

Cultural Memory and Intellectual History: Locating Austrian Literature¹

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Anyone who writes about tradition is inevitably drawn into a process that includes a mixture of objective knowledge, memory, projection, and invention. Maurice Halbwachs argued that memory is “a collective function” and that we use reason “to introduce greater coherence” into our image of the past (53). He emphasized that this is true even for personal experience, but still more conspicuous in discussing the historical experience of a group: “One cannot in fact think about the events of one’s past without discoursing upon them. But to discourse upon something means to connect within a single system of ideas, our opinions as well as those of our circle.”² An account of the origins of the concept of Austrian literature helps to show how cultural narratives become established as official discourses of public memory and how they originate in academic fields.

This is an essay about the way intellectuals contributed to reshaping cultural memory in Austria after the Second World War. By cultural memory I mean collective memory of the cultural past, of the creative achievements of a society, in this case the achievements of writers. At the center of my story are five intellectuals trying to make sense of the significance of Austrian literature and the Austrian cultural past, usually in a mode of advocacy, both recalling and creating a cultural past for the tiny postwar republic. Cultural memory of this kind is both collective, in the sense of repeating what is known and accepted, and individual, in the sense of being actively selective and inventive.³ I am concerned here primarily

with five cultural commentators who helped to shape understandings of Austrian literature in the early years of the Second Republic: Heimito von Doderer (1896-1966), Friedrich Heer (1916-83), Ivar Ivask (1927-92), Herbert Eisenreich (1925-86), and Herbert Seidler (b. 1905). These intellectuals developed a view of Austrian literature that contributed to discourse about Austrian national identity by both expressing and refining Austrian understandings of their cultural past. In my discussion of their work, I concentrate on five texts that defined the concept of Austrian literature between 1955 and 1970. I write as an intellectual historian, trying to clarify post-war understandings of Austrian literature. I want to locate both the theorists and the stories they tell, to work for more understanding of the concept of Austrian literature—both its historical origins and its geographical and institutional limits.⁴

Recent historical scholarship has encouraged us to think of national identity and historical traditions in terms of their retrospective invention by modern writers and theorists. In the case of the Second Austrian Republic, national identity became a preoccupation for intellectuals in ways that unmistakably indicated the invention of national traditions by political and intellectual elites.⁵ Peter Thaler makes clear in *The Ambivalence of Identity* that in the postwar years Austrian elites were hard at work convincing their fellow Austrians that they were, and always had been, quite different from Germans. An important dimension of this rhetorical endeavor was the development and clarification of the idea of a distinctively Austrian literature. It would be tempting to argue that the concepts of national identity and Austrian literature were both created in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. But the most important work on Austrian national identity appeared in the 1980s—as the yield of a long public discussion that did not win broad support for the idea of an Austrian national identity until the 1970s—while the works that crystallized the concept of Austrian literature appeared between the end of Allied occupation and 1970.⁶

It is remarkable to see how many of the most important critical formulations of the concept of Austrian literature appeared in the decade and a half after the state treaty that ratified Austrian independence in 1955. The principal contributions to this conceptualization were Heimito von Doderer's "Athener Rede: Von der Wiederkehr

Österreichs,”⁷ Friedrich Heer’s *Land im Strom der Zeit*, especially the lead essay on “Humanitas Austriaca” (17-105), Ivar Ivask’s “Das grosse Erbe: Die überationale Struktur der österreichischen Dichtung,” Herbert Eisenreich’s “Das schöpferische Misstrauen oder Ist Österreichs Literatur eine österreichische Literatur?” and Herbert Seidler’s “Die österreichische Literatur als Problem der Forschung.” By 1970, Seidler (quite conscious of his debt to Walter Weiss) could provide an impressively objective, scholarly overview of the field that moved for the most part beyond the ideological impulse of the founding essays, although his work was still marked by the temptation of essentialism. Arguments about Austrian literature from this period were often written in essayistic, occasional form, usually in the context of justifying the claim that there was something distinctive about Austrian literature. It seems helpful to see these essays as a stage in the development of understandings of Austrian national identity; and, despite their limitations, they contributed in important ways to identifying what an account of the Austrian tradition in German culture might look like.⁸

Consciousness of Austrian literature as a field began to emerge in the nineteenth century, especially in relation to Franz Grillparzer, Adalbert Stifter, and Viennese theater; and key figures such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Josef Nadler shaped these arguments further in the early twentieth century.⁹ But the decisive period for the creation of the contemporary concept of Austrian literature was the decade and a half after Austrian independence. The recurring theme of the commentators I discuss here is that the field of German literature has been conceived in a way that cannot do justice to Austrian writers. They were influenced by public discussions, and they contributed to shaping public discourse about memory. I see their work as a stage in a process of understanding rather than as timeless statements of historical relationships.

Since the eighteenth century the concept of German literature has been tailored to fit a particular model of the *kleindeutsch* (little German) nation, an approach that was actually reinforced both by the experience of National Socialism and by the postwar division and reunion of (little) Germany. To Austrian ears, any attempt to discuss Austria in this context sounds like *grossdeutsch* (greater German) nationalism if not National Socialism. Meanwhile, Ger-

man critics rediscover from time to time that their favorite German writers come from another country: a decade after the essays I discuss here, Ulrich Greiner could still note the delightful anomaly that half of German literature in the twentieth century came from Austria (11).¹⁰ At the same time, it is often hard to say whether the main problem for Austrians is that they are ignored or misunderstood or (mis-)represented as Germans. While Austrian accounts of Austrian and German culture are often ideological, commentators on German history, literature, philosophy, and social science are frequently not even aware of perspectives that open up from the south. Nonetheless, conventional memory and cliché rather than careful thinking have been too prominent in understandings of Austrian literature and national identity. Even in a scholarly setting Austrians often proceed from a narrow, nationalist conception of German culture from the Hohenstaufen to Luther to Frederick the Great to Bismarck to Hitler, a tradition that is usually conceived as anti-Austrian and anti-Catholic, and sometimes even as racist, especially as anti-Slav. The ideal image of Austria or the Austrian tradition is usually imagined as the opposite of this, but this model is of course schematic and polemical rather than historical. What is meant by "Austrian literature" nearly always turns out to be a specifically German literature that is distinguished from Prussian and national German literature.

For the concept of Austrian literature, as for the problem of Austrian national identity, the experience of National Socialism was central. This experience intensified the concern with distinguishing Austria from the history of 1938-45 and from the whole national tradition as Germans had conceived it between 1871 and 1945. The reaction against National Socialism is the most prominent ideological dimension of these understandings of Austrian literature, but there are others. A second is the tendency toward abstraction, to generalize from periods or individual writers to define an essence that is not located historically or even geographically. A third is the emphasis on themes that preceded modern German culture and even Austrian literature, including connections to the Roman Empire, to the Roman Catholic Church, and to the Baroque. The historical connection of Austria to the Holy Roman Empire is often omitted (along with Austria's importance for German history), while at

other times this connection is allowed to obscure the distinction between the German *Reich* and the modern state that emerged in Austria in the late eighteenth century. And, finally, before the work of Seidler and Weiss, most commentators on Austrian literature in the postwar years proceeded on the assumption that their task was to advocate and defend Austrian literature rather than simply to understand it.

Conceptions of Austrian literature in the 1950s and 1960s generally aimed to define the identity of the Second Republic in relation to the Austrian Empire. Conspicuous in this process were the contributions of Catholic and conservative writers who wanted to emphasize the legacy of the multinational Habsburg Monarchy to the tiny republic of the twentieth century. In this respect, Doderer's conception of a supranational identity was formative, as well as his view that the Second Republic was doing what the First Republic had failed to do. Again, the contrast with Germany and German literature was crucial. What was sometimes lost was the fact that Austrian literature *was* a German literature, and not Czech or Magyar or Polish, if perhaps sensitive at times to Slavic literatures and peoples. It was more likely to be mentioned that it was the literature of an imperial elite centered primarily in Vienna, but then not in Prague or Budapest or Cracow; and there was little effort to sort out Austria from Hungary, to locate Vienna in relation to Bohemia, or to distinguish the centralized, Josephinist monarchy from the Dual Monarchy of 1867–1918.

Doderer played an important role in shaping the language of cultural memory that was employed in the creation of the concept of Austrian literature. He was both a novelist and a historian, and his ideas were crucial for Ivask and Eisenreich, who in turn played leading roles in this discussion in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Doderer wrote an essay on *Anschluss* in 1954, but the *Anschluss* he had in mind was "the connection to the depths of the ages."¹¹ He argued that 1918 had represented an exaggerated effort to break with the past in order to begin anew in a way that was not possible. He believed that the years between 1938 and 1945 had intensified Austrian consciousness to such an extent that the attempt to restore the First Republic had gone far beyond its intended object. Instead, Austrians had recovered something more fundamental and enhanc-

ing in their relationship with the past that could now break through into the future.

For Doderer the Austrians were a German people who had borne the responsibilities of a supranational great power throughout the modern period; as a result, Austrian national consciousness was characterized by its "supranational structure." He argued that Austrian national consciousness was "not so dependent on a superficial concept of land and people. This nationality is of all nationalities the least material" (242). And he contended that an "Austrian who understands his situation must still be very happy today about every single Croatian or Magyar peasant in Burgenland, about every Slovene in southern Carinthia: but the Croatian, the Magyar, and the Slovene need not feel this way at all . . ." (242–43). Doderer made explicit what was often lost in later appropriations of this theme: that Austrians are, for the most part, Germans, but his view also explicitly defied any attempt to locate Austria on the map or to discuss it empirically, and his account recalls Robert Musil's view that Austrian culture had never been acknowledged by the other nationalities of the Monarchy. Doderer argued that the sixteenth-century synthesis between Austrian and Spanish traditions had created "not only a great power, but also an immaterial situation which has outlived it" (243). After the separation of the many peoples from their original center in 1918, what remained was a "specifically Austrian way of existing—as one of the German peoples, yet gifted with an utterly enormous capacity for assimilation, even integration" (243).¹² Even Doderer believed that the ideal balance of Austrian supranationalism had been lost by 1918, but he wanted to recover this sense of identity for the Second Republic. For Doderer, supranational consciousness was Austrian national feeling understood correctly, although German Austrians had often forgotten this and Doderer himself had managed to be an enthusiastic German nationalist in the 1930s.

Friedrich Heer was a key figure in the formation of understandings of Austrian literature although he was an intellectual historian rather than a literary historian. He presented one of the most important accounts of Austrian literature, and one that did not repress the experience of National Socialism but responded very strongly to it.¹³ His essay "Humanitas Austriaca" (which appeared in 1957 and

again in 1958)¹⁴ is a good reminder not to caricature the writers of postwar Austria since he spoke very directly and responsibly about National Socialism, Adolf Hitler, and anti-Semitism. Heer, much like Doderer, described an anti-ideological tradition that preceded modern German; for him, this tradition was an idealization of sixteenth-century Austria, especially the years from 1530 to 1550.¹⁵ He emphasized the Baroque and the service elites of the Monarchy, as well as intellectual and imperial traditions that reached back to the Roman Empire and Marcus Aurelius. And he regarded many Austrian developments thereafter as actually counter to what was best in the Austrian tradition, although he also saw Hermann Broch and Karl Popper as its best mid-twentieth-century representatives. Heer had in mind a way of living—a set of values that were grounded in Renaissance humanism, universalism, and Stoicism. Like Doderer, he argued that the Austrian principle cannot be grasped (*Land im Strom* 14), but he did characterize the resistance to self-righteous ideologies as “the Austrian tradition of the 16th to 20th centuries” (20). Despite his many valuable insights into Austrian intellectual history, his account is fundamentally conceived as an argument that Austria (whatever its form or extent) was valuable in some distinctive and continuous way—that also submerged much of what was negative. He blurred his discussions of Austrian history, political ideology, and literary history so that it is often not clear just what is being claimed. The most striking aspect of Heer’s view is that it depends not on the period of modern German culture, but on the centuries before modern German culture emerged. These premodern themes recur in most commentaries on Austrian literature from this period, but not always so explicitly.

Heer identified Austrian intellectual life with the ideal image of the cavalier and with the Maria Theresian bureaucrats and officers of the multinational Monarchy. But even here Austrian literature turns out to be a German literature—mainly in the hereditary lands, but also in Bohemia and Moravia. He emphasizes the multinational nature of Vienna, but in practice his implicit argument is the close connection to Bohemia and the Czechs. He notes that in 1900 Vienna was still the largest Czech city, and he points to the connections between Vienna and Masaryk, and to the unwise politics of German liberals in matters of language and nationalism. What is never

coherently developed is the special place of the Czechs in German-speaking Austria, which would be significantly different from the emphasis on a centralist, multinational, European monarchy. Heer makes connections of the most varied kinds, but, finally, Austrian literature turns out to mean Lenau, Grillparzer, Stifter, Kubin, Bahr, Kafka, Broch, Musil, Saiko, Doderer, Werfel, and Brod, which is to say a German literature in Austria and Bohemia (61–62). His essay is an excellent place to learn what Austrian literature and intellectual history are, but it requires a more precise frame of reference, one that locates abstractions and generalizations more historically and that makes more explicit Austria's close connection to Bohemia.

Ivar Ivask's "Das grosse Erbe: Die übernationale Struktur der österreichischen Dichtung" was the first of three essays on Austrian literature in *Das grosse Erbe*, published in 1962. His title suggests the legacy of the Empire in the Second Republic, and the sense of the subtitle is clear, though not precise. Ivask underscores Doderer's theme of a supranational structure, but he does not explain what this is, and he does not attempt to distinguish a kind of enhanced multicultural awareness from a genuinely multilingual or multicultural literature. This ambiguity is crucial to the conservative quality of the concept of Austrian literature as it emerged in these years, but this approach also opened up important insights, especially in relation to the then dominant conventions of German literary history, which simply subsumed Austrian writers when not ignoring them altogether. Like Heer, Ivask emphasized Austria before modern German culture, including the Roman Empire and Stoicism as well as the sixteenth century, the Spanish connection, and the idea of a supranational structure with Vienna at the center. Ivask also underscored the Austrian critique of German philosophy and literature and of the categories of German literary history, and he was more explicit than Heer about this context. His critique of the assumptions of German literature as a field is largely justified, and it provides the legitimate rationale for what has come to be known as Austrian literature. Ivask argues that Austrian literature began in the mid-nineteenth century with Grillparzer and Stifter, but he wants to ground this tradition in Empire and in the Baroque world before modern German culture and literature. He argues that Vienna is central to Austrian literature, but he does not make this point when

he lists Kafka, Rilke, and Musil as the most important Austrian writers of the twentieth century. Moreover, Ivask's interpretation of "supranational" connects Austrian literature not so much to its own nationalities as to Spain, Russia, France, and England. Presumably there is an implicit contrast to Germany, but certainly Germany's openness to foreign influence is not considered in a comparable way here or in any of this literature.

Unlike Doderer and Heer, Ivask was not Austrian, and his commitment to world and comparative literature is evident in his account of Austria. He was born in Riga in 1927, studied German and comparative literature in Germany after the war, and spent his professional life in the United States as a professor and as editor of *Books Abroad* (later *World Literature Today*; the journal was published by the University of Oklahoma in Norman). These wider themes often merge with Ivask's account of a specifically Austrian literature. It might be reasonable to characterize the Habsburg Monarchy, though perhaps not Austria, as the natural homeland of world literature, but this aspect is often lost in the emphasis on a literature that is in German only. One way to think about the supranational structure of Austrian literature might be to explore the roles of Latin, Spanish, Czech, and Italian in the origins of Austrian literature before 1740 and the significance of these non-German influences. But this is very different from addressing the matter of a multinational monarchy.

Ivask's deep sense of what is Austrian is ideological, referring not simply to writers who lived in Austria, but to writers who saw Austria in a certain way. He wants to convey that Austria had a distinctive literary tradition, but his problems arise in defining it and locating it. Ivask explicitly distinguishes (if sometimes polemically or one-sidedly) between Germans and Austrians; he is interested in this dialogue between Austrians and Germans and in the figures he sees as decisive, especially Grillparzer and Hofmannsthal. He emphasizes the long historical conflict of "a southeastern, Catholic-Baroque culture with a northern, Protestant-idealistic culture" (19), but he characterizes Grillparzer as the beginning of "the genuinely Austrian literary tradition" (9–10), as the clear point of separation of Austria from Germany in cultural history. Ivask was reacting to German claims that Austrian literature is a fiction, and he under-

scores the distance that the great Austrian critics took from German literature, especially from its profundity. His point is that it is more illuminating to locate these writers in an Austrian context than to fit them into the familiar master narrative of German literature. His essay amounts to a program for the field of Austrian literature: he sees important connections and knows the literature, and he describes what he sees as the major contributions of Austrian literature to criticism, lyric poetry, the novel, the essay, and the aphorism. Most of this argument is very sound (especially about some things that German critics often forget), but his concluding examples are Rilke, Kafka, and Musil—marking a conspicuous drift in the direction of Prague, Bohemia, and Moravia rather than the Viennese story he mainly emphasizes. This special relationship between Austria and Bohemia needs to be framed more candidly. In practice, Austrian literature fails to be explicit about Bohemia in much the same way that German literature fails to be explicit about Austria.

Herbert Eisenreich's contribution to *Das grosse Erbe* is titled "Das schöpferische Misstrauen oder Ist Österreichs Literatur eine österreichische Literatur?" and his discussion is an important addition to theory about Austrian literature. He makes clear that there was no Austrian national literature before the first half of the nineteenth century; his list of the great writers in the Austrian tradition is "Grillparzer, Stifter, Raimund, Kafka, Rilke, Roth"—but he does not mention the problems of location that are implicit in this selection, and he is not much concerned with the political and institutional changes and geographical realities that underlie the notion of an Austrian literature. He is thinking in terms of the grouping of aesthetic objects—German, Austrian, and Swiss—and he assumes that these categories have some national meaning. Eisenreich was himself an Austrian writer and strongly committed to the theme of national identity—and to arguments that seem dated and unsatisfactory today. He argues that the distinctive quality of Austrian literature and national identity is "creative mistrust," that is, "the effort at distance" and objectivity (106–08), and his account distinguishes five generations of Austrian writers, beginning with Grillparzer's and ending with his own.

Eisenreich identifies an alternating pattern within the Austrian tradition. Thus, Grillparzer's founding generation was followed by

the relative insignificance of late nineteenth-century literature; the stagnation before 1900 (nothing here of the glories of the *fin de siècle*) was followed by a third generation that was comparable to the founders of the tradition; and the generation of great Austrian writers in the early twentieth century was succeeded by a loss of focus in the interwar years, by a generation without distinct profile or unity and without the characteristics of Austrian literature. He regarded his own generation as “the found generation” (105), who aimed at recovering the Austrian tradition and Austrian national identity. Eisenreich advocated resistance to homogenization with German culture since the late nineteenth century, and he was critical of what he regarded as a cultural *Anschluss* with Germany and of the losses this had entailed for national identity on a variety of levels. His argument for an Austrian literature based on Austrian national identity follows the pattern we have already seen: Vienna is central, with a special relationship to Bohemia and Austria, while the rest of the Empire is included in a very general and imprecise way. The third essay in the volume, by Otto Basil, is less satisfactory than those by Ivask and Eisenreich, but their appearance together in *Das grosse Erbe* makes 1962 a crystallization point for the conception of Austrian literature. Perhaps most striking about Basil’s account is his extreme conclusion: “Das Austriakische ist die österreichische Sprache schlechtin” (88), a view that Seidler argues should be “completely rejected.”¹⁶

In order to establish that there was an Austrian literature, scholars from this period often felt obliged to demonstrate an essence, most explicitly perhaps in Kurt Adel’s *Vom Wesen der österreichischen Dichtung* (1964). Joseph Strelka, in his “Von Wesen und Eigenart der österreichischen Literatur,” emphasized the difficulty of defining such an essence for any literature, but he also pointed to “the historical reality of the sublime ethos of Austrian literature.”¹⁷ Although Strelka saw the methodological problems inherent in defining any national literary tradition as distinct from others, he was obviously drawn to approaches that emphasized the way in which Austrian literature expressed the multinational Monarchy as a whole. His essay is in some respects an explanation of the difficulty of defining Austrian literature, although his view follows the contours of what Heer, Ivask, and Eisenreich argue.

Scholars who wrote about Austrian literature in the early years of the Second Republic were coming to terms with their generation's experience: the end of empire and the challenge of creating something new. It is difficult to convey the range of claims about the Austrian essence that appears in essays from these years or the contradictory assertions of an impressionistic criticism. But these tendencies were prominent until about 1970 and have never entirely disappeared from Austrian characterizations of themselves and their intellectual history. In a recent essay on Austrian nationalism, Ernst Hanisch emphasizes the perils of attempting to describe what is distinctive about Austrian culture. He comes close to capturing this rhetorical approach in his characterization of the Austrian press service view of music from 1948 to 1957, although the scholarship on Austrian literature did not go quite so far: "The Austrian-European aristocrat of the mind—so we are informed—activated Gothic imagination, Hellenic esprit, the Celtic passion to give form, and Slavic seriousness in order to create the wonder of Austrian music."¹⁸

In 1970 Herbert Seidler presented a mature statement of the field which was close to the work of Walter Weiss and explicitly resisted simple advocacy of Austrian ideology.¹⁹ His excellent and remarkably non-ideological article "Die österreichische Literatur als Problem der Forschung" shows the emergence of a more disinterested perspective that reflected back on earlier work. He begins by emphasizing the historical variability of the term "Austrian," and he makes clear that what we ordinarily refer to as Austrian literature is "written in the German language" (354). Seidler insists that the historical and linguistic experience of German-speaking Austrians is simply not comparable to the Netherlands or Switzerland (354), and he underscores the need for sobriety and objectivity in addressing the "ticklish" question of "the connections among language, community, and nation" (356). Perhaps most refreshing of all is his call for scholars who actually know the wide range of languages that would comprise a truly multinational Austrian literature. The model of Austrian literature he develops is thoughtful, even shrewd, but Seidler, too, feels the impulse to generalize over broad historical periods during which the term "Austrian" changed its meanings in significant ways. In addition to sheer advocacy, it is this impulse to

generalize that introduces the ideological dimension in a negative way.

Only rarely are women (or themes related to gender) mentioned in these essays, although Heer does present an argument about the traditional male/female balance of Austrian humanity that has been disturbed in the modern world. It seems right to say that historically Austrian literature, like many other literatures, has been conceived as male. By the 1960s, Fanny von Arnstein, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach (the woman most frequently mentioned), Rosa Mayreder, Ingeborg Bachmann, and even Hilde Spiel had still hardly made their mark on this tradition. There was not much reference to the theme of gender at all, or, for example, to writers such as Otto Weininger, who took this theme seriously; and gender issues were not likely to be what was discussed in writers like Musil, who were concerned with the subject.²⁰ Heer argues that Austrian writers testified to "*the power of being of the woman*," and that the loss of balance between male and female brought forth many important women in Austria (78);²¹ however, he discusses women mainly in the context of his theme of a way of living and concentrates on the practical accomplishments of Austrian women in the early twentieth century rather than their contributions to literature, mentioning Auguste Fickert, Adelheid Popp-Dworak, Mariane Hainisch, and Bertha von Suttner, but also Rosa Mayreder and Paula von Preradovic (81–83). This discussion is not central to Heer's argument, but there is a certain morphological affinity between his views on Austria and women. He contends that the traditional balance of male and female has been disturbed since the sixteenth century by the one-sided emphasis on the male and the abyss between Europe and the rest of the world (77), and he argues that Austria resisted this tendency in its Mediterranean way—a kind of conservative resistance to modernity, against the ideological, activist, expansive style of the late nineteenth century.

Eisenreich was more concerned than Heer with the contributions of women to Austrian literature, and he located women writers within his generational scheme, especially those who reached maturity after 1945. Women writers are integrated into his argument early in his essay, when he discusses the epochs of Austrian literature in generational terms. He includes a number of women in

his catalogue of the fourth generation, born in the early twentieth century: Martha Hofmann (1905), Erika Mitterer (1903), Gertrud Fussenegger (1912), and Lilly von Sauter (1913), although two of them seem to him to belong more to the next generation: Christine Busta and Christine Lavant (1915). His fifth generation (his own) reached maturity after the Second World War and identified with "the grandfathers" of the early twentieth century: Jeannie Ebner (1918), Marlen Haushofer and Doris Mühringer (1920), Ilse Aichinger and Irmgard Beidl-Perfahl (1921), Fredericke Mayröcker (1924), Ingeborg Bachmann (1926), and Hertha Kräftner (1928).²² It is apparent from this list how important women seem to have become for Eisenreich, and his argument recalls the degree to which the advocacy of Austrian literature was the form in which his generation of intellectuals came to terms with the historical experience of the early twentieth century. From one point of view, Austrian literature is an imperial literature, and accounts of it can suffer in this respect from triumphalism, false consciousness, or apologetics. On the other hand, Austrian literature is in some respects a minor literature that is poorly integrated into established canons—somewhat like female authors or minority writers.

These essays present the elements of a coherent view of Austrian literature, but not in a way that provides a clear framework and a sufficiently explicit argument. Common to all of them is the emphasis on Grillparzer and Stifter as the founders of Austrian literature, although this early nineteenth-century location seems far from the sixteenth-century Empire or from the late twentieth-century Republic. At times these critics concede that their fundamental motive for writing about Austrian literature and tradition is to make sense of the significance of a handful of great writers from the early twentieth century—Musil, Broch, Kafka, Rilke, and sometimes Doderer or a few others. At least in the 1950s this theme was central to the concerns of scholars who wrote about Austrian literature, and it continues to be important for anyone who writes about Austrian intellectual history. Implicit in most of these accounts is a special relationship to Bohemia that is closer than the connections to Hungary or Galicia, but this theme was not developed by these authors in a coherent way.²³ Moreover, they often write about Vienna as if it was the center of a single culture or multi-culture in German, and

they are rarely sufficiently sensitive to the changes in what constituted Austria or how it was constituted.

What is missing in these accounts is a strong sense of historical structure and periodization that makes explicit the political and institutional forms and geographical realities that underlie the notion of an Austrian literature. Working in the fields of literary history and intellectual history, Doderer, Heer, Ivask, Eisenreich, and Seidler helped to make conscious Austrian understandings about their cultural past. In the immediate aftermath of National Socialism, these writers were concerned to assert the identity of the Second Republic by arguing the distinctiveness of Austrian literary traditions. What seems more important now is this tradition itself, an empirical reality that is too often overlooked or misunderstood in the context of German literature. Too often Austrian literature has been lost between the conventional narrative of German culture and expansive claims about the multinational monarchy of the Habsburgs. What is needed is a better understanding of a German literary tradition that was located not in Berlin, Tübingen, and Weimar, but in Vienna, Prague, and Cisleithanian Austria. Especially important both for Austrian literature and for Austrian cultural memory is greater candor about the special place of Bohemia and Moravia in Austrian literature. Certainly for the nineteenth century more can be done to locate Vienna in relation to Bohemia, and to distinguish the centralized, Josephinist monarchy from the Dual Monarchy of 1867–1918. Sixty years after the Second World War and in the context of the new concerns of the European Union, it is possible now to locate Austrian literature in a way that resists the temptations of idealizing Austria, stereotyping Germany, or obscuring the deep affinity between Austrian and Bohemian cultural traditions.²⁴

Notes

1 My thanks for their thoughtful readings and suggestions to Maria-Regina Kecht, to my colleague Frank Biess, and to my students Joseph Busby, Cecily Heisser, and Donald Wallace.

2 On the relationship between personal experience and collective represen-

tation, see also Nietzsche: "Fundamentally all our actions are incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual; there is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness *they no longer seem to be*" (299).

3 For a discussion of these theoretical issues, especially cultural memory, see Assmann.

4 As an intellectual historian I am interested in understanding the historical context of work in literature, philosophy, and social science (see Luft).

5 See Thaler and, for an earlier approach to this question, see Bluhm.

6 On Austrian national identity, see Bruckmüller, Kreissler, Erdmann, Stourzh, and Fellner.

7 A decade later, Doderer presented a revised version of this essay as a speech in Athens entitled "Le Renouveau Autrichien."

8 Here I have in mind a concept of modern German culture that emphasizes the German language since the eighteenth century and the value of distinguishing an Austrian intellectual tradition within this.

9 Even Nadler's *Literaturgeschichte Österreichs* of 1948 is quite different from the works I discuss here. See also Zeman's collaborative *Literaturgeschichte Österreichs* of 1996, which he regards as the fourth attempt at a comprehensive literary history of Austria—and as the first since Nadler. For the history of Austrian Germanistik from 1848 to 1914, see Michler/Schmidt-Dengler.

10 See also Blei's playful remark about Robert Musil and Hermann Broch: "Strange that it should be two Viennese writers who have written the fundamentally different novels from which we date a new epoch of the German novel" (88).

11 Doderer 244: "den Anschluss an die Tiefe der Zeiten." The original essay was titled "Der Anschluss ist vollzogen" and was written just before the

independence of the Second Republic; however, Doderer later revised it, including the most familiar version of this essay, to which references are given here. On Doderer, see Luft, *Eros and Inwardness* ch. 4.

12 Certainly it should not be assumed that Austria continues to be more gifted in this regard than its neighbor to the north. Despite Doderer's comments about national identity, however, his central concern is Austrian literature and making it visible: "The appearance of a genuine critical genius in Austria—and such an appearance remains possible at any time—would suddenly reveal our national literature of the past hundred years like a mountain range bathed in sunlight" (247).

13 Heer studied German history with Heinrich Ritter von Srbik and Otto Brunner. Part of his appeal is that he began to develop an alternative master narrative of the history of Central Europe—see Heer, *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität*. Even in this long book, Heer's emphasis is on polemic, but the underlying argument is learned and complex.

14 My references are to Heer's essay in his *Land im Strom der Zeit*, but it is also to be found in Schulmeister's *Spectrum Austriae*, which includes similar essays by Gerhart Baumann and Friedrich Torberg.

15 For a more detailed discussion of this theme, see Heer, *Die dritte Kraft*.

16 "The characteristically Austrian is the Austrian language itself" (Seidler, "Die Österreichische Literatur" 367).

17 Strelka 16: "[d]ie historische Wirklichkeit des hohen Ethos österreichischen Dichtung" 24.

18 "Der österreichisch-europäische Geistesadel—hiess es darin—aktivierte gotische Phantasie, hellenischen Esprit, keltische Formenlust, slawische Schwere, um das Wunder der österreichischen Musik zu schaffen" (Hanisch 29).

19 Seidler was trained in Austria in Germanistik and Romanistik, became a University Professor at Salzburg in 1963, and moved two years later to

Vienna. See his *Dichtkunst und Literaturwissenschaft*.

20 See Luft, *Eros and Inwardness*. Similarly, the Jewish dimension of Austrian literature was rarely brought out strongly or located carefully.

21 Heer's formulation, "*the power of being of the woman*," invites a variety of interpretations, but his own rather awkward commentary indicates that he was well aware of some of them. He argues that, for writers like Grillparzer, Stifter, Saar, Hofmannsthal, and Kafka, the man becomes a human being through the woman, that the woman educates the man to humanity even when she seems to be in the background or absent:

Grillparzer (in allen seinen Werken), Stifter, Saar, Hofmannsthal—und besonders eindrucksstark Dichtungen und Themen, in denen die Frau latent im Hintergrund, scheinbar abwesend, aber in der Gesinnung und Behandlung der Stoff wirksam "da" ist (so in seiner Dichtung, nicht im Leben, als mächtige Abwesenheit bei Kafka, der zeigt wie eine "Welt" des Mannes an sich, des Übervaters, "Kaisers" jede Kommunikationsfähigkeit verliert!) bezeugen diesen österreichischen Realismus, der sich immer wieder mit Goethe begegnet und auf Goethe beruft: der Mann wird zum Menschen nur durch die Frau. Der Mann wird aus männlicher Angst, Weltfremdheit und Taktlosigkeit nur erlöst durch das Erziehungswerk der Frau. (*Land im Strom der Zeit* 78)

22 Women are most likely to appear in these essays simply in lists, without critical commentary.

23 Spector characterizes Prague as "this central-marginal space within the Habsburg realm" (37), and much the same might be said of Bohemia and Moravia more generally.

24 I am working on a larger project entitled "The Austrian Tradition in German Culture" with the aim of giving historical shape to Austrian intellectual life by locating Austrian writers, philosophers, and other intellectuals within the wider context of language, culture, and politics in Central Europe. I hope to minimize the abstract, essentialist, ahistorical moment in discussions of Austrian intellectual history in order to work for a stronger

sense of historical, geographical, institutional, and linguistic location. My account will emphasize the geographical region marked by the historical overlap between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Holy Roman Empire (and later the German Confederation) before 1866. See David Luft, "Austrian Intellectual History and Bohemia," *The Austrian History Yearbook* 38 (2007), 108–121.

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