

Kainz, Friedrich

b. 4.7.1897, Vienna, Austria

d. 1.7.1977, Vienna, Austria

Life and Work

Kainz, since 1923 private lecturer on topics in the philosophy and psychology of language and since 1939 an ordinary professor of aesthetics and psychology of language at the University of Vienna, is chiefly known for his five volumes on the psychology of language (1954-1965). Between 1939 and 1943 he was director of the Viennese Psychological Institute. His psychology of language gives a prominent place to the production of speech and language. Language structures reveal the underlying psychic constitution of the speakers of a particular language. This view, rooted in Kainz's training as a psychologist and philosopher, was criticized by linguists. In the second volume of his Psychologie der Sprache Kainz related the complex structure of so-called primitive languages to the orgiastic life in primitive cultures, a view still held in a later edition of this volume (cf. Römer 1989). Although he was inspired by the psychophysiological approach of Wilhelm *Wundt and the latter's tendency towards an encyclopaedic description of linguistic phenomena based on psychological insights, Kainz was not that much of a generalist, being basically interested in pathological aspects of language production and of speech perception (cf. Blumenthal 1970). His work is also inspired by Karl *Bühler, both in scope and in diversity. In 1965 Kainz wrote an introduction to the reedition of Bühler's Sprachtheorie, in which he not only stressed the importance of Bühler's holistic work, but also referred to his own research concerning the psychology of

individual languages and of cultures. Each language reflects in its own way the mentality (Geistigkeit) of its users. In general, language should genetically and culturally be considered to be an all-embracing cultural 'organon', which is realized in concrete individual speech. Elaborating on Bühler's concept of linguistic fields Kainz critically analyzed those neurological approaches which depart from a neural centre responsible for mental or linguistic acts. Apart from his psycholinguistic work Kainz published on the linguistic development of children, on animal language, aesthetics, and on Franz Grillparzer's and Friedrich *Schlegel's position in Romantic literature.

Major Works

(1946) Einführung in die Sprachpsychologie. Wien: Sexl.

(1954-65) Psychologie der Sprache (5 vols.: I. Grundlagen der allgemeinen Sprachpsychologie; II. Vergleichend-genetische Sprachpsychologie; III. Physiologische Psychologie der Sprachvorgänge; IV. Spezielle Sprachpsychologie; V. Psychologie der Einzelsprachen). Stuttgart: Enke.

Further Reading

Blumenthal, Arthur L. (1970) Language and Psychology. Historical Aspects of Psycholinguistics. New York etc.: Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Fischer, Kurt R. & Franz M. Wimmer (1993) Der geistige Anschluß. Philosophie und Politik an der Universität Wien 1930-1950. Wien: WUV - Universitätsverlag.

Heintel, Erich (1977), "Nachruf auf Friedrich Kainz". Almanach der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 510-516.

Römer, Ruth (1989²) Sprachwissenschaft und Rassenideologie in Deutschland.

München: Wilhelm Fink.

F. Vonk,

463 words