



KATYA KRYLOVA

# WALKING THROUGH HISTORY

TOPOGRAPHY AND IDENTITY IN THE  
WORKS OF INGEBORG BACHMANN  
AND THOMAS BERNHARD

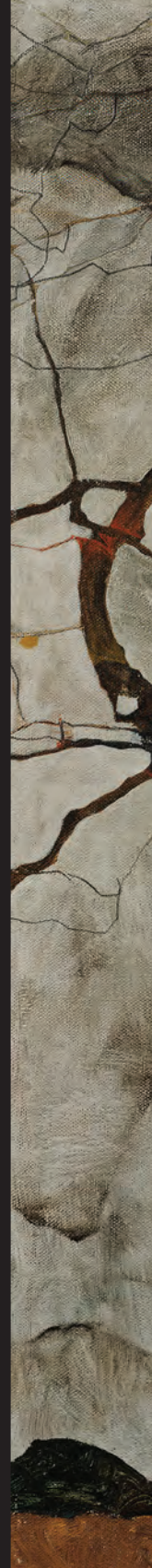
Peter Lang

The post-war landscape of Europe is unthinkable without the voices of the Austrian writers Ingeborg Bachmann (1926–1973) and Thomas Bernhard (1931–1989). Their work, coming after the devastation wrought by the Second World War and the Holocaust, is rooted in a specifically Austrian context of repression of this traumatic historical legacy. In post-war Austria, discourse on the recent past may have been dominated by silence, but the legacy of this past was all too apparent in the country's ruined and speedily reconstructed cityscapes.

This book investigates Bachmann's and Bernhard's treatment of two fundamental aspects of the Austrian historical legacy: the trauma of the war and the desire to return to an ideal homeland, known as 'Haus Österreich'. Following a methodology based on Freud and Benjamin, this comparative study demonstrates that the confrontation with Austria's troubled history occurs through the protagonists' ambivalent encounter with the landscape or cityscape that they inhabit, travel or return to. The book demonstrates the centrality of topography on both thematic and structural levels in the authors' prose works, as a mode of confronting the past and making sense of the present.

This book was the winner of the 2011 Peter Lang Young Scholars Competition in German Studies.

Katya Krylova is a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow in the Department of German Studies, University of Nottingham. She studied German and Italian at Churchill College, University of Cambridge, where she completed her PhD in German Literature in 2011. She was a recipient of the 2010 Sylvia Naish Research Student Lecture prize in a competition held by the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies (IGRS), University of London. From 2010 to 2012, she worked as a researcher at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for the History and Theory of Biography in Vienna. Her research interests include post-war Austrian and German literature, the literature of Austrian modernism, psychoanalytic and critical theory, memory studies, and contemporary Austrian literature and film.



# Walking Through History



KATYA KRYLOVA

# WALKING THROUGH HISTORY

Topography and Identity in the Works of  
Ingeborg Bachmann and Thomas Bernhard



PETER LANG

Oxford • Bern • Berlin • Bruxelles • Frankfurt am Main • New York • Wien

Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek  
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;  
detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

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

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Krylova, Katya.

Walking through history : topography and identity in the works of Ingeborg Bachmann and  
Thomas Bernhard / Katya Krylova.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-3-0343-0845-8 (alk. paper)

1. Bachmann, Ingeborg, 1926-1973--Criticism and interpretation. 2. Bernhard, Thomas--  
Criticism and interpretation. 3. Geography in literature. I. Title.

PT2603.A147Z76526 2012

838'.91409--dc23

2012037082

Cover image: Egon Schiele, *Herbstbaum in bewegter Luft* (*Autumn Tree in Turbulent Air*),  
1912. Oil and soft pencil on canvas. Image courtesy of Leopold Museum, Vienna

ISBN 978-3-0343-0845-8 (print)

ISBN 978-3-0353-0392-6 (eBook)

Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, Bern 2013  
Hochfeldstrasse 32, CH-3012 Bern, Switzerland  
[info@peterlang.com](mailto:info@peterlang.com), [www.peterlang.com](http://www.peterlang.com), [www.peterlang.net](http://www.peterlang.net)

All rights reserved.

All parts of this publication are protected by copyright.

Any utilisation outside the strict limits of the copyright law, without the  
permission of the publisher, is forbidden and liable to prosecution.

This applies in particular to reproductions, translations, microfilming,  
and storage and processing in electronic retrieval systems.

Printed in Germany

*For my parents*



# Contents

List of figures	ix
List of abbreviations	xi
Acknowledgements	xiii
Introduction: Trauma and topography	i
CHAPTER 1	
Topography and the search for origin in Bachmann's 'Drei Wege zum See'	37
CHAPTER 2	
Ruined landscape and familial decline in Bernhard's <i>Ungenach</i>	61
CHAPTER 3	
Grounding and ruination: Bachmann's <i>Das Buch Franza</i>	83
CHAPTER 4	
Topographical subjection: Bernhard's <i>Frost</i>	111
CHAPTER 5	
Where one must suffer the past: Bachmann's <i>Malina</i>	137
CHAPTER 6	
Eradication of place: Bernhard's <i>Auslöschung</i>	185

viii

Conclusion: Habsburg nostalgia after Waldheim 249

Bibliography 259

Index 269

## List of figures

- 1 Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*, 1514. Copperplate engraving. Albertina, Vienna Inv. DG1930/1525 © Albertina, Vienna. Reproduced with permission.
- 2 Pieter Brueghel the Elder, *Jagers in de Sneeuw* (*The Hunters in the Snow*), 1565. Oil on wood panel. Image courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.
- 3 The Ungargasse in Vienna's third district.  
House number six in the Ungargasse (the Ich and Malina's home). Photographs by the author.
- 4 Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (Museum of Military History), Vienna. Photograph by the author.
- 5 Wiener Riesenrad (Giant Ferris Wheel), Vienna. Photograph by the author.
- 6 *Steine der Erinnerung* (*Stones of Remembrance*) on the Mariahilfer Strasse, Vienna. Photograph by the author.
- 7 *Schlüssel gegen das Vergessen* (*Keys Against Forgetting*) memorial, Julia Schulz (2008), Servitengasse, Vienna. Photograph by the author.



## List of abbreviations

### Works by Ingeborg Bachmann

- BF *Das Buch Franza* in *‘Todesarten’-Projekt: Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Monika Albrecht and Dirk Göttsche, 4 vols (Munich: Piper, 1995), II: *Das Buch Franza*
- DWS *Drei Wege zum See* in *Werke*, ed. Christine Koschel, Inge von Weidenbaum and Clemens Münster, 4 vols (Munich: Piper 1978), II: *Erzählungen*
- GuI *Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden: Gespräche und Interviews*, ed. Christine Koschel and Inge von Weidenbaum (Munich: Piper, 1983)
- IB *Werke*, ed. Christine Koschel, Inge von Weidenbaum and Clemens Münster, 4 vols (Munich: Piper, 1978)
- KS *Kritische Schriften*, ed. Monika Albrecht and Dirk Göttsche (Munich: Piper, 2005)
- M *Malina* in *Werke*, ed. Christine Koschel, Inge von Weidenbaum and Clemens Münster, 4 vols (Munich: Piper 1978), III: *Todesarten: Malina und unvollendete Romane*
- TP *‘Todesarten’-Projekt: Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Monika Albrecht and Dirk Göttsche, 4 vols (Munich: Piper, 1995)

### Works by Thomas Bernhard

- A *Auslöschung* in *Werke*, ed. Martin Huber et al., 22 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003–), IX: *Auslöschung*, ed. Hans Höller (2009)
- EB *Eine Begegnung: Gespräche mit Krista Fleischmann*, pb edn (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006)

- F *Frost* in *Werke*, ed. Martin Huber et al., 22 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003–), I: *Frost*, ed. Martin Huber and Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler (2003)
- H *Heldenplatz*, pb edn (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995)
- TB *Werke*, ed. Martin Huber et al., 22 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003–)
- U *Ungenach* in *Werke*, ed. Martin Huber et al., 22 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003–), XII: *Erzählungen II: Ungenach, Watten, Geben*, ed. Hans Höller and Manfred Mittermayer (2006)

## Works by other authors

- JR Joseph Roth, *Werke*, ed. Fritz Hackert and Klaus Westermann, 6 vols (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1989–91)
- SFGW Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Anna Freud et al., 17 vols (London: Imago Publishing, 1940–52)
- SFSA Sigmund Freud, *Studienausgabe*, ed. Alexander Mitscherlich, Angela Richards and James Strachey, 11 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1972)
- WB Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 12 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972–80)

References will be given to volume and page number.

## Archives

- NÖN Nachlass von Ingeborg Bachmann, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Handschriften- und Inkunabelsammlung, Vienna

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

## Acknowledgements

The research presented in this book has its origins in a doctoral thesis completed at Churchill College, Cambridge, in 2011. My deepest thanks go to my supervisor, Professor Andrew Webber, for his invaluable insight, attentive criticism, and inspiration that have guided this project from its beginnings. I am greatly indebted to Dr Michael Minden for his support and engagement with my project. I would also like to thank Dr Lucia Ruprecht and Professor Jonathan Long, as well as my graduate colleagues within the Department of German and Dutch, University of Cambridge. I wish to thank my colleagues at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for the History and Theory of Biography in Vienna, and in particular, Professor Wilhelm Hemecker. Finally I would like to thank Dr Laurel Plapp at Peter Lang Oxford for expertly overseeing this publication through to its completion, as well as the distinguished Editorial Board at Peter Lang for the honour of selecting this manuscript as the winner of the 2011 *Peter Lang Young Scholars Competition in German Studies*.

The research presented in this monograph was made possible by the generous support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), to whom I am most grateful. This project was also greatly enriched by a three-month AHRC-funded research visit to the Department of German Studies, University of Vienna. I would like to thank Professor Robert Pichl for his time and advice throughout the course of my time at the University of Vienna, and for facilitating my archival research with Ingeborg Bachmann's literary estate at the Austrian National Library. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ingeborg Bachmann's family and estate executors, for allowing me to consult Bachmann's published and unpublished papers. I am indebted to the late Brigitte Mersich for her knowledgeable assistance and advice as director of the Bachmann archive at the Austrian National Library. The Literaturhaus Wien and the Österreichische Mediathek also provided invaluable material for my project. My understanding of

Bernhard's work was also greatly enhanced at this time by a study visit to the Thomas Bernhard Archive, Gmunden, and Bernhard Haus, Ohlsdorf. I am grateful to Dr Martin Huber and Dr Peter Fabjan for this opportunity.

I wish to thank all my friends for their support. Finally, words cannot express the extent of my gratitude to my parents for their unconditional support and for being a constant source of strength and encouragement.

Versions of parts of the book have appeared in the following publications: 'Melancholy, topography and the search for origin in Ingeborg Bachmann's *Drei Wege zum See*', *German Life and Letters*, 62/2 April 2009, 157–73; 'A city where one must suffer the past: Vienna and Austrian identity in Ingeborg Bachmann's *Malina*' (abridged version of 2010 *Sylvia Naish Research Student Lecture*), *Friends of Germanic Studies* newsletter, Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies, University of London (November 2010), 16–19; "Eine den Menschen zerzausende Landschaft": Psychotopography and the Alpine landscape in Thomas Bernhard's *Frost*', *Austrian Studies* 18, special issue on 'Austria and the Alps', September 2011, 74–88; "Ein Wahnsinniger, der die Fakultäten vermischt": Interdisciplinarity and Ingeborg Bachmann's *Das Buch Franza*', in Jens Elze et al., eds, *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Philologie, Friedrich Schlegel Graduiertenschule für literaturwissenschaftliche Studien, Freie Universität Berlin* (online conference proceedings), *Germanistik im Netz*: October 2011, 163–70; 'Thomas Bernhards *Auslöschung*: Der Umgang mit dem Herkunfts-komplex', in Johann Georg Lughofer, ed., *Thomas Bernhard: Gesellschaftliche und politische Bedeutung der Literatur* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2012), 189–200.

## Introduction: Trauma and topography

Es gibt kein Land Österreich, das hat es nie gegeben. Und was wir heute so nennen, trägt seinen Namen, weil es in irgendwelchen Verträgen so beschlossen wurde. Aber der wirkliche Name war immer 'Haus Österreich'. Ich komme aus dieser Welt, obwohl ich geboren wurde, als Österreich schon nicht mehr existierte. Doch unterirdische Querverbindungen gelten für mich immer noch, und die geistige Formation hat mir dieses Land, das keines ist, gegeben.<sup>1</sup>

— INGEORG BACHMANN

... und wenn man einmal sein Herz an die Heimat gehängt hat, genügt das ja. Da kann man es ja verschimmeln lassen an der Wand, an der Mauer, wo es hängt. Ich hab' es ein für allemal da drangehängt, an das Haus Österreich. Da hängt's jetzt, muß man halt abwarten. Manchmal tropft noch ein Tropferl Blut heraus.<sup>2</sup>

— THOMAS BERNHARD

The epigraphs here are worth some attention at the beginning of this study. Taken from interviews given by the authors who will provide the focus of the following investigation, they display a strong affinity with the two

- 1 [There is no country of Austria. That never existed. That which we call Austria today goes by that name because it was decided that way in some treaty or other. But its real name was always 'House of Austria'. I come from this world, although I was born when Austria no longer existed. But subterranean interconnections have their significance and my spiritual formation was given to me by this country, which is not a country], Gul, 79.
- 2 [and once one has hung one's heart on one's homeland that is enough. One can then let it become mildewed on the wall upon which it hangs. I have hung it there once and for all on the House of Austria. There it hangs now, one must only wait. Sometimes a drop of blood flows from it still], EB, 118.

authors' conception of Austrian identity, one that may be termed both phylogenetic and psychotopographic. Both Bachmann's and Bernhard's conception of the *Haus Österreich* [House of Austria], a historical term designating the Habsburg dynasty as well as the territory that made up the Habsburg Empire, is of something no longer actually existing but that remains psychically preserved in the ground, in subterranean space (giving rise to 'unterirdische Querverbindungen' [subterranean interconnections] in Bachmann's case), or in the buildings that serve as melancholic reminders of this past era. Although the *Haus Österreich*, in its territorial sense, may have been consigned to historical maps in 1918, a lasting melancholic attachment to 'dieses Land, das keines ist' [this country, which is not a country], an attachment to an ideal of homeland or nationhood pervades both of the authors' work. And this melancholy is deeply intertwined with the experience of space and place, through which attitudes regarding personal and collective identity are elaborated.

The *Domus Austriae*, vanishing from the concrete topographical map, moves instead into the more intangible inner scene of the psyche. It is a scene where that which has disappeared and become submerged, the 'country, which is not a country', may be constructed and reconstructed through the interplay of topography and imagination, through the intersections (*Querverbindungen*) of ground, and that which lies below or, in the case of architecture, above ground. These planes of above and below constitute the different facets of the *Haus Österreich*, ranging from the subterranean plane under ground, to the architectural plane above. Bernhard's analogy of hanging a heart upon the wall of the House of Austria should be understood in both a metaphorical and a concrete sense, as an attachment to the vestiges of the Habsburg past which remain preserved in buildings and architecture. Frequently in Bernhard's work, architecture provides a concrete mode in which accommodation within more abstract ideas of homeland and nationhood may be sought. The bleeding heart image, meanwhile, attests to the state of psychic and physical subjection to a space or place that results from such investment in a national architecture.

As the above-cited quotations illustrate, both Bachmann and Bernhard see themselves as heirs to the Habsburg legacy, as descendants of the *Haus Österreich*, phylogenetically affiliated to its literary traditions in particular,

their allegiance being to a 'Welt von Gestern' [world of yesterday] in contrast to a pathological 'Heute' [today] to which the protagonist of Bachmann's best-known prose work, *Malina*, has such a troubled relationship. The melancholy and anachronistic attachment to an intangible ideal of homeland and nationhood that the Habsburg Empire provided persists in Bachmann's and Bernhard's work and is rendered all the more potent through a bitter disappointment with contemporary Austria and more recent historical developments (to which Bernhard's bleeding heart image and Bachmann's reference to the Austrian State Treaty allude). Confronted with the historical caesura of the Second World War and the Holocaust, the melancholy attachment to a bygone era characterizing Bachmann's and Bernhard's works, effected above all through the experience of space and place, constitutes a reflective, critical nostalgia. Their affiliation is less with territorial conceptions of Austrian identity than with a feeling of home, encapsulated in the domesticity of the term 'Haus Österreich', which for many, following the Second World War, vanished forever.

## Trauma and historical legacy

The German-speaking literary landscape in the post-war era is unthinkable without the figures of Ingeborg Bachmann and Thomas Bernhard. Their unique voices in different genres gained both of these very Austrian writers international renown, while their reception in their homeland ranged from 'established outsider' in the case of Bernhard,<sup>3</sup> to 'gefallene Lyrikerin' [fallen poet] in the case of Bachmann.<sup>4</sup> Bernhard was a prolific and exuber-

3 This is how Dagmar Lorenz characterizes Thomas Bernhard's reception in Austria in 'The Established Outsider: Thomas Bernhard' in *A Companion to the Works of Thomas Bernhard*, ed. Matthias Konzett (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002), 29–51.

4 This is how Marcel Reich-Ranicki famously characterized Bachmann in his review of her *Simultan* collection in 'Am liebsten beim Friseur', *Die Zeit*, Hamburg, 29 September 1972.

ant writer, a self-styled *Übertreibungskünstler* [artist of exaggeration] and ‘connoisseur of spite’, with the performative gesture permeating both his prose and dramatic works.<sup>5</sup> Bachmann’s work meanwhile is pervaded by an ethical quest for authentic and truthful representation of the pathologies of post-war society and an oscillation between a search for a utopia and the awareness of its destruction. The gender of the two authors also impacted strongly on their reception; Bachmann navigated a difficult path as a female intellectual and writer in the largely male-dominated post-war German literary field, a confrontation whose traces resonate in Bachmann’s exploration of gender relations in her work. Bernhard was vilified at times as a ‘Nestbeschmutzer’ [nest-dirtier] but subsequently occupied the place of a renowned *enfant terrible*, enjoying his status as arch-satirist in a long (and largely male) Austrian tradition, with his plays eagerly awaited for the controversy they would inevitably cause.<sup>6</sup>

While these differences in style, approach and biography between the two authors are undeniable, there is more that unites than separates them, as Bachmann’s draft essay on Bernhard of 1969 (‘Watten und andere Prosa (über Thomas Bernhard)/Ein Versuch’ [Playing Watten and Other Prose (about Thomas Bernhard)/An Essay]) demonstrates. It is most likely that the essay draft was composed following their first meeting in December 1968.<sup>7</sup> Her analysis of Bernhard’s work as being characterized by a ‘Radikalität, die im Denken liegt und bis zum Äußersten [geht]’ [a radicality of thought that [goes] to the extreme] (KS, 455) may just as easily be applied to her own writing. Indeed, the quality of ‘going to extremes’, a fascination for outlying paths that Bachmann defines as a hallmark of Bernhard’s work, should be understood topographically as well as metaphorically. Further, Bachmann’s categorization of Bernhard’s work as being ‘über die letzten

5 See Stephen D. Dowden, *Understanding Thomas Bernhard* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 2.

6 See Dagmar Lorenz, ‘The Established Outsider: Thomas Bernhard’, 29.

7 Hilde Spiel recalls in her memoirs *Welche Welt ist meine Welt?* that the two authors met each other following the award of the *Großer Österreichischer Staatspreis* to Ingeborg Bachmann, as quoted in: Gregor Hens ‘Poetologie einer Dreiecksbeziehung: zu Thomas Bernhards Erzählung *Ja*’, *Colloquia Germanica*, 33/3 (2000), 255–74.

Dinge, über die Misere des Menschen, nicht über das Miserable, sondern die Verstörung, in der sich jeder befindet' [about last things, about the plight of mankind, not about misery as such, but rather the devastation in which everyone finds themselves] (KS, 454) not only anticipates the title of the last chapter of her novel *Malina* ('Von letzten Dingen' [Of Last Things]) but also ascribes the same existential concerns that dominated her entire oeuvre, but particularly the *Todesarten-Projekt*, to her contemporary Bernhard.

The categorization of 'last things' positions Bernhard's, as well as her own work, as concerned with legacies of various kinds, and constructing one's own counter-testaments to the inheritances that have been bequeathed to one without consent. Indeed, many of the points Bachmann picks out in her perceptive and only posthumously published essay on Bernhard's early works, an essay that Bernhard most likely knew and valued,<sup>8</sup> recognize a kindred spirit in terms of her own narrative project. There is also a remarkable convergence when it comes to examining one of the central preoccupations of their work, the intersections and interactions between historical legacy, topography and identity.

Both Bachmann and Bernhard were adolescents at the time of the Second World War, too young to be actively involved yet old enough to perceive that which was happening around them. For Bachmann, Hitler's march into Klagenfurt in April 1938, following the annexation of Austria, constituted an *Urtrauma* [primary trauma], the beginning of (traumatic) memory and loss of innocence. In a well-known interview with Gerda Bödefeld in December 1971, Bachmann asserted:

Es hat einen bestimmten Moment gegeben, der hat meine Kindheit zertrümmert. Der Einmarsch von Hitlers Truppen in Klagenfurt. Es war etwas so Entsetzliches, daß mit diesem Tag meine Erinnerung anfängt: durch einen zu frühen Schmerz, wie ich ihn in dieser Stärke vielleicht später überhaupt nie mehr hatte.

8 In Hans Joachim Schyle's review of Bernhard's *Auslöschung* he speculates that the figure of Maria, which clearly corresponds to the biographical figure of Bachmann, constitutes Bernhard's response to Bachmann's unequivocal praise of his work, *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* (1 October 1986).

[There was one particular moment that destroyed my childhood. Hitler's troops marching into Klagenfurt. It was something so awful that my memory begins with this day: with a pain that came much too early, and possibly one that I never had again in such severity.] (GuI, 111)

The centrality of this confrontation with war to her work has repeatedly been noted.<sup>9</sup> The formative experience of this period is further underscored by the recently published *Kriegstagebuch*, written by the 18-year-old Bachmann in the closing months and end of the war. It charts the young Bachmann's experience of wartime bombing raids, relief at the arrival of peace-time, and her confrontation with Nazi ideology.<sup>10</sup> Bernhard's poignant description of the bombing of his home-town of Salzburg in his autobiography is framed in the same terms of an *Urtrauma*, to which much of his subsequent work can be traced. *Die Ursache [An Indication of the Cause]* (1975) programmatically ascribes the origin and cause of his subsequent development to his confrontation with the brutality and destruction wrought by total war, as well as its continuing effects in the post-war era.

On 13 March 1938 Austria became the Ostmark, divided up into seven Gaue, and came under the administration of the Third Reich. Although there were dissenting voices, the majority of Austrians supported the *Anschluss* actively or passively, fought alongside their Reich German counterparts in the Wehrmacht (with approximately 247,000 Austrian casualties),<sup>11</sup> benefited from large-scale investment and modernization of their industries, and were very well represented in all echelons of the Third Reich administration. One sphere where Austrians were particularly strongly represented was in the execution of the Holocaust, furnishing the Third Reich with half of its concentration camp guards, despite Austria

9 See, for example, Karen Achberger, *Understanding Ingeborg Bachmann* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995): 'one theme runs throughout Bachmann's oeuvre: the constant state of war', 5.

10 Ingeborg Bachmann, *Kriegstagebuch: Mit Briefen von Jack Hamesh an Ingeborg Bachmann*, ed. Hans Höller (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010).

11 See Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 243.

having just one-tenth of Germany's pre-war population.<sup>12</sup> Anti-Jewish policies in Vienna often became a model for policies in the Third Reich as a whole, with Adolf Eichmann heading the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna, where prospective refugees were stripped of most of their money and belongings before being allowed to emigrate. Jewish firms and businesses were 'Aryanized', thousands of Jews lost their jobs and Jewish children were excluded from 'Aryan' schools. From 1941, deportations of Jews from Vienna began to Poland. Before the *Anschluss*, Vienna had been home to over 200,000 Jews; by the end of the war there were only 5,700.<sup>13</sup>

Despite these irrefutable signs of Austrian participation in the Nazi war machine, Austria was able to emerge in the post-war era without being held to account for its collusion in and execution of Nazi crimes. The allies' interest in reasserting Austrian independence as a way to undermine Austrian loyalty to Germany led to the section in the Moscow Declaration of 30 October 1943, which declared Austria 'the first victim of Hitlerite aggression' (primarily as a means to stir up Austrian resistance), while the stipulated clause concerning 'Austrian responsibility for her participation in World War II' was eventually omitted by the Allies in the Austrian State Treaty of May 1955. 'Hitler's first victim' became the Second Republic's *Lebenslüge* [grand delusion], born out of the marriage of convenience of Western Allies seeking to gain Austrian support in the emerging Cold War and the Austrian desire to avoid being held to account for the crimes committed during the Nazi era.

In a draft of a *Vörrede* [opening speech] to *Das Buch Franza*, Bachmann draws the reader's attention to her concern with the period 'danach' [there-after], with the displaced forms in which 'das Quantum Verbrechen, der latente Mord' [the quantum of crime, the latent murder] continues to manifest itself, following the ostensible caesura of 1945.<sup>14</sup> Both Bernhard's and Bachmann's work in a certain sense comes 'danach', traumatically *after*

12 See Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Pimlico, 2007), 808.

13 See Beller, *A Concise History of Austria*, 236.

14 Bachmann in a draft of an opening speech to a public reading from *Das Buch Franza*, BF, 17.

the devastation wrought by the Second World War and the Holocaust, and their writing is rooted in a specifically Austrian context of repression and denial of this traumatic historical legacy. Trauma is a concept that has been subject to wide-ranging and varied interpretations.<sup>15</sup> Some aspects of trauma are commonly agreed upon, by those working both within psychoanalytic and clinical psychiatric frameworks. It is primarily characterized by its unassimilability, by its resistance to being integrated into the framework of normal human experience. Traumatic memories are ‘the unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences’, with the emphasis on the *overwhelming*, something that goes over and above the subject’s known experience and is thereby experienced as a shock or wounding.<sup>16</sup>

Central to the idea of trauma is its belatedness. The traumatic event, incapable of being assimilated, returns to haunt the subject in the mode of flashbacks, repetitions, hallucinations, dreams, intrusive thoughts or behaviour. Cathy Caruth argues that there is an ‘inherent latency’ within the traumatic experience itself, and that traumatic events assume their force precisely in their temporal and spatial delay. In Freud’s earliest studies on hysteria with Breuer, he conceived the traumatic affect as being converted into corporeal symptoms ostensibly far removed from it, but that on further investigation reveal themselves to be inextricably linked to the repressed traumata. Freud saw trauma as characterized by the organizing principle of *Entstellung*, distortion and displacement. In his speculative work about the origins of monotheistic religion, *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion [Moses and Monotheism]* (1938), traumatic experience follows the pattern of ‘frühes Trauma – Abwehr – Latenz – Ausbruch der neurotischen Erkrankung – teilweise Wiederkehr des Verdrängten’ (SFSA 3, 528) [early trauma – resistance – latency – eruption of the neurotic illness – partial return of the repressed]. Freud’s account reads transportation,

15 See *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) for examples of the wide-ranging applications of trauma theory.

16 See Bessel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, ‘The Intrusive Past: the Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma’, in Cathy Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 158–83.

or displacement to another location (such as Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt), as necessarily connected with a repression or negation. My explorations in the following sections will be particularly concerned with such questions of temporal and spatial belatedness, and the transmission of trauma in displaced forms across time and space.

Bachmann and Bernhard repeatedly thematize the belatedness that may be said to characterize the post-war era in Austria. Their work is concerned with the period when what Bachmann terms 'die erste Nachkriegszeit' [the first post-war period] (M, 261) was ostensibly over, when the rubble was cleared, and Second Republic Austria could proceed to fashion a new identity for itself as an Alpine Republic. This was a valorization of traditional and conservative *Heimat* culture, a privileging of the avowed regenerating moral purity of the Alpine landscape, allegedly untainted by the atrocities perpetrated and destruction wrought in the nation's capital and cities. This was the image of Austria that was marketed to the outside world through its burgeoning tourism industry, which became the prime vehicle of economic growth after the war. It went hand-in-hand with a promotion of Austria as a land of culture, abetted by a nostalgia for the Habsburg era that was also very conservative in its approach, ignoring the critical voices of Viennese modernism in favour of more traditional, patriotic voices. Both Bachmann and Bernhard experienced a strong sense of unease at this speedy whitewashing and precarious patching-up of a problematic historical legacy that remained all the more present despite its persistent veiling. The new conception of Austrian identity, limited largely to the Austrian landscape and a narrow aspect of the Austrian historical legacy, is one that critical voices in the Austrian post-war consciousness, including those of Bachmann and Bernhard, could not identify with.

Following 1945 the predominant consensus in Austria was that Austrian literary culture (and Austrian culture generally) could seamlessly pick up where it had left off in 1938. The 1950s, when both Bachmann and Bernhard were emerging onto the literary scene, were dominated by restorative and conservative cultural tendencies, which extended to the rehabilitation of many popular Austrian authors compromised by their support of Austro-fascism and National Socialism. Further, the works of writers such as Heimito von Doderer (a former NSDAP member)

foregrounded Austria's imperial heritage rather than confronting present-day problems and 'studiously avoid[ed] the period after 1927'.<sup>17</sup> Literary circles, such as those headed by Hans Weigel (along with the numerous literary journals that he set up), while doing much to encourage rising stars, including Ilse Aichinger and Ingeborg Bachmann, in the very early stages of their careers, avoided anything that was too experimental or too politically sensitive. It is significant that both Aichinger and Bachmann achieved literary recognition through their involvement in the West German Gruppe 47, and in the German literary field more generally, rather than in Austria. Others like Paul Celan and Peter Handke similarly rejected the parochialism of the Austrian cultural establishment and published abroad. Indeed many of the more radical treatments of Austria's recent past, such as Milo Dor's *Tote auf Urlaub* [*Dead Men on Leave*] (1952), were published by German publishing houses, and enjoyed only a limited reception in Austria.

It is into this climate of conservatism and lack of resonance for anything that was aesthetically or politically radical that organizations such as the Wiener Gruppe emerged in the late 1950s, their experiments with language and concrete poetry signalling what Andrew Barker terms 'the belated appearance of the European avant-garde in Austria'.<sup>18</sup> In prose, the emergence of a new *anti-Heimat* [anti-patriotic] literary movement served to challenge idealized and sanitized views of the Austrian landscape propagated in *Heimat* literature [patriotic, regional literature] and abetted by the tourism industry. The idealization of the Austrian landscape in *Heimat* literature is a tradition going back to the nineteenth century in Austria.<sup>19</sup> Celebrating rural life, community and tradition, it is a largely conservative genre that responded to urbanization and modernity by constructing an

17 Andrew Barker, 'The Politics of Austrian Literature, 1927–56', in *A History of Austrian Literature 1918–2000*, ed. Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), 107–27, 108.

18 *Ibid.*, 120.

19 See the discussion of 'Habsburgische Heimatliteratur', in Claudio Magris, *Der habsburgische Mythos in der modernen österreichischen Literatur* (Salzburg: O. Müller, 1966), 135–67.

idyll of rural life. It is this anti-cosmopolitanism and rural conservatism that made this type of genre readily amenable to the ideology of National Socialism, and after 1945 the genre was used to extol rural Alpine life in the new Alpine republic, increasingly also through the popular medium of film. Faced with the growing misrepresentation of rural Alpine life in *Heimat* literature and film following the Second World War, some of the most notable writers in the post-war Austrian literary landscape turned the genre on its head in the form of *anti-Heimat* literature. Works such as Hans Lebert's *Die Wolfsbaut* [*The Wolf's Skin*] (1960), Gerhard Fritsch's *Fasching* [*Carnival*] (1967), and Franz Innerhofer's *Schöne Tage* [*Beautiful Days*] (1974) drew attention to the repressed legacy of fascism and challenged the perception of the Austrian landscape as an ostensible idyll. Writers as diverse as Peter Handke, Elfriede Jelinek and Gert Jonke have all made recourse to this counter-genre at various stages of their careers, with many choosing Austria's rural Alpine landscape as a setting for their explorations of Austrian identity. Jelinek's Alpine trilogy *In den Alpen: Drei Dramen* [*In the Alps: Three Plays*] (2002) is a case in point. Some of Bernhard's works may also be ascribed to the genre of *anti-Heimat* literature (while much of Bachmann's writing is also set in the Austrian countryside, it lacks the ethnographic attention to rural milieu that is characteristic for the genre), but as we shall see Bernhard differs from these writers in the radicalism that characterizes his own presentation of the Austrian landscape, not only as a site inscribed with repressed historical experience but also as a pathogenic symptomatic body, which in turn provokes traumatic symptoms in its inhabitants.

Any exploration of Austrian identity cannot neglect the nation's capital. This is particularly so in a nation where the contrast between the former imperial capital and the province has historically been very strongly marked, and even more so in post-war Austria, where the city of Vienna with its one and a half million inhabitants is the only metropolis in a nation whose landscape is largely dominated by the Alps. As the contemporary Austrian writer Franzobel has articulated, 'Land oder Wien, etwas anderes gibt es nicht in Österreich' ['the province or Vienna, there is nothing in between

in Austria’].<sup>20</sup> While the Austrian writer, social commentator and essayist Robert Menasse asserted in 1992 that due to the overwhelming dominance of *anti-Heimat* literature there has not been an Austrian city novel since the works of Heimito von Doderer,<sup>21</sup> a cursory look at post-1945 Austrian literature would show that the foremost post-war Austrian writers including Jelinek, Bernhard, and indeed, more recently, Menasse himself, have written novels which may not necessarily have the city of Vienna as their primary focus, but which are unimaginable set anywhere else. In other genres too, Austrian poets made specific Viennese landmarks the focus for their exploration of language, memory, and national identity, an example being Ernst Jandl’s ‘wien: heldenplatz’ [vienna: heldenplatz] (1962), thematizing the historically laden site where Austria’s *Anschluss* with Nazi Germany was celebrated on 15 March 1938. The same historically fraught site was later chosen for Bernhard’s most infamous (at least in terms of its Austrian reception) eponymous play (*Heldenplatz*, 1988). Menasse is right in arguing that very few post-war Austrian authors have written fiction set in Vienna that is persistently concerned with the city’s topography and historical memory, but Ingeborg Bachmann’s *Malina* (1971), a uniquely important contribution to the Viennese ‘Stadtroman’ [city novel], a novel insistently preoccupied with the city of Vienna, is an important example that would seem to refute Menasse’s thesis. In its seismographic portrait of Vienna’s post-war cityscape, irredeemably scarred by the trauma of the recent past, *Malina* may be understood not only as a city novel in the modernist tradition but as a new kind of city novel, steeped in the tradition of writing on the modern city, but responding to the new caesura of the Second World War and the Holocaust, as well as to the post-war era of high capitalism.

While it is important to emphasize that Bachmann and Bernhard were not writing in a vacuum, and that they were certainly not alone in

20 Franzobel, ‘Fische in der Bachmann. Eine österreichische Suppe’ in *Einsam sind alle Brücken: Autoren schreiben über Ingeborg Bachmann*, ed. Reinhard Baumgart and Thomas Tebbe (Munich: Piper 2001), 101–8, 102.

21 Robert Menasse, *Das Land ohne Eigenschaften: Essay zur österreichischen Identität*, 3rd edn (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 1993), 102.

articulating their ideas on post-war Austria through the representation of the Austrian landscape and cityscape, they were doing so in a radically new way that put topography, the presentation of space and place, at the heart of what they were trying to articulate. Bachmann's and Bernhard's presentations of space and place differ from that of their contemporaries in two important respects. The first is their privileging of the subjective experience of topography, with their protagonists frequently becoming seismographs for the places that they inhabit. The second is the authors' critical Habsburg nostalgia, which is again primarily articulated through the writers' topographic concerns and diachronically through the authors' engagement with writers belonging to an earlier tradition of Austrian modernism (in particular Franz Kafka and Joseph Roth).

Both writers were very aware of the literary and cultural legacy that they as Austrians had been born into. Their origination was, in both cases, in the Austrian countryside, yet their subjective experience of their homeland differed markedly from the Alpine idyll perpetuated by the new post-war rhetoric. In Bachmann's case, her childhood in Carinthia on the Slovenian border, close to the 'Dreiländereck' [three country triangle] between Austria, Slovenia, and Italy, would resonate in her entire work as a directionality towards a utopian and borderless realm of languages and people, a 'utopisch zu verstehende Wunschwelt' [a dream world that should be understood as utopian].<sup>22</sup> Here, the Habsburg Empire formed an antipode to the homogenous identity politics of Second Republic Austria, even if the Dual Monarchy constituted an imperfect realization of the borderless, multinational realm of which Bachmann lamented the passing.

In the case of Bernhard, his maternal grandfather, the interwar writer Johannes Freumbichler (1881–1949), would prove a lasting influence on his life and work. Freumbichler's work has in recent years been radically reassessed from its traditional positioning within the genre of an uncritical *Heimatliteratur*.<sup>23</sup> More nuanced interpretations have foregrounded the

22 See Peter Beicken, *Ingeborg Bachmann* (Munich: Beck, 1988), 197.

23 See Bernhard Judex, *Der Schriftsteller Johannes Freumbichler: Leben und Werk von Johannes Freumbichler* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2006).

ambivalence and uncertainty over the loss of old values characterizing his work, extolling rural moral values and the imperial authority of old Austria as a political model on the one-hand, while mounting severe social criticism on the other.<sup>24</sup> Bernhard's work would repeatedly feature characters that would display the same sort of ambivalence with regard to rural Alpine life and the Austrian landscape. However, his portrayal of the timeless brutality, conservatism and repression characterizing rural Austria gains a new dimension altogether in the post-war era.

As the epigraphs to this introduction foregrounded, to a greater or lesser degree, both writers are indebted to what Bachmann called 'die mythenreiche Vorstellungswelt meiner Heimat' [the mythical world of the imagination of my home] (*Biographisches*, IB 4, 302).<sup>25</sup> What Claudio Magris has termed 'der Habsburgische Mythos' [the Habsburg myth] emerged in Austrian literature long before the collapse of the Dual Monarchy, with the works of Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Arthur Schnitzler permeated with the melancholic awareness of the Empire's impending self-implosion, but the Habsburg myth really came into its own after 1918. This is a literature that largely presented a glorified and rose-tinted view of the Habsburg era, prizing the security and stability of this 'Welt von Gestern' [world of yesterday] in the face of the fragmentation and uncertainty of Austria's new political order and destabilization of old values following the First World War. Magris terms it a 'Prozeß der Sublimierung einer konkreten Gesellschaft in eine malerische, sichere und geordnete Märchenwelt' [a process of sublimation of a concrete society into a picturesque, secure and ordered fairy-tale world].<sup>26</sup> Foremost among such Habsburg mythologists are the modernist Austrian Jewish writers – Joseph Roth, Franz Werfel, and Stefan Zweig – for whom in the face of growing Nazi ideology and

24 See Manfred Mittermayer, *Thomas Bernhard: Leben – Werk – Wirkung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), 25.

25 Bachmann's conscious self-positioning in an Austrian literary tradition in her late prose in particular has been repeatedly highlighted. See, for example, Dippel (1995), Bannasch (1997), O'Regan (2000), and Spencer (2008).

26 Magris, 9.