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| **S. Fischer Verlag** |
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| Founded in Berlin in 1886 by Samuel Fischer, S. Fischer Verlag quickly became one of the most important publishing houses of German and European modernism. Émile Zola and Henrik Ibsen headlined the publisher’s first list of authors. The company went on to bring European and world literature to the German reading public, including works by Joseph Conrad, John Dos Passos, and Virgina Woolf. Yet the main focus of S. Fischer Verlag was to launch important new German-language writers who would soon come to shape the canon of modernism, including Gerhart Hauptmann, Thomas Mann, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Hermann Hesse, Arthur Schnitzler, Franz Werfel, Robert Musil, and Alfred Döblin. |
| Founded in Berlin in 1886 by Samuel Fischer, S. Fischer Verlag quickly became one of the most important publishing houses of German and European modernism. Émile Zola and Henrik Ibsen headlined the publisher’s first list of authors. The company went on to bring European and world literature to the German reading public, including works by Joseph Conrad, John Dos Passos, and Virgina Woolf. Yet the main focus of S. Fischer Verlag was to launch important new German-language writers who would soon come to shape the canon of modernism, including Gerhart Hauptmann, Thomas Mann, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Hermann Hesse, Arthur Schnitzler, Franz Werfel, Robert Musil, and Alfred Döblin.  During the first decade of its existence, S. Fischer Verlag was instrumental in shaping naturalist drama in Germany, with Gerhart Hauptmann as its leading literary voice. This success was due to an engagement on various fronts: the founding of a private theater association, the *Freie Bühne* (Free Stage), where new plays could premiere despite censorship; the promotion of naturalism in the publisher’s own literary journal; and the publishing concept of “Collected Works”. These multi-volume editions of complete works by living writers successfully accelerated the canonization of many of Fischer’s authors, adding economic and cultural value in the process. These Collected Works were modeled on the pioneering work of Cotta, the publisher of Friedrich Schiller and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Lauded as the “Cotta of Modernism” Fischer loosened his association with naturalism at the onset of the 20th century and embraced a concept of literature based in aesthetic autonomy and auteurism. Viewing himself as a cultivator of “spiritual value”, Fischer aimed to expand the bourgeois literary sphere around shared notions of taste and education (*Bildung*). However, the economic crises of the interwar years as well as the democratization of the reading public challenged this normative notion of culture. Alongside other publishers, S. Fischer Verlag began to issue cheaper book editions that eventually resulted in independent pocket book series. Thomas Mann’s cheap 1926 edition of *Buddenbrooks* led the way, selling over one million copies within four years.  Until his death in 1934, Samuel Fischer headed the publishing house. He was born into a German-speaking Jewish family in Royal Hungary and had come to Berlin via Vienna. His son-in-law, Gottfried Bermann-Fischer, started to shape the publishing program in the late 1920s. After Adolf Hitler’s ascent to power, national socialist censorship forced the publisher to take 135 titles off his book list, including novels by Alfred Döblin, Franz Werfel and Stefan Zweig. In 1936, Bermann-Fischer therefore decided to immigrate to Vienna (followed by Zürich, Stockholm, and New York) and to divide the publishing house into two corporate entities. The Bermann-Fischer publishing house in exile was based in Stockholm and granted the works of authors who had fled Nazi Germany, including all authors of Jewish descend, a future in print. At the same time, the publisher handed the rights of Fischer authors who were not prosecuted or censored by Nazi Germany over to senior editor Peter Suhrkamp. Suhrkamp and Bermann-Fischer had originally planned to reunite the two publishing entities after the war, but they separated permanently in 1950 into S. Fischer Verlag and Suhrkamp Verlag.  File:SFischerVerlag\_logo.jpg  Figure The logo of the S. Fischer Verlag has remained steady throughout its history, playing with the proximity between the founder’s name and the activity of fishing – the casting of a net to bring in good books. Copyright: Fischer Verlage  Source: [www.fischerverlage.de](http://www.fischerverlage.de) -- copyright: Fischer Verlage  Since 1963, S. Fischer Verlag has operated under the aegis of the Holzbrinck Publishing Group with a book list of over 7000 titles that features many contemporary authors as well as the classic modern authors whom S. Fischer had originally signed to the company, including the likes of Thomas Mann and Alfred Döblin. |
| Further reading:  (de Mendelssohn)  (Pfäfflin) |