A History of Austrian Literature 1918–2000

EDITED BY KATRIN KOHL AND RITCHIE ROBERTSON

A History of Austrian Literature 1918–2000

Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture

A History of Austrian Literature 1918–2000

Edited by
Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson

CAMDEN HOUSE

First published 2006
by Camden House

Camden House is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
668 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620, USA
www.camden-house.com
and of Boydell & Brewer Limited
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
www.boydellandbrewer.com

ISBN: 1–57113–276–7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A history of Austrian literature 1918–2000 / edited by Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson.
p. cm. — (Studies in German literature, linguistics, and culture)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1–57113–276–7 (hardcover: alk. paper)
1. Austrian literature—20th century—History and criticism. 2. Politics and literature—Austria—History—20th century. 3. Popular culture—Austria—History—20th century. 4. Publishers and publishing—Austria—History—20th century. I. Kohl, Katrin M. (Katrin Maria), 1956– II. Robertson, Ritchie. III. Title. IV. Series: Studies in German literature, linguistics, and culture (Unnumbered)

PT3818.H57 2006
830.9′94360904—dc22

2006013223

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

This publication is printed on acid-free paper.
Printed in the United States of America.

Contents

Illustrations

Following page 162

1. 1988 premiere of Thomas Bernhard's *Heldenplatz*.
2. Caricature of Kaiser Franz Josef I.
3. Veza and Elias Canetti in Vienna-Grinzing, October 1937.
4. *The Burning of the Palace of Justice*. Painting by Hugo Löffler.
5. Franz Werfel's *Verdi*.
6. Cover of *Bekenntnisbuch österreichischer Dichter*.
7. Scene from *Salto in die Seligkeit*.
8. H. G. Adler in his study in London.
9. Otto Basil.
10. The first issue of *PLAN*.
11. Poster for the first "Styrian Autumn" literature festival, 1972.
12. Heimito von Doderer and Hans Weigel at the Café Sacher, 1966.
13. Ingeborg Bachmann in her flat in Rome.
14. Peter Handke challenging the goalie.
15. Effigy of Elfriede Jelinek.
16. Helmut Qualtinger as "Herr Karl."
17. Alma Hadzibeganovic's first book.

Acknowledgments

We should like to thank all contributors for the enthusiastic commitment they brought to this project — their cooperative approach made it a pleasure to work on the volume. We are also most grateful to Jim Walker and James Hardin of Camden House for their meticulous editing, probing questions, and generosity in finding mutually satisfying solutions. Their robust criticism posed challenges that invariably proved fruitful. Thanks are further due to Jane Best for seeing the book through the production stage.

Thanks are due to the following persons and institutions for permission to reproduce illustrations: Erwin Schuh, CONTRAST Foto, Vienna; The Austrian National Library; Carl Hanser Verlag and the Heirs of Elias Canetti; DLA Marbach; Filmdokumenationszentrum - Filmarchiv Austria and Wiener Film KG Morawsky & Co.; Colin Davey and Camera Press, London; Frau Christine Basil; steirischer herbst Press Office; Bezirksmuseum Alsergrund; Dokumentationsstelle für neuere österreichische Literatur / Bildarchiv Wien and Garibaldi Schwarze; Isolde Ohlbaum; Matthias Horn; Ingrid Votava, Pressefoto Votava, Vienna; edition exil, Vienna.

Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson
Oxford, July 2006

Note on the Dates and Translations

LIFE DATES OF AUSTRIAN AUTHORS are provided in the index, and additionally given in the text where there is extended discussion of an author's work. On the first mention, the titles of German works are given in the original, with the translation in parentheses, normally followed by the date of first publication. Titles of published translations (in italics) are given where the translation is discussed. Quotations from the German are normally provided in the original with a translation in parentheses. Unless otherwise indicated, translations of titles and quotations are by the author of the contribution and intended primarily to convey the meaning of the original.

Key Dates

1918 3 November: Austria signs armistice, ending its participation in the First World War.

11 November: The Emperor Karl formally gives up participation in state affairs (he never formally abdicates).

12 November: The Republic of Deutsch-Österreich (German Austria) is proclaimed, though the name "Deutsch-Österreich" is abandoned in 1919.

1927 15 July: after members of an ex-servicemen's organization are acquitted of killing an old man and a boy by shooting on a Socialist march, a crowd gathers in Vienna to protest against this miscarriage of justice and sets fire to the Palace of Justice; the police open fire on the crowd, and 89 people are killed (including four policemen).

1933 Engelbert Dollfuss, supported as Chancellor by the Christian Social Party and the right-wing paramilitary Heimwehr, suspends Parliament, orders the disbandment of the Socialist militia (the Schutzbund), declares the Austrian Nazi Party illegal, sets up the "non-partisan" Fatherland Front, and begins reorganizing the state along corporate lines inspired partly by Italian fascism.

1934 February: the Civil War begins when units of the now illegal Socialist Schutzbund in Linz forcibly resist a search for weapons by the police, and spreads to Vienna. Though no mass uprising occurs, fighting in industrial centers kills 193 civilians and 128 members of government forces. The Socialists are defeated and outlawed.

25 July: a Nazi putsch in Vienna fails, but Dollfuss is assassinated.

1938 12 March: the German Army enters Austria, which undergoes annexation (*Anschluss*) to the Third Reich.

1943 1 November: the Moscow Declaration by the Allies identifies Austria as the first free country to fall victim to Hitler's policy of aggression.

1945 Austria liberated by the Allies and divided into four zones.

27 April: the provisional Austrian government is recognized by all four occupying powers, restoring the Constitution of 1920.

1955 15 May: the State Treaty restores Austrian sovereignty.

1986 Kurt Waldheim, a distinguished diplomat who was Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1971 to 1981, is elected president of Austria, despite revelations that he had been an officer in a German army unit responsible for war atrocities, and that he had given an inaccurate account of his war service.

2000 Governing coalition formed between the conservative People's Party (ÖVP) under Wolfgang Schüssel and the far-right (anti-immigration, anti-EU) Freedom Party (FPÖ) under Jörg Haider, its chairman since 1986. At the end of the year, however, Haider resigns as Party leader in order to concentrate on his role as Governor of Carinthia, since when the FPÖ's national popularity has severely declined.

Introduction

Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson

"Gibt es eine österreichische Literatur?" — Is there such a thing as Austrian literature? This question, posed for a survey in 1936, was famously answered in the affirmative by Thomas Mann: "Die spezifische Besonderheit der österreichischen Literatur ist zwar nicht leicht zu bestimmen, aber jeder empfindet sie" (The specific particularity of Austrian literature is not easy to define, but everyone perceives it).[1] The vagueness of Mann's response was not designed to lay this question to rest, and it has become a standard point of departure for reflections on Austrian literary identity. In 1976, exile writer Hilde Spiel used Mann's answer as the starting point for a history of postwar Austrian literature, and in 1995 the novelist and poet Julian Schutting asked the question afresh in his contribution to a literary anthology on Austrian literature.[2] The parameters of the question are clear: at issue is the relationship between Austrian literature and the "German literature" that ambiguously refers both to the literature produced by the larger neighbor and to all literature written in the German language.

The question of Austrian literature's identity is of interest not because it promises a stable definition of the characteristics of the country's national literature by means of robustly defensible criteria, but because it casts the spotlight on interactions between the country's literature, its linguistic identity, its cultural constellations, and the political developments that shape a continuously changing public sphere. Moreover, the introduction to this volume ought to provide the reader with some discussion of the question even if it fails to deliver a definitive answer. For the essays in this book cover ground that has already received attention in Ingo R. Stoehr's *German Literature of the Twentieth Century: From Aestheticism to Postmodernism* (2001), the final part of the Camden House History of German Literature.[3] Stoehr examines literature written in the German language in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The present volume complements his wider perspective with a closer look at the continuities and tensions of a literature that has derived strength both from its integration in the community of German speakers, and from its specific national and cultural identity.

Throughout the twentieth century, Austrian literature was caught up in political tensions between the assertion of Austrian difference and

potential assimilation to Germany. Austria has repeatedly had to reconfigure its identity since the loss of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918 — the year that forms the starting point for this volume. The history of Austrian literature in the twentieth century is connected at every turn with the country's political history, and the question of the identity of Austrian literature cannot be considered without the context of political developments. An overview of the country's history between 1918 and 2000 will therefore serve to highlight the issues that shape the debate about literary identity, while at the same time providing historical reference points for the essays on the literature itself.

Austrian History from 1918 to 2000

The year 1918 marks the defeat of Austria-Hungary in the First World War and the dissolution of the empire. There was no single moment of military defeat. Indeed 1918 began encouragingly with negotiations between the Central Powers, dominated by Germany and Austria-Hungary, and Russia, which after the Bolshevik Revolution was prepared to make peace even on the harsh terms dictated by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (signed on 3 March 1918). Despite a further peace treaty with Romania, Austria failed to defeat its other neighboring enemy, Italy, and in September 1918, when the Western Allies forced the German Army to abandon its front-line position, it became clear, with shocking suddenness, that the Central Powers had no hope of victory. The sufferings of soldiers at the front — Austrian troops recorded proportionately heavier losses than those of any other combatant nation — and of civilians at home, increasingly afflicted by starvation and disease, had all been for nothing. On 4 October 1918 Germany and Austria requested an armistice, which Austria signed on 3 November.

The various nationalities that composed the empire had grown increasingly restive as the unpopular war dragged on. Their aspirations to autonomy, or even independence, were fostered by France and Britain, who announced in January 1917 that their victory would mean the liberation of the Slavs, Italians, and Romanians within the empire. After the United States entered the war in April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson on 8 January 1918 issued his peace program consisting of Fourteen Points, of which the tenth ran: "The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development." Late in 1918, as military and political authority broke down, Czech nationalists assumed power in Prague, Hungary proclaimed itself a republic, and the state of Croatia-Slavonia was set up in Zagreb. As the empire fragmented around them, the German speakers in and around Vienna began constructing their own state. On 21 October 1918, they set up a provisional

national assembly of "German Austria" (*Deutsch-Österreich*), with a coalition government formed ten days later. Bowing to the inevitable, the Emperor Karl issued a proclamation on 11 November, declaring: "I renounce any participation in the business of the State."[4] Unlike his German counterpart, he never formally abdicated. (He moved abroad, dying of pneumonia in Madeira at the age of thirty-five in 1922.)

The problems of the new republic included fuzzy boundaries and an uncertainty about its identity. Speakers of Slovenian in Carinthia and of Hungarian in the Burgenland were eventually able to decide their future by plebiscites that assigned these territories to Austria; South Tyrol, however, became part of Italy. Many speakers of German were stranded outside the new state, especially in the area called the Sudetenland, which was annexed by the new state of Czechoslovakia. Moreover, was "German-Austria" still Austria? The moderate Socialist leader Karl Renner, who became its first chancellor, suggested calling it "Ostalpenlande," the Eastern Alpine Lands. The name "German-Austria" was favored especially by Social Democrats, who hoped for union with a Socialist Germany. Such a union was expressly forbidden in the peace treaty of St. Germain, published in July 1919, and to discourage the idea further, the name "German-Austria" was forbidden. Despite the mismatch with its recent imperial past, the new rump state called itself the Republic of Austria.

As in Germany, the new state emerged amid revolutionary upheavals, vividly recounted by Franz Werfel in his novel *Barbara oder die Frömmigkeit* (Barbara or Piety, 1929). The Social Democrats were prevented from swinging far to the left, however, by fear of intervention from the victorious Entente powers, by concern that any extensive nationalization program would simply mean "nationalizing debts,"[5] and by the warning example of the short-lived Soviet Republic in Munich, bloodily suppressed in May 1919, and its Hungarian counterpart under Béla Kun. They were also aware that the provinces were dominated by a politically literate farming class that supported right-wing parties, especially the Christian Socials, and whose political influence counterbalanced that of the industrial workers. The Social Democrats introduced some national reforms, including unemployment benefits and the eight-hour day (both in winter 1918). As the largest party in the Constituent Assembly, but without a majority, they formed a coalition with Christian Social and German nationalist parties under Chancellor Karl Renner (February 1919), but the elections of November 1920 sent the Socialists into opposition, and for the rest of its life the First Republic was governed by a succession of Christian Social chancellors. Outstanding among these was Ignaz Seipel, a Catholic priest and intellectual of working-class origins, formerly professor of moral theology at Vienna University, who held office in 1922–24 and 1926–29. His influence was crucial in gaining Catholic support for the new republic. Seipel firmly opposed Socialism and favored instead the paternalistic and

conservative social policies (*Sozialpolitik*) that were eventually formulated in Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (1931).

The First Republic was divided politically between its solidly conservative provinces and its Socialist capital. From May 1921, the city government had a Social Democratic majority in every election. "Red Vienna" under its mayor Karl Seitz practiced redistributive taxation, with heavy taxes on luxuries such as cars, racehorses, and servants helping to fund outstanding hospitals, schools, and welfare services. The greatest achievement of "Red Vienna" was its subsidized housing. Between 1923 and 1933, 65,000 new apartments were built, including such famous housing schemes as the Karl-Marx-Hof. These projects drew in distinguished architects like Adolf Loos, who from 1921 to 1924 was director of the Gemeindebauamt (Office for the Construction of Settlements). More generally, enthusiastic intellectuals sought to bring art to the people by such institutions as the Social Democratic Agency for Art (Kunststelle) founded by David Josef Bach.

In the provinces, however, an increasingly important role was played by paramilitary organizations, often consisting of ex-soldiers. They originated amid the chaos immediately after the war, to protect local populations and repel attempts at territorial annexation by Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Italy. They were soon united under the name "Heimwehr," and were encouraged by Christian Social governments as a kind of auxiliary police. A Socialist counterpart, the Schutzbund, was formed in 1923.

The young republic managed to survive the threat of civil war and overcome the inflation, which reached its peak in 1922. In that year Seipel persuaded the League of Nations to stabilize the Austrian currency by a loan of 650 million gold crowns. A new unit of currency, the Schilling, was introduced. The mass unemployment of the immediate postwar years was reduced, but it never fell below ten percent of the working population.

A defining moment for the republic was the riot outside the Palace of Justice in Vienna on 15 July 1927. This riot was provoked by a politically motivated miscarriage of justice: some members of a right-wing paramilitary organization, accused of shooting a forty-year-old Socialist and an eight-year-old boy earlier that year during a political confrontation in the village of Schattendorf, near the Hungarian border, were tried and acquitted on 14 July by a slender majority of the jury. On the following morning, protest demonstrations were held in Vienna. The demonstrators were forced by mounted police away from Parliament into the square outside the Palace of Justice. The police fired from inside the building into the crowd, which eventually succeeded in forcing an entrance and setting fire to the building. Ordered by their chief, Johannes Schober (himself following instructions from Chancellor Seipel), to clear the square, the police continued to shoot into the crowd (thus also preventing firemen from saving the building, which burned to the ground). This incident, together

with sporadic disturbances the next day, resulted in ninety deaths and over a thousand injuries. "In the annals of policing in the western world," writes Edward Timms, "there is no massacre of comparable magnitude."[6] Instead of resigning or being put on trial, however, Schober was praised and decorated for maintaining order. Popular confidence in the government was irreparably damaged.

In September 1929 Schober became chancellor, against the background of the renewed world economic crisis. Although Schober actually strengthened democracy, the next few years saw an increase in the power of the paramilitaries. The Heimwehr formed a political party, which denounced parliamentary democracy. In September 1929 they briefly formed a governing coalition with the Christian Socials under Schober's successor, Carl Vaugoin, with the Heimwehr leader Prince Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg as Minister of the Interior, but were sent into opposition by the elections two months later, which produced a Christian Social and Pan-German government.

All this time the growth of National Socialism in Germany was being watched from Austria, with dread by some and sympathy by others. From 1926 on the small Austrian Nazi Party, previously divided and ineffectual, was placed under the direct control of Hitler. As the crises of the republic deepened, Nazis increased their support: in 1930 they obtained only 27,000 votes in the civic elections in Vienna, but by 1932 they received 201,000 votes.

Austria seemed to be becoming ungovernable. In May 1932, the conservative Catholic Engelbert Dollfuss, a politician in Seipel's mold, became chancellor. In March 1933, prompted by a breakdown in parliamentary procedure, Dollfuss suspended Parliament and the Constitutional Court. The Socialist paramilitary, the Schutzbund, was disbanded. Dollfuss set up the Fatherland Front (Vaterländische Front) as an organization to unite the population and supersede political parties and trade unions. At its first mass rally on 11 September 1933, Dollfuss proclaimed the corporatist reorganization of the state, putting forward a conservative and Catholic definition of Austrian identity, deploring the decline of feudal society, the rise of liberalism, soulless materialism, and unrestrained capitalism, and promising to roll back liberal democracy.[7]

In thus creating the *Ständestaat* (corporate state), Dollfuss was fulfilling his own convictions and carrying out a long-established Catholic and anti-Socialist program; he was also following instructions from Mussolini, who wished Austrian society to be remodeled along lines similar to Italian fascism, as his price for supporting Austria's independence from Germany. Dollfuss firmly opposed Nazism. When the Bavarian Minister of Justice, who had recently called for the Austrian government to be overthrown, arrived in Austria for a lecture tour in May 1933, the Deputy Police Chief met his plane and informed him that his visit was unwelcome. The Austrian

Nazis stepped up a campaign of terror, while Hitler attempted to cripple Austria's tourist industry by imposing a tax of one thousand marks on German visitors to Austria. By April 1934 some 50,000 Nazis had been convicted of political or criminal offenses in Austria. Many of them were confined in a special camp near Wiener Neustadt.

The Left, however, suspected that Dollfuss's prime aim was to crush Social Democracy, and responded with armed insurrection. Raids on illegal Schutzbund arms depots in Linz prompted the Social Democratic Party leadership to proclaim a general strike on 12 February 1934. There was fighting in the Viennese suburbs, Linz, Graz, and various industrial centers, but the Social Democrats were disorganized and poorly armed, and the general strike did not happen. Despite desperate resistance in housing estates such as the Karl-Marx-Hof, the insurrectionaries were defeated within two days by the army supported by the police and the Heimwehr. Some two hundred Socialists were killed, as were 138 of the government forces. Social Democracy was crushed, its party suppressed, the trade unions dissolved, and the leaders of the Left were exiled. In retrospect, Dollfuss's decision to destroy Socialism for fear of its revolutionary potential, instead of allying himself with moderate Socialists against the internal and external Nazi threat, looks like a fatal error. Indeed, as a contemporary journalist asserted, it was "political suicide" — even if it did secure support from Mussolini (with whom Dollfuss had conferred only four days before the Civil War).[8]

Austria's incorporation into Greater Germany could not be long postponed. On 25 July 1934 the Nazis attempted to seize power in Austria by a putsch. Nazis attacked the Chancellery on the Ballhausplatz in Vienna during a cabinet meeting and shot Dollfuss, leaving him to bleed to death. Thanks to the army and the Heimwehr, the putsch was defeated. For a while, Hitler adopted more conciliatory tactics. But Italy, committed to imperialist war in Africa and under increasing German influence, could no longer guarantee Austria's independence. On 12 February 1938, Hitler summoned Dollfuss's successor as chancellor, Kurt Schuschnigg, to his Bavarian mountain residence at Berchtesgaden. He subjected Schuschnigg to a long tirade and demanded that Nazi activity should be freely permitted in Austria and the Austrian Nazi Arthur Seyss-Inquart appointed Minister of the Interior. Back home, Schuschnigg tried to challenge Hitler by calling a referendum on union (*Anschluss*) with Germany, but Hitler forestalled him by ordering the German Army to enter Austria on the day planned for the referendum, 13 March. Mussolini promised Hitler his support. Schuschnigg resigned as chancellor. At midnight on 11 March, after a day of rioting by triumphant Nazis, Seyss-Inquart was appointed as chancellor. Although Seyss-Inquart tried to stop the invasion, it went ahead, and on the afternoon of 12 March Hitler entered Austria at his birthplace, Braunau am Inn, whence he proceeded to Linz along roads lined by cheering

crowds. On 13 March Austria was formally annexed to the German Reich. The next day Hitler arrived in Vienna, where the Archbishop, Cardinal Innitzer, had ordered church bells to be rung and swastika banners hung from church steeples (for which Innitzer was soon reprimanded by Pope Pius XI). On March 15, Hitler addressed an enthusiastic crowd, a quarter of a million strong, on the Heldenplatz, assuring them that Austria, now referred to as the Ostmark, would be the Reich's bulwark against the storms coming from the (Communist) East.[9]

Immediately after the *Anschluss*, many outrages were committed against Austrian Jews. Jewish women were ordered to scrub pro-Schuschnigg slogans off sidewalks with their bare hands or with toothbrushes; Jewish actresses from the Theater in der Josefstadt were compelled to clean the toilets of the Nazi Sturmabteilung (SA); Jews were insulted, robbed, had their apartments looted and their automobiles confiscated.[10] In March 1938 alone, 220 Jews committed suicide. Within three months, Jews had been removed from Austrian public life. Some 128,500 managed to emigrate. The pogrom of 9 November 1938, known as "Kristallnacht" (Night of Broken Glass), was at least as savage in Austria as in Germany: all but one of the twenty-four synagogues and seventy prayer houses in Vienna were burned down, and over four thousand Jewish-owned shops were looted. The subsequent treatment of "the Jewish problem in Austria" was initially entrusted to the notorious Adolf Eichmann, who proved so efficient at arranging the deportation of Jews that in October 1939 he was promoted to take charge of Jewish deportation for the entire German Reich. Austrians were disproportionately prominent in conducting the Holocaust. Odilo Globocnik, who was Gauleiter (District Chief) of Vienna in 1938, later supervised the death camps at Treblinka, Sobibor, and Belzec. In the death camps, Austrians formed forty percent of the staff. Austrians also made up some thirteen percent of the Schutzstaffel, or SS, although their share in the population of the Reich was only eight percent. There was an Austrian concentration camp at Mauthausen, near Linz, where prisoners were worked to death within a few months. By the end of the war, 65,459 Austrian Jews had been killed by various means.

After the war, Austria's first imperative was survival. It was divided into four zones of occupation, with Vienna split into four sectors. Its impoverishment was made worse by the French and Russian troops' policy of living off the land, and by the Russians' confiscation of machinery and raw materials to rebuild the yet more devastated Soviet economy. Austria benefited, however, from the European Recovery Program, also known as the Marshall Plan after the US Secretary of State George Marshall. By 1949, industrial production was higher than before the war. The elections of November 1945 brought a narrow victory for the conservative Austrian People's Party (Österreichische Volkspartei; ÖVP) over the Socialist Party

of Austria (Sozialistische Partei Österreichs, later Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs, SPÖ), with the Communists far behind. Fears that Austria would follow other Eastern European states into the Communist bloc were finally dispelled when the Russians withdrew in 1955. The Russians were probably responding to the lack of popular support and also anxious, after Stalin's death, to display a change of policy from expansionism to coexistence. They cooperated with the other powers in signing the Austrian State Treaty, after years of negotiation, on 15 May 1955 in the Belvedere Palace. In the treaty, Austria pledged to become a neutral country, like Switzerland.

To heal the scars left by the conflicts of the 1930s, especially by the Civil War, postwar Austria was governed from 1945 to 1966 by the Grand Coalition of the two major parties, the conservative Austrian People's Party and the Socialist Party of Austria. Political offices and civil service posts, right down to schoolteaching and local administration, were systematically divided between adherents of the two parties in a system known as "Proporz." In 1970, after a move toward the political center had increased support for the SPÖ, Bruno Kreisky became the first Social Democratic chancellor, continuing in office until 1983, when the SPÖ lost its majority. The next three years saw an incongruous coalition government between the SPÖ and the small right-wing Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ), led by Kreisky's former minister of education Fred Sinowatz. Another Grand Coalition between the SPÖ and the ÖVP was established in 1987 and endured, under Chancellor Franz Vranitzky and (from 1997) his successor Viktor Klima, until October 1999.

The question of Austrian complicity in the Third Reich was for a long time avoided. It was carefully glossed over in the Moscow Declaration, issued by the Allies on 1 November 1943, which described Austria as "the first free country to fall victim to Hitlerite aggression," although it also warned that Austria must accept responsibility for taking part in the war on the side of Nazi Germany.[11] The "responsibility clause" was duly quoted in the Declaration of Austrian Independence (27 April 1945), but was described as only a "postscript," and it did not appear at all in the Austrian State Treaty (1955), which established the Second Republic. This elision matched the dominance in postwar Austria of an interlinked series of narratives that tended, as the historian Robert Knight has argued, to gloss over the darker side of recent Austrian history by stressing what Austria had learned from the Nazi past, its narrow avoidance of Communism, and its progress toward sovereignty and neutrality.[12]

However, it presently became apparent that many Austrians had learned little from the past, and that denazification had been perfunctory compared with the corresponding processes in East and West Germany. The Nazi past reasserted itself in a series of scandals. In 1965 Taras Borodajkewycz, a professor at the Vienna Commercial Academy (Wiener

Handelsakademie), was obliged to take early retirement because in his lectures he had repeatedly expressed sympathy with Nazism. Ten years later Simon Wiesenthal, director of the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna, produced evidence that during the war Friedrich Peter, leader of the FPÖ, had served as an SS officer in a unit that had carried out mass murders. Surprisingly, Kreisky — an unimpeachable liberal of Jewish descent — defended Peter, and the basis of Wiesenthal's charges remained controversial. The FPÖ again made headlines in 1985 when its Defense Minister, Friedhelm Frischenschlager, went to the airport to welcome in person Walter Reder, a former SS officer who had just been released from over thirty years' imprisonment in Italy for war crimes.

None of these incidents, however, attracted remotely so much attention as the Waldheim affair. Kurt Waldheim, a distinguished diplomat who had been Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1972 to 1981, stood for the presidency of Austria in 1986. It emerged that in his recently published autobiography he had misrepresented his war service, claiming that he had been recovering from wounds in Vienna at a time when he had in fact been serving with the SA stormtroopers (paramilitary units of the Nazi Party) in the Balkans. Suspicions that Waldheim might have been concealing war crimes were never confirmed. An investigatory commission reported that he had passed on intelligence about suitable targets for military "cleansing actions." The campaign against him, spearheaded by the World Jewish Congress, placed him under a cloud internationally; he was declared *persona non grata* in many countries, including the USA. In Austria, however, it probably increased his popularity, for he was elected president with an impressive fifty-four percent of the vote, and continued in office until 1992.

Austria's next dose of negative publicity came with the electoral surprise of October 1999. The national elections confirmed the importance of the FPÖ under the youthful and athletic Jörg Haider, who had been worryingly outspoken since the late 1980s. Himself the son of committed Nazi Party members, he had publicly praised Hitler's employment policies and congratulated SS veterans on their decency.[13] Haider opposed the stagnation of the "Proporz" system and advocated nationalist policies that were hostile to immigration and to Austrian membership in the European Union (Austria joined the EU in 1995). In 2000 the FPÖ won twenty-seven percent of the national vote. After months of slow negotiations, in February 2000 it formed a governing coalition with the ÖVP under Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel. The rise to power of an unacceptably illiberal far-right party caused international alarm, which was only slightly alleviated when Haider resigned from his party's leadership in 2000 to concentrate on his role as governor of Carinthia, for he was thought still to be controlling his party from behind the scenes. The FPÖ's style of government and broken promises also left many of their former voters disillusioned. In the elections held on

24 November 2002, they suffered the biggest loss of votes in Austria's history, going down from twenty-seven percent to only ten percent. Most of these losses went to the more moderate ÖVP, whose share of the vote rose from twenty-six percent to forty-two percent, the highest level in decades. In 2005, Haider founded a new party, the Bündnis Zukunft Österreichs (Alliance for the Future of Austria), and was expelled from the FPÖ. His career is perhaps most noteworthy for his success in uniting against him writers, artists, and intellectuals, foremost among them the courageously outspoken novelist and playwright Elfriede Jelinek, who in 2004 became the first Austrian writer (unless one counts Elias Canetti) to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.

It is, then, hardly surprising that in recent decades the exposure of pretense, the investigation of the past, and the reconstruction of memory should have been of increasing concern to Austrian intellectuals. A substantial body of critical historical research now exists revealing long-term continuities in Austrian anti-Semitism and traditions of intolerance toward Slav nations.[14] Alongside this may be set the work of writers since 1945 who have looked behind the schmaltzy image projected by Austrian tourism to reveal social and ecological decay in Alpine landscapes (notably Thomas Bernhard in *Frost*, 1963, and Jelinek in *Gier*, Greed, 2000) and the continuing presence of pro-Nazi intolerance amid large sectors of the population (Bernhard again in his longest novel, *Auslöschung*, Extinction, 1986, and in his provocative drama *Heldenplatz*, 1988). Austrian literature is interwoven with Austrian history, often providing trenchant critiques of government policies and evolving hard-hitting narratives of resistance.

A Distinct National Literature?

Austria's independent national status established in 1945 secured not only its political and geographical shape, but also its cultural identity, although connections with Germany remain strong. The two countries share the same written language, the name of which can subsume literature by Austrian writers indistinguishably into the larger body of "German literature." Such assimilation is supported by the fact that the most successful Austrian writers have participated fully in the literary life of Germany and have published their work with major German publishers: to take only a few examples, Hugo von Hofmannsthal published mainly with Fischer, Peter Handke and Friederike Mayröcker with Suhrkamp, and Ingeborg Bachmann with Piper. Moreover, there is a shared literary heritage: like their German colleagues, Austrian writers in the twentieth century looked to Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Friedrich Schiller and Friedrich Hölderlin as their "classics," notwithstanding special affinities with Austrian writers such as Franz Grillparzer, Johann Nestroy, or Adalbert Stifter.

Nevertheless, the focus on Austrian literature yields distinctive perspectives. Unlike Berlin, Vienna retained its central national role throughout the twentieth century, and continued to be shaped by its illustrious history as the capital of an empire encompassing many cultures and languages. Although it underwent heavy bombing during the Second World War, Vienna was not ravaged like its German counterpart, and it has seen a more gradual transition into the modern era. There is a productive tension in Austria between the cosmopolitan center and the provincial periphery, while regional identities are well developed with their own cultural centers in cities like Klagenfurt, Graz, and Salzburg. These centers are by no means parochial: long before the current boom in literary festivals, Klagenfurt developed a major literary event in 1977 focused on the award of the prestigious Ingeborg-Bachmann-Preis. The Tage der deutschsprachigen Literatur (Days of Literature in German) now attract writers from Germany and Switzerland as well as homegrown Austrian talent, providing a whole series of prizes as well as a course for young writers, and giving authors intensive media coverage across German-language television and radio channels. Many rural areas of Austria saw virtually nothing of the two wars, and there is a strong sense of a continuous Austrian tradition that was indeed deliberately fostered in the postwar period in order to eliminate National Socialism from the nation's cultural memory.

In the postwar era, the difference between the literature written in Austria and the literature written in the Federal Republic of Germany is one of distinctive constellations rather than clearly defined boundaries. Where writers in Germany have negotiated narratives of cultural discontinuity and supposed new beginnings while also facing the issues of political and ideological division, Austrian writers have contended with the pressures of traditionalism. Yet the conservative literary establishment has provided a context in which avant-garde movements have flourished and literary provocations have gained a high public profile — most prominently those by Bernhard and Jelinek.

A different linguistic heritage also plays an important part in giving Austrian literature a distinct identity. The disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire left Austria with only vestigial ethnic minorities — notably the Slovenes — to recall its rich linguistic past. Yet even with respect to the German language, there are differences by comparison with Germany. Dialect and regional linguistic variants have higher status in Austria than in Germany, and can be subsumed under the broad category of "Austrian" if the aim is to identify a national language distinct from "German." As with the issue of cultural identity, the question of Austrian linguistic identity is one that is based less on empirical facts than on cultural needs.

The changing concepts of identity emerge in comments by writers responding to the cultural and political environment. A prominent voice

between the wars was that of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, himself an icon of Austrian culture.[15] In an essay entitled "Österreich im Spiegel seiner Literatur" (Austria in the Mirror of its Literature), published in 1916, he posits that Austrians experience an emotional dualism: in terms of nationality, they identify with Austria, while culturally, they feel that they belong to a greater German whole, a German "Gesamtwesen."[16] He finds a synthesis in the destiny of a Greater Germany when he celebrates Austrians as the supreme embodiment of the German spirit and the German past; in that context there is need for a practical, radical, and immediate "Austriazismus" (Austriacism, 349). By 1927, Hofmannsthal's focus has changed: in a lecture delivered in Munich, "Das Schrifttum als geistiger Raum der Nation" (Literature as the Spiritual Space of the Nation), Austrian identity is subsumed in the German nation to the point of invisibility as Hofmannsthal evokes the unity of spiritual culture and politics within a new German reality in which Austrians and Germans can participate as a united nation.[17]

In the light of the atrocities perpetrated in the name of the Greater Germany, postwar Austrian writers were generally keen to follow the lead of the politicians and assume separation from the discredited neighbor. While contact and integration with the larger German language community have generally been vital to literary success, asserting difference has served as a strategy to avoid association with Germany's National Socialist past, and as a means of establishing independence and indeed superiority in the face of the more prominent literary culture. Ingeborg Bachmann, for example, availed herself of all the publishing and publicity opportunities offered by the German authors' association Gruppe 47, and argued in 1955 on pragmatic grounds that Austrian writers should be considered part of German literature, since "provincial" and "regional" literary products had no chance of long-term survival.[18] Yet a visit to Auschwitz in 1973 prompted her to assert difference with respect to the very factor that most obviously unites the countries — language. Alluding to Bernard Shaw's much-cited distinction between the British and the Americans, she comments: "Wir haben sehr viele Fehler gemeinsam, [. . .] nur eins haben wir nicht gemeinsam — und das ist die Sprache. Sprache heißt aber auch: Unser Denken ist anders, weil unsere Sprache anders ist" (We have many failings in common, [. . .] but there's one thing we don't have in common — and that's our language. However, language also means: our thinking is different, because our language is different, 132). The comment is not just revealing with respect to the question of political and cultural identity — it also indicates the high status of language in the self-perception of Austrian writers. While Bachmann here draws on cognitive linguistics to assert that "Austrian" writing differs from "German" writing even when Austrian writers use standard German, other writers such as the avant-garde poets H. C. Artmann and Ernst Jandl enriched the common German medium

with a specifically Austrian idiom, bringing dialect into the domain of mainstream written German literature.

Following the end of the Cold War, the specter of National Socialism has receded as a factor contributing to national identity, but there has been a strengthening of regional identities across Europe. Tensions between cultures are no less evident today, as writers and cultural historians address issues of national identity in the face of far-right nationalist tendencies, multiculturalism, globalization, and the impact of American culture. For some, Austria's integration in the supranational context of a united Europe has justified a new confidence in its relation to Germany, as the country has gained a new "regional" identity on a par with that of other European cultures. Confidence in the specificity of Austrian culture underpins the historiographical projects undertaken by Herbert Zeman, who set out in the late 1970s to chart the course and identity of Austrian literature — producing the first Austrian literary history since Josef Nadler's history of 1948.[19] Zeman is not troubled about the existence or definition of his subject: for him, the distinct identity of Austrian literature is founded in an incontrovertible cultural truth, and it is in the service of that truth that he seeks to uncover Austria's enduring literary achievements.[20] His concern is to define the boundaries of the Austrian "Literaturraum" (literary territory) and gather proof of a distinctive consciousness of Austria as an entity — an "Österreichbewußtsein."[21] Writing from within Austria, he sees his ambitious historiographical project as a specifically Austrian contribution to the defense of regional identities in Europe.

The historiographical project presented with this volume is altogether more tentative and exploratory. When Mann affirmed the special quality of Austrian literature in 1936, he made little attempt to find criteria that might serve to secure it: subsequent generations have sought to identify an empirical basis for the "feeling" that Austrian literature has a distinct identity, and Zeman is currently seeking to provide scientifically robust evidence that will close the question once and for all. This volume will not add to these attempts. With its title it opts for the fuzzy boundaries of "Austrian literature" as opposed to the solution favored by Austrian literary historians, who generally define their subject as "literature written in Austria"; the choice of title is intended to signal the absence of clear-cut answers.[22] The editors did not prescribe boundaries that would definitively include or exclude specific writers based on cultural heritage, nationality at time of birth, or place of residence at the time of writing. Each essay will pursue connections on its own terms and be as inclusive as its author deems appropriate. Similarly, the temporal limits that mark out the subject of individual essays will be handled flexibly.

The essays follow a broadly chronological order, although the volume does not aim to provide a historical survey. Rather, it seeks to offer a network of approaches to twentieth-century Austrian literature in which the

authors trace developments in the major literary genres, illuminate aspects of popular culture, investigate the role of cultural institutions, and consider the literary responses of writers to the most controversial issues of their time: the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire in 1918, National Socialism and the Holocaust in the middle of the century, and multiculturalism and migration at the turn of the millennium. The political and social caesura of National Socialism and the Second World War is reflected in Austrian culture, and most of the topics discussed are therefore dealt with in two essays, treating the prewar and postwar periods separately. Yet the discourse at the center of this volume is an uninterrupted one, and tradition provides important continuities that are as controversial as they are fruitful in the postwar period, so a number of essays bridge the divide in order to explore the ways in which the past is continually reconfigured in response to a fast-changing present. A number of essays on the major literary genres — two each on drama and prose fiction, one on poetry — focus on the writers and works that constitute the mainstream tradition of Austrian literature, giving a sense of their literary quality, highlighting experiments, and pursuing complex processes of reception. The specifically literary focus of these essays is complemented in other essays by a wide range of different perspectives that relate literature to its cultural, political, and institutional context. It should thereby emerge that throughout the twentieth century, Austrian literature is both highly self-reflexive and intensely responsive to other discourses, engaging with philosophical, linguistic, social, and political issues in ways that are seldom straightforward, often shocking, and at best linguistically vibrant and intensely thought-provoking.

In the changing fortunes of twentieth-century Austrian literature, drama occupied a particularly prominent place because of its dependence on public institutions and its contested role in forging the nation's cultural identity. It could build on a rich nineteenth-century tradition that ranged from the tragedies of Franz Grillparzer, which appealed to audiences across the German-speaking countries, to the *Volksstücke* by Ferdinand Raimund and Johann Nestroy, which were written in dialect and intended for a Viennese audience. In her chapter on Austrian drama in the first half of the twentieth century, Judith Beniston shows how this varied tradition is taken further. Going beyond such familiar names as Arthur Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, Werfel, and Ödön von Horváth, she re-evaluates the work of Karl Schönherr, draws attention to Austria's contribution to Expressionist drama, and examines the efforts made, from various political directions, to express and explore the concept of Austrian identity. Juliane Vogel shows how theater was used in the postwar years to restore Austria's self-image in the spirit of the Habsburg era, while from the mid 1950s, new types of drama emerged that sought to counteract such myths of continuity. They do so less by overt political statement than by an experimental critique of

language and by inventive use of the body as a performative medium, subverting the established order and foregrounding the violence of patriarchal structures. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the "new *Volksstück*," highlighting how postwar Austrian drama has built productively on tradition, using the sociocritical potential of this genre to give a grotesque view of the disintegration of urban and rural communities in the Alpine republic.

Austria has brought forth an impressive array of internationally established novelists in the twentieth century, and many others who are barely known outside the German-speaking world. Ritchie Robertson finds Austria's contribution to interwar prose fiction to lie not only in the "novel of totality" pioneered by Robert Musil and Hermann Broch, but also in the internationally-minded humanism of Joseph Roth and Stefan Zweig. He suggests a positive re-evaluation of the *Heimatroman*, whose association with conservative politics has caused critics to overlook the complexity and even the emancipatory thrust of some examples of the genre, and draws attention to the range of fiction by women, often anti-Nazi exiles, which has until recently been ignored. This chapter also looks ahead by discussing the work of Heimito von Doderer, who began writing in the 1920s, though his best-known novels appeared in the 1950s, and by considering how two novelists publishing after 1945, George Saiko and Albert Drach, offer searching retrospectives on the interwar period. In his chapter on prose fiction after 1945, Jonathan Long distinguishes two tendencies in the postwar years: conservative, stylistically traditional novels that support restorative values, and novels that draw on modernist techniques to confront the immediate Austrian past critically; the latter have generally been more successful in establishing themselves in the canon of literature in German. Like the *Volksstück*, the *Heimatroman* has continued to be a productive genre in the postwar era, with writers subverting its sentimental parochialism in order to articulate forceful critiques of contemporary society. The chapter discusses a wide range of novelists including a number of lesser-known women writers and Jewish writers, while looking in detail at the novels of Bernhard, Handke, Jelinek, and Bachmann, who are generally acknowledged to be among the most important postwar writers in German.

Poetry is treated in a single essay in order to trace the varied ways in which tradition contributed to a continuous dialogue beyond the ruptures of the war and provided an important stimulus for the rise of avant-garde movements in the postwar era. The chapter is permissive in its interpretation of "Austrian" literature, going beyond the borders established in 1918 to include poets such as Rainer Maria Rilke and Paul Celan, who were Austrian by cultural origin or nationality, but who lived and worked in other countries. In considering the poetic response to National Socialism, the chapter focuses on the complex role of the German poetic tradition both in the work of the Viennese Nazi poet Josef Weinheber and in

the work of two Prague exile poets, Franz Baermann Steiner and H. G. Adler. The purpose of this juxtaposition is not to elide political and moral difference, but to demonstrate the diachronic and synchronic connectedness of a discourse that is all too often separated by means of political and geographical criteria. With respect to the postwar era, the chapter highlights the importance of Ludwig Wittgenstein's theory of "language games," which inspired ludic experiments with the linguistic elements of poetry and with dialect poetry. It concludes with a brief look at the trend toward diversification at the turn of the millennium, with the re-emergence of the "learned" poet, and the rise of performative, popular forms such as poetry slam.

Traditionally, Austrian culture is marked by a sharp distinction between "high" culture and "popular" or "entertainment" culture, although this is perhaps less extreme than in Germany, with the *Volksstück* and dialect poetry being examples of forms that refute such a division. The increasing importance of Anglo-American literature and the enhanced status of mass culture are tending to foster more integration at the turn of the millennium, and have also encouraged broader perspectives of historical study. Two essays focusing on prewar and postwar popular culture investigate how literature interacts with other media, in particular film, while also conveying the cultural context of the major literary genres. Janet Stewart traces the rise of mass commercial culture and evokes the vibrancy of cabaret and film in the prewar period. She explores the tension between culture and politics by showing how aspects of popular culture were mobilized first by the Social Democratic government of Vienna under the First Republic and then by the Catholic and conservative policies of the *Ständestaat*, while finally being subjected to totalitarian control under the Third Reich. This perspective indicates the powerful economic role of popular culture and highlights its significance as a political force — a force that intellectuals were slow to appreciate. Joseph McVeigh focuses on radio, television, film, and music in the Second Republic to trace the changing cultural role of these popular media. He considers the impact of the Allied radio networks on occupied Austria, discussing the clash between American concern with advocating responsiveness to public taste, and the aim of Austrian politicians to educate the public and provide it with "moral protection" through censorship. In all the media, he sees a tension between the popularity of foreign, especially American, media output, and a domestic policy of combating cultural "Überfremdung" (foreign domination). It is a tension he still finds evident at the turn of the millennium, especially in music, suggesting that popular culture in Austria is in no danger of losing touch with traditional forms.

The role of literature in the public arena cannot be fully appreciated without reference to the institutions that determine its dissemination, and two essays therefore investigate the means of publication and the institutional

context of literature before and after the war. Murray Hall identifies the traditional importance of German publishing houses for Austrian literature, tracing this to a highly restrictive approach to literature in the Habsburg Monarchy: a multitude of regulations, the prevalence of censorship, and lack of copyright protection in Austria meant that throughout the nineteenth century, Austrian writers often preferred to publish with German publishers. Hall depicts the interwar years as a period of rapid change, with more favorable conditions encouraging the emergence of new publishing houses in Austria — though many were short-lived, and Germany remained the dominant market. He investigates the role of literary institutions in a period that was marked by political conflict, and shows how these institutions contributed to the debate about what literature is and how it should project itself in the public sphere. Anthony Bushell charts the political context of literature after the ravages of the war and traces the emergence of institutions that were to determine the publishing landscape of the postwar era. His essay investigates the divergence between those who sought to restore Austria on the basis of an earlier, uncontaminated era, and those who urged their contemporaries to build a new cultural world that would leave the past behind while addressing the questions it so urgently raised. He traces the role of exile writers in the emergence of the new institutions, but highlights the unwelcoming approach toward exile writers within Austria and the fact that most did not return, which meant a severe impoverishment of the literary life of the Second Republic. Literary journals are shown to be important for the postwar decades, as they provided authors with a medium of publication, although the conservative taste of most editors meant that the young avant-garde found it difficult to gain a foothold in the literary world. Bushell indicates the powerful influence of state-run institutions on literature, a notable example being the Vienna Burgtheater. More generally, the antagonism between state-sponsored and alternative literatures emerges as a distinctive feature of Austria's literary landscape.

Two essays focus specifically on the impact exerted by the all-encompassing force of National Socialism on Austrian literature. Andrew Barker traces the interaction between politics and literature in the years between 1927 and 1956. His essay takes as its starting point the year of the riot outside the Vienna Palace of Justice, which marked the end of the First Republic, and as its endpoint the year when Doderer published his novel *Die Dämonen* (The Demons, 1956), in which he pays tribute to the victims of 1927. Going beyond the traditional caesuras of the *Anschluss* in 1938 and the inauguration of the Second Republic in 1955, Bushell addresses the controversial question of writers' involvement with the conservatism of the *Ständestaat* and in some cases with Nazism, showing how more critical and left-wing writers were not just forced into exile but had their work recognized only gradually in a postwar Austria where conservative

critics were still arbiters of taste. Dagmar Lorenz explores similar territory from a different angle by focusing on responses to National Socialism and the Holocaust, themes that came to the fore relatively late in Austria. In her essay, too, the quintessentially Austrian figure of Doderer is prominent, whose massive and engrossing Viennese novels display his talent while imperfectly concealing the right-wing sympathies that had led him in the 1930s to join the National Socialist Party. Lorenz's essay demonstrates the continuing importance of the past for Austrian writers, while also teasing out the ways in which politically aware writers engage with the changing threats to personal and social freedom in a society where new communication technologies are determining the individual's participation.

In the concluding essay, Allyson Fiddler examines responses in narrative prose, drama, poetry, and film to the shifts in a society where minority cultures are increasingly claiming a voice. While the end of the Habsburg era had reduced the country's identity to that of a German-speaking culture, and Nazism had driven out Jewish citizens, the assumptions of cultural homogeneity that characterized the postwar era have repeatedly been called into question as other ethnic groups have asserted themselves, and a defense of Austrian values became associated once again with nationalism and racism in the controversies around Jörg Haider. Fiddler's essay breaks new ground in showing how German-speaking Austrian writers, writers from indigenous ethnic minorities, and immigrant writers foreground processes of cultural interaction at the turn of the millennium. Fiddler considers works with black protagonists, written by white writers, in which skin color is used to expose Austrian cultural tolerance as part of the Habsburg myth, and she discusses films and installations that focus on xenophobic tendencies among Austrians. Documentary modes and techniques of reality TV reveal both subtle and overt mechanisms of cultural exclusion and highlight the nationalist prejudices that surround issues such as the expulsion of foreign workers and asylum seekers. Works by immigrant authors from Bosnia-Herzegovina are examined alongside works by the established writer Barbara Frischmuth, in which she treats Turkish-Austrian relationships. By demonstrating how Austrian literature has become a discursive space for the exploration of highly complex processes of cultural interaction, Fiddler also refutes the view that the emergence of literature in German by Austrians originating from non-German-speaking cultures weakens the identity of Austrian literature. She demonstrates rather that writers are reflecting current changes in Austrian society and challenging the German-language majority to expand its conception of Austrian culture.

The authors of the essays in this volume are from a variety of countries, and they are writing for an international readership. The purpose of the volume is to complement histories of German literature that subsume Austria into a larger whole by giving a more localized sense of the concerns and connections that were significant in literature written by Austrian writers

and in Austria between the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the turn of the millennium. For there is no doubt that a focus on Austrian literature yields a specific sense of tradition as well as a special constellation of concerns and tensions. Yet the volume also differs from those stridently Austrian ventures that seek to press literary history into the service of cultural politics. It assumes that the question whether there is a distinct Austrian literature is most fruitful where it remains open-ended, exploring connections rather than defining essences and boundaries.

Notes

[1] Thomas Mann, "['Gibt es eine österreichische Literatur?']," in T. Mann, *Gesammelte Werke*, 12 vols. (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1960–74), vol. 10, 919.

[2] Hilde Spiel, "Die österreichische Literatur nach 1945. Eine Einführung," in *Die zeitgenössische Literatur Österreichs*, ed. H. Spiel, Kindlers Literaturgeschichte der Gegenwart. Autoren — Werke — Themen — Tendenzen seit 1945 (Zurich and Munich: Kindler, 1976), 11–127; here: 11. Julian Schutting, "Gibt es eine österreichische Literatur?" in *Literatur über Literatur: Eine österreichische Anthologie*, ed. Petra Nachbaur and Sigurd Paul Scheichl (Graz: Styria, 1995), 25–29.

[3] Ingo R. Stoehr, *German Literature of the Twentieth Century: From Aestheticism to Postmodernism*, vol. 10 of *The Camden House History of German Literature* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2001).

[4] Quoted from C. A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire 1790–1918* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 833.

[5] Martin Kitchen, *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 12.

[6] Edward Timms, *Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist*, vol. 2*: The Post-War Crisis and the Rise of the Swastika* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2005), 336.

[7] "Wir wollen das neue Österreich" in *Dollfuß an Österreich: Eines Mannes Wort und Ziel*, ed. by Hofrat Edmund Weber (Vienna: Reinhold, 1935), 31.

[8] See G. E. R. Gedye, *Fallen Bastions: The Central European Tragedy* (London: Gollancz, 1939), 91. Gedye's eyewitness account of events from 15 July 1927 to the *Anschluss* in March 1938 remains invaluable.

[9] This follows the detailed narrative in Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936–45: Nemesis* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), 70–82.

[10] Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London: U of North Carolina P, 1992), 280.

[11] See Judith Beniston, "Introduction," *Austrian Studies* 11 (2003), 1–13; here: 2.

[12] Robert Knight, "Narratives in Post-War Austrian Historiography," in *Austria 1945–1955: Studies in Political and Cultural Re-emergence*, ed. by Anthony Bushell (Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1996), 11–36.

[13] See Hella Pick, *Guilty Victim: Austria from the Holocaust to Haider* (New York and London: Tauris, 2000), 183.

[14] For a conspectus, see *Das große Tabu: Österreichs Umgang mit seiner Vergangenheit*, ed. by Erika Weinzierl and Anton Pelinka ([Vienna]: Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1987).

[15] His essays serve as a point of reference for both Spiel, "Die österreichische Literatur," 14–16, and Schutting, "Gibt es eine österreichische Literatur?," 25.

[16] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Österreich im Spiegel seiner Dichtung," in Hofmannsthal, *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben*, ed. by Herbert Steiner (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer, and Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1945–59), *Prosa III*, 333–49; here: 345.

[17] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Das Schrifttum als geistiger Raum der Nation," in Hofmannsthal, *Gesammelte Werke*, *Prosa IV*, 390–413; here: 413.

[18] Ingeborg Bachmann, *"Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden." Gespräche und Interviews*, ed. by Christine Koschel and Inge von Weidenbaum (Munich and Zurich: Piper, 1983), 12.

[19] Josef Nadler, *Literaturgeschichte Österreichs*, Linz 1948, [2]1952.

[20] Herbert Zeman, "Vorwort," in *Literaturgeschichte Österreichs von den Anfängen im Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by H. Zeman (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1996), vii–viii.

[21] Zeman delivers a systematic definition of the specific characteristics of Austrian literature as part of a mammoth seven-volume project: "Die Geschichte des Begriffs einer Literatur Österreichs. Literaturraum und Österreichbewußtsein," in *Geschichte der Literatur in Österreich von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Herbert Zeman, vols. 1- (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1994–), vol. 7, 639–84.

[22] See Josef Nadler, *Literaturgeschichte Österreichs* (Linz: Österreichischer Verlag für Belletristik und Wissenschaft, 1948). See also the titles of Zeman's volumes, cited above, who uses geographical and political boundaries to define his subject as well as seeking to identify special characteristics. We are grateful to Sigurd Paul Scheichl for giving us access to his lecture notes entitled "Abriss der Literaturgeschichte Österreichs" (University of Innsbruck, winter semester 2002/2003), in which he discusses the issue of terminology: he rejects use of the term "österreichische Literatur" not out of any nationalist or regionalist impulse, but because of its implied essentialism, and its problematic implication that Austrian literature differs in essence from that of the Federal Republic of Germany. While at first sight the designation "Literary history of Austria" is straightforward, it loses its clear boundaries if the coverage extends back beyond 1945. Even after 1945, both terms have often been used synonymously. This is evident from the volume edited by Spiel (see note 2, above), which specifies "literature of Austria" in its title but refers in the title of the introductory essay to "Austrian literature." Since literature is a cultural phenomenon, it is not unequivocally defined by political and geographical boundaries, as the importance of the German publishing context for Austrian writers demonstrates.

1: Drama in Austria, 1918–45

Judith Beniston

Political and Institutional Factors

The political upheavals of 1918–19 — the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, the declaration of the First Austrian Republic and the associated threat of Bolshevik Revolution — were accompanied not only by economic crisis and grave material privations but also by widespread sociocultural and psychological disturbance. Austrian identity became problematic for many: deprived of the cohesion provided by the dynastic factor, the rump Republic had little to unite its largely conservative and rural Alpine provinces with an over-large, now geographically peripheral capital city that had long been famed for its cosmopolitanism and for the modernist culture of its predominantly Jewish intellectual elite. As elsewhere in Europe, the aftermath of war saw a destabilization of traditional authority structures and of relations between the sexes, reflected in a relaxation of public morality and of censorship regulations. In the theater, where censorship was immediately reduced and then abolished altogether in 1926, this destabilization allowed many taboos to be broken but also called forth hostile reactions that were all too frequently underpinned by anti-Semitic prejudice. Furthermore, as the rival political camps grew ever more implacable in their opposition to each other, dramatists found it increasingly difficult to stand aloof from the competing ideologies.

The politics of the newly democratic republic had major institutional repercussions for the Austrian, and especially Viennese, theater. Most directly affected were the former court theaters (the Burgtheater and Opera House), which came under state control and as such became the subject of ongoing economic and ideological wrangling between the state government, which was dominated from 1920 on by the Christian Social Party, and, from 1919 until 1934, a Social Democratic municipal authority. While the perceived representative function of the Burgtheater as Austria's national stage meant that its future, which remained uncertain until 1922, was the subject of intense public debate, it became commonplace for private theaters in the capital to change management with disturbing frequency, experience periods of closure (sometimes permanent) due to bankruptcy

or be converted into cinemas.[1] This tendency was particularly marked during the early postwar years, which saw not only a shortage of material resources, rampant inflation, and the resultant impoverishment of the middle classes but also, and illogically, an expansion of the entertainment sector that was untenable given a decrease in the overall population of Vienna and ever greater competition from film, radio, and spectator sports.

The situation was rendered even more complex, both economically and ideologically, by the ambitious (and ambiguous) cultural politics of "Red Vienna." On the one hand, the introduction in 1918 of an entertainment tax (*Lustbarkeitsabgabe*) exacerbated the financial difficulties, even though drama, opera, and classical music were taxed at far lower levels than, for example, cinema, wrestling, and horse-racing. On the other hand, the creation of *Kunststellen*, cut-price ticket agencies making theater, opera, and classical music available to people who could not otherwise afford such entertainments, offered a lifeline to the theater industry by increasing the potential audience. However, this support came at an ideological price as two of these agencies, the Kunststelle der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterzentrale (Cultural Agency of the Social Democratic Workers' Central Office) and the Kunststelle für christliche Volksbildung (Cultural Agency for the Promotion of Christian [i.e. non-Jewish] Community), functioned as the cultural arm of the major political parties (the Social Democrats and Christian Socials respectively) and aimed to influence both the cultural tastes of party members and, by force of numbers, the repertoire of the city's professional theaters. Until around 1926, the Social Democratic organization, and its president David Josef Bach, enjoyed considerable success, and many contemporary commentators note that, collectively, the *Kunststellen* brought about a marked change in the social composition of the theater-going public.

This opening up of the theater to new and more democratic influences did not, however, extend to women dramatists. Around the turn of the century, and coinciding with the beginnings of the women's movement, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Else Bernstein (writing under the pseudonym Ernst Rosmer) and Marie Eugenie delle Grazie had all made tentative inroads into this traditionally male-dominated institution, and by the 1920s women were prominent in other areas of Austrian literature and intellectual life — for example, Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti, Paula Grogger, Vicki Baum, Helene Deutsch, and Rosa Mayreder. Between the wars, Austrian women continued to write drama, but no female playwright is conventionally present in literary histories of the First Republic, and analysis of the repertoire reveals that only a tiny number of plays written by women were performed in the major theaters.[2] In this respect, Vienna was more conservative than Berlin, where the politically leftist and artistically innovative circles around Bertolt Brecht and Erwin Piscator included not only Marieluise Fleisser and Elisabeth Hauptmann but also Anna Gmeyner

(1902–91), an Austrian who worked as Piscator's *Dramaturgin* for several years, and Galician-born Communist Berta Lask (1878–1967), both of whom will be discussed below.

War and Its Aftermath

During the First World War it had been observed repeatedly that Viennese audiences remained shamefully escapist in their predilection for comedy and operetta; but recent events did find a variety of responses in the work of Austrian writers, with the appearance of several powerful anti-war dramas. Alongside *Antigone* (1917) by Walter Hasenclever, *Jeremias* (Jeremiah, 1917) by Stefan Zweig (1881–1942) dresses up the modern conflict in mythical garb in order to plead for universal brotherhood, while the Euripedes adaptation by Franz Werfel (1890–1945), *Die Troerinnen* (The Trojan Women), completed in 1914 and staged in Vienna in 1920, uses similar techniques to dignify the sufferings of the defeated populace. Austria's most remarkable literary reckoning with the First World War and the mentalities it fostered was, however, produced by Karl Kraus (1874–1936) in his vast satirical panorama, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (The Last Days of Mankind). Written largely between 1915 and 1917, it was serialized in Kraus's magazine *Die Fackel* (The Torch) in 1919, with the full revised text appearing in 1922. Structured as a five-act tragedy with prologue and epilogue, and comprising more than two hundred scenes of varying length, it has little traditional dramatic development and conveys only a limited sense of the progress of the war. Rather, the dominant principle is that of dramatic montage. As Kraus observes in his introduction, tragic events are played out by a cast more suited to operetta; consequently, cabaret, puppet theater, and carnivalesque moments repeatedly intrude. Another formal model on which he draws is that of "cosmic" drama, of a *theatrum mundi* observed, and ultimately judged, from an extraterrestrial standpoint. Whereas the traditional Christian view is that all human activity has value and meaning if considered aright, for Kraus war is senseless, however one views it, and demonstrates only the moral bankruptcy of society. Rather than expressing satisfaction with the world, as the Lord was to do at the close of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Das Salzburger große Welttheater* (The Salzburg Great Theater of the World, 1922), *Die letzten Tage* ends with a Voice from Above summoning a meteor shower to destroy the earth.

Historians have often asserted that the First World War was the first major conflict in which the media exerted substantial influence. Kraus, for whom the journalistic degradation of language had long been a prime satirical target, perceived from the outset that the military conflict was accompanied by a war of words: much of the text (even, according to

Kraus, the most improbable sections) is derived from documentary sources, and the vast majority of the named characters are based on real people. War correspondents, politicians, and creative writers turned propagandists are all condemned out of their own mouths. That such influences penetrated public discourse is suggested as each act opens with a Viennese street scene in which newspaper sellers tout their wares and as Kraus uses his ear for dialect to eavesdrop on the language and opinions of representative passers-by — juxtaposing his observations with those of newspaper reporters sampling the public mood in more partial fashion.

Carrying on its original frontispiece the notorious photograph of the execution of Cesare Battisti — an Irredentist whom the Austrians hanged for treason in 1916 — *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* is a pioneering intermedial work. Several scenes are inspired by photographs, some of which, such as a line of nurses in gas masks looking like giant insects, were included in the published text. Propaganda posters provide a frequent topic of conversation for the Grumbler ("Der Nörgler") and the Optimist ("Der Optimist"), whose commentaries punctuate the play in a manner that anticipates Brechtian techniques, while cinematic projections are called for at several points. Although individual scenes are intensely theatrical — in both auditory and visual terms — *Die letzten Tage* has rarely been staged and Kraus himself deemed it fit only for a Martian theater ("Marstheater"). The sole exception to this lack of production, during his lifetime, was the Epilogue, "Die letzte Nacht" (The Final Night), which was performed in Vienna as a charity event in 1923. Here, the text shifts into verse, as Expressionist drama is prone to do at its climax; humanity is reduced to grotesque stylizations — Dying Soldier, Male Gas Mask, Female Gas Mask, Hussar of the "Skull-and-Crossbones" Regiment, the Lord of the Hyenas — and dialogue gives way to monologue and spoken oratorio.

While *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* affords glimpses of how conditions on the home front deteriorated as the war dragged on, a grim picture of Vienna in its aftermath is offered by two of Austria's most important but neglected writers of the early twentieth century, Karl Schönherr (1867–1943) and Max Mell (1882–1971), each of whom published in a Viennese newspaper a dramatic poem that gives a voice to typical victims of war and poverty — women scavenging for food and fuel, mothers whose children are starving or dead, discharged officers waiting to die from their wounds, amputees, the homeless, the hungry and the unemployed. In *Das Wiener Kripperl von 1919* (A Viennese Nativity Play for 1919), excerpts from which appeared in the *Wiener Mittag* on Christmas Eve of that year, Mell offers these victims the solace of Christianity, as their number 52 tram takes them on an unexpected trip to Bethlehem, with God in the driving seat and Archangel Gabriel collecting tickets. In Schönherr's *Die Ballade vom Untergehen* (Ballad of Ruin), published in the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* on 16 January 1921, there is no such comfort; the impression is rather of a