



PROJECT MUSE®

On Display: Conditions of Critique in Austria

Jakob Norberg

Journal of Austrian Studies, Volume 46, Number 1, Spring 2013, pp.
23-45 (Article)

Published by University of Nebraska Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/oas.2013.0018>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/501654>

On Display

Conditions of Critique in Austria

Jakob Norberg

Postwar Austrian literature features an unusual number of outspoken writers whose literary attacks are frequently directed at Austria. There is a long tradition of satire in Austrian literary history, one that includes names such as Johann Nestroy and Karl Kraus.¹ Since 1945, however, befouling Austria has become a widespread activity, practiced not only by the nation's literary stars—Thomas Bernhard, Elfriede Jelinek, Peter Handke—but by a large number of less-known writers (Schmid-Bortenschlager 11). Being brutally critical of Austria seems to be part of being an Austrian author. Austrians with literary and intellectual ambitions often appear as “Experten für Österreichkritik,” and many writers have dialects ready for various occasions, a standardized Austria critique to be delivered at, for instance, prize ceremonies (Zeyringer 588). Familiar with the rituals of the Austrian literary field, author Antonio Fian has spoken of the critical “Fertigteilpreisrede” (quoted in Bartsch 52).

Why is this the case? Some claim that the persistent expressions of hatred are pathological and that Austrian authors are oversensitive, histrionic, or just plain mad. Others maintain that the pathologies of the Austrian nation, such as the failure to come to terms with the National Socialist past, make the exasperation and even hatred of the authors understandable and legitimate.²

Yet these claims about individual and collective insanity suffer from a lack of distance to the subject matter. To call Austrian authors deranged, or Austria morally decayed, is to participate in the hostility directed at or expressed in Austrian literature rather than to seek to explain it. Commentators who are sympathetic to the sharply critical writers tend to refer to what they

see as specifically Austrian horrors—the disavowal of mass involvement with National Socialism and complicity in the Holocaust, the crushing oppressiveness of provincial life and so on— but anyone who recounts *reasons* for critique, however urgent and infuriating, must still presuppose the existence of an *infrastructure of critique* that allows those reasons to be invoked in particular ways by publicly active figures. Austria may be more awful than other countries—the aim of this essay is not to settle this issue—but the question is who points this out, under what circumstances, and with what means?

How, then, do we account for such a high concentration of tirades in one particular nation? One potentially satisfying answer may be that satire begets satire, for once a genre has crystallized, it can be recycled. That the means of critique have been developed and the audience primed then explains the recurrence. The literary scholar Klaus Zeyringer calls Thomas Bernhard a “Vorschimpfer” whose jeremiads have inspired countless emulators, epigones, and parodists (522).³ Yet the question why Austria became a stage for this dynamic remains. Why did the widespread and vehement “rhetoric of national dissent,” to cite the title of a book by Matthias Konzett, arise in Austria?

Just as there is a literary history of attacks on Austria, there is also a scholarly history of trying to explain them, and in this essay, I will try to map this trailing tradition. There is a small number of typical answers to the question of why Austria is the target of a particular literary “Österreichkritik,” and those in turn rest upon presuppositions about the peculiar social position of the modern writer as a marginal figure who nonetheless must bear the responsibility of enunciating political critique. The writers’ critique of Austria is explained by the sociological conditions of literary authorship in Austria.

The overview of the literature will, finally, be contrasted with an alternative explanation of why Austrian writers have so often excoriated Austria. This attempt at a different answer takes as its main source a literary work: *Alte Meister* (1985) by Thomas Bernhard. The novel suggests that the primary location of critical judgments is the museum, in which artworks by great masters are put on permanent display for sustained reflection in a nonreligious context. The museum has historically also been an institution that allows for the articulation of critique, at first directed only at paintings and sculptures. But the attitude of critical evaluation may eventually begin to wander, Bernhard’s novel also suggests, and choose a range of targets outside of the display contained in the museum. This migration is made possible in Austria because the museum has been elevated to the status of the paradigmatic state institu-

tion, with multiple ties to political, social, and educational contexts. When a nation begins to mimic the procedures of the exhibition developed in the museum, the critique fostered within its bounds may also expand beyond it. Bernhard's novel shows how post war Austria becomes the object of a particular kind of critique because it is in the process of turning itself into an enormous museum.

In other words, the bitter criticisms of Austria are not necessarily reactions to various *strategies of concealment*—the fact that Austrian leaders have sought to suppress dissent or that Austrian citizens have wanted to remain silent about the country's criminal past. Instead, the literary critique of Austria has, probably unintentionally, been promoted by widespread *conventions of display* that call forth attitudes of evaluation and critical assessment. Bernhard's novel intimates that Austria, because of its museum-like qualities, may very well be the most "criticizable" nation, whether or not it is the most despicable one.

Sociologies of the Austrian Writer

Ambitious explanations of Austrian literary hatred often begin with reflections on the sociological position of the writer. Intellectuals and scholars puzzling over the literary "Österreichkritik" have examined the prevailing conditions of articulation for Austrians who write. What in the writers' basic situation vis-à-vis their society induces them to deliver such cascades of invective?

Quite frequently, these commentators point out that Austrian society is characterized by the containment of publicly articulated strife, "Konfliktvermeidungsstrategien," for instance in the historical guises of conservative restoration and post war corporatism (Beilein 36). From its early days, the political system of the Second Republic followed a program of "Sozialpartnerschaft" that meant that large interest groups—trade unions, chambers of commerce, industrialist associations, and so on—worked together to negotiate mutually beneficial agreements concerning, for example, prices and wages in order to maintain a peaceable situation conducive to economic growth (Djordjevich 392–93). Disruptive public conflicts between organizations representing workers and employers were systematically avoided by making closed committees the sites for permanent relationships of bargaining. The political scientist Klaus von Beyme defines corporatism as the state's endeavor

or “konfliktorisch einander gegenüberstehene Interessen zu *versöhnen*,” singling out Austria as the best post war example of this regime type in Europe (135). As compromises were continually reached behind closed doors, the parliament also partly lost its function as the site of articulated social conflict (Menasse, *Das war Österreich* 272).⁴ Postwar Austria was a case study in politically managed society-wide reconciliation, an achievement that came at the cost of vigorous public discussion over political principles.⁵ In the realm of politics, Austria lacked vocal opposition.

The question for the sociologists of Austrian literature is how literary authors respond to the institutionalized political silence of corporatist structures. The answer to this question will differ depending on whether one believes that the closed-off and monolithic political life makes authors retreat into despair, compels them to assume more political responsibility, or results in a paradoxical combination of both. The political essayist Robert Menasse has argued that Austrian writers have effectively taken up the otherwise unperformed task of political critique: “Sie [the writers] waren es, die Tabus bekämpften, die Sozialpartnerschaft kritisierte, Demokratisierung eingefordert, über die Lügen und Mythen der Zweiten Republik aufgeklärt haben” (*Das war Österreich* 272). In Austria, Menasse claims, the critique that in other societies is enunciated by parties temporarily out of government, representatives of interest groups, or politically engaged intellectuals with access to a wide range of newspapers and cultural journals falls upon literary authors. The literature is agitated because the rest of society appears all too calm.⁶

Before Menasse developed his arguments concerning literature in the age of “Sozialpartnerschaft,” however, the literary critic Ulrich Greiner had claimed, in 1979, that a long history of antirevolutionary political management had continually minimized the opportunities for authors to play a constructive political role.⁷ In a more openly fractured society, authors can take sides in struggles and pursue political causes, but in Austria, where consequential policy decisions have often been made behind a facade of fundamental accord, authors remain isolated from societal movements and enclosed in the realm of aesthetics. The strident satirical postwar literature is, as Greiner argues, a violent reaction to an Austrian literary tradition of beautiful resignation, first analyzed by Claudio Magris in his well-known study *Das habsburgische Mythos in der modernen österreichischen Literatur*. Greiner sets up a line from Adalbert Stifter to Thomas Bernhard, from an ethos of the gentle cultivation of beauty to desperate destructiveness (Greiner 18, 22), both extremes

equally at a remove from the social critique performed by intellectuals such as Heinrich Heine and Heinrich Mann (15). Austrian postwar literature is so agitated, Greiner submits, because the Austrian literary tradition has placed such emphasis on placidity and acquiescence.

In both of the above accounts, Austrian authors are said to represent lonely or weakened voices of opposition. Menasse and Greiner begin with the image of the abandoned writer who is up against a fortified state-society compound and has to invent and sustain the project of critique without aid or allies from outside of the purely literary realm. As the author of a Bourdieus-inspired study of the Austrian literary field puts it, creative writers have come to occupy positions in the cultural and political life of the nation that would not be vacant in other countries (Beilein 55). There may be a kind of standardized and predictable literary Austria attack, but it is performed in a society that has few exponents of and platforms for a critical approach to the nation's life. The prototypical Austrian author feels compelled to voice critique in the eerie absence of public debate and yet can rarely do so in a way that will resonate with broader segments of society and spur others into organized action. The resulting combination of felt political responsibility and helplessness then only serves to amplify the fury. As Karl Kraus put it: "Österreich: Isolierzelle, in der man schreien darf" (137).

According to Menasse and other commentators, the social structure of critique also conditions the type and form of the critical arguments. Not surprisingly, creative writers who become critical of society do not suddenly relinquish their preferred means of communication and begin to speak in the idiom of party politics or sociological analysis. Instead, they voice their complaints in the medium of literature and exploit the resources of abrasive satire. Austrian authors are known for breaking up linguistic behaviors. They play word games with key ideological concepts, expose euphemisms to address taboos, distort ossified idioms, and ironize jargons and tonalities.

The object of the writer's critique is likewise connected to the nationwide silence on social and political issues or the deplorable fact of stifled debate. The engineered harmony of political consensus that prompts writers to speak up also provides them with a central theme. The peaceful atmosphere in Austria screens persisting inequalities, they can insist, and the glossy surface of the tourist paradise covers a history of discrimination and crime. Commentators speak of the discrepancy between the image of Austria as an island of carefree happiness, on the one hand, and the long history of

officials denying broad popular support for National Socialism, on the other. Behind the “Operetten- und Tourismuswelt mit Sissy, Lipizzanern, Mozartkugeln und feschen Schullehrern” is an enduring and callous disregard for the victims of totalitarian persecution (Bartsch 51). The “Insel der Seligen” is in fact a “Grab der Lebendigen” (51). Or Austria is a “Punschkrapfen”—a pastry that is pretty pink on the outside but brown on the inside (Menasse, *Das Land ohne Eigenschaften* 37).

In all of these cases, the surface impression of stability and innocence is inauthentic, and Austrian writers have been relentless in their efforts to bring these discrepancies to public consciousness.⁸ Their critique can best be captured in metaphors of excavation or exposure. The writers bring the dark, sordid underside of the nation to light, reveal denied or long-forgotten crimes, or pierce through the beautiful image to the ugly essence below. They are trying to uncover the “braune, unterirdische Fluß,” to cite a formulation by the author and essayist Josef Haslinger (74).⁹ In this discourse, critique typically involves pointing to the sharp contrast between pretense and reality, between outward presentation and inner truth. But to return to this paper’s fundamental question: Is there an alternative image of critique? Are there other ways to understand the prevalence of a critical stance toward Austria among literary authors?

Conditions of Critique: Thomas Bernhard’s *Alte Meister*

A sociological analysis of the Austrian author’s peculiar position in the political and cultural landscape supports the more complex accounts of the pervasive literary rants against Austria. One may be skeptical of the idea that writers assume the entire burden of performing critique in the absence of vocal political opposition or that the lack of political agency provokes an oscillation between quiet resignation and raucous frustration. Yet these approaches constitute a great advance over commentaries that only point to the standard themes of literary-satirical engagements with Austria, such as the suðocating provincialism, the disavowed guilt, and the specious political harmony.

Not coincidentally, the sociological dissections of the “Österreichskritik” have been presented by literary critics, scholars, or public intellectuals rather than by literary authors. Menasse, for instance, has written several novels but is better known as one of the foremost contemporary commentators on Austrian national identity. He is a public figure who initiates debates by writing essays on politics and history rather than satirical fictions or well-crafted dia-

tribes. Menasse exemplifies a European-type intellectual who has the intellectual resources to diagnose the preponderance of literary-satirical critiques of Austria and can claim that the attacks are ultimately a symptom of a deformed, contracted public sphere—a public sphere, in other words, that urgently needs more intellectuals such as him. In his study of a generation of Austrian writers that became active after the Waldheim controversy in 1986, Matthias Beilein argues that Menasse and his less-known generational peers do in fact represent a diversification and intellectualization (“Intellektualisierung”) of the Austrian cultural field (89).

But intellectuals and scholars do not enjoy a monopoly on reflection, and heated literary attacks on Austria may also seek to supply an account of their own conditions of articulation, albeit not in the dispassionate language of analysis. Thomas Bernhard’s *Alte Meister* from 1985 contains such a sustained reflection on the nature and historical place of critical judgments, although it is not cast in the idiom of sociological argumentation. Its slightly concealed but quite elaborate explanation of “Österreichskritik” can be summarized in the following way: The primary object of an uncompromising critical judgment is the autonomous work of art; the museum is the crucial site for this critical judgment, since it is in the museum that artworks become accessible to the public and are put on display as artifacts divested of sacred meaning; Austria as a whole becomes the object of sustained critique because it has made the museum the paradigmatic institution of the nation-state; finally, the authors or artists are the figures most likely to take offense at the “musealization” of Austria and voice this critique, since they themselves are put on display as objects that prove Austria’s status as a cultured nation.

In sum: the critical judgment of the literary observers is directed toward everything Austrian because Austria is a curiously museum-like nation—in which they too have been interred. Bernhard is of course not the first to note the museum-like qualities of Austria. The notion, or the cliché, has a long history, as we shall see. Yet in *Alte Meister*, he manages to mobilize this familiar image of Austria in new ways in order to construct an account of the Austrian conditions of critique.

Bernhard’s *Alte Meister* takes place in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, where the music critic Reger sits down every second day in the front of Tintoretto’s painting, *Portrait of a White Bearded Man*. His judgments of this and all other great works by the old masters are highly critical. No matter how famous and celebrated, they reveal themselves to be flawed under his close

and continuous scrutiny. But Reger not only exercises his critical judgment, he also discusses, however briefly and intermittently, the character of critique.

Critique, Reger implies, is the antithesis of astonishment. Great works of art typically call forth admiration (“Bewunderung”), which is an inherently submissive attitude (Bernhard 12). The subjects who admire a piece of music or a painting place themselves in a position of weakness vis-à-vis the work; they are even threatened with being crushed by the perceived majesty of the art. Rather than admire the work of art, one should approach it with respect, an attitude that places the work and the subject on equal footing. Most often, however, Reger considers works of art, or everything under the sky, to be ridiculous (“lächerlich”), an attitude that presupposes and inspires a feeling of superiority toward the object. Things that are ridiculous can be mastered and dominated (“beherrschen”) (Bernhard 122). Each state—admiration, respect, and ridicule—thus corresponds to a particular quasi-social relationship: submissiveness, equality, or superiority.

What makes it possible for someone to emerge out of servility and to cease to admire the great works of art? Reger’s answer rests upon an underlying narrative of secularization. Admiration is inappropriate or impossible, at least for him, because miracles are inconceivable: “da es das Wunder nicht gibt, war mir Bewunderung immer fremd” (Bernhard 12). A state of wonder may be the natural response to truly wondrous occurrences, but if there are no manifestations of the divine—and Reger insists that there are none—people should not stand in awe of things that appear before them. In any strictly non-religious context, wondrous admiration is not a fitting comportment. Critical judgments directed at works of art deprive them of their power over people, but this process can only take place in a secularized realm. Briefly put, the critic Reger presupposes the separation of art and religion.¹⁰

We should not worship works of art, for they are objects of reflection and not signs or incarnations of the divine; this is the basic assumption of the critic in Bernhard’s *Alte Meister*. But how and where does the secularization of art take place? When and where do artworks cease to be miraculous objects that compel our admiration? The novel as a whole suggests a simple answer: in the museum. The museum is of course the primary scene of the narrative, which means that it is in the museum that Reger’s long, critical speech is articulated or reported. The severely critical critic has found a permanent place of reflection on a bench in the Kunsthistorisches Museum. But this is no coincidence: Bernhard’s novel is part of a greater intellectual tradition that treats

the museum as an institutional vehicle of art's profanation.¹¹ Artworks in the church or the imperial palace serve to adorn, or perhaps constitute, an aura of holiness and authority.¹² In these settings of religious and political representation, art should provide awe-inspiring images of the transcendent. Once artworks are extracted from the ecclesiastical and dynastic realms and put on display in a context that is not claimed by an institution that wishes only to inspire devotion, they become available for attitudes other than admiration and worship.¹³

The most important new gathering place for artworks detached from the divine is the modern museum. In the museum building, artworks are collected and find their place in an aesthetic rather than religious context. (For instance, the individual paintings are categorized and organized according to their place in a sequence of styles and epochs, a principle that emerges out of an internal history of art.) As soon as works of art are meant to be enjoyed by a large and shifting collective rather than concealed in the secret chambers of temples, the "Ausstellbarkeit" of works of art begin to do damage to their "Kultwert," to speak with Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 146–47).

Reger in Bernhard's *Alte Meister* inhabits the museum of art and takes full advantage of the fact that this institution collects and displays artifacts in a way that robs them of a religious or cultish meaning. No matter how grandiose or mysterious the works of art may be, Reger can always discover a fatal flaw:

Ich gehe davon aus, daß es das Vollkommene, das Ganze, gar nicht gibt und je desmal, wenn ich aus einem solchen hier an der Wand hängenden sogenannten vollkommenen Kunstwerk ein Fragment gemacht habe, indem ich so lange an und in diesem Kunstwerk nach einem gravierenden Fehler, nach dem entscheidenden Punkt des Scheiterns des Künstlers, der das Kunstwerk gemacht habe, gesucht habe, bis ich ihn gefunden habe, komme ich einen Schritt weiter. (42)

Again, there are no miracles in the museum. Rather, the museum is the place in which "so-called" masterpieces are permanently put on display, placed before the spectator who, after long and concentrated scrutiny, will finally be able to identify at least some small imperfection and in this way cast off his submissive attitude. The novel *Alte Meister* indicates that the museum (contrary to the church or the palace) allows for a critical judgment of art no longer conceived of as worthy of unquestioning devotion. But how does the critically minded museum visitor turn to the nation in its entirety? How does

the particular, bounded environment of the museum in any way help explain literary attacks on the country of Austria?

In Bernhard's *Alte Meister*, the museum does not stand alone but forms one node in a network of interconnected institutions. The museum guard Irrsigler who helps Reger enjoy his place on the bench first wanted to become a policeman, failed to join the police force, but then received a position in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, another line of work that provided him with a uniform. And the novel also relates how teachers regularly lead groups of schoolchildren through the museum as part of their art education, which, according to Reger, is designed to ruin the enjoyment of art for young minds. In this way, the novel points to overlaps between the museum and the school and between the museum and the prison. Schools, prisons, and museums are, the novel proposes, all institutions of discipline that work together to shape the people into an orderly, obedient, even uniformed unit. From a Foucauldian viewpoint, this makes some sense: the prison and the school are closely associated with the production of docile bodies aware of continuous surveillance, but the museum, too, demands a particular (bodily) behavior characterized by silence and moderation, and guards are there to watch over the visitors.¹⁴

These various institutions of discipline are, moreover, connected to one another as institutions of the modern state. In Bernhard's novel, Irrsigler is characterized as a dead man working for the state, a "Staatstoter"; the teachers are the "Händlanger des Staates" (53); the children are viewed as "Statsschüler" (57); and the artists who created the great works housed by the museum are nothing but "Staatskünstlern" (61). In *Alte Meister*, then, various institutions and collectivities are linked to one another as sites and servants of the state. The museum is only one of many institutions that are, as a Foucault-inspired scholar puts it, "summoned to the task of cultural governance of the populace" (Bennett 21). Artworks are no longer adornments in cathedrals or pieces gathered in private collections to glorify the reign of a prince but are exhibited by a secular (and more or less democratic) state that nonetheless initiates an ambitious "Bildungsprogramm" for all its citizens (Osterhammel 38).¹⁵

While the categorization of all Austrians as "Staatsarbeiter, Staatsbeamte, Staatsgreise" captures the novel's vision of an all-encompassing and invasive regime of government, it simultaneously offers a clue to the mobility of critical judgment (Bernhard 57). The museum belongs to the nonmonarchical,

nonreligious State, but it is also where Reger develops his ruthless critique of great masters and, in fact, where his critical tendency seems to run wild. The author Adalbert Stifter and the philosopher Martin Heidegger become the targets of harsh critiques early on in the novel; by the end, Viennese restaurants are castigated as the dirtiest in Europe. The critical judgment is first liberated in the museum as the place for art beyond the realm of the sacred, but this institution does not contain the activity of assessment; rather, the museum proves to be a training ground. Once the capacity for excoriating critique has been honed in decades-long reflections on works of art, nothing seems to overwhelm the spectator or even command much respect.

The Austrian literary scholar Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler points out that, in *Alte Meister*, the critique of art “weitet sich zur Universalkritik” (*Der Übertreibungskünstler* 124). For instance, Reger maintains that all official ceremonies are absolutely ridiculous. This includes a New Year’s reception hosted by the president, an inauguration at the university, a prize ceremony, or a papal audience, all of which are scripted ceremonies performed within institutional bodies. The series itself suggests that performances at discreet institutions can be meaningfully grouped together and subjected to the same merciless gaze. Insofar as different institutions employ similar strategies of display and exhibition, they also offer themselves up for evaluation by the art critic who can identify the resemblances.

In *Alte Meister*, the critical judgment is first directed toward great works of art but then transgresses the confines of the museum, and it does so at least partly because the museum is only one institution among many, connected to other like institutions within the complex that makes up the state. There is a continuum of modern state institutions designed to educate, re-educate, manage, and impress the population (the school, the prison, the museum), but there is also a continuum of things to be criticized, pervasive conventions of display and performance that allow objects and behaviors to become the objects of critical assessment. Bernhard’s protagonist Reger first scrutinizes individual paintings and artists but also everything else that takes place in the museum, the state that houses and sustains it, and then all Austrians in their roles as willing conduits of the state. In this way, the novel demonstrates how the museum works as the point of origin of an unsparing critical view on phenomena offered up for display but also how the conditions of critique in the museum begin to apply to more and more societal areas.

The Austria Museum

The expansion of the museum and the critical judgment that it fosters is, one could argue, a very Austrian development. Attempts by Austrian politicians to justify the existence of an Austrian nation often rely on images of cultural specificity—and cultural greatness. An anecdote from the immediate post-war period illustrates this tendency. In 1946, the Austrian government decided to collect masterpieces from Viennese museums and send them to Switzerland in order to protect national property, which could also be turned into capital, should it be necessary to defend Austria by channeling funds to allies. “Diese Geschichte zeigt,” Robert Menasse writes, “daß Österreich, noch bevor es im politischen Sinn eine Nation wurde, bereits eine Kulturnation war” (*Das Land ohne Eigenschaften* 21). The cultural inheritance composed by masterpieces of art would form the basis of efforts to protect Austrian national integrity. After the Second World War, Menasse indicates, the museum was actually the embryo of the Austrian nation.¹⁶

The sense that Austria is a museum among nations, however, can be traced further back. The central *Bildungsroman* of the Austrian literary tradition—Stifter’s *Der Nachsommer*—is a literary work concerned with the collection and classification as well as the careful restoration and constant rearrangement of objects for the purpose of knowledge and beautification.¹⁷ To cite yet another example, Hermann Broch, writing about Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s formative years, noted that the city of Vienna as a whole had become a museum: “In Erfüllung seiner Traditionspflicht verwechselte Wien Museumhaftigkeit mit Kultur und wurde [. . .] zum Museum seiner selbst” (49). Broch is speaking here of fin-de-siècle Vienna, but his insight is applicable to postwar Austria as a whole. Austria is of course not literally an immense museum (with discount admission tickets, elegantly designed plastic bags with the museum logo, a spacious museum coöcesshop, and so on). Yet as a nation conceiving of itself as the bearer of a particular cultural mission, it has defined itself by its relationship with a great cultural past, which it is called upon to preserve, protect, and exhibit to both citizens and visitors. To some extent, Austria as a whole is on display.

Present-day nations use museums to deposit materials they can no longer use and yet do not want to condemn to oblivion.¹⁸ In a democracy, the emblems of a past monarchy or aristocracy are gathered and displayed in the cultural archive of the museum—they belong to an obsolete political order

and can no longer represent the current state but nonetheless remain significant as detoxified relics from which the present sets itself apart. (Similarly, few can use cars manufactured fifty years ago to drive to work, but they have a place in the automobile museum.) Museums are containers for objects that are no longer deployed in current political or social practice but help constitute cultural identity. The art theorist Boris Groys has claimed that museums are recycling machines that convert the “kulturgeschichtliche[n] Müll” to “kulturellen Identitäten” (48–49).

But if a nation defines itself as nothing but the carrier of an imposing cultural legacy and makes the loyalty to the great past one of its central legitimating reasons for existence, then its borders become, one could say, the walls of a large museum. This is the case with postwar Austria, at least if we follow the commentators quoted above. This particular European nation—so the provocative claim goes—does not put some of its now discarded past on display to furnish itself with a deeper historical identity but rather exists *for* this past, in order to protect and commemorate it. Postwar Austria is a nation with museum-like qualities: the metaphor of the museum captures its obsessive preoccupation with a proud past to be preserved and shown to the world. The celebrated museums of postwar Austria are housed in a much larger museum, the limits of which coincide with the country’s borders.

Museums typically inspire reverence; they are architectural-institutional frames designed to accord special significance to objects. Like the visitor groups that move through the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Bernhard’s novel, the majority responds to the collections accordingly, with “Bewunderung,” as if they had entered a place of worship. As Bernhard’s *Alte Meister* shows, however, the museum is also the location where works are deprived of their sacral aura and become available to the aesthetically schooled viewer. The works are detached from an older context of religious or regal representation, placed in an aesthetic-historical context as samples of culture, and put on display for consumption and reflection. Artifacts in the museum are at least potentially artifacts ready for critique. If Austria as a whole is then likened to an enormous open-air museum in which beautiful landscapes and remnants of the great past are put on display, the nation is in fact exhibiting its contents for the distanced observer. Austria invites critique.

The Austria that we know as an “Operetten- und Tourismuswelt mit Sissy, Lipizzanern, Mozartkugeln und fischen Skilehrern” is thus a target of critique not necessarily because the colorful facade conceals a dark truth that

must be uncovered but because all its components are presented, as if preserved in neat glass casings and put before the visitor's gaze. And the writers who criticize Austria do not necessarily only perform the feat of excavation or exposure to reveal the hidden underside of a beautiful surface but rather behave much like experienced museum visitors who direct their gazes toward the presented objects and vocalize their assessment. Critique is not simply a strategy meant to counter deception. Rather, critical activity is the effect of musealization, defined as the permanent display of beautiful things in a secularized realm corrosive of wonders and miracle.

We have now come to a first conclusion based on Bernhard's novel: In postwar Austria, nearly everything can be criticized and harshly so, because everything is in the process of being "musealized." If the institution of the museum is linked to a range of other state institutions (schools, prisons) and even comes to epitomize the state, the attitudes cultivated in the museum could also apply to the nation. Austria is an oddly museum-like nation, but for this very reason also a highly criticizable nation, a nation that one can have a look at, pass judgment on, approve or disapprove of.

Of course, the museum is not the only metaphor on offer to capture the specificities of Austrian cultural and political life. Why not, one could ask, think of public displays of power, prestige, and artifice in Austria as a series of theatrical performances, single out Austria as the most stage-like (rather than the most museum-like) among nations, and conceive of the exponents of "national dissent" as theater critics rather than art critics?

In this context, one could point out that the museum and the modern theater that caters to a bourgeois public may be viewed as historically parallel institutions. Both the museum and the theater put objects or performances on display for an audience ready to discuss critically what they are paying to consume and consider. In his account of the emerging bourgeois public sphere, Jürgen Habermas relates how the museum and the theater belong to a range of sites designed for a reflective type of viewer, for whom paintings, plays, and recitals are objects of assessment: "Die Museen institutionalisieren, wie Konzert und Theater, das Laienurteil über Kunst: die Diskussion wird zum Medien ihrer Aneignung" (102–03). It seems, then, that an investigation of Austria's particular criticizability could just as well start with the critic in the theater audience as with the museum visitor.

And Bernhard may have been quite close to exploring this option, too. In the novel *Holzfällen: Eine Erregung*, published the year before *Alte Meister*,

the excited and angered narrator is present at an artist soirée, where he closely watches the people around him and views them as actors in a spectacle. Much like Reger in *Alte Meister*, he engages in a form of critique that is absolutely merciless, and his diatribes swell to touch on multiple topics: not only the narrator's despicable hosts and their antics are ridiculed and rejected but also Vienna and Austria.¹⁹ In comparison to *Alte Meister*, however, *Holzfällen* lacks the sustained preoccupation with the complex of interlocking state institutions and does not in the same way indicate the path from a focused and specialized practice of criticism within the frame of a particular setting to an expansive "Universalkritik." Yet Bernhard seems quite aware that the museum and the theater are connected, complementary institutions, both of which serve to kindle and organize criticism. It is no coincidence that *Alte Meister* ends with Reger and his friend Atzbacher going to watch a Kleist play in the Burgtheater, only to find the performance terrible.

The Author on Display

To explain why Austria so often serves as the target of bitter critique in the nation's literature, it is not enough to point out that there is much to attack in the country's political culture, even though that may be very true. What needs to be explained is how figures, behaviors, and themes are consistently framed as objects of critique or how they become available for the critical gaze of authors. Bernhard's novel sheds some light on this problem, for it provides an account of the genesis and mobility of critical judgment. *Alte Meister* suggests that artworks are offered up for the inspection of the nonsubmissive critic when they are displayed in the secular space of the museum; that the museum stands at the center of a range of state institutions in Austria; and that the resulting musealization of society converts it into an object of critique. In the museum-like nation of Austria, things are on display for an audience invited to express approval or disapproval. This does not elucidate, however, why Austrian authors have been particularly quick to level criticisms at Austria. How do we account for the astonishing number of tirades delivered by creative writers?

The striking accumulation of literary attacks on Austria can be explained within the general argument about the logic of the expanding museum. Put simply, it is a case of the museum artifacts speaking up. This development, too, is subtly thematized in the pages of Bernhard's novel *Alte Meister*. The

protagonist Reger has been visiting the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna regularly for decades and could plausibly be viewed as a member of the institution rather than a mere visitor. Sitting on the bench in front of the Tintoretto painting with such frequency and regularity, he ends up being a part of the inventory and becomes subject to the museum guard's care as yet another artifact in need of protection. In the novel, Reger is in fact represented as an object of continuous observation. Atzbacher, the name of the actual narrator, relates Reger's life and opinions as he watches him from a distance. No matter how much he criticizes the contents of the museum, the critic Reger himself belongs to it as one of its objects.

More generally, the Austrian authors are representative members of a country that defines itself as a "Kulturation" and are in fact included in the range of things to be looked at in the Austrian museum. They, too, are precious objects of display. Those who view themselves as active producers of culture are forced to experience how they are being watched by visitors at the world heritage site with the name of Austria: "Österreich [...] ist ein europäischer Ferienpark, in dem auch Artisten auftreten dürfen/sollen" (Schmid 90). If they then begin to criticize the petrification of Austria into an immense exhibition of snow-capped mountains, picturesque towns, white horses, and literary coöeehouses, that may be because they themselves experience the reification and perceive the discrepancy between their internal perspective on their own creative life and the set of expectations and impositions emanating from outside.

Experts on contemporary literature have pointed out that Austrian writers often combine the pathos of a rebellious attitude with a desire for "öäntlichen Subventionen," that they present themselves as uncompromising antagonists to the very state that actually supports them (Ünlü 14).²⁰ This does not necessarily mean that the artists and writers are hypocritical. Rather, they understand that the subsidies are channeled to them precisely in their role as living objects in an exhibition and that their presence converts the museum into a literary zoo. The Austrian "Insel der Seligen" is indeed a "Grab der Lebendigen," for the novelists and playwrights become figurines in the cultural show of the "Kulturation" and feel compelled to react against it. The collective of literary writers may be the first and most prominent group of people to make ample use of the criticizability of the Austrian nation-turned-museum precisely because they experience the cost of this development, namely the fact that they themselves are put on permanent display.

Literary writers are engaged in creative work, and it is as fabricators, fabulators, and experimenters with language that they are of interest to the cultivated state of Austria. They are hard evidence of the state's cultural mission. But it is also the symbolic value of the writers to the state that annuls their sovereignty as creative beings, for the state is the ultimate curator and not the writers; they are merely collected as badges and shown to the world. The more they write and speak, the more suited they are for exhibition, and hence the more they fit the activity of the state that seeks to consolidate its reputation as a bearer of culture. The state retains the "expository agency" (Bal 146). Bernhard's *Alte Meister*, in which an aspiring policeman takes a post as a museum guard, may even suggest why the experience of being gathered and put on display can be infuriating: the museum represents a sort of internment. In her study of heritage tourism, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes the affinity between "display traditions" and "incarceration" and claims that a glass case in a museum can be called a "tomb with a view" (57). The museum is a mausoleum, and the writers are the most prominent living dead (Hamacher 53).

Austria may be one of few nations where artists are held captive in some way not because they pose a threat to a dictatorial regime but because they so perfectly fulfill the self-image of the cultural state. When these writers become critics and release streams of invective against their own nation, who or what are they in fact attacking? They are turning against that very arrangement—the museum display—that also put in place the enabling conditions of their critique. Their critical voices emerge from within the museum of which they unavoidably are a part as living objects of appreciation. Austrian writers can be critical of Austria not only because they occupy a particular place in a corporatist nation-state without vigorous political and publicist opposition (Menasse and Greiner) but also because they inhabit and are put on display in the great national museum that simultaneously releases and contains critique.

As Bernhard's *Alte Meister* shows, the museum is the place for critical judgments of artifacts previously protected in an aura of sacredness or majesty, and the musealization of Austria, the fact that it is presented as an object to citizens and visitors, turns the nation into a potential object of critical evaluation. Yet this very musealization has a reifying effect upon those who are put on a pedestal as creative artists, and this may be the reason why Austrian authors so often turn against their nation in their works. The museum liberates the activity of critical judgment, but when the nation becomes a museum, it

also imprisons those who best can formulate these critical judgments, others set them up as objects to be looked at and approved or disapproved of, and ultimately drives writers to turn their critique toward the national-museal setting itself. Kraus writes that Austria is an “Isolierzelle, in der man schreien darf.” We can now add that the walls of this cell are transparent, like the walls of a glass case in a museum.

Notes

1. As Gerald Stieg writes, “Nestroy, Kraus und Bernhard bilden eine einzigartige Trias von Satirikern innerhalb der Literaturgeschichte der deutschsprachigen Länder” (3).

2. For instance, Anthony Bushell claims that the “dichterische Vehemenz” of the Austrian authors must be related to the memory of violence, without specifying exactly how this works: “Sie [the poetic vehemence] liegt wohl an der Erinnerung und an den vielen Erinnerungen, die dieses Land und seine Geschichte nie ganz preisgibt oder preisgeben kann.” (“Mozartkugeln als Waffen der Massenvernichtung” 8).

3. On a basic level, producing literary scandals has become known as a possible marketing strategy that will mobilize various segments of the audience—support from fellow writers and indignation among the “people.” This could make it attractive for aspiring authors. See Menasse, *Das war Österreich* 240.

4. Menasse also quotes the Austrian political scientist Peter Gerlich, who writes: “Daß die Funktionäre der Sozialpartnerschaft Informationen akkumulieren und austauschen können, die nie in die öffentliche Debatte eindringen, und daß ihre Verhandlungen abseits jeglicher öffentlicher Kontrolle stattfinden, hat zweifellos dazu geführt, daß sie mit ihren Verhandlungspartnern mehr verbindet als mit jenen, die sie vertreten. Der Kompromiß, den jede Verhandlung zum Ziel hat, ist daher im Selbstverständnis immer schon vorgegeben” (*Das war Österreich* 136–37).

5. The most famous analysis of how government by public discussion is replaced by committee work behind closed doors is Carl Schmitt’s *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*. In his account, the liberal principle of a “Kampf der Meinungen” increasingly gives way to nonpublic negotiations among powerful interest groups (9).

6. It has been claimed that Austrian writers, in contrast to their German colleagues, often remain literary writers and do not make the transition to the position of critical intellectuals producing pamphlets, articles, political essays, radio reports and so on. This literariness can be explained by the relatively small and undifferentiated media landscape in Austria. Whereas German writers have had access to a greater number of culturally ambitious newspapers, journals, and radio stations, for which they can begin to produce in nonliterary genres, Austria has offered fewer publicity opportunities and thus compelled its authors to continue on the path of literary self-realization. The typical Austrian author keeps writing novels and plays and does not or cannot take the step toward becoming a generalist “Wortproduzent” (Menasse, *Das war Österreich* 155). As Anthony Bushell has pointed out, the relatively reduced number of media outlets has also served to reinforce the polarization in

the public sphere. The dominance of a few tabloid newspapers hostile to a restive highbrow culture meant that writers and new literary developments were often summarily dismissed, which in turn encouraged these writers to “produce more works openly intended to provoke” (“Writing in Austria after 1945” 172).

7. For a critical consideration of Gruner’s provocative theses and the way they are based upon and extend Claudio Magris’s study of the Habsburg myth in modern Austrian literature, see Schmidt-Dengler, *Bruchlinien* 333, 373–75.

8. When authors are the only national critics, the critique frequently assumes the form of language critique. Living within a political system geared toward stability in which various social groups seek cooperation over conflict, Austrian authors cast a critical eye on the harmonizing function of entrenched nomenclatures, jargons, and genres. If social systems rely on fixed rituals of communication that define and continually confirm the relationships of groups and individuals to one another, the dismantling of patterns of language can expose the mechanisms of social relationships. See Menasse, *Das war Österreich* 185.

9. Haslinger is also a perceptive commentator on the modern society of spectacle, in which the attempt to sell a political candidate during an election is similar to selling any other product. When analyzing the commercialization of modern political campaigns, then, Haslinger contends that a business attitude is more pervasive than a disavowal of the past. The problem with modern Austrian politics is not simply the concealment of past crimes, which must then be excavated, but the “Strategie einer prinzipiellen Standpunktslosigkeit” (51).

10. Hegel famously claims that artistic production and works of art in the modern period no longer belong to religion. Art may have been tied to ritual, but for the philosopher-latecomer, art has lost its religious significance. Once art is viewed critically rather than worshipped as divine, the age of art has reached its end. No matter how many artworks are produced, art has become a thing of the past. The drifting apart of art and religion that Hegel announces may be related to the advent of the museum, in which all works of art find a place in an historical frame. Hegel’s Berlin lectures on aesthetics (1820/21 to 1828/29) are contemporaneous with the building of Altes Museum in Berlin (1823–30).

11. Following Walter Benjamin, Habermas claims that the critical discussion of art in a sphere separate from religious worship or political submission amounts to a profanation of auratic works: “Die Privatleute, denen das Werk als Ware zugänglich wird, profanieren es, indem sie autonom, auf dem Wege der rationalen Verständigung untereinander, seinen Sinn suchen, bereden und damit aussprechen müssen, was eben in der Unausgesprochenheit solange autoritative Kraft hatte entfalten können” (Habermas 98). In his scholarship on Enlightenment aesthetics, Jonathan Hess has argued that Habermas relies on an Hegelian tradition of aesthetic thought according to which modernity entails the sublation of art into rational philosophy: “In Habermas’s story of the public sphere, art is sublated [...] by the rational-critical debate” (116).

12. Albert Koschorke points out the aesthetic representation of power, or “das Element der ästhetischen Inszenierung,” is not added to relationships of power but rather essential to them (82). Any societal hierarchy that wants to last beyond the moment in which it mobilizes brute force against resistance must rely on strategies of (aesthetic) representation that create and consolidate political legitimacy.

13. In his summary of Hans Blumenberg's thesis on secularization, Malcolm Bull writes that the basis of the secularization theory must be an analogy between the expropriation of ecclesiastical property and the secularization of ideas. Secularization in the strict sense involves the transfer of some constant and enduring entity from the realm of the church to another societal arena (1–17).

14. Museums in fact often declare what type of behavior is permissible within its bounds. Visitors may not touch the paintings, cannot bring food with them, and so on. For a brief discussion of the norms that regulate museum visits, see "Producing Publics—Making Worlds!"

15. In his panoramic review of the typical sites and spectacles of the nineteenth century, Osterhammel relates how the state supersedes the prince as the organizer of permanent art exhibitions after the French Revolution (37). In the cityscape of the nineteenth-century metropolis, the magnificent public museum building takes its place among the national parliament, the railway station, and the opera house. The state thus assumes the expository role of the prince and, in some cases, expropriates his art to make it accessible to all citizens, all the while tying the collections to an educational plan: "Durch den Aufstieg der Experten in Europa wurde das Museum nun zum Ort angeleitet begehbarer Kunstgeschichte" (38).

16. That the plan for a museum precedes and encourages the construction of a nation-state is not without precedent. A "Germanisches Nationalmuseum" was opened in 1852, about two decades before German unification. The museum is one of many examples of how German patrons and intellectuals, in this case Baron Hans von Aufsess, hoped to further the national cause by supporting a national culture (see Hoffmann).

17. For an analysis of *Der Nachsommer* along these lines, see McIsaac 89–125.

18. Boris Groys writes that the museum is the place "an dem die kulturelle Identität des Nationalstaates definiert werden kann" precisely through the display of things for which this nation no longer has any use (47). Of course, the museum itself, as yet another historical institution, can be put on display in the museum—it can become "der Gegenstand seiner Ausstellung" (Hamacher 53).

19. For an analysis of the conditions and operations of critique in *Holzfällen*, see Gellen and Norberg.

20. The Austrian authors do not criticize society from a position of independence. On the contrary, they rely on state funding. In a country that defines itself as a cultivated nation but because of its size cannot generate a large public of cultural consumers, the state even becomes the crucial sponsor and patron: "Die Rolle des Adressaten der Kunst hat in Österreich der Staat übernommen, als alleiniger potenter Förderer, Käufer, Vermittler, Initiator, Vermarkter" (Menasse, *Das war Österreich* 241). Clearly, this relationship of need has not eliminated the rhetoric of national dissent. The plethora of ready-made Austria critiques looks somewhat like the continual nagging typical of intimate relationships gone sour. Some speak of "unerbittliche Undankbarkeit der Poeten," a sentiment that is prevalent in the Austrian population, whose tax revenues finance critical art (Bushell, "Mozartkugeln als Waffen der Massenvernichtung" 8). The combination of economic dependence on the state and an endless stream of severe reckonings can be understood in multiple ways. Perhaps the felt reliance on the state compels writers to demonstrate their intact integrity by relentless critique, or

maybe the critique must be viewed as the manifestation of loyalty in the peculiar, distorted form of obsessive attachment to the source of money and prestige. In either case, the “Staatskünstler” is also the “Staatsfeind” (Menasse, *Das war Österreich* 237).

Works Cited

- Bal, Mieke. *Double Exposures: The Subject of Cultural Analysis*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.
- Bartsch, Kurt. “‘Das produktiv Negative zur eigenen Heimat.’ Eine Momentaufnahme österreichischer Literatur 1995 und eine Korrektur.” *Begegnung mit dem Nachbarn: Aspekte österreichischer Gegenwartsliteratur*. Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2003. Print.
- Beilein, Matthias. *86 und die Folgen: Robert Schindel, Robert Menasse und Doron Rabinovici im literarischen Feld Österreichs*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2008. Print.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminationen: Ausgewählte Schriften I*. Ed. Siegfried Unseld. Frankfurt a.M., 1977. Print.
- Bennett, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Bernhard, Thomas. *Alte Meister: Komödie*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1985. Print.
- Broch, Hermann. *Hugo von Hofmannsthal und seine Zeit: Eine Studie*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2001. Print.
- Bull, Malcolm. “On Making Ends Meet.” *Apocalypse Theory and the Ends of the World*. Ed. Malcolm Bull. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995. Print.
- Bushell, Anthony. “Mozartkugeln als Waffen der Massenvernichtung, oder: Wer hat Angst vor der österreichischen Literatur? Ein einleitendes Wort.” *Von aussen betrachtet: Österreich und die österreichische Literatur im Spiegel der Auslandsrezeption*. Ed. Anthony Bushell and Dagmar Kostalova. Bern: Peter Lang, 2007. Print.
- . “Writing in Austria after 1945: The Political, Institutional, and Publishing Context.” *A History of Austrian Literature 1918–2000*. Ed. Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson. Rochester: Camden, 2006. Print.
- Djordjević, Goran. “Sozialpartnerschaft” *Wörterbuch der politischen Sprache in Österreich*. Ed. Peter Gehrlich and Oswald Panagl. Vienna: öbv, 2007. Print.
- Gellen, Kata, and Jakob Norberg. “The Unconscionable Critic: Thomas Bernhard’s Holzfällen.” *Modern Austrian Literature* 44.1 (2011): 5–75. Print.
- Greiner, Ulrich. *Der Tod des Nachsommers: Aufsätze, Porträts, Kritiken zur österreichischen Gegenwartsliteratur*. Munich: Carl Hanser, 1979. Print.
- Groys, Boris. *Logik der Sammlung: Am Ende des musealen Zeitalters*. Munich: Carl Hanser, 1997. Print.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1990. Print.
- Hamacher, Werner. “Ausstellungen der Mutter: Kurzer Gang durch verschiedene Museen.”

- "Geteilte Aufmerksamkeit": zur Frage des Lesens. Ed. Thomas Schestag. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1997. Print.
- Haslinger, Josef. *Politik der Gefühle: Ein Essay über Österreich*. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1995. Print.
- Hess, Jonathan. *Reconstituting the Body Politic: Enlightenment, Public Culture, and the Invention of Aesthetic Autonomy*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1999. Print.
- Hoffmann, Detlef. "The German Art Museum and the History of the Nation." *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*. Ed. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994. Print.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1998. Print.
- Konzett, Matthias. *The Rhetoric of National Dissent in Thomas Bernhard, Peter Handke, and Elfriede Jelinek*. Rochester: Camden, 2000. Print.
- Koschorke, Albert. "Macht und Fiktion." *Des Kaisers neue Kleider. Über das Imaginäre politischer Herrschaft*. Ed. Thomas Frank et al. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 2002. Print.
- Kraus, Karl. *Aphorismen: Sprüche und Widersprüche, Pro Domo et Mundo, Nachts*. Schriften. Ed. Christian Wagenknecht. Vol. 8. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1986. Print.
- Magris, Claudio. *Das habsburgische Mythos in der modernen österreichischen Literatur*. Trans. Madeleine von Pastoray and Renate Lunzer. Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 2000. Print.
- McIsaac, Peter M. *Museums of the Mind: German Modernity and the Dynamics of Collecting*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2007. Print.
- Menasse, Robert. *Das Land ohne Eigenschaften: Essay zur österreichischen Identität*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1995. Print.
- . *Das war Österreich: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Land ohne Eigenschaften*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2005. Print.
- Osterhammel, Jürgen. *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009. Print.
- "Producing Publics—Making Worlds! Zum Verhältnis von Kunstöffentlichkeit und Gegenöffentlichkeit." *Publicum: Theorien der Öffentlichkeit*. Ed. Gerald Raunig and Ulf Wuggenig. Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2005. Print.
- Schmid, Georg. "Reserve/Regreß/Repression: Axiome zur historischen Entwicklung der 'literarischen Moderne Österreichs' nach 1945." *Für und wider eine österreichische Literatur*. Ed. Kurt Bartsch, Dietmar Goltschnigg, and Gerhard Melzer. Königstein: Athenäum, 1982. Print.
- Schmid-Bortenschlager, Sigrid. "From Provocation to Appropriation." *From High Priests to Desecrators: Contemporary Austrian Writers*. Ed. Ricarda Schmidt and Moray McGowan. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992. Print.
- Schmidt-Dengler, Wendelin. *Bruchlinien: Vorlesungen zur österreichischen Literatur 1945 bis 1990*. Salzburg: Residenz, 2010. Print.
- . *Der Übertreibungskünstler: Zu Thomas Bernhard*. Vienna: Sonderzahl, 2010. Print.
- Schmitt, Carl. *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1996. Print.
- Stieg, Gerald. "Die totale Satire: Von Johann Nestroy über K. Kraus zu Th. Bernhard."

Österreich (1945–2000): Das Land der Satire. Ed. Jeanne Benay and Gerald Stieg. Bern: Peter Lang, 2002. Print.

Ünlü, Selcuk. "Die österreichische Literatur ist keineswegs ein bloßer Wurmfortsatz der deutschen: Ein Nachwort als Vorwort." *Die österreichische Literatur ist keineswegs ein bloßer Wurmfortsatz der deutschen: Ein Weißbuch.* Steyr: Ennsthaler, 2009. Print.

von Beyme, Klaus. *Theorie der Politik im 20. Jahrhundert: Von der Moderne zur Postmoderne.* Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2007. Print.

Zeyringer, Klaus. *Österreichische Literatur 1945–1998: Überblicke, Einschnitte, Wegmarken.* Innsbruck: Haymon, 1999. Print.

