berlin 14 March 1915 [France barely has folk art that could serve fashion. (...) Austria-Hungary is more advanced in this respect. What incredible results have for instance the Wiener Werkstätte achieved in textile art].

<sup>94</sup> Gilbert, From Paris to Shanghai, 4.

<sup>95</sup> WWAN83-22, Wiener Werkstätte in Berlin, *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag*, Berlin 19 March 1915.

<sup>96</sup> WWAN82-64, Das Bleibende im Wechsel der Mode, *NFP*, Wien 25 October 1908 [The Parisian woman and in particular the American, loves this Viennese touch of international elegance].

described how a Viennese aristocrat saw a beautiful blouse in Monte Carlo and wanted to order it from France. Ironically, however, the shop in Paris ordered it for her from the Wiener Werkstätte. This story was not only meant to encourage Viennese women to buy the Werkstätte's fashion, but also to suggest pride in the international fame and cosmopolitan character of the Werkstätte, and a sense of superiority over Parisian fashion.<sup>97</sup>

One voice was an exception during the war: Berta Zuckerkandl-Szepts. Her popular call 'Los von Paris!' is often repeated in academic studies, but her pro-French statements are hardly ever mentioned. It seems that they did not fit into the narratives of many authors. However, Zuckerkandl-Szepts was closely connected to France through her family. In her sister's salon, she met people such as François-Auguste-René Rodin and Joseph-Maurice Ravel. She welcomed many French intellectuals and artists to her own salon.<sup>98</sup> At the same time, she was one of the main propagandists of the fashion of the Wiener Werkstätte and the Parisian fashion (especially Poiret's). In 1913, she praised Poiret's transformation of the 'Reformkleid' and wrote: 'Das Heil musste aus der grössten Traditionsstätte der Modekultur, musste aus Paris kommen' – although in the same passage she concluded that French women were too backward for this novelty, and that Vienna instead became the place for such fashion innovations.<sup>99</sup> But her admiration for France did not disappear during the war. In fact, in the famous article 'Los von Paris', she wrote that one should not fall into the chauvinistic trap of ignoring French fashion achievements.<sup>100</sup> Another article in 1915, unsigned but most likely written by her, given the title of the column, actually gets right to the point of how cosmopolitanism and nationalism could be combined. She wrote: 'Aber man darf Unabhängigkeit nicht mit Losgelöstheit von jeder gemeinsamen Beziehung zu Paris identifizieren. Ein Blick in die Modeblätter (...) belehrt uns auch jetzt noch über die Einigkeit der Mode.'<sup>101</sup> She described the Werkstätte's fashion as 'national und kosmopolitisch zugleich'.<sup>102</sup> High fashion is inevitably cosmopolitan, and it can also be nationalistic– but rarely without the former. What exactly Zuckerkandl-Szepts meant by 'national' is unclear. Given her strong support for the Habsburg Empire, however, it is possible that she was referring to the Empire as a whole. In her autobiography, she praises the 'völkerverbindende, völkerbeherrschende Österreich' during the war. This also seems to indicate that her idea of Austria included many nationalities, which makes it possible that she was referring to the empire as a whole, including the Hungarian parts.<sup>103</sup> But only in one article, in 1912, does she refer explicitly to Hungary. She speaks of 'österreichisch-ungarischer Kunst' that inspired

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<sup>97</sup> WWAN82-189, Eine Modegeschichte von der Riviera, *NFP*, Wien 22 March 1912.

<sup>98</sup> Redl, Berta Zuckerkandl, 25f., 46.

<sup>99</sup> WWAN88-19-20, Zuckerkandl, Durch Kunst zu künstlerischer Mode, *WAZ*, Wien 15 March 1913 [Salvation must come from the most traditional place of fashion culture, it must come from Paris].

<sup>100</sup> WWAN83-1, Los von Paris!, *WAZ*, Wien 18 August 1914.

<sup>101</sup> WWAN87-107, *WAZ*, Wien 8 November 1915 [Yet one should not mistake independence for complete disconnectedness from Paris. One look into the fashion magazines (...) shows us, also now, the unity of fashion].

<sup>102</sup> Redl, Berta Zuckerkandl, 93 [national and cosmopolitan at the same time].

<sup>103</sup> Zuckerkandl, Ich erlebte, 240.

Poiret's fashion. She seems to distinguish between 'unsere Volkskunst' and 'unsere Moderne'; the former referring to 'ungarischen Heim-Industrien' and 'polnischer Heimstickereien'. The textiles of the Wiener Werkstätte, on the other hand, seem to be the modern art.<sup>104</sup> This seems to indicate that Zuckerkandl-Szepe probably considered 'Österreich' to be the entire Habsburg Empire, but that she nevertheless distinguished between the 'Volkskunst' of the non-German-speaking regions, which had the connotation of being less developed, and the modern art of Vienna.

Throughout the war, the attitude toward Paris remained the same. After it ended, however, it did not take long for things to return to normal. Parisian influence soon regained ground.<sup>105</sup> Aspects such as the Empire waist, a very high waist that came from and was associated with France, slowly but surely returned to Wiener Werkstätte fashion by the end of the war.

This probably did not mean that nationalism was over, but it did signal that people were tired of the war. In fact, the same items often had elements of Biedermeier (suggesting a carefree time) and the fashion of the 'Wiener Kongresszeit' (suggesting peace).<sup>106</sup>

Zuckerkandl-Szepe, perhaps not surprisingly, even openly defended the return of Parisian contacts, stating that Poiret was still the 'fashion leader' and that he 'ha[d] remained loyal to Austrian art, to Vienna'.<sup>107</sup> But another article in the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* also wrote about him as a celebrity, declaring that he had done no more than his duty during the war and that it had not changed his admiration for Vienna.<sup>108</sup> It almost seemed as if Vienna had to start all over again to compete with Paris, as it remained the center of fashion.<sup>109</sup> Viennese newspapers suggested that it would be an honor for Viennese fashion, for 'the now so small Austria' to compete with Paris.<sup>110</sup> The influence of Parisian fashion on the Werkstätte after the war was perhaps best described in the 1928 issue of *Moderne Welt*: 'sie anerkennt die Pariser Mode, ohne sich ihr jedoch sklavisch zu unterwerfen'.<sup>111</sup>

In the context of this study, this also shows that the cosmopolitan character of haute couture could not really be broken. It may have been masked during the war, when nationalism seemed to prevail. But even then, the Werkstätte and the critics compared the fashion to Paris. Moreover, cosmopolitanism during the war meant that inspiration and markets could be found elsewhere.

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<sup>104</sup> WWAN87-104, Zuckerkandl, Paris 1912, *WAZ*, Wien 24 February 1912.

<sup>105</sup> Hess, *The Wiener Werkstätte*, 129; Hansen, *Wiener Werkstätte*, 198.

<sup>106</sup> WWAN83-95, Eine Modeausstellung der Wiener Werkstätte in Berlin, *NWT*, Wien 7 January 1916; WWAN83-81, Die Modellschau der Wiener Werkstätte im Modenhaus Nenner, *Dresdner Nachrichten*, Dresden 4 February 1917.

<sup>107</sup> WWAN83-606, Zuckerkandl, Paul Poiret und die Klimt-Gruppe, *NWJ*, Wien 25 November 1923, 5.

<sup>108</sup> WWAN83-629, Poiret in Wien, *WAZ*, Wien 3 March, n.d.

<sup>109</sup> WWAN86-1904, Poiret wieder der Erste, *Die Stunde*, Wien 25 October 1929.

<sup>110</sup> WWAN83-674, Josef Hoffmann, Die kommende Weltausstellung in Paris, *NWJ*, Wien n.d.; WWAN85-1554, M.E., Vierteljahrhundertfeier der Wiener Werkstätte, *Der Tag*, Wien 4 May 1928.

<sup>111</sup> WWAN85-1644, Alba, Die Wiener Werkstätte und die Mode, *Moderne Welt*, Wien 1928, 20 [It acknowledges Parisian fashion, without, however, slavishly submitting to it].

### The Wiener Werkstätte's culture offensive

Austria's 'supranational consciousness' has already been mentioned. For many, the mixture of cultures of the Habsburg Empire represented the Austrian 'Geist'.<sup>112</sup> Although 'Österreichertum' was mostly a political identity, this lack of a unified culture was almost a cultural identity in itself. With its multinational character, some saw Austria as representative of European culture in general.<sup>113</sup> Zweig, for example, subtitled his 1941 autobiography "Memories of a European". Europe stood for a common past, for traditions. Steven Beller (\*1958) also claimed of the Secession that 'theirs was an Austrian art that stood above and beyond national divisions'.<sup>114</sup> It also had this reputation among the authorities: 'modern high culture could act as a binding counterforce to nationalist divisiveness,' which is why the Austrian state supported modern art projects like the Wiener Werkstätte.<sup>115</sup> The Werkstätte's goal of becoming 'Weltmode' seems to be related to these ideas.

It almost seems as if these ideas were a cultural translation of a political situation. It is true that the Habsburg Empire united many cultures, as did Vienna. Interwar Austria was less diverse, but could still be considered a 'small empire' in the way it was governed and perceived. Long before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the empire was seen as a 'European necessity' to form a buffer zone between the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe.<sup>116</sup> The forced existence of interwar Austria can still be seen in this light, as it once again gave Austria an important position in maintaining the balance of power in Europe.

Looking through the Wiener Werkstätte catalogs, it is striking that while the texts were in German, French and English translations were provided as well.<sup>117</sup> The catalogs were thus clearly aimed at an international audience, and not at those in the Habsburg Empire who did not speak German. However, the cosmopolitan goal of reaching an international audience did not only stem from the desire for worldwide fame to fuel nationalism. In the case of the Wiener Werkstätte, perhaps more than with other fashion capitals, this mission was inextricably linked to the self-image of the Habsburg Empire and later of Austria. In 1916, prominent cultural figures such as Pistor called Vienna the 'meeting-place of Western and Eastern culture'.<sup>118</sup> But even after the fall of the empire, this image was transferred to the new Austria. Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929) famously expressed it in his 1927 essay 'The

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<sup>112</sup> Josef Hoffmann, *Selbstbiographie*, in: Peter Noever – Marek Pokorný (Eds.), *Josef Hoffmann Selbstbiografie*, Wien/Brno 2009, 84–141; WWAN84-761, *Oesterreich auf der Kunstgewerbeausstellung in Paris 1925*, *NWJ*, Wien 1924; WiR, B-356361, Mathilde Flögl, *The Wiener Werkstätte 1903-1928: The Evolution of the Modern Applied Arts*, Wien 1929.

<sup>113</sup> Daviau, *Understanding Hermann Bahr*, 135, 469.

<sup>114</sup> Beller, *A Concise History of Austria*, Cambridge 2007, 169.

<sup>115</sup> Beller, *A Concise History of Austria*, Cambridge 2007, 169.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 177f.

<sup>117</sup> *E.g.*, WiR, G-80488, *Wiener Werkstätte: Detailgeschäfte in Wien I., Kärntnerstrasse Nr. 32 und Kärntnerstrasse Nr. 41*, ca. 1930; WiR, B-286481 *Wiener-Werkstätte-Katalog*, 1928; UfAK, 2724/Q *Werkbroschüre*.

<sup>118</sup> UfAK, 11.339/Aut (Q) *Die Wiener Modebewegung*, Erich Pistor.

Austrian Idea'. Austria was a borderland, 'cultural waves propagating toward the East, but also receiving and ready to receive the counter-wave striving westward'.<sup>119</sup> While some contemporaries focused on the problems of the multinational state that the Habsburg Empire had been and the 'little empire' that Austria still was, Hofmannsthal romanticized this diversity.<sup>120</sup>

The Wiener Werkstätte probably intended to do the same by creating an Austrian style. Although most of the designers had grown up in Vienna, their fashion designs incorporated techniques and fabrics from all over the Habsburg Empire.<sup>121</sup> To the public, then, these designs also represented 'Österreichertum'.<sup>122</sup> The Werkstätte played a role in preserving traditions after the fall of the empire: 'Wien [ist] an das Ewige gebunden. Das ist das Europäische an ihm,' stated the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1920, 'und in des Wortes vollster Bedeutung liegt hier die Kulturmission des Wiener Kunsthandwerkes zutage. Das alte, kleine Palais in der Kärntnerstrasse [the Werkstätte's shop] hat gezeigt, wie sehr es daran Teil hat'.<sup>123</sup> It was felt that the Werkstätte principles were 'deeply European' and thus 'die jüngste Blüte des alten Geistes europäischer Humanität in Wien aufging'.<sup>124</sup> In a sense, even Austria's national self-image was linked to an international, cosmopolitan European identity through the cultural mission of the Wiener Werkstätte's fashion. Mathilde Flögl (1893–1958) herself, in her 1929 book, called it 'the holy Spring of Vienna art', which meant 'the realisation of the Viennese soul, in which happily is united northsouth to eastwest, old traditions and new growths'.<sup>125</sup>

Austria's multinational image came in handy during World War I. Zweig described how countries at war were very concerned with their cultural reputation. Artists were seen as the moral representatives of a country. Artists, writers and scientists were sent to neutral countries as a means of justification and propaganda.<sup>126</sup> It is almost like a charm offensive; or rather, a cultural offensive.

What Zweig may not have realized was that fashion was also being propagandized abroad. In 1916, the Wiener Werkstätte began holding fashion shows in a number of neutral countries, such as Sweden, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.<sup>127</sup> This may have been for the commercial reason that the

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<sup>119</sup> Hugo Von Hofmannsthal, *The Austrian Idea*, in: David S. Luft (Ed.), *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and the Austrian Idea: Selected Essays and Addresses 1906–1927*, West Lafayette 2011, 99–102, here 100; WWAN84-761, *Oesterreich auf die Kunstgewerbeausstellung in Paris 1925*, *NWJ*, Wien 1924?.

<sup>120</sup> Johnson, *Introducing Austria*, 39f.

<sup>121</sup> Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 14; WWAN83-55, *Modenschau der Wiener Werkstätten in Berlin*, *Der Manufakturist*, Hannover 7 August 1915; WWAN83-547, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Frankfurt 5 April 1922.

<sup>122</sup> E.g., WWAN83-16, *Die Wiener Modellschau – ein Erfolg!*, *Der Konfektionär*, Berlin 28 February 1915; WWAN83-342, *Wiener Werkstätte*, *WAZ*, Wien 22 March 1920.

<sup>123</sup> WWAN83-342, *Wiener Werkstätte*, *WAZ*, Vienna 23 March 1920 [Vienna is bound to the eternal. That is European about it. (...) And in the full meaning of the word, lies here the current cultural mission of Viennese applied arts. The old, small palace at the Kärntnerstrasse has witnessed of its big role in this].

<sup>124</sup> WWAN85-1565, *Zum Jubiläum der Wiener Werkstätte*, *Die Bühne*, Wien May 1928 [the youngest blood of the old spirit of European humanity is in Vienna].

<sup>125</sup> Flögl, *The Wiener Werkstätte 1903–1928*, f. 2.

<sup>126</sup> Zweig, *De wereld*, 314f.

<sup>127</sup> UfAK, 11.339/Aut (Q) *Die Wiener Modebewegung*, Aus einem Vortrage zu Beginn der Kleidervorfürungen im k.k. Österr. Museum für Kunst und Industrie. Von Hofrat Dr. Adolf Vetter; Völker, *Wiener Mode*, 104, 114.

Werkstätte's fashion was simply not very popular in Austria itself. Nevertheless, these trips should be seen in the context of the war. As early as December 1914, the Ministry of Public Works had allocated funds for 'propaganda' in Germany, the United States, the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland and the neutral or allied Balkan countries.<sup>128</sup> Second, the reactions in the newspapers were delirious, celebrating Austrian success abroad. Even here, war terms sometimes appeared: articles spoke of 'the friendly conquest of the neutral market by Viennese women's fashion' or that the fashion of the Werkstätte had 'conquered a new colony' in Sweden.<sup>129</sup> Again, this cultural offensive was not only about the success of the Werkstätte's fashion, but also about imperial and nationalist ideas about Austria's mission. An author in the Viennese newspaper *Die Chronik* even wrote that Vienna was predestined to lead in the field of fashion, because 'was das Ausland für unsern grössten Fehler gehalten hat, die Mannigfaltigkeit der Nationalitäten, das bringt auf dem Gebiete der Mode den abwechslungsreichen Turnus schöpferischer Genien'.<sup>130</sup>

The Austrian mission, however, was not even limited to material culture. The spread of Austrian material culture, even through haute couture, was a symbol of Austria's moral strength. Success abroad had made 'a big moral impression' and was claimed to be 'evidence of the inner power, the richness of ideas, and the moral strength of the Austrian'.<sup>131</sup> This was perceived not only by journalists and critics, but also by the artists of the Wiener Werkstätte. Flögl praised the success of the Werkstätte as 'a means of approachment of the Nations'. She quoted Franz Čížek (1865–1946), who said that 'by its perfect noble work and cultured taste, the Wiener Werkstätte has become the teacher of the whole civilised world, and thus she has raised the best essence of Vienna life to a truly international importance'.<sup>132</sup>

### Conclusion

Nationalism in culture has been studied extensively in recent decades. Its apparent opposite, cosmopolitanism, has received most attention in terms of its political, moral, and legal components. The case of Vienna in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century adds other territorial layers, such as the local and the imperial. This study was an attempt to explore the intersections of these territorial identities in the realm of culture. The fashion department of the Wiener Werkstätte (1911–1932) has proven to be a case study in which these clashes and coexistences become visible and shed light on this larger question. Overall,

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<sup>128</sup> UfAK, 11.295/Aut. Sitzungsprotokolle für Wiener Modellschau 3. Dezember 1914, Brief aan Herrn Musiker, Dr. Ottokar Trenka, 8.

<sup>129</sup> E.g., WWAN83-157, Wiener Kunst in Stockholm, *Wiener Blätter*, Wien October 1917; WWAN83-189, Unsre Mode im Auslande: Ein Rückblick auf das Jahr 1917, *NWT*, Wien 1 January 1918.

<sup>130</sup> WWAN83-110, E.E., Die edle Linie, *Die Chronik* 10, Wien 1917 [that which foreign countries have held for our biggest mistake, the multitude of nationalities, is what brings a diversity in creating geniuses in the field of fashion].

<sup>131</sup> WWAN83-139, Die österreichische Kunstgewerbe- und Modeausstellung in Stockholm, *NWT*, Wien 5 April 1916; WWAN83-110, E.E., Die edle Linie, *Die Chronik* 10, Wien 1917.

<sup>132</sup> Flögl, The Wiener Werkstätte.

it seems that cosmopolitanism never really disappeared in the field of fashion – although its balance with other territorial identifications was always influenced by external events.

What can be deduced from the results of this article? As previously stated, it appears that cosmopolitanism is inherent to haute couture. Throughout the period under examination, relations of competition and inspiration were never truly absent. Political and societal events appear to have exerted a significant influence on the balance between Viennese, Austrian, Habsburg and cosmopolitan identity. Of greater consequence, perhaps, is the fact that cosmopolitanism and other territorial identifications do not inherently exclude each other. Despite their apparent opposition, this study has demonstrated that they can coexist to a certain extent. The equilibrium shifts over time and from one perspective.

The findings of this study indicate that the notion of ‘Austria’ or ‘nation’ was often associated with an author’s political background, yet remained ambiguous and inconsistent. The importance of conducting precise research on the meanings attributed to certain terms by the actors, without assuming that these are their contemporary meanings. Furthermore, it suggests that national identities, or territorial identities in general, were significant to individuals but that they were unconcerned with the precise definitions. The assertion of absolute national indifference, as put forth by scholars such as Zahra, seems to be an overgeneralization ; there is ample evidence of national categories and engagement with national or imperial pride in the sources. However, there also seems to be a lack of interest in the exact definitions and the composition of each group.

In her words, ‘National und kosmopolitisch zugleich’, Zuckerkandl-Szepe encapsulates the essence of the Wiener Werkstätte’s fashion between the period of 1911 to 1932. She highlighted a coexistence that has been largely overlooked for almost a century, despite its inherent complexity. This balance has the potential to enhance (art) historians’ understanding and utilization of territorial identities. As Vienna’s culture exemplified the convergence of eastern and western influences, it is plausible that the concepts of cosmopolitanism and nationalism may intersect at pivotal moments and historical processes.