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*Forging a Multinational State: State Making in Imperial
Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War* by
John Deak (review)

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jargon. Her frequent return to the concepts of *Biedermeier* and *Bildung* maintains for the general reader a focused encounter with Stifter's texts.

Saur's inquiry into Stifter would have benefited from a more explicit exposition of the cultural contexts specific to his various works. Relatedly, the study would also have benefited from a deeper engagement with secondary literature. She points toward some of this literature in the "Selected Secondary Literature" section at the end of the book but does not engage directly with much of this scholarship in her analyses. Additionally, the book's subtitle, "A Study in Poetic Realism," is odd, because she does not actively take up the matter of Realism as a literary style or period. On the contrary, Saur emphasizes a general idealist tendency in Stifter's literary works. She restricts these texts to products of an author and restricts the author to a firm set of *Biedermeier* values.

Saur does not alter the standard account about Adalbert Stifter as an author or the standard readings of his works. And she does not seek to do so. She aims to take seriously the claims about the relationship between the specific and the general that Stifter asserts in the famous *Vorrede to Bunte Steine*. Saur seeks to take stock of the specific representations of material objects and illustrate how they correspond to sets of social values. Her study offers a guided tour through Stifter's museum of material objects.

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John Deak, *Forging a Multinational State: State Making in Imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2015. 355 pp.

While John Deak's thorough study was not written to coincide with this year's commemoration of Francis Joseph's demise one hundred years ago—the book begins, after all, with the dynamics of Austrian governance under Joseph II in 1780—it is certainly a welcome and valuable contribution to the remembrance of Francis Joseph and his long reign of nearly seven decades. Deak counters the dominant paradigm of Francis Joseph as the last towering figure of an empire that was destined to fail because it was an outdated, medieval, multinational state entrenched against the modern nation-state model Hegel proclaimed as the endpoint in history. What Deak offers instead is "a new

history of the Austrian state-building project" (4), focusing on the intentions of central reformers "who continually sought to refine the Austrian state between 1740 and 1914" (6); he also tells the story of "how the bureaucracy came to be both the glue which held the state together and the lubricant which ameliorated its natural friction" (9). In short, instead of regarding Francis Joseph as synonymous with the decline of the Habsburg Empire, Deak seeks to "convince" (17) his readers that the Habsburg's complex monarchy was "a continually evolving polity" (16), not unlike the current European Union, providing a counterpoint to the all-too-popular bashing of (the imperial) bureaucracy or civil service (9).

In addition to relatively accessible documents, Deak cites a variety of primary sources he uncovered, including "memoirs, handbooks, reports, private letters, statistical handbooks, and manuals on regulations" (7-8), materials that allow him to present in six chronological chapters how the central imperial state was able to set up multiple levels of intertwined administrative layers fueled by an ethos of civil service that persisted after the reign of the reformer Joseph II.

Deak's perhaps too-friendly view of the Habsburg Empire and its educated elite leads, however, to several rather questionable assessments, such as his observation that "while Francis and Ferdinand ruled under the banner of reaction, they were not reactionaries" (61), supposedly because they left untouched the ethos of Josephinism, maintaining their "faith in its role as the motor of progress and development" (62). Similarly, he evaluates in contradictory terms Alexander Bach's administration by suggesting that it "may have been oppressive in the public sphere, but this guardianship of society also came with, and supplemented, both institutional modernization and economic development" (132). Deak's favorable opinion of the ever-evolving multinational and complex empire stems from his positive attitude toward the educated elite, or the *Beamten*, and their best intentions for a functioning, impartial, and progressive state in which central and local needs are ever coordinated or balanced. The author correspondingly downplays social frictions resulting from the economic modernization process or national conflicts, contextualizing them within continuous attempts to stabilize or make the empire-state work from within its administrative structures. A case in point is the so-called Stremayr Language Ordinance, which "elevated the Czech language to official status alongside German in Bohemia and Moravia" (203). Yet for Deak these nationalist politics "played an insignificant role in comparison to the qualities

necessary to represent the empire” (204). In other words, when taking consistently the view from the center of the empire “without privileging ideas of decline or a particular nation’s rise” (271), a narrative emerges by which the paternalistic state flexibly deals “with the complexities of multinational, popular participation in policy making” (269). From this vantage point, Deak then concludes that the Habsburg Empire “was not ultimately defeated on the field of battle,” noting that “in 1918 were no areas of the Habsburg Empire under enemy occupation” (264–65). Rather, the “war did not continue the process of state making, but ended it” (274). And while Deak admits “signs of decline in the long sweep of history in Habsburg monarchy” (271), such as the repressive stagnation of the *Biedermeier* in the years before the 1848 revolution and military defeats in the 1850s and 1860s, he nevertheless argues for an alternative narrative that is radical in that it views the fractured state from within its center. The extent to which Deak will sway readers may depend on their willingness to accept a strong endorsement of a conservative monarchy. Nonetheless, Deak’s book is a refreshing alternative to an all-too-self-assuring myth of the inevitable decline of the Habsburg dynasty.

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Elfie Poulain, *Einführung in die Literaturpragmatik mit einer Beispielanalyse von Kafkas Roman Der Prozess*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2015. 110 pp.

Elfie Poulain’s book *Einführung in die Literaturpragmatik mit einer Beispielanalyse von Kafka’s Roman Der Prozess* is aptly titled. The first portion, more than half of the slim volume, offers an explication of the linguistic field of pragmatics, defining pertinent terms, quoting important theorists, and supplying some examples of applications to literary works. There follows the most original section, a well-executed pragmatic analysis of Franz Kafka’s novel *Der Prozess*. This volume (called a “Lehrbuch” on the back cover) belongs to a pedagogical series, “Sprachwissenschaft Studienbücher,” published by the Winter Universitätsverlag of Heidelberg. Although it is also of scholarly interest beyond the classroom, it will serve well as a useful and well-organized textbook to help students understand and apply one important contemporary method of literary analysis. Kafka scholars might wish that the brief dis-