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From the Editors: Happy 50th Anniversary!

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From the Editors

Happy 50th Anniversary!

When we assumed editorship of the flagship journal of the Austrian Studies Association five years ago, the association voted to give the publication a new name: *Journal of Austrian Studies*. This new name was chosen to reflect a broader scope for both the journal and the ASA. It would still deal with Austrian literature in the modern period, but also with material that extended beyond literature and beyond any given historical period. The journal had a new name, a new publisher, new editors, and a new look. But the ASA also consciously chose not to begin this “new” journal with volume 1, issue 1. Instead, we continued the numbering that had begun in 1968, when the first issue of *Modern Austrian Literature* appeared.¹ *Modern Austrian Literature* had, in fact, long dealt with a wide variety of texts and methodologies that extended beyond the implicit boundaries set by its title. We wanted to signal that the *JAS* was simply the obvious next step in a trajectory that dates back to the journal’s origins in the 1960s.

With this issue, we begin volume 50 of this publication. Over the half-century that has elapsed between volume 1 and volume 50, this journal has published 148 issues under eight different editors. On the occasion of this golden anniversary, we thought that it would be interesting and instructive to look back over the history of the journal and see how it has developed over its first fifty years.

As one might expect, the journal’s evolution over the years has reflected the evolution of scholarship in the field. Every single issue of the 1960s contained at least one article focusing on the literary works of Arthur Schnitzler. This concentration on one of the most highly regarded and celebrated modern Austrian authors not only reflected *MAL*’s origins in the *Journal of the Arthur Schnitzler Research Association* but also expressed the implicit notion that the subject of the journal was to focus on established literary masters. As the longtime editor of *MAL*, Donald Daviau, later recalled, in its early years

MAL “placed greater emphasis on the age in which Schnitzler lived, while still keeping the man as the center of focus” (Daviau 1986, iv).

The 1970s saw further expansion in the notion of what constituted a suitable topic for inclusion in the journal. *MAL* closed out the decade with a special issue on “Austrian Women Writers,” amid controversy as to “whether it was justifiable and appropriate to devote an issue” to the topic (Daviau 1979, np). Daviau argued that indeed it was, going so far as to apologize in his preface that several important Austrian women writers had to be omitted from the discussion “simply because it was impossible to locate critics who are currently working on them” and to express the hope that “[i]f the issue truly fulfills the purpose for which it was intended, it will ultimately serve as an impetus and stimulus for further research” (Daviau 1979, np). It appears to have worked, because *every one* of the eleven authors cited by Daviau as conspicuously absent has since been the subject of articles and reviews in the journal. Indeed, one of these eleven (Elfriede Jelinek) ranks among the most prevalent subjects of scholarly discussion in the journal over the past two decades.

Twenty years after the special issue on Austrian women writers, *MAL* 32:4 (Daviau’s last as editor) featured a special issue devoted to the topic of “Austria in Film” in recognition of the fact that visual culture had “now become a popular area of study” and that “movies, whether good or bad, usually reach and influence a much larger audience than is the case for books” (Daviau, 1999, i). Looking back on the years that have passed since then, it is difficult to imagine an issue of the journal in the twenty-first century that does not deal with film and visual culture in some way.

As *Modern Austrian Literature* entered the new century, the new editorial team, Geoffrey Howes and Jacqueline Vansant, announced that they would explicitly welcome “articles not only on the growing canon of literary texts, but also on film, popular culture, and texts that challenge definitions of high and low culture, genres, and methodologies” (Howes and Vansant, iii). The following year, the journal’s subtitle was changed to reflect the new name of the organization that it represented: It would henceforth be known as “The Journal of the Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association.” Subsequent editors continued to expand the journal’s size and scope, just as previous editors had.

Over the past five years we have worked to continue this longstanding tradition of opening the journal to new areas of scholarship and to feature new scholars with innovative methodologies. We are especially proud of the

newly emerging scholars whose work has appeared in these pages and who have carried the journal forward to new areas of exploration and new methods of exploring those areas. In the coming years, we hope to see the journal continue to attract and feature new scholars and new areas of scholarship. In particular, we hope to see the journal open up to an increasingly broad definition of “Austria” that moves beyond the borders of the current republic and takes in the many nationalities, languages, and cultures of the former Habsburg empire.

Now, as we celebrate our golden anniversary year, we want to remember and thank all of those who have devoted themselves to the fostering of this journal over the past half-century. It has been a good run. We look forward to seeing what the journal looks like when it celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary twenty-five years from now. It may have a new title, it will almost certainly be published in (and publish articles on) new and different media, and it will (we hope!) have new editors. But whatever it is called, whatever form it takes, and whoever is at the helm, we are confident that at its heart it will be the ever-youthful, ever-adaptable, ever more expansive venue for the best and most innovative scholarship in Austrian Studies that it has been throughout its first half century.

Hillary & Todd

Note

1. *Modern Austrian Literature* already had a predecessor in the form of the *Journal of the International Arthur Schnitzler Research Association*. Although MAL did begin with volume 1, the editor who oversaw the transition, Vincent LoCicero, wrote that “[i]n a sense, *Modern Austrian Literature* represents a heart-transplant operation. The body of this publication is new, but its spirit and essence remains that of the *Journal of the International Arthur Schnitzler Research Association*” (LoCicero). We agree with LoCicero, which means that we missed the journal’s actual 50th anniversary a few years ago.

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